

# Psych 3350: Positive Psychology

Spring 2018

## Course Syllabus

**Instructor:** Ken Sheldon. **Email:** [sheldonk@missouri.edu](mailto:sheldonk@missouri.edu). **Phone:** 884-1547  
**Office:** 112 McAlester Hall. **Office hours:** TTh after class.

**Course meeting place/time:** LeFevre 112, T/Th 12:30 – 1:45

**Course website:** <https://missouri.instructure.com/courses/9921>

*Please check the Canvas 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 Canvas. 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. It gives us a way to see what our “Group Mind” thinks! You may have already gotten an email from Tophat about signing up. The class join code for Tophat is 013752.

### 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 that day 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).

3. Extra Credit: There will be 2 on-line questionnaires you can take, one near the beginning and one near 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.

#### Intellectual Property Notice

All course materials including but not limited to the syllabus, course assignments, study guides, learning guides, online lecture videos and content, and lab book (i.e. course pack) are property of the instructor and University and may not be shared online or distributed in any manner to others. Students are prohibited from posting course materials or notes online and from selling notes to or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the professor teaching this course. Doing so will constitute both an academic integrity violation and a copyright violation. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to civil penalties and criminal liability. Violations of academic integrity may subject you to disciplinary action under University policies.

#### 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/) (<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 16 Introduction: The Course, the Syllabus, and Tophat.
- Jan 18 What and Why is Positive Psychology?  
Readings: Compton 1-9; Sheldon & King; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi.
- Jan 23 Positive motivation for this class! – Self-determination theory.  
Readings: Compton 33-36. Ryan & Deci.
- Jan 25 Laying the groundwork: A Systems Perspective on Human Behavior.  
Reading: Compton 290. Sheldon, 2009.
- Jan. 30 Happiness – Definitions and Measures.  
Readings: Myers. Compton 9-19, 42-44.

#### **HW 1, to complete before Feb 1 class: upload one happiness photo.**

Upload by going to flickr.com, click Sign in (user id = sheldonnkennon, pwd = Wmbg2016), 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 1 Happiness – Changeability and sustainability.  
Readings: Compton Chapter 3, Sheldon & Lyubomirsky.
- Feb 6 Happiness – Materialism and happiness. **HW 1 ESSAY DUE.**  
Readings: Dunn, Gilbert, Wilson.

**HW 2, to continue right up till the Feb 8 class: Do a "media fast."** At least try not to use any social media for 2 days (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc).

- Feb 8 Happiness – Media and Happiness.  
Readings: Hinsch & Sheldon article, Manago & Vaughn chapter
- Feb 13 Positive cognitive processes – the Broaden and Build model. **HW 2 ESSAY DUE.**  
Readings: Compton 23-32, 37-41. Fredrickson.
- Feb 15 Positive cognitive processes – Curiosity  
Readings: Compton 88, 224. Kashdan & Steger.
- Feb 20 Positive cognitive processes – Flow

Readings: Compton 82-90. Csikszentmihalyi.

**EXTRA CREDIT Q1 DUE.** Do it at the link emailed to the class.

Feb 22 Positive cognitive processes – Mindfulness  
Compton 90-93. Brown & Cordon.

**HW 3: Go on a “savoring” expedition, before Feb 27.** Make a conscious attempt to savor and enjoy something that you don't usually pay enough attention to. Pay attention to how it feels.

Feb 27 Positive cognitive processes – Savoring. Compton 94. Lyubomirsky.

Mar 1 Making Positives out of Negatives: personal stories. Bring your own example to class!

Mar 6 Review session: Bring questions about the readings! **HW 3 ESSAY DUE.**

Mar 8 **EXAM 1.**

**HW 4: Take VIA quiz before March 13, at this website:**  
<http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths-Survey>. Print out your scores, and think about what they might mean.

Mar 13 Positive personality process – The Strengths approach  
Readings: Compton 29-31. Gilham et al.

Mar 15 Positive personality processes – Humility. **HW 4 ESSAY DUE**  
Readings: Compton 240-241. Davis.

Mar 20 Positive personality processes – Purpose  
Readings: Compton 46, 288. Damon, Menon, & Bronk.

Mar 22 No Class: Instructor conference.

**HW 5: Think about dying, over spring break.** Do you worry about death? If so, how? Do you not worry about death? If so, how??!!

### **SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**

April 3 Positive personality process – Terror Management. **HW 5 ESSAY DUE.**  
Readings: Vail.

April 5 Positive personality process – Resilience.  
Readings: Compton 178, 186-196. Masten.

April 10 Positive interpersonal processes – Forgiveness  
Readings: Compton 238-239. McCullough.

April 12 Positive interpersonal processes – Gratitude. Readings: Compton 236-238.  
Emmons.

- April 17 Positive interpersonal processes – Relationships/Love.  
Readings: Compton, Chpt. 5. Gable & Gosnell.
- April 19 Positive interpersonal processes – Autonomy support. Readings: Reeve.
- April 24 Positive contexts – Work. Readings: Twenge.
- April 26 Psychological Needs – What really matters? Readings: Sheldon & Krieger.
- May 1 The rest of your life: Authenticity, and Self-Concordance.  
Readings: Compton 35, 209-214. Sheldon Self-concordance

**EXTRA CREDIT Q2 DUE.** Take it at the link emailed to the class.

May 3 **EXAM 2**

May 8: **OPTIONAL FINAL EXAM:** 12:30 – 2:30, same place.