Psych 3350: Positive Psychology

Spring 2016

Course Syllabus

Instructor: Ken Sheldon. Email: sheldonk@missouri.edu. Phone: 884-1547
Office: 112 McAlester Hall. Office hours: TTh after class.

TA: 
Email: 
Office: 
Office Hours:

Course meeting place/time: Arts and Science 113, T/Th 2:00-3:15

Course website: http://blackboard.missouri.edu

Please check the Blackboard page for this course regularly. Important announcements will be posted throughout the semester, for which you will be held responsible.

Required Readings

Short journal articles will be assigned, from the primary literature. All articles will be made available on Blackboard. In addition, there is a short textbook, by William Compton. Do the readings in the order listed on the syllabus (usually start with textbook). I recommend doing the assigned reading BEFORE the lecture (underline & highlight), and then reviewing it AFTER the lecture (more underlines & highlights), then reviewing it again BEFORE the exam.

Required Purchase

You will need to purchase a license (approx. $20) to use the “Tophat” website (go to https://app.tophat.com/register/student/, click “click here to sign up”). This website allows me to check attendance and collect your responses to various questions during class, using your phone, smart or otherwise. It gives us a way to see what our “Group Mind” thinks! You may have already gotten an email from Tophat about signing up.

Course Description and Objectives

Whereas much of psychology has examined psychologically maladaptive behaviors and emotions, this course covers emerging scientific theory and research that focus on how ordinary individuals may achieve “the good life.” Topics such as happiness, courage, generosity, forgiveness, and gratitude will be examined. By the end of the course you will know what these terms mean, how they have been researched, and how they apply to your life. This course will provide you with opportunities for considerable personal discovery and growth, if you fully engage in it.

Grading

100 points total. 90-100=A range, 80-89=B range, 70-79=C range, 60-69=D range.

Earning points:
1. Class participation: You will receive 1 point for each class you attend and answer the presented questions, up to 20 classes/20 points. Tophat will record your participation. You must be in class, and enter that day’s password, to participate.

2. In-class exams: Mid-term and End-term. These will be multiple choice and short answer exams, each worth 30 points (60 total). The final exam will be optional, and may be used to replace a low mid-term or end-term score. Exams will be based equally on lecture and readings. Do the readings!

3. Five homework-based writing assignments: Describe your experience of each of the 5 homework assignments, explore the meaning in it. Two pages each. Will be graded to receive a maximum of 4 points each, based on quality of writing and reflection (up to 20 points).

4. Extra Credit: There will be 2 on-line questionnaires you can take, one at the beginning and one at the end of the semester. Completing both questionnaires, by the required times, will give you 5 extra points. Thus, the best possible class score is 105.

Laptop/Tablet/Phone policy
Electronic devices are allowed in the classroom, but if you bring one, please use it appropriately (avoid checking your emails, playing computer games, chatting, anything other than taking notes). Also, you should sit strategically near the back of the class, so that you do not distract students sitting behind you.

Academic Dishonesty
Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person’s work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: looking at someone’s exam during a test, looking at notes during the test, turning in someone else’s work as your own, plagiarizing from a printed article. Instructors at this university are required to report any suspicious behavior to the vice-provost’s office. For a more complete discussion of academic dishonesty go to: http://web.missouri.edu/~mbookwww/

Students with Disabilities:
If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the Office of Disability Services (http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu), S5 Memorial Union, 573- 882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

Intellectual Pluralism
The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions concerning the quality of instruction in this class may address concerns to either the Departmental Chair or Divisional leader or Director of the Office of
Students Rights and Responsibilities (http://osrr.missouri.edu/). All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.

Course Schedule

Jan 19  Introduction: The Course, the Syllabus, and Tophat.

Jan 21  What and Why is Positive Psychology?  
Readings: Compton 1-9; Sheldon & King; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi.

Jan 26  Positive motivation for this class! – Self-determination theory.  

Jan 28  Laying the groundwork: A Systems Perspective on Human Behavior.  

Feb. 2  Happiness – Definitions and Measures.  
Readings: Myers. Compton 9-19, 42-44.

**HW 1, to complete before Feb 4 class: upload 1 happiness photo.**  
Upload by going to flickr.com, click Sign in (user id = sheldonk10, pwd = Happypotos14), click Upload, follow instructions. After you upload, name your photo by your last name. To see your (and other’s) pictures, go to “You,” “Photostream.” Others will see your pictures and we may use them as research data, so do not post anything that you might regret.

Feb 4  Happiness – Changeability and sustainability. **EXTRA CREDIT Q1 DUE.** Do it at: https://missouri.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6ifznm2hcXMMSc5  
Readings: Compton Chapter 3, Sheldon & Lyubomirsky.

Feb 9  Happiness – Materialism and happiness. **HW 1 ESSAY DUE.**  
Readings: Dunn, Gilbert, Wilson.  
**HW 2, to continue right up till the Feb 12 class: Do a “media fast.”**

Feb 11  Happiness – Media and Happiness.  
Readings: Sheldon & Hinsch.

Feb 16  Positive cognitive processes – the Broaden and Build model. **HW 2 ESSAY DUE.**  

Feb 18  Positive cognitive processes – Curiosity  

Feb 23  Positive cognitive processes – Flow  
Readings: Compton 82-90. Csikszentmihalyi.

Feb 25  Positive cognitive processes – Mindfulness  
**HW 3: Go on a “savoring” expedition, before March 1.**

Mar 3   Making Positives out of Negatives: Special presentation by Buck Blodgett.

Mar 8   Review session: Bring questions about the readings! **HW 3 ESSAY DUE.**

Mar 10  **EXAM 1.**
        **HW 4: Take VIA quiz before 3-15**  [http://www.viacharacter.org/SURVEYS.aspx](http://www.viacharacter.org/SURVEYS.aspx)

Mar 15  Positive personality process – The Strengths approach

Mar 17  Positive personality process – Sense that life is Meaningful (guest lecture)
        **HW 4 ESSAY DUE.**  Readings: Compton 234-236, 286-288. Hicks & King.

Mar 22  Positive personality processes – Humility
        Readings: Compton 240-241. Davis.

Mar 24  Positive personality processes – Purpose
        Readings: Compton 46, 288. Damon, Menon, & Bronk.
        **HW 5: Think about dying, over spring break. Do you worry about death?**

**SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**

April 5  Positive personality process – Terror Management.
        Readings: Vail. **HW 5 ESSAY DUE.**

April 7  Positive personality process – Resilience.

April 12 Positive interpersonal processes – Forgiveness
        Readings: Compton 238-239. McCullough.

April 14 Positive interpersonal processes – Gratitude.
        Readings: Compton 236-238. Emmons.

April 19 Positive interpersonal processes – Relationships/Love.
        Readings: Compton, Chpt. 5. Gable & Gosnell.

April 21 Positive interpersonal processes – Autonomy support.
        Readings: Reeve.

April 26 Positive contexts – Work.
        Readings: Twenge.

April 28 Psychological Needs – What really matters?
        Readings: Sheldon & Krieger.


May 5   **EXAM 2**

May 11: **OPTIONAL FINAL EXAM:**  10-12 a.m., same place.