

Positive Psychology (01:830:455)
Spring 2022 (Last update: 12/14/2021)

Instructor	Evan M. Kleiman, Ph.D. (evan.kleiman@rutgers.edu)
TA:	To be announced
Office hours:	Tuesdays 3:30-4:30pm or by appointment *Please email to confirm before coming to office hours. This will allow us to find an alternate time if many students are planning to attend.
Course time:	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM
Location:	Tillett 254
Canvas site:	To be announced

Important class info

What is the goal of this class?

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an introduction to positive psychology—the study of topics related to happiness and the positive aspects of human experience. This course will review the core concepts, basic interventions, and real-world applications of positive psychology. By the end of this course, you will understand the key concepts and primary research areas of positive psychology; appreciate how to distinguish between science and intuition in a topic riddled with personal history and biases; and get hands-on experience in applying many core concepts in the real life. One of the hallmarks of the class are the week activities that will allow you to experience positive psychology in a hands-on, experiential way.

How will this class work?

Generally, the course will follow this general schedule (starting around week 2). Each topic will be taught over two days. It will be introduced in the Thursday class. There will be an out of class assignment assigned on Thursday that will be due the next Tuesday (giving you ~5 days to complete it). On Thursdays, we will discuss the assignment and learn more about the topic.

Is there a textbook?

No. Positive Psychology is a rapidly changing field and textbooks do not always have the most up-to-date content. So, beyond not wanting to make you pay for an expensive textbook, I want you to connect with the primary source material. This means the course material will consist of journal articles, relevant TED talks (e.g., from the primary researcher for any given area), and some textbook chapters. All materials will be provided to you on Canvas.

Assignments

There are three different types of assignments for this class. These assignments work together to help you better understand the material we're covering and to better connect the material to the "real world."

Activities (50% of grade; 10 total, 5% each)

The goal of the 10 activities is to connect what you're learning in class to your everyday life. You will generally be asked to complete the activity and then turn in a response about the activity. More details will be given before the relevant due dates.

In-Class (pop) Quizzes (25% of grade; 7 total, 5% each with 2 lowest dropped)

These quizzes serve three purposes: (1) to reinforce the main topics from the readings, (2) to reward those who attend class regularly, and (3) to prepare you for the final exam. (They are not meant to stress you, seriously!) Also, the two lowest scores are dropped.

Final Exam (25% of your grade)

The final exam is a cumulative, closed-book assessment of all the material we have covered during the semester. The goal of the exam is to make sure you understand and can apply the main concepts we've learned in class. The goal of the exam is **not** to stress you out, make you pull all nighters, or make you hate psychology. We'll have a lot of time to review and I will do everything I can to make an A or a B well within your reach.

Course schedule

Note: ● = Activity ● = Reading ● = Watch Video Details on activities, readings, and videos will be posted on Canvas. See Canvas for class materials!

#	Date	Topic	Due (before class)
1	1/18	Intro to the class	none
2	1/20	History and background of positive psychology and positive psychology interventions	●● Readings + watch TED Talk
3	1/25		
4	1/27	How we imagine the future: Optimism and affective forecasting	● Readings
5	2/1		● Best Possible Self
6	2/3	How we interpret and interact with the world: Attributional style and stress generation	● Readings
7	2/8		● Thought Log
8	2/10	How we conceptualize the positive: Character Strengths and Virtues	● Readings
9	2/15		● Activity: VIA Strengths Test
10	2/17	How we explore and enjoy activities: Curiosity, flow, and the functions of positive affect	●● Readings, Csikszentmihalyi Video
11	2/22		● Flow Activity
12	2/24	How we view ourselves: Self-esteem and self-efficacy	● Readings
13	3/1		● Self-esteem and efficacy evaluation
14	3/3	Empathy, Self-Compassion, and Forgiveness	● Readings
15	3/8		● Practicing Forgiveness for Self
	3/10	Happiness: What we get right and what we don't (Part 1)	●● Readings + watch TED talk
No class 3/15 and 3/17			
16	3/21	Happiness: What we get right and what we don't (Part 2)	● Three good things
17	3/23	How we relate to others: Interpersonal Connectedness, Relationships, and Community	● Readings
18	3/29		● Active Responding
19	4/31	Self-Control, Goal Setting, and Procrastination	● Readings
20	4/5		● Procrastination Activity
21	4/7	Mindfulness	● Readings
22	4/11		● Mindfulness Activity
23	4/13	Post-Traumatic Growth	● Readings
24	4/19	Catch up day	None
25	4/21	Catch up day	
26	4/26	Catch up day	
27	4/28	Final review day	

FINAL EXAM – TBD (you can always confirm the final exam date at <http://finalexams.rutgers.edu/>)

Other information

Attendance

This is a hands-on class and attending it is crucial to your success in class. However, the realities of COVID-19 (and life in general) mean that you will need to miss class from time-to-time for legitimate reasons (e.g., if you're feeling sick). Please let me know in advance if you plan to miss a class. You will be responsible for learning the material you will miss during class. Document your absences using the absence reporting system: <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>

University Code of Student Conduct

It's important to realize that coming to the University brings you into a scholarly community, and as with all communities, there are principles and standards of behavior and action. The University Code of Conduct can be accessed here: <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/student-conduct-processes/university-code-of-student-conduct/>