



COURSE SYLLABUS

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
WINTER 2012
COURSE NUMBER: PSYCH 226R
COURSE NAME: POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Martin Day
Email: mvday@uwaterloo.ca
Office: PAS 3240E
Office Hours: Mon 4:00-5:00 PM, or by appointment. Please contact me if this time does not fit with your schedule; I'm sure we can find a time to meet.

CLASS TIMES/LOCATION

Class Times: **Mon/Wed 2:30-3:50 PM**
Room: **REN 2107**

COURSE OVERVIEW

Welcome to Positive Psychology!

This course will focus on the nature of happiness and the good life from a positive psychology perspective. This course will cover a range of topics including: self-concept, communication, relationships, mindfulness, strengths, values, optimal functioning, wellness, and happiness. Through group and class discussions, involved exercises, presentations, videos, and review of journal articles, students will: (i) gain an understanding of positive psychological concepts; (ii) have the opportunity to experience and apply positive psychological concepts and principles to personal growth and well-being, (iii) become familiar with the methodologies used in the scientific study of positive psychology; and (iv) learn to think critically and analytically about issues related to positive psychology.

REQUIRED TEXT

Peterson, C. (2006). *A Primer in Positive Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

**In addition to the text, up to 6 journal articles will also be assigned (all articles will be made available on the course website)

ONLINE INFORMATION

This course will be available on Learn, the new course software at the University of Waterloo. The class website on Learn will be used for a variety of purposes including the following: access to class resources (e.g., syllabus, articles, websites), dropboxes for submitting assignments, access to course grades, and class announcements. It will be your responsibility to check this website regularly: <http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/>

**Please also sign up for a free account at <http://www.authentic happiness.org>. Periodically, you will be asked to complete online surveys that are relevant to this course.

GRADING SCHEME

Participation	(15%)
Thought Questions	(10%)
Reflective Reports	(10%)
Presentation	(15%)
Midterm Test	(25%)
Final Test	(25%)

FORMAT OF THE COURSE

1. Participation

The success of this course depends on the participation of everyone. You will be expected to play an active role in classroom activity. There will be a number of individual and group activities throughout the course. These activities are designed to promote participation in class and active learning of the material. For some in-class activities, you may be asked to bring material to class. For such occasions, requirements will be discussed in the class prior to the day of the activity.

You are strongly encouraged to come to every class. ☺ To encourage participation, 15% of your final grade will be awarded for class participation and group activity as determined by myself. There will be a sign-in sheet at each class. Given the importance of class participation, class attendance for each *entire* class session is mandatory. For every 10 minutes absent, you will be docked 0.5pts off your class participation mark.

In case of serious illness or other life difficulties, you may miss 3 classes (excluding the first class) without penalty. Afterwards, any additional absences for entire class sessions will result in 2.5pts off your class participation mark (out of 15). Note: For any absences, you are still responsible for contributing to any ongoing individual or group work, finding out what material was covered in class, and any announcements.

2. Thought Questions

There will be eight occasions where students are asked to submit two discussion questions based on assigned readings or a specific class topic. **These questions should be brought to class** to help elicit thoughtful discussion in class. Therefore, do not ask yes/no questions or clarification questions. For example, good thought questions will: suggest how the research/topic could be applied or extended; relate the research/topic to readings or discussions from previous classes, or raise questions about how the research was conducted. Also, provide supporting information that helps clarify the topic that you are addressing and builds up to your question – do not simply ask questions out of the blue. There should be one paragraph per question so that each thought question assignment should be two paragraphs long. Each assignment will be marked out of 10 based on clarity, depth, originality and class relevance. The lowest grade will be dropped. That is, the final “thought questions” grade will be the sum of the top 7 scores. In order for the questions to be examined by me and relevant to class, **you must submit your thought questions (through Learn) by 6pm, the day before the class that they are due.** However, if you submit your questions after 6pm but before class the next day, they will only be deducted 2 pts each (i.e., it will be possible to get up to 8/10).

3. Reflective Reports

Students will be required to complete eight out-of-class exercises throughout the semester and to write a report about their experience of these exercises. These exercises are designed to help students apply positive psychology constructs to their own lives, self-reflect in a meaningful way, and as a result gain insight into the mechanisms and processes of the good life. **Note: You will need to read and start these exercises several days, if not a week or more before they are due – please plan accordingly.** Length of each report should range from approximately 1-1.5 pages, with the following format: 8½ x 11 sheets; 1-inch margins; double-spaced; 12-point-font. Also, you should be prepared to discuss your experience of the exercises in class, particularly in the context of that week’s assigned readings. Each report will be marked out of 10 based on clarity and depth, and the highest seven marks will be aggregated together for each student to count as their final “reflective report” grade. **The reports are to be submitted (through Learn) before the class that they are due (i.e., by 2:30pm).** However, if you submit a report after 2:30 pm, but by Friday at 6pm of the week it is due, you can still receive up to 5/10 marks.

4. Presentation

In groups of three, students will give a presentation on a topic concerning positive psychology. This will require choosing a topic and a supplementary journal article, presenting that article to the rest of class, and leading a discussion or activity/demonstration related to that article. The article will be published in 2006 or later, and preferably consist of an experimental study, although it can be a review article if the topic has not been covered and is relevant to this class. Each presentation should take very close to 15-20 minutes in total. Generally, each presentation should spend roughly 5-10 minutes to present the article (e.g., summarizing the topic, explaining what was done, and explaining what was found). The remaining minutes must be used by either 1) engaging in a positive psychology activity/demonstration new to this class and related to the topic/article OR 2) leading a class or group discussion on the article and any implications for facilitating positive psychology (e.g., possible interventions, implications for daily life, changes to policies, etc). **Each group is to email me a copy of the journal article at least 10 days before they are to present.** In addition, each group is to **email me a copy of their power point slides by 6pm the day before they are to present.** Both the article and the slides will be made available to the rest of class on Learn. In addition, each group will **submit 3 multiple choice questions** for possible inclusion on the final test. These potential test questions should directly test and reflect the content you presented on. Send your questions to me as an email attachment at the same time you send your power point slides. Marks will be based on the quality of the presentation, activity/discussion, and multiple choice questions, as well as evaluations of your contribution to the project by your fellow group members. Presentations will be held during classes from **March 14th to March 28th**. Scheduling of presentations within that time will be on a first-come first-serve basis, once a group has decided upon a topic, they can contact me to schedule when they would like to present from the remaining available times.

6. Midterm and Final Tests

The midterm and final tests will consist of multiple choice questions. The questions for the midterm will be based on Chapters 1, and 3-7, as well as the lectures and all assigned readings up to and including February 6th. The final test will be based on Chapters 8-12, lectures and assigned reading from February 7th –March 28th. Moreover, a number of questions on the final test will be based directly on the student presentations. There will be up to 80 minutes to complete these tests. The midterm is scheduled for **February 13th**, and the final test is scheduled for the **last class (April 2nd)**. In cases of severe illness a make-up test will be offered.

If you feel you require a make-up test, please contact me as soon as possible and be prepared to provide documentation.

7. Bonus Credit (up to 3%)

Since experiential learning is a highly valued component of psychology, students can earn a "bonus" of 3% by participating in psychology experiments (i.e., the maximum possible final grade is 103%). You will have the option to participate in social/personality or clinical experiments through the Research Experiences Group (REG). Every participation credit will add 1% to your final grade (i.e., 0.5% for 0.5 credits, 1.5% for 1.5 credits, etc).

Students are not required to participate in research, and not all students wish to do so. As an alternative to participation in research, students may submit short reviews (1½ to 2 pages) of positive psychology journal articles not covered in class, but relevant to the course material, and published after 2008. Each review counts as one percentage point. You should e-mail me to get approval before writing the review. These reviews are due the same day as the final test.

More information on both forms of extra credit will be posted on Learn.

COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>In-Class Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Due dates</u>
Jan 4 (W)	1	Intro & Syllabus		
Jan 9 (M)	2	What is Positive Psychology?	Ch 1; Gable & Haidt (2005)	Thought Questions 1
Jan 11(W)	3	Pleasure and Positive Experience 1	Ch 3	Reflective Report 1
Jan 16 (M)	4	Pleasure and Positive Experience 2	Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre (1989)	Thought Questions 2
Jan 18 (W)	5	Happiness and Life Satisfaction 1	Ch 4	Reflective Report 2
Jan 23(M)	6	Happiness and Life Satisfaction 2	Diener, Lucas, & Scollon (2006)	Thought Questions 3
Jan 25 (W)	7	Positive Thinking & Optimism 1	Ch 5	Reflective Report 3
Jan 30 (M)	8	Positive Thinking & Optimism 2	Positive thinking in the media	Thought Questions 4
Feb 1 (W)	9	Strengths and Values 1	Ch 6	Reflective Report 4

Feb 6 (M)	10	Strengths and Values 2	Ch 7; Park, Peterson, & Seligman (2004)	Thought Questions 5
Feb 8 (W)	11	Interests and Talents 1 (on Final Test, not Midterm)	Ch 8	Reflective Report 5
Feb 13 (M)	12	Midterm		
Feb 15 (W)	13	Interests and Talents 2	Simonton (2001)	Thought Questions 6
Feb 20 & Feb 22		Winter Break		
Feb 27 (M)	14	Wellness & Health	Ch 9	Reflective Report 6
Feb 29 (W)	15	Interpersonal Relationships	Ch 10; Milkulincer & Shaver (2005)	Thought Questions 7
Mar 5 (M)	16	Mindfulness & Meditation 1		Reflective Report 7
Mar 7 (W)	17	Mindfulness & Meditation 2	*Guest Speaker* Susan Child – Waterloo Riverview Dharma Centre	Thought Questions 8
Mar 12 (M)	18	Enabling Institutions	Ch 11; Ch 12	Reflective Report 8
Mar 14 (W)	19	Student Presentations 1-3		
Mar 19 (M)	20	Student Presentations 4-6		
Mar 21 (W)	21	Student Presentation 7 & Review Activities		
Mar 26 (M)	22	Student Presentations 8-10		
Mar 28 (W)	23	Student Presentations 11-13		
Apr 2 (M)	24	Final Test		

**Please note that either the schedule or the assigned readings may be adjusted as the term progresses. If changes are made, an updated schedule will be posted on Learn.

The Official Version of the Course Outline

If there is a discrepancy between the hard copy outline (*i.e., if students were provided with a hard copy at the first class*) and the outline posted on Learn, the outline on Learn will be deemed the official version. Outlines on Learn may change as instructors develop a course, but they become final as of the first class meeting for the term.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Concerns About the Course or Instructor (Informal Stage)

We in the Psychology Department take great pride in the high quality of our program and our instructors. Though infrequent, we know that students occasionally find themselves in situations of conflict with their instructors over course policies or grade assessments. If such a conflict arises, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Affairs (Dr. Colin Ellard) is available for consultation and to mediate a resolution between the student and instructor. Dr. Ellard's contact information is as follows:

Email: cellard@uwaterloo.ca

Ph 519-888- 4567 ext 36852

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. See Policy 70 and 71 below for further details.

Academic Integrity, Academic Offenses, Grievance, and Appeals

To protect course integrity, as well as to provide appropriate guidance to students, course outlines in the Faculty of Arts must include the following note on avoidance of academic offenses:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

[Check <http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/> for more informaton.]

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity [check <http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>] , to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about 'rules' for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For information on categories of

offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm) - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm) - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read [Policy 72](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm) - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

Academic Integrity website (Arts): http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (UW): <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's words or ideas as if they are one's own. It includes the use of quotations without proper referencing. All students must complete their assignments and papers on their own, unless otherwise stated. Copying someone else's assignment (or portion thereof), or allowing someone to copy your assignment, are prohibited. Cheating on tests or assignments and plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the course and will be reported to the Chair of the Department of Psychology and to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Additional disciplinary action could include probation, suspension, or expulsion.

How to Avoid Plagiarism and Other Written Offences: A Guide for Students and Instructors (<http://watarts.uwaterloo.ca/~sager/plagiarism.html>).