

The Science of Happiness

Spring 2018
Thursdays
8:30-11:30 AM

University of Vermont
Williams Hall 301

Instructor:

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Course Description:

We will survey the science of well-being with a goal toward up-ending the standard medical approach of curing illness or reducing dysfunction in favor of pursuits such as making meaning, pursuing goals, enhancing well-being, and fulfilling potential. To this end, we will explore facets of “happiness;” their neuroscientific and genetic bases, what distinguishes one happiness from another, how happinesses interact in daily living, what elements of happiness are changeable, and how one would go about optimizing positive experiences in one’s life and/or the broader community. The course has an experiential design—it is essential that you are actively engaged in experimentation with these concepts, assaying the tenets, structure, and limits of your own happiness.

Course Goals:

1. Gain fluency with the foundational concepts and vocabulary in the field of positive psychology.
2. Develop facility in analyzing and interpreting articles from the scientific literature on happiness and its correlates as well as media sources commenting on positive psychology theories.
3. Consider the challenges of operationalizing positive psychology principles into everyday living at the individual, system, and population levels.

Course Objectives: (the numbers correspond with the Goals above)

1.a./2.a: Detail what outcomes are often measured in positive psychology studies, why these are chosen, what differential information they offer, and which are important to you.

1.b./2.b: Use knowledge gained and synthesized from research and observation to write cogently about positive psychology concepts, referencing the evidence base, labeling phenomena with core terms, and integrating concepts from the literature with one's own ideas.

1.e./2.b: Evaluate the evidence for the validity and impact of key concepts in the field of positive psychology, such as subjective well-being, optimism, mindfulness, the hedonic treadmill, resilience, post-traumatic growth, eudaimonia, etc.

2.c: Depict the major components of a research article and its relevance, e.g., study format, randomization, placebo/controls, biases, power, generalizability, replicability, diversity and validity of measures, relevance of outcomes studied, correlation vs. causation.

2.d: Integrate articles describing varied research endeavors in order to compare and contrast methods and findings, note shortcomings, synthesize conclusions, and identify future research needs.

2.e: Analyze commentaries in the media reflecting on positive psychology conceptions with regard to their accuracy, reliability, and biases.

3.a: Utilize the major themes of positive psychology to critique one's own beliefs, thoughts, actions, and emotions with a goal toward understanding their interrelated contributions to personal well-being.

3.b: Use your understanding of positive psychology to analyze clinical cases of children and adolescents with identified mental health problems in order to propose innovative interventions.

3.c: Apply a growing knowledge of the science of happiness to proposing creative, evidence-based, impactful solutions to local and global dilemmas.



Policies:

- How To Contact Us: Use your UVM e-mail account so we can reply (if needed) with confidential information about your work in the class. In most cases, you will get a reply within one *business* day.
- How We Contact You: Most information will be posted on Blackboard. If we need to contact you individually, we will use your UVM e-mail address. Students are expected to manage their own e-mail accounts so that they can receive messages related to the course.
- Web-based resources: <https://bb.uvm.edu/> This is your gateway to the resources for the course, including readings, videos, and other material. Most of your assignments will be posted and submitted here. You are expected to check it regularly.

Classroom Environment Expectations:

- Students are expected to attend every class, arriving promptly and remaining alert and involved until dismissed by the instructor.
- Faculty and students will promote academic discourse and the free exchange of ideas by listening with respectful attention to all individuals.
- **Laptop computers and other web-enabled devices:** Cell phones or smart phones are not to be used during class; in case of an emergency you may step out. Laptops are permitted only as instructed by the professor, typically for group work. The goal is for you to be engaged and participating. You may take notes on paper and all slides presented will be subsequently posted online for your review. Students observed to be using electronic devices during class time will lose their participation points for the day.
- Absences: Attendance is **mandatory**. You are allowed to miss one class with no point losses as long as you notify the TAs and/or the professor *in advance*. No absences will be excused if we are notified after the missed class. After the first absence you will lose your participation points for each subsequent absence. (*Unless you have a scheduled varsity or club athletic event, religious holiday, illness, or family crisis that is covered by UVM policy as appended below*).

Required Texts:

- All required readings will be posted on Blackboard. Optional films listed can be acquired on your own or through a library.

Grading:

- Quizzes/Participation: (Total 30% of final grade)
 - A short closed-book quiz will be administered at the start of each class. It will cover the required reading(s) assigned for that session. After handing it in for *individual quiz* points (graded for completeness only), you will then join your



Team to retake the quiz as a group. Teams will be assigned in the beginning of the semester. The group quizzes will then be graded for correctness and will contribute to *group quiz* points. You will have opportunities to give your Teammates formative (ungraded) anonymous feedback midway through the course, as well as summative (graded) anonymous feedback at the end of the course.

Additionally, in-class Team work will be graded for participation, effort, creativity, and application of course concepts.

- Individual Quiz: 5% of final grade
- Group Quiz: 5% of final grade
- Group In-Class Exercises: 10% of final grade
- Team Midterm Peer Feedback: 0% of final grade
- Team Final Peer Feedback (solicited at end of semester): 10% of final grade

NB: If you are late and/or do not hand in your individual quiz, you cannot earn missed quiz or participation points. No make-ups will be offered, so if you are going to miss a class please notify us in advance. Only one excused absence will be allowed for the quizzes (see above re: absences). We reserve the right to take attendance at any time and this may be reflected in your quiz grade.

- Weekly Exercises: (Total 20% of final grade)
 - Each week an exercise is assigned for you to personally experience an aspect of positive psychology. Your assignment is to write a one-page Reflection on your experience with the exercise. With this, you must include **a connection to the week's readings**—a thought relating the readings to the exercise, or a point of confusion, or something you'd like to know more about, or a question a reading raised for you.

The exercise Reflections are to be submitted on Blackboard by the **beginning** of class each week. Your reflection should be *no less than 2 paragraphs and no more than 1.5 pages*. Please use 12-point font, double-spacing, and one-inch margins.

The Reflections are each graded out of 10 points. As a general reference point, you will receive a 5/10 if it appears your Reflection could have been completed without doing the exercise itself. You will receive a 10/10 if your Reflection shows evidence of participation, effort, and thought, *and* includes some connection to or question about the week's readings.

- Response Paper and Team Presentation: (Total 30% of final grade)
 - The response paper will be due March 1st and is completed individually. See due date, assignment prompt, writing guidelines, and grading rubric below. (15% of final grade)
 - Each Team will also be assigned a date to present a scientific article on the week's theme. See below for details. (15% of final grade)



- Final Project: (Total 20% of final grade)
 - With your Teams you will create and carry out a small intervention rooted in positive psychology to address a need at the individual, family, system, national, or global level. See full description and grading guidelines below.

- Extra Credit: (up to 3 points added to your Final Grade)
 - This is an extension of the second week's exercise, The Good Day Experiment. To obtain extra credit, you may continue the experiment for 2-4 weeks at any point in the semester. Write a 4-5 page paper (double-spaced, 12-point font) describing the experience, your findings, and how it changed your routines—or why it didn't. You must include 5 legitimate references to receive full credit (see citation guidelines below). The assignment is due by May 3rd, 2018 at 8:30AM on Blackboard; no late submissions will be accepted.

- Grades
 - A+ > 99%
 - A = 92 to 98.9%
 - A- = 90 to 91.9%
 - B+ = 87 to 89.9%
 - B = 82 to 86.9%
 - B- = 80 to 81.9%
 - C+ = 77 to 79.9%
 - C = 72 to 76.9%
 - C- = 70 to 71.9%
 - D+ = 67 to 69.9%
 - D = 62 to 66.9%
 - D- = 60 to 61.9%
 - F < 60%

[**For further policy information, see the end of this Syllabus.](#)

N.B. The readings in the week-by-week schedule listed below are posted on the course site. You are expected to have completed only the *required* readings *prior* to the class date for which they are assigned. The optional readings are also on the course site should you be interested in further material on a topic.

Week 1: Introductory

January 18th: Introduction, Overview, & History

[**Be prepared to share your Wellness Introduction today.](#)

Required Materials: Review Syllabus.

Optional Materials:

- Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University.
Chapter 1.
- Seligman, M.E.P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). *Positive psychology: An introduction*. *American Psychologist*. 55(1), 5-14.
- Epicurus on Happiness: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irornIAQzQY>
- Film: *The Happy Movie* (Dir: Roko Belic). Available on Amazon.

Week 2: Science & Measurement

January 25th: Measuring Happiness and the Good Life

Exercise due today at 8:30AM on Blackboard: The Good Day Experiment

Complete the Good Day Experiment for at least 5 days. It is described under “Exercises” on Blackboard and there is a separate spreadsheet to help with your data collection. Write your weekly reflection on your findings; you may submit your Good Day daily ratings chart with it but this is not required. There is also a description of this in Peterson’s *A Primer in Positive Psychology*, pp. 43-45. Don’t forget to relate the exercise and your experience to the readings for this week, or describe a question or confusion or something you’d like to know more about related to the readings (see Weekly Exercises under *Grading* above). Come prepared to discuss your findings and questions in class.

Required Materials:

- Lopez SJ, Teramoto Pedrotti J, Snyder CR. *Positive Psychology: The scientific and practical explorations of human strengths*. Chapter 6. 3rd Ed. 2015.
- Chokshi, Niraj. “Norway Is No. 1 in Happiness. The U.S., Sadly, Is No. 14.” *The New York Times*. March 20, 2017.
- Gallup Purdue Index (2014). You do not need to read the whole thing. Instead, **find one fact or statistic to share in class that fascinated you.**

Optional Materials:

- Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University.
Chapters 4.
- Gallup-Purdue Index Report (2015).

Week 3: What Makes People Happy?

February 8th: Positive Emotions, Money, and PERMA

***Team 1: Team Presentation today*

Exercise due today at 8:30AM on Blackboard: Commercial Media Fast. Research has demonstrated that an orientation to extrinsic goals (e.g., popularity, wealth, appearance) is associated with lower levels of well-being. On the other hand, intrinsic goals (helping the community, personal growth, close relationships) promote higher levels of well-being. Moreover, one of the causes associated with extrinsic values is exposure to social models that emphasize these, including commercial media. In this exercise, you will spend 4 consecutive days avoiding all commercial media to the extent possible. This includes messages in any form that attempt to sell a particular product or service in order to profit the seller or foster a positive image of a profit-driven entity. There are some obvious sources of commercial media—television, radio, Facebook ads. Be aware also of less obvious influences of commercial media in your life. After completing the 4-day fast, write your reflection on your experience, anything that surprised you, and what you learned. Don't forget to relate it to the readings for this week, or describe a question or confusion or something you'd like to know more about related to the readings.

Required Materials:

- Kasser, T., & Ryan, R. M. (1993). *A dark side of the American dream: correlates of financial success as a central life aspiration*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65(2), 410-422.
- Fredrickson, B. (2001). *The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden and build theory of positive emotions*. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 218-226.

Optional Materials:

- Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005). *The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success?* *Psychological Bulletin*, 131(6), 803-855. (Read ONLY 803-804, 822-846)
- Fredrickson, B., Mancuso, R., Branigan, C., & Tugade, M. (2000). *The undoing effect of positive emotions*. *Motivation and Emotion*, 24(4), 237-258.
- Dunn, E. W., Aknin, L. B., & Norton, M. I. (2008). *Spending money on others promotes happiness*. *Science*, 319 (5870), 1687-1688.
- Film: The Pursuit of Happiness.

Week 4: Love & Relationships

February 15th: The Science of Positive Relationships

***Team 2: Team Presentation today*

Exercise due today at 8:30AM on Blackboard: Story Corps—there is a program called StoryCorps that creates a platform for meaningful interviews. Read about its creation at this website: <http://storycorps.org/about/> Storycorps also exists as an app: <https://storycorps.me/> For this week's assignment, use the StoryCorps website or app to record a meaningful interview with someone you care about. They have questions to scaffold this process. We advise you to set aside at least 20 minutes for the interview, limit yourself to a few questions, and see where it takes you. In your reflection, write about what you learned from this experience, what surprised you, and how the process of doing the interview affected the relationship. Don't forget to relate it to the readings for this week, or describe a question or confusion or something you'd like to know more about related to the readings.

Required Materials:

- Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University. **Read chapter 10.**
- Helen Fisher TED talk, Anatomy of Love: http://www.ted.com/talks/helen_fisher_studies_the_brain_in_love?language=en

Optional Materials:

- Listen to the NPR Podcast on Attachment here: <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/317/unconditional-love>
- Nicolas Christakis TED Talk: http://www.ted.com/talks/nicholas_christakis_the_hidden_influence_of_social_networks
- Fonagy et al. *Adult Attachment Predicts Maternal Brain and Oxytocin Response to Infant Cues*. *Neuropsychopharmacology* (2009) 34, 2655–2666.
- Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). *The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 497-529. Read the first 7 pages (p.497-503)



- Gable, S. G. & Gosnell, C. L. (2011) *The positive side of close relationships*. In K. M. Sheldon, T. B. Kashdan and M. F. Steger (Eds.) *Designing positive psychology: Taking stock and moving forward* (pp. 265 – 279).
- Yaniv Kanat-Maymon, Orna Zagoory-Sharon & Ruth Feldman: *Mutual influences between partners' hormones shape conflict dialog and relationship duration at the initiation of romantic love*. *Social Neuroscience* Volume 9, Issue 4, 2014, 337-351.
- Champagne, F. *Epigenetic mechanisms and the transgenerational effects of maternal care*. *Frontiers in Neuroendocrinology*. Volume 29, Issue 3, June 2008, Pages 386–397
- Film: *Good Will Hunting*
- Film: *When Harry Met Sally*
- Film: *Remember the Titans*
- Film: *Annie Hall*
- Film: *Love Story*

Week 5: Virtues and Character Strengths

February 22nd: The Science of Character

Exercise due today at 8:30AM on Blackboard: VIA-IS in practice

Please log onto Martin Seligman's website www.authentic happiness.org, and take the VIA Survey of Character Strengths under Questionnaires (you will need to create your own free account). Bring a copy of your assessment to class this week.

Choose one of your top signature strengths from the assessment and spend 30 minutes each day for five days immersed in a related activity. For example, if a signature strength is appreciation of beauty and mastery, and your passion is music, choose a favorite performer, and really listen for 30 minutes – immerse yourself, eyes closed, no distractions, etc. If it is love of learning, pick up a book solely for enjoyment or go to the museum, etc. See the Rashid piece on Blackboard, "340 Ways to Use Your Signature Strengths," for ideas.

Write your Reflection about how the exercise informed your understanding of your strength and how you might use the strength differently in the future. Don't forget to connect it to the readings for this week, or describe a question or confusion or something you'd like to know more about related to the readings.

****Please bring your VIA-IS assessments to class this week.**

Required Materials:



- Schwartz, B. & Sharpe, K. (2006). *Practical wisdom: Aristotle meets positive psychology*. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 7, 377-395.
- Please see the list of films from Ryan Niemiec on Blackboard. Choose one that corresponds to one of your top three Signature Strengths and enjoy.

Optional Materials:

- Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University. Read chapter 6.
- Biswas-Diener, R., Kashdan, T.B., & Minhas, G. (2011). A dynamic approach to psychological strength development and intervention. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 6(2), 106-118
- Rashid: 340 Ways to Use Your Signature Strengths.
- Shainberg, L. (1989, April 9). "Finding 'The Zone'". *New York Times*, pp. 1-5.

Week 6: Optimism, Hope, & Forgiveness

March 1st: Optimism & Hope & Forgiveness, *with guest lecturer Jeffrey Rettew PhD*

****Response Paper Due today (3/1/18) by 8:30AM on Blackboard (see below for details).**

Exercise due today at 8:30AM on Blackboard: Random Acts of Kindness. Random, conscious acts of kindness have been empirically shown to decrease stress and strongly benefit enhanced mental health. Lyubomirski has found that individuals who complete five acts of kindness over the course of even one day report feeling much happier than control groups even days after the exercise is over. Note that these acts are consciously done rather than scanning the past day to see what you might have done that was nice. In preparation for this session, please choose three successive days on which to consciously perform such acts. They can be as simple as holding the door for someone, helping someone with their bags, etc. Please write your reflection detailing your interventions, and the reactions of both the beneficiaries and yourself.

Required Materials:

- Seligman, M. (1990) *Learned Optimism*. New York: Free Press. Read chapters 1, 2, 3. Take the self-assessment in Chapter 3 and bring your results to class.
- Seligman, M. (1990) *Learned Optimism*. New York: Free Press. Read chapters 7 and 12. If you have the chance, administer the assessment in chapter 7 to a child between the ages of 8-13.

****We will take part of next week's class (Thursday, March 8th) for you to meet with your Teams and begin to plan your Final Project (see guidelines below).**

Optional Materials:

- Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University. Pp. **114-134**.
- Snyder, CR; Shorey HS; Cheavens J; Pulvers KM; Adams VH; & Wiklund C. *Hope and academic success in college*. Journal of Educational Psychology. 2002, 94(4): 820-826.
- Feudtner, C. (2009). *The breadth of hopes*. New England Journal of Medicine, 361(24), 2306-2307.
- Schneider, S.L. (2001). *In search of Realistic Optimism: Meaning, Knowledge, and Warm Fuzziness*. American Psychologist 56(3), 250-263.
- Film: *The Shawshank Redemption (1994)*
- Film: *Forrest Gump (1994)*
- Film: *Life is Beautiful*
- Film: *Hotel Rwanda*

Week 7: Kindness & Altruism

March 8th: Science of Altruism, Final Project Planning

***Team 3: Team Presentation today*

***We will take part of this week's class (~30 minutes) for you to meet with your Teams and begin to plan your Final Project (see guidelines below).*

Exercise due today at 8:30AM on Blackboard: Using Seligman's guidelines from Chapter 12, carry out the ABCDEs of using optimism in your everyday life. Take three situations that include some adversity (it can be small, like running late for a class, or bigger) and work through each of the ABCDE steps. The three situations can be all in one day or over the course of the week. For your reflection, describe how this experience affected you and how willpower was involved in your efforts to change your thinking. Don't forget to connect it to the readings for this week, or describe a question or confusion or something you'd like to know more about related to the readings.

Required Materials:

- Robson, D. "Does it pay to be kind to strangers?" BBC.Com. November 26, 2015.

- Buchanan & Bardi. "Acts of Kindness and Acts of Novelty Affect Life Satisfaction." *J of Soc Psychology*, 2009.

Optional Materials:

- Warneken & Tomasello. "Extrinsic Rewards Undermine Altruistic Tendencies in 20-Month-Olds." *Developmental Psychology*, 44(6), 2008.
- Rilling et al. *Neuroreport* 2004. "Opposing BOLD responses to reciprocated and unreciprocated altruism in putative reward pathways."

Spring Break: March 15th!

Week 8: Gratitude & Post-Traumatic Growth

March 22nd: The Science of Gratitude and Growth

***Team 4: Team Presentation today*

***Please prepare a brief, written proposal for your final project to be handed in by 8:30AM today on Blackboard. Submit one per group. It should include an outline of your plan for your project intervention, each member's name and email, and specifics of how each person will contribute to the project, paper, and presentation.*

Exercise due today at 8:30AM on Blackboard: Gratitude Letter

For this week's exercise, we would like you to express your gratitude to someone. Think of someone who has contributed to your well-being whom you've never fully thanked. This can be a parent, coach, sibling, romantic partner, friend, presidential candidate, mentor, etc. Write a letter to that person describing the benefits you have received from them and why you appreciate them. Be detailed. Describe how the actions made you feel. Take this letter and read it out loud to that person (if it will not cause harm or embarrassment or upset to the other person). If possible, do this *in person*. Take enough time to be together to exchange emotions. If this is not possible, send the letter to them. Bring a copy of your letter to class, along with some thoughts on how this exercise made you feel, what your experience was like, and (if you were able to share this with the recipient of the gratitude), how the sharing experience made you both feel. Be prepared to share a part or the whole letter depending on your comfort level. In the past some people have thanked those who are no longer alive.

For your reflection paper write about your experience with reading your letter. Don't forget to connect it to the readings for this week, or describe a question or confusion or something you'd like to know more about related to the readings. You are welcome to submit the Gratitude letter itself in addition, but you will be graded on the Reflection itself, not the letter.

Required Materials:

- Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L. G. (2004). *Posttraumatic growth: Conceptual foundations and empirical evidence*. *Psychological Inquiry*, 15(1), 1-18.
- Emmons, R.A., & McCullough, M.E. (2003). *Counting Blessings Versus Burdens: An Experimental Investigation of Gratitude and Subjective Well-Being in Daily Life*. *J of Personality & Social Psychology*, 84(2), 377-389.

Optional Materials:

- Rosmarin, D.H., Pirutinsky, S., Cohen, A., Galler, Y., & Krumrei, E.J. (2011). *Grateful to God or just plain grateful? A study of religious and non-religious gratitude*. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 6(5), 389-396.
- Seligman, M.E.P. (2011). *Flourish*. New York: Free Press. Read chapter 8, pages 152-163.
- Film: *The Matrix*
- Film: *Ordinary People*
- Film: *The Bridge on The River Kwai*
- Film: *The Silver Linings Playbook*

Week 9: Flow & Passion

March 29th: The Science of Flow and Harmonious Passion

Exercise due today at 8:30AM on Blackboard: Spend at least 30 minutes at least 3 days this week pursuing an activity about which you are passionate. For your reflection, describe your state of being during and after the activity. E.g., how does it affect your mood, focus, relationships, self-image? Is this different during vs. after the activity? Don't forget to connect it to the readings for this week, or describe a question or confusion or something you'd like to know more about related to the readings.

Required Materials:

- Vallerand, R. J., Mageau, G. A., Ratelle, C., Leonard, M., Blanchard, C., Koester, R., Marsolais, J. (2003). *Les passion de l'ame: On obsessive and harmonious passion*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85, 756-767.
- Doskoch, P. (2005) *The winning edge*. *Psychology Today*.

Optional Materials:

- Angela Duckworth: "The Key to Success? Grit." April 2013.
https://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_the_key_to_success_grit?language=en
- Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University. Chapter 12.
- Locke, E.A. & Latham, G.P. (2002). *Building a practically useful theory of goal-setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey*. *American Psychologist*, 57(9), 705-717
- Lerner, D. (2012). *Positive excellence: An exploration of the potential impact of positive psychology on the road to excellence and expertise*.
- Kashdan, T.B., & McKnight, P.E. (2009). *Origins of purpose in life: Refining our understanding of a life well lived*. *Psychological Topics*, 18, 303-316.
- Steger, M. F. (2009). *Experiencing meaning in life: Optimal functioning at the nexus of wellbeing, psychopathology, and spirituality*. In S. J. Lopez (Ed.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (2ndEd.) (pp. 679-687). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Torrance, E.P. (1995). *Insights about creativity: Questioned, rejected, ridiculed, ignored*. *Educational Psychology Review* 7(3), 313-322.

Week 10: Mindfulness, Mindset, & Willpower

April 5th: The Science of Mindfulness & Mindset, *guest lecturer meditation instructor and Family Wellness Coach DeShan Foret MPH, RYT-500*

***Team 5: Team Presentation today*

Exercise due today at 8:30AM on Blackboard: Stages of Change (Model by James Prochaska)

In the transtheoretical model, change is a process involving progress through a series of six stages:

- Precontemplation - "people are not intending to take action in the foreseeable future, usually measured as the next 6 months"
- Contemplation - "people are intending to change in the next 6 months"
- Preparation - "people are intending to take action in the immediate future, usually measured as the next month"
- Action - "people have made specific overt modifications in their lifestyles within the past 6 months"
- Maintenance - "people are working to prevent relapse," a stage which is estimated to last "from 6 months to about 5 years"

- Termination - "individuals have zero temptation and 100% self-efficacy... they are sure they will not return to their old unhealthy habit as a way of coping"

In addition, the researchers conceptualized "relapse" which is not a stage in itself but rather the "return from action or maintenance to an earlier stage."

During this week, use your reflection to write about an example of *at least 3* of the 6 stages of the transtheoretical model in your life. For example, if you have wanted to exercise but cannot seem to ever go to the gym, you may decide that you are still in precontemplation. Reflect on what keeps you in precontemplation. If you are going to the gym, think about what it will take to continue through the maintenance phase. Find examples of what has caused you to relapse over time vs. what has allowed you to progress. Be prepared to share your "stages of change." Don't forget to connect it to the readings for this week, or describe a question or confusion or something you'd like to know more about related to the readings.

Required Materials:

- Baumeister, R., & Tierney, J. (2012). *Willpower: Rediscovering the greatest human strength*. Read chapters 2 & 10.
- Swami Rama. *Meditation is not what you think*. Excerpt from *The Art of Joyful Living*, Himalayan Institute Press.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. "An outpatient program in behavioral medicine for chronic pain patients based on the practice of mindfulness meditation: Theoretical considerations and preliminary results." *General Hospital Psychiatry* 4, 33-47, 1982. **Only pp. 33-37 are required.**
- TED Talk: Barry Schwartz discussing The Paradox of Choice:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VO6XEQIsCoM>

Optional Materials:

- Rocha, Tomas. "The dark knight of the soul." *The Atlantic*, June 25, 2014
- Doidge, N. (2007). *The brain that changes itself*. New York: Penguin Books. **Read Chapter 2.**
- Dweck et al. (2007) *Implicit Theories of Intelligence Predict Achievement Across an Adolescent Transition: A Longitudinal Study and an Intervention*. *Child Development*, 78(1), 246-263. Read **the introduction (the first 2.5 pages) and the General Discussion.**
- Villarica, H..(2012, April 9). "The Chocolate-and-Radish Experiment That Birthed the Modern Conception of Willpower." *The Atlantic*.



- Tykocinski, O.E., and Pittman, T.S., (1998). The Consequences of Doing Nothing: Inaction Inertia as Avoidance of Anticipated Counterfactual Regret. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 75(3). 607-616.
- Doidge, N. (2007). *The brain that changes itself*. New York: Penguin Books. Chapters 1 and 3.
- TEDTalk: Dan Gilbert on happiness:
http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_gilbert_asks_why_are_we_happy.html
- Dweck, C. *Messages that motivate*. Excerpt
- Schwartz, B., Ward, A., Monterosso, J., Lyubomirsky, S., White, K., & Lehman, D. R. (2002). Maximizing versus satisficing: happiness is a matter of choice. *Journal of Personality and Social psychology*, 83(5), 1178-1197.
- On Being with Krista Tippett: Listen to the end of this 8/18/16 episode, where Billy Mills describes his Olympic race. <http://www.onbeing.org/program/billy-mills-christina-torres-ashley-hicks-et-al-running-as-spiritual-practice/8878>
- Grant, Adam. "Can we end the meditation madness?" *NY Times*, October 29, 2015.
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), 822-848.
- Davidson J. R., Kabat-Zinn, J., Schumacher, J., Rosenkranz, M., Muller, D., Santorelli, S. F., Urbanowski, F., Sheridan, J. F. (2003). Alterations in brain and immune function produced by mindfulness meditation. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 65, 564-570.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology*, 10(2), 144-156.
- On Being. Krista Tippett interviewing Mirabai Bush on meditation at Google and beyond. <http://www.onbeing.org/program/mirabai-bush-search-inside-yourself-contemplation-in-life-and-work/7731>
- Jon Kabat-Zinn. How mindfulness can change your life. <https://youtu.be/EJjyrzqkXrE>
Outlines the history and purpose of Kabat-Zinn's Center for Mindfulness at UMass.
- Langer, E., Djikic, M., Pirson, M., Madenci, A., & Donahue, R. (2010). Believing is seeing: Using mindlessness (mindfully) to improve visual acuity. *Psychological Science*, 21(5), 661-666.
- Film: *Gattaca*
- Film: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

Week 11: Positive Interventions

April 12th: Positive Psychology & Psychiatry, *Guest lecturer David Rettew MD*

Exercise due today at 8:30AM on Blackboard: Three Good Things

Seligman, Steen, Park, and Peterson (2005) write that people who stop and reflect on things for which they are most grateful are happier and more content with life. These researchers found that having people write three things down (with a brief explanation of why they were grateful for these things) at the end of each day had particular success. Please complete this exercise for at least 5 days of this week (we recommend continuing it 2-4 weeks if possible). That is, at the end of each day write down 3 good things that happened during that day and why they happened or why you are grateful for them. For your reflection, write about how this exercise affects you as the week progresses and how you view the process and results. Don't forget to connect it to the readings for this week, or describe a question or confusion or something you'd like to know more about related to the readings.

Required Materials:

- Rettew, D. "Positive Child Psychiatry." In *Positive Psychiatry*, Ed. Palmer, B & Jeste, D. 2015.
- Seligman, M.E.P., Rashid, T., & Parks, A.C. "Positive Psychotherapy." *American Psychologist*, November 2006. 774-788. Focus on the
- TED Talk: Dan Buettner discussing *How to Live to Be 100*.
http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_buettner_how_to_live_to_be_100.html

Optional Materials:

- Rashid, T. (2009). "Positive Interventions in Clinical Practice." *J Clin Psych* 65(5), 461-466.
- Sin, NL & Lyubormirsky, S. (2009). "Enhancing well-being and alleviating depressive symptoms with positive psychology interventions: A practice-friendly meta-analysis." *J Clin Psychology*, 65(5), 467-487.
- Seligman, M.E.P., Steen, T.A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). *Positive psychology progress: Empirical validation of interventions*. *American Psychologist*, 60, 410-421.
- Mutrie, N., & Faulkner, G. (2004). Physical activity: Positive psychology in motion. In P. A. Linley & S. Joseph (Eds.), *Positive psychology in practice* (pp. 146-164). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (1990) *Learned optimism*. New York: Free Press. **Chapter 10.**



- Kahn, M. (2003) "Does this Mean I'm Crazy?" *Hidden Worries of Treatment-Naïve Patients*. Harvard Review of Psychiatry, 11(1), 43-45.
- Ratey, J. J., & Loehr, J. E. (2011). The positive impact of physical activity on cognition during adulthood: A review of underlying mechanisms, evidence, and recommendations. *Reviews in the Neurosciences* 22(2), 171-185.
- Ahmed, Q. (2010). "Sleep Deprivation: The Metabolic Costs of Chronic Partial Sleep Loss." PCCSU, 2010.
- Klinkenborg, V. (1997, January 5). "Awakening to Sleep". *New York Times*.
- Kilgore, W. D., Kilgore, D. B., Day, L.M., Li, C., Kamimori, G.H., & Balkin, T. J.,(2007). The Effects of 53 Hours of Sleep Deprivation on Moral Judgment. *Sleep*, 30(3), 345-352.
- Henry, D., McClellan, D., Rosenthal, L., Dedrick, D., & Gosdin, M. (2008). Is sleep really for sissies? Understanding the role of work in insomnia in the US. *Social Science & Medicine*, 66(3), 715-726.

Week 12: Self-Acceptance and Self-Actualization

April 19th: The Science of the Good Self

***Team 6: Team Presentation today*

Exercise due today at 8:30AM on Blackboard: Choose between the following 2 options.

Writing Your Own Legacy. Consider what sort of life you want to lead—what do you want to accomplish and how do you want to be remembered? Be creative, honest, and realistic. Write your legacy in the past tense, describing the memorable attributes of your fantasized life. Set this aside for a day or two, then return to reflect on what steps you are taking to make this life happen. Your written reflection may include your legacy description and your reflections on this process. Don't forget to connect it to the readings for this week, or describe a question or confusion or something you'd like to know more about related to the readings.

Or A Hundred Years from Today.

Imagine yourself at 100 years old. Assuming intact cognitive faculties, consider what wisdom you will have accumulated. Write a letter from your 100 year-old self to your current self. Share what you have learned and provide advice to your current self about *what to do now* to begin on a path to "the good life" as you see it. Try to include specific advice about whatever challenge seems biggest in your life right now. The letter itself is your Reflection for this week. Don't forget to connect it to the readings for this week, or describe a question or confusion or something you'd like to know more about related to the readings.

Required Materials:



- Carson SH & Langer EJ. "Mindfulness and self-acceptance." *Journal of Rational-Emotive and Cognitive-Behavior Therapy*, 24 (1), 2006.
- Brene Brown's TED talk: https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability
- Viktor Frankl excerpt from *Man's Search for Meaning*.

Optional Materials:

- Hardin & Larsen. "Distinct Sources of Self-Discrepancies: Effects of Being Who You Want to Be and Wanting to Be Who You Are on Well-Being." *Emotion*, 2014.
- Warren et al. "Self-criticism & self-compassion." *Current Psychiatry*, December 2016.
- Film: *Flight*, in reference to Langer's description of "the benefits of mistakes"

Week 13: Nature & Beauty

April 26th: The Environment & the Arts, *guest speaker clinical psychologist Logan Hegg Psy.D*

***Team 5: Team Presentation today*

***Wear comfortable gear for walking outdoors today*

Exercise due today at 8:30AM on Blackboard: Free Time.

- 1) Put your phone on silent/no vibrate.
- 2) Leave your bag/backpack secured somewhere.
- 3) Take out a piece of paper and write (yes, with a pen or pencil or marker or crayon) whatever comes to mind for 3 minutes.
- 4) Take a walk for 15 minutes, anywhere, by yourself, without headphones or music or distractions.
- 5) Take out another piece of paper and write (yes, with a pen or pencil or marker or crayon) whatever comes to mind for 3 minutes.
- 6) In your reflection, compare your scribbles. Notice similarities/differences in content (what you wrote), style (how you wrote), tone (the feeling in what was written). Remember to reference the readings or a question about them.

Required Materials:

- Tsunetsugu, Y., Park, B.J. & Miyazaki, Y. Trends in research related to "Shinrin-yoku" (taking in the forest atmosphere or forest bathing) in Japan. *Environmental Health and Preventative Medicine* (2010) 15: 27. doi:10.1007/s12199-009-0091-z
- Elizabeth K. Nisbet, John M. Zelenski. Underestimating Nearby Nature. *Psychological Science* (2011) 22:9, pp. 1101 – 1106, DOI: 10.1177/0956797611418527

Optional Materials:

- Bratman et al. Nature experience reduces rumination and subgenual prefrontal cortex activation. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (2015), 112 (28): 8567-8572.
- E. Morita, S. Fukuda, J. Nagano, N. Hamajima, H. Yamamoto, Y. Iwai, T. Nakashima, H. Ohira, T. Shirakawa. Psychological effects of forest environments on healthy adults: Shinrin-yoku (forest-air bathing, walking) as a possible method of stress reduction. *Public Health* (2006) 54-63. doi:10.1016/j.puhe.2006.05.024
- Renate Cervinka, Kathrin Röderer, Elisabeth Hefler. Are nature lovers happy? On various indicators of well-being and connectedness with nature. *Journal of Health Psychology* (2011) 17:3, pp. 379 – 388. DOI: 10.1177/1359105311416873
- F. S. Mayer, C. M. Frantz, E. Bruehlman-Senecal, K. Dolliver. Why Is Nature Beneficial?: The Role of Connectedness to Nature. *Environment and Behavior* (2009) pp. 607-643. DOI: 10.1177/0013916508319745
- John Zelenski & Elizabeth Nisbet. Happiness and Feeling Connected: The Distinct Role of Nature Relatedness. *Environment and Behavior* (2014) 46:1 pp. 3-23. DOI: 10.1177/0013916512451901

Week 14: Final Projects

May 3rd: Student Presentations. Each group will have 10-15 minutes to present their background, implementation, and outcomes, followed by 5-10 minutes for questions and discussion.

***Final Project Papers due by 8:30AM on May 3rd*

***Optional Extra Credit Papers due by 8:30AM on May 3rd*

Team Presentation:

Each Team of students will be assigned a date to do a 5-10 minute presentation on a *scientific* study of your choosing related to the week's theme. You should choose an article *outside* of the course readings that comes from a peer-reviewed journal. The article itself must be shared (electronic copies preferred) with the TAs and professor prior to the presentation. If you are uncertain about the quality of the article, write to the TAs or professor at least a week ahead of time to get approval or else you may not earn full credit. Newspaper, blog, internet, or other media articles are insufficient for this assignment.

Your charge with the presentation is to creatively convey the science in the article, its merits and shortcomings, and how it applies to everyday life. Creative formats including activities, quizzes, poetry, theater, dance, music, videos, and other art forms are welcomed.

Grading Rubric for Team Presentations:

- 5 points for reviewing the elements of the scientific method as they relate to the chosen article *clearly and concisely*. These include their observations, their hypothesis, their experiment/intervention, their results, and their conclusions. You do not need to describe their methods/statistics in any detail.
- 5 points for communicating the strengths and weaknesses of the article, such as potential biases or lack of control groups or need for replication.
- 5 points for elucidating how the research findings apply to everyday life and well-being.
- 5 points for clarity, creativity, and originality in delivering the presentation.
- 5 points *graded by peers* based on individual contributions; this will be submitted anonymously by your Team members after the presentations are completed.

Response Paper (due March 1st, 2018 at 8:30AM on Blackboard):

We used to think that the brain became a static organ as people entered adulthood. We now know this is no longer true—as described for example in *The Brain That Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science (Dooidge)*. The one thing in life we can be certain of is that there will always be change. If this is true, an important quality in all of us is our ability to tolerate and embrace change, or our plasticity.

Identify an area in your life that you would like to change to increase your well-being. Describe why this change is important to your overall well-being using what you have learned in class. Outline a proposed process of change for yourself, discussing 3-5 ideas related to the class that could help you implement the changes. Be specific. Use references to support 1) why you chose your specific approach and 2) how you would assess your success.

The response paper should be 4 - 5 pages double-spaced (MLA or APA format, size 12 font, double-spaced, Times New Roman, left heading, 1" margins). The response paper will involve some degree of personal examination using the material from the class. It should not be a diary entry and it should not be a book report – include an introduction, thesis statement, supporting evidence (with at least 5 references), and a conclusion. We will also expect a certain amount of proofreading so that spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors do not hinder our enjoyment of your writing (use the Writing Center if you need to!). If for any technical reason you cannot submit the paper on time you must email it to the TA (so that we know it is done) and submit it on Blackboard as soon as possible. See Writing Requirements below for further detail.

Writing Requirements for Response Papers:

- The paper should have an introductory paragraph and thesis statement to let us know the focus of the paper.



- The subsequent paragraphs should be clearly related to your thesis statement, offering support for your argument. Every paragraph should be easily connected to the previous one.
- The paper should be 4-5 pages with 1" margins and double-spacing. Your references list/bibliography does not count as part of the 4-5 pages.
- Every paper should cite *at least* 5 total sources to support/define your argument. Two (2) of these sources must be from **outside** the Required Readings. They can be Optional Readings or references you find yourself. Appropriate sources include textbooks, journal articles, or *scientific* writing from the media. As a general rule, scientific writing should include its own citations or reference list. While blogs, opinion pieces, course lectures, and media samples (TV, movies, music, etc.) may support your arguments, they *do not* count toward your citations requirement.
- Citations should be included parenthetically with author and page number within your paper, e.g., (Seligman, 254), where they apply to your argument. Course lectures may be cited but *do not* count toward your minimum number of references.
- Citations from all referenced course and non-course materials should be listed with full citation information in a reference/bibliography list at the end of your paper. Use APA or MLA style for these citations. *If the reference information is not listed, you will not get credit for the citation.*
- We strongly suggest that you proofread the paper for grammar, spelling, and readability. If that is not your forte, get help from friends, family, the UVM Writing Center (Located in 105 Bailey/Howe Library), etc.

Grading Rubric for Response Papers:

- 10 points for clear writing (e.g., grammar, punctuation, spelling, clear sentences, no typos) and/or communication of themes
- 10 points for organization (e.g., clear thesis, supporting arguments linked together, conclusion summarizes); credit for creativity/originality included here
- 10 points for incorporation of resources, references, and ideas/sources from the course (at least 5 citations with reference information required for full credit)
- 10 points for adequately and clearly addressing the assignment prompt in 4-5 pages or in a creative format
- Papers that are turned in late will lose 5 points for each day that they are late. Students requesting an exemption from the late submission policy must present a written note from a school Dean, Academic Advisor, or personal physician justifying the late submission, which will then be considered by the instructors.

Final Project:

The goal of the final project is for Teams to carry out an intervention that shares something about the science of positive psychology. It is *not* a research project, but an *implementation* project. You do not need to create the science, but we are looking for you to expand on what you've learned this semester to create a project that will use positive psychology to help others. Your Team is encouraged to think as a Well-Being Dissemination Team. Projects may focus on

ways to improve self-esteem, happiness, relationships, physical health, character strengths, optimism, and/or any other wellness domains covered during or related to the class. *You are expected to actually carry out the intervention as part of the final project*, not just to plan it out. Thus it is recommended that you keep the intervention **very** small for feasibility. You will be graded (see rubric below) on both your idea/intervention as described in writing as well as your final presentation to the class on your results.

Timeline: You will have class time on **March 1st** for you to meet with your team and begin to outline your final project ideas. Students are then expected to submit a brief proposal of their project on Blackboard by **March 22nd**, **one** per group. The proposal should include an outline of your plan for your project intervention, each member's name and email, and specifics of *how each person will contribute* to the project, paper, and presentation for purposes of grading. During our final week of class, you will be assigned in random order to present your project as a group in 10-15 minutes, with additional time for others to ask questions or respond to your work. Your Final Project papers will also be due the day of our final class, May 3rd, at 8:30AM on Blackboard. The papers are collaborative and should be put together with each group member contributing (see guidelines below). Only one paper needs to be submitted for your group. Please note you cannot videotape people without their permission.

Feel free to set up a meeting with your TA or the professor to discuss your ideas.

One example of a final project topic might be holding a session in the Davis Center on mindful eating that involves leading participants in an exercise of mindfully eating an M&M, then discussing the benefits in relation to health and wellness, and collecting feedback about participants' experiences. The paper would then describe some of the theories and evidence for the benefits of mindful eating, how the literature on mindful eating guided the creation and implementation of your intervention, and how you judged the effectiveness of your intervention or what you might do differently next time. The presentation would highlight some of the evidence and your findings, maybe discussing conflict in the research literature as to whether mindful eating makes a real difference in well-being, or perhaps even including a brief experiential component of mindful eating for our class.

There are a million "right" ways to do the Final Project and this is but one idea to give you a sense of the framework. Creativity is encouraged!

Writing Requirements for Final Projects:

- The paper should have an introductory paragraph and thesis statement to let us know the focus of the paper and why/how you chose your project focus.
- The subsequent paragraphs should be clearly related to your thesis statement, offering support for your argument. Every paragraph should be easily connected to the previous one.
- The paper should be 10-12 pages with 1" margins and double-spacing. Your references list/bibliography does not count as part of the 10-12 pages.
- The paper is a collaborative effort amongst your group members. Your proposal should make clear what each person will contribute. Only one paper needs to be submitted for the entire group.



- Every paper should cite *at least 10* total sources to support/define your argument. *At least 5* of these sources must be from outside of the required readings for this course. Appropriate sources include textbooks, journal articles, or *scientific* writing from the media. While blogs, opinion pieces, course lectures, and media samples (TV, movies, music, etc.) are excellent to support your arguments, they *do not* count toward your citations. Sources do not have to agree with your hypothesis; it is important to include research that may conflict with your ideas to present a balanced perspective.
- Citations to materials from the course (textbooks, articles) or outside the course must be included parenthetically with author and page number within your paper, e.g., (Seligman, 254). Course lectures may be cited but *do not* count toward your minimum number of references.
- Citations from course and non-course materials must *also* be listed with full citation information in a reference/bibliography list at the end of your paper. Use APA or MLA style for these citations. *If the reference information is not listed, you will not get credit for the citation.*
- We strongly suggest that you proofread the paper for grammar, spelling, and readability. If that is not your forte, get help from friends, family, the UVM Writing Center (Located in 105 Bailey/Howe Library), etc.

Grading Rubric for Final Projects:

- 20 points for clear writing (grammar, punctuation, spelling, clear sentences, typos)
- 20 points for organization (clear thesis, supporting arguments linked together, conclusion summarizes)
- 20 points for ideas clearly presented to the class; creativity/originality points included here
- 20 points for incorporation of salient resources and references, as well as ideas/sources from the course—your work must be *explicitly* connected to course themes
- 20 points *graded by peers* based on individual contributions; this will be submitted anonymously by your Team members after the projects are completed

For project papers that are turned in late, you will lose 20 points for each day that it is late. Students requesting an exemption from the late submission policy must present a written note from a school Dean, Academic Advisor, or personal physician justifying the late submission, which will then be considered by the instructors.

More Policies:

- **Student Learning Accommodations:** In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact ACCESS, the office of Disability Services on campus. ACCESS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations via an accommodation letter to faculty with approved accommodations as early as possible



each semester. All students are strongly encouraged to meet with their faculty to discuss the accommodations they plan to use in each course.

Contact ACCESS: A170 Living/Learning Center; 802-656-7753; access@uvm.edu;
www.uvm.edu/access

- UVM's policy on disability certification and student support:
www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/disability.pdf
- **Religious Holidays:** Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes. You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time.
- **Academic Integrity:** The policy addresses plagiarism, fabrication, collusion, and cheating. <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/acadintegrity.pdf>
- **Grade Appeals:** If you would like to contest a grade, please follow the procedures outlined in this policy: <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/gradeappeals.pdf>
- **Grading:** For information on grading and GPA calculation, go to www.uvm.edu/academics/catalogue and click on Policies for an A-Z listing.
- **Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities:**
www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/studentcode.pdf
- **FERPA Rights Disclosure:** The purpose of this policy is to communicate the rights of students regarding access to, and privacy of their student educational records as provided for in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.
<http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/ferpa.pdf>
- **Promoting Health & Safety:** The University of Vermont's number one priority is to support a healthy and safe community:
- **Center for Health and Wellbeing** <http://www.uvm.edu/~chwb/>
- **Counseling & Psychiatry Services (CAPS)** Phone: (802) 656-3340
C.A.R.E. If you are concerned about a UVM community member or are concerned about a specific event, we encourage you to contact the Dean of Students Office (802-656-3380). If you would like to remain anonymous, you can report your concerns online by visiting the Dean of Students website at <http://www.uvm.edu/~dos/>
- **Final exam policy:** The University final exam policy outlines expectations during final exams and explains timing and process of examination period.
<http://www.uvm.edu/academics/catalogue2013-14/?Page=allpolicies.php&SM=policymenu.html&policy=Exams>



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COMU 022
The Science of Happiness
Spring 2018