

**Psychology 336: Positive Psychology  
Fall 2023**

University of Toronto, St. George

Lectures Tuesdays 5 - 8 pm EST

In person @ Sid Smith 2105

Live-streamed (and recorded) on Zoom <https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/87640372081>

Passcode: **psychology**

	Instructor	Teaching Assistant
Name:	Dr. William Ryan (Will)	Zi Cheng
E-mail:	ws.ryan@utoronto.ca	ziming.cheng@mail.utoronto.ca
Office Hours:	In-person (SS 4029) or on Zoom. Sign up for a timeslot here: <a href="https://calendly.com/profwill/15-minute-appointment">https://calendly.com/profwill/15-minute-appointment</a>	Available via email, or by appointment as needed

**Description, Goals, & Prerequisites**

**Course Overview:** This course is designed to give you a broad overview of the field of positive psychology, an exciting and relatively new field of study focusing on promoting human happiness and flourishing. In this class we will cover what it means to be happy and how emotional, motivational, cognitive, and social processes can be harnessed to promote wellness. Some of the specific topics we will address include: hedonic and eudaimonic approaches to well-being, gratitude, awe, meaning, flow states, mindfulness, self-compassion, and more!

**Intended Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Understand the definitions of and differences between various happiness constructs including (subjective well-being, meaning, and hedonic and eudaimonic well-being).
2. Understand and describe the history and utility of studying happiness and flourishing.
3. Discuss how cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes impact well-being.
4. Explain how psychological research can be applied to promote well-being- both your own and others'.

**Note about Prerequisites:**

- **PSY201H1/ECO220Y1/EEB225H1/GGR270H1/POL222H1/SOC202H1/STA220H1/STA238H1/STA248H1/STA288H1/PSY201H5/STA215H5/STA220H5/PSYB07H3/STAB22H3/STAB23H3/STAB57H3,**
- **AND** one of PSY220H1/PSY220H5/PSYB10H3/SOC213H1
- **OR** PSY230H1/PSY230H5/PSYB30H3 or PSY240H1/PSY240H5/PSYB32H3
- **Exclusion:** PSY324H5

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met all prerequisites listed in the Psychology section of the A&S Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites the department may cancel your registration at any time, so please double check that you have met the prerequisites!

## Land Acknowledgement & Statement of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity

I wish to acknowledge and honour the history of this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land. [Learn more about the acknowledgement of traditional land in the University of Toronto.](#)

I am committed to creating a learning environment for my students, where your diverse perspectives and identities are respected and represented. I intend for this course to respect and promote diversity, equity, and human rights, so you will gain a more comprehensive understanding of psychology beyond historical biases. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated! Please let me know how I could improve the effectiveness, equity, inclusivity, and diversity of perspectives included in this course as well as the sense of belonging you and other students experience in the classroom. If you'd like to provide feedback anonymously, the weekly surveys are a great way to do that! You should, of course, also feel welcome to discuss any issues or concerns you have with me directly in person, in office hours, over email, or by appointment. I am always open to and actively looking for ways to improve my courses and myself, especially in relation to principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## Course Structure

This is an “in person” course and is listed on the course timetables as such. However, all lectures will ALSO be delivered online over Zoom (synchronously and recorded). What this means is that, if needed, you can access and complete any or all components of this course remotely. This is to allow students maximum flexibility and opportunities for success in the course. Please take advantage of this flexibility to prioritize not just your success in this course, but your health, well-being, and other obligations, values, and needs. That said, I encourage those who can, to join in person as there will be opportunities for discussion with both me (the professor) and your peers. If you are attending class in person, please follow the University's health and safety guidelines (whatever those are at the time) and consider wearing a mask even if not required. If you are feeling sick, please do NOT attend in person. Take care of yourself and your classmates by staying home! You can always join us live on Zoom if you are worried about missing out or you can take a nap and watch the recording later.

This syllabus describes the different ways that students can participate in the course. Please read this carefully and select the options that work best for you. To summarize, here is what a typical week in the course will look like:

### **Required:**

#### *Each Week:*

- Attending/Watching Lecture
- 2-3 required readings
- Studying lecture and readings
- Keeping up with Book Club reading

*Some Weeks:*

- Leading or participating in Book Club (either in person or Zoom)
- Work on Book Review paper

**Optional:**

- Positivity Exercises (some weeks)
- Additional videos, readings, and surveys will also be posted for students interested in learning more about various topics

### Options for Accessing Lectures

Options for attending lecture include the following, each of which are detailed below.

1. Attending in person
2. Attending via zoom live
3. Watching the lecture recording

**Option 1. In-Person Lectures.** Lectures will take place in Sid Smith 2105 on **Tuesdays from 5:00-8:00 pm EST**. Please note that while I would love to see you in class, you do NOT have to attend in person if you are not able or comfortable doing so for whatever reason. If this is the case, see the alternative options below.

**Option 2. Synchronous Remote Lectures.** All lectures can be attended remotely and synchronously over zoom. Students who cannot class in person, but would still like to listen to and participate in lectures synchronously may do so. I will monitor the chat and answer questions. Students attending in person are also welcome to log onto zoom and ask questions using the chat if you prefer that to asking out loud in-class.

The link for all lectures is: <https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/87640372081>

Passcode: **psychology**.

**Option 3. Lecture Recordings.** Students may also wish to listen to some lectures asynchronously due to illness, or perhaps you missed something live and would like to listen again. All lectures will be recorded using Zoom and will be posted in the weekly Quercus page for that lecture shortly after the live lecture ends.

**Note:** Students are welcome to use any of the above options to listen to and participate in lectures and may switch between options as needed.

### Course Requirements & Marking Scheme

Your grade in this course will be based on your performance on two primary assessments (a midterm and a final assessment), your participation in and leadership of your Book Club (in person OR discussion board), the completion of several positivity exercises (optional), and a book review paper. Overviews of each assignment are provided in the sections below and details will be discussed in class and posted on Quercus.

Assessment	Weight	Due Date(s)
Participating in Book Club	4%	Multiple Dates (must attend 4 out of 5)
Leading Book Club	12%	Each student will sign-up for a date to lead
Positivity Exercises	6% (optional)	Multiple Dates (complete 4 out of 6)
Midterm Assessment	25% or 28%	October 24 <sup>th</sup>
Book Review Paper	28%	December 5 <sup>th</sup>
Final Assessment	25% or 28%	During Final Assessment Period- Date TBA

\*For students who choose not to complete the positivity exercises the midterm and final will be worth 28% each

### Course Materials

**Required Readings:** Required readings consist of primary empirical and review articles. These will be available on the course page on Quercus/Canvas under the “library course reserves” tab.

**Required Text:** As part of this course you will select one of the following “trades books” (books written by positive psychology researchers or others for non-expert audiences) to read and discuss in a “book club” format. More information on this assignment can be found in the “assignments” section of this syllabus. We will discuss all 4 book choices in class on the first day and then you will make your selection and be grouped into “book clubs” with students who selected the same book. All options are available from both online and local book sellers and are listed below.

1. Friedman, R. (2014). *The Best Place to Work: The Art and Science of Creating an Extraordinary Workplace*. Perigee.
2. Lama, D. & Cutler, H. C., (1998/2009) *The Art of Happiness: A Handbook for Living*. Riverhead Books.
3. Lyubomirsky, S. (2014). *The Myths of Happiness: What Should Make You Happy, but Doesn't, What Shouldn't Make You Happy, but Does*. Penguin Books.
4. McCullough, M. (2020). *The Kindness of Strangers: How a Selfish Ape Invented a New Moral Code*. Basic Books.

**Course Website:** We will be using Quercus/Canvas (q.utoronto.ca) as a primary means of (1) accessing and submitting course assignments, (2) communicating announcements, and (3) posting/tracking grades. A current version of the syllabus and other relevant course resources will also be posted. Please make sure you check Quercus regularly for important announcements and course information.

**Lecture Slides:** Slides presented in lecture will be uploaded in PDF format to Quercus *just prior* to each lecture. The reason for not posting slides sooner is that I like to be able to update and edit the lectures right up until the time of that lecture. This allows me to make them as up-to-date, fresh, and engaging as possible.

## Asking Questions & Getting Help

There are several options for getting your questions answered. Students should feel free to use any of these options.

1. **Questions during lecture.** Students attending the lecture in person or synchronously over zoom will be able to ask questions throughout lecture.
2. **Office Hours.** You can schedule an appointment to meet with Will/Dr. Ryan either in person or over Zoom here: <https://calendly.com/profwill/15-minute-appointment>
  - a. You can sign up for up to 1 appointment per week. If, for whatever reason, you think you will need more time, email Will/Dr. Ryan to let him know.
  - b. You will be able to select what type of appointment you would like.
    - i. In person appointments will be held in SS4029
    - ii. Zoom appointments will be held on our regular class link: <https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/87640372081> Passcode: **psychology**
3. **General Discussion Board.** Students may also post questions on the general discussion board on Quercus. Will/Dr. Ryan will answer questions there and other students can provide answers if they have them as well. This is a great place to ask questions that you think other students may have as well.
4. **Emails.** Students are welcome also to email to Will/Dr. Ryan and/or the TA with questions. I will do my best to reply to all emails within 48 hours (if not sooner!). Before emailing, please check to make sure the information you are seeking is not already available on Quercus. Email is best for quick questions, while longer, more complex questions are best addressed in office hours.

## Details on Assignments

### Book Clubs (16% Total)

A major component of this course will be “Book Clubs”. These are small discussion groups that will meet 5 times throughout the semester to discuss a popular book related to happiness and well-being. You will be able to choose from among four possible books (listed in the “required text” section above). Each book addresses well-being and happiness from a different angle (e.g., philosophical, theoretical, evolutionary, applied).

You will use the *Intake Poll* (on Quercus) to rank your book choices. Groups will be formed based on preferences indicated in this poll. I will do my very best to give all students their top choices.

On book club days (indicated on the course schedule) the last 30-45 minutes of class will be set aside for the groups to engage in their discussions. Each member of your group will be responsible for leading discussion of one section of the book. Information on leading and participating in discussion appears below and more details will be provided in class and on Quercus.

If you are unable to attend class on the day of a book club discussion but you are feeling well enough and are able to participate, you may coordinate with a group member to Zoom/FaceTime in to the group.

**Participating in Book Club (4%).** For Book Clubs to serve their purpose (and be fun!) participation of group members is critical. For a good discussion it is essential that you come prepared, having read the assigned section of the book, even if you are not the group leader. Participation points are based on attendance and active participation (aka discussion of the questions).

**Leading Book Club (12%).** Each student will sign up to lead discussion on one section of their book. Students will sign up using a Google doc that will be posted on Quercus after the intake poll is complete. In addition to this written work below, you are also responsible for facilitating the discussion by reading out the questions and encouraging and discussing the responses from others.

On the week that you lead Book Club you will be responsible for:

- 1) coming up with three discussion questions
- 2) writing a short summary of the book section
- 3) finding and summarizing a related article
- 4) typing up a brief summary of the groups' discussion and who participated.

The first three parts should be completed and submitted on Quercus by **Monday night before 11:59 pm**. This will allow your group members some time to think about the questions, read over your summaries, and skim the related article if they wish. Within two days of when your discussion ends (before Thursday night at 11:59 pm) you are to submit the final part (the brief summary of the discussion) on Quercus. You can submit these notes right at the end of class, but the extra two days is just to give you some time in case you forget or want to spend a few minutes cleaning up your notes before you submit them.

**Free Pass.** There will be a total of 5 Book Club meetings (plus one “get to know each other” meeting at the beginning) over the course of the term. I understand that life happens so everyone gets one “free pass” to miss ONE Book Club. If you need to miss more than one for one of the reasons outlined in the “course policy” section below, please email Will/Dr. Ryan to work out an alternate plan. Your free pass may NOT be used on the week that you are discussion leader.

### **Book Review Paper (28%)**

For this assignment you will complete a formal review of the book you read for Book Club. A book review is much more than a summary of the content of the book. In this assignment you will critique both the content as well as the presentation of information (e.g., were points supported by strong evidence? were arguments clear? Etc.) and include suggestions for improvement. Your review should also include your thoughts and reflections on the book and how it fits in (or doesn't) with other theory and research you learned about in this course, supported with at least 5 peer-reviewed sources (additional sources, including non-peer reviewed sources, are welcome). This assignment should be 6-8 pages (double-spaced, not including title

page and references) and is due **December 5<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 pm EST**. More instructions on the requirements of this paper will be provided on Quercus and in class.

### **(Optional) Positivity Exercises (6% or 0%\*)**

To give you a chance to apply research and theory from positive psychology in your own life, you have the option to complete positivity exercises throughout the course.

Positivity exercises accompany many of the lectures. Each one will open the day of its accompanying lecture and (if you select this option) and will be due the night before the next lecture (usually one week later, except when holidays or midterms fall between- in which case you will have longer). Due dates for all exercises are listed on the course schedule and on Quercus.

There will be a total of 6 positivity exercises, however each student only needs to complete 4 of these (the lowest 2 grades will be dropped). This is to allow for flexibility and absences and to provide some additional choice in the exercises in which you engage.

\*Students who wish to skip these exercises entirely may do so. In this case the 6% will be reallocated to your midterm and final assessment (3% each).

## **Midterm & Final Assessments**

### **Weight:**

There will be two exams in this course, a midterm and a final exam, each worth 25% (if you are doing the positivity exercises) or 28% (if you are not doing the optional positivity exercises).

### **Timing:**

Both exams will be online (administered over Quercus). The exams are written to take no more than 3 hours each. The midterm will be available during class time (5-8 pm) on October 24<sup>th</sup>. The date and time of the final exam will be announced by A&S, but will be sometime during the final assessment period.

Students with accommodations for extended time on tests, please contact me (Will/Dr. Ryan) with your documentation and I will adjust the time limit on Quercus for you accordingly. Assessments **MUST** be turned in on time. **Late exams are NOT accepted and will be treated as missed exams.** See *Course Policies* below.

### **Structure & Content:**

Both exams will consist of short answer and long answer questions. These questions will ask you to think critically about course themes, connect topics in the course, and apply what you have learned to real-world situations. Both assessments are “open book”, but not “open Google”, meaning that you can use course notes and articles when writing your responses, but should not be relying on other sources or Googling answers to questions. All assessments must be completed independently and all writing **MUST** be in your own words. See *Course Policies* section below for more on academic integrity.

Any of the material covered in the lectures and the required readings may be included on the exams. The midterm will include all material covered up until that point. The final will cover ALL course material. In other words, the final assessment IS cumulative, but with more questions focusing on the latter half of the course. More details are posted on Quercus and will be discussed in class.

### **Review Sessions:**

We will hold Question & Answer review sessions prior to the midterm and final assessment, time and date TBA. These review sessions will be question and answer based so come prepared with questions to aid your studying. Sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend. More details will be provided prior to each assessment.

## **Course Policies**

**On the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) Tools:** Students may not use generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT) for the exams in this course, but may use these tools for other assignments. If you choose to use generative artificial intelligence tools to assist you in the assignments in this course, this use must be documented in an appendix for each assignment. The documentation should include what tool(s) were used, how they were used (e.g., include your prompts), and how the results from the AI were incorporated into the submitted work. These tools can be most helpful in improving your writing and clear expression of your ideas (rather than trying to generate complete content which is unlikely to meet the standards of the assignments).

**Lecture Slides & Recording Policy:** All lectures will be recorded on video by the instructor and will be available to students in the course for viewing remotely and after each session. Recordings are intended to permit lecture content review to enhance understanding of the topics presented. Audio-recordings are not substitutes for attending class, except as necessary for illness or similar short-term situations. Students should note that although only the instructor and slides are captured visually, student voices will be captured on the recording if they ask questions during class. Similarly, questions entered in the live Zoom chat will also be recorded. Please speak to the instructor if this is a concern for you. Small group discussions will NOT be recorded.

Students are free to use all lecture video, slides, and other materials for their own use. Students are, however, NOT permitted to share lecture slides or recordings with others not enrolled in this course. Uploading course materials to the web or shared server is expressly prohibited. Lectures are the intellectual property of the instructor, and the slides and recordings should be respected thus. Specifically, I do not want to discover that a student has put any of my materials into the public domain, has sold my materials, or has given my materials to a person or company that is using them to earn money (this is a real thing that has happened!). The University will support me in asserting and pursuing my rights, and my copyrights in such matters.

**Penalties for Late Assignments:** Assignments handed in late will incur a 5% deduction in points for EACH day that they are late. Midterm and final assessments will NOT be accepted late, nor will your Book Club leading assignment.



**The 48 Hour Late Ticket:** Each student gets one 48-hour late ticket good for (almost) any assignment\*. To use this late ticket, all you have to do is comment "Late ticket" in the comments box on your late submission. You do NOT need to seek permission to use your late ticket or let the TA or I know. We will keep track of who uses their late tickets on each assignment. Although Quercus may automatically flag your assignment as late (it doesn't know you are using your ticket), no points will be deducted and it will be treated as on time.

\*Note: This ticket may NOT be used for the midterm or final assessment or to skip leading Book Club (i.e., you may not submit your discussion leading questions late).

**Missed Assessments:** If you miss the midterm assessment, you must submit documentation that demonstrates your inability to complete that assessment (i.e., the ACORN illness self-declaration tool) and let Will/Dr. Ryan know within 7 calendar days of the due date of the missed assessment. In these cases, the weight of the midterm assessment will be added to the final assessment. If you miss the final assessment, you must get in touch with Dr. Ryan (and potentially your College Registrar) as soon as possible to work out a plan.

**Grade Dispute Policy: The 24/14 Policy.** You must wait for at least 24 hours following the return of an assignment/assessment before bringing a grade concern to me; use this time to reflect upon your performance and grade. Additionally, grade concerns must be brought to my attention within 14 business days of the return of the assignment/assessment. Please write a short paragraph detailing your grade concern, including a copy, photo, or scan of the original assignment, if relevant, and email it to me. Grade disputes are not to be directed to your TA. Only reasonable and well-justified concerns will be considered, and all decisions are final. Note that in agreeing to resubmit your work for remarking, you are agreeing to a re-evaluation of the entirety of your work; your grade may go up, go down, or stay the same.

**Accommodation for Illness & Personal & Family Emergencies:** If you become ill or face a personal or family emergency that negatively impacts your ability to do your academic work, please consult me right away (over email or in office hours) so we can work out a plan that best supports your needs. Indeed, I am here to support you and will make accommodations where reasonable, possible, and in fairness to other students. You do NOT need to divulge specifics of your situation to me, just the duration of the absence and the support or accommodation requested. The university does, however, require documentation for accommodations made. Therefore, you will need to complete either: the ACORN absence declaration form (<https://registrar.utoronto.ca/policies-and-guidelines/absence-declaration/>) OR the Verification of Illness (VOI) form (<http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/index.php>). The ACORN absence declaration tool can be used for medical emergencies as well as personal and family emergencies whereas the VOI is for medical absences only. Please note that as of Fall 2023, the University is allowing students to use the ACORN absence declaration tool only *once per term*. Additional absences will require the Verification of Illness form which includes documentation from a medical professional. More information on the current Faculty of Arts & Science Policy is available here: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academics/student-absences>. Depending on your circumstances may also be a good idea to speak with an advisor in your College Registrar's office; they can support you in requesting extensions or accommodations, and importantly, connect you with other resources on campus for help with many situations and concerns.

**Religious Accommodation:** As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of backgrounds, cultural traditions, and spiritual beliefs. I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling, assessments, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you cannot complete a component of the course or meet a course deadline due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:** Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters ([www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm)) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity>).

**Plagiarism Detection:** Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation website (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>). Please note that I (Will/Dr. Ryan) understand that this is an imperfect tool and will always do additional investigation before interpreting a specific "plagiarism detection score". Sometimes the scores on this are inflated for reasons other than plagiarism and I will always take this into consideration and will never rely solely on this automatic analysis in registering an academic integrity concern. I am also aware that there are many ways to prevent these programs from detecting plagiarism, artificially reducing the score. Again, this is but one tool I use in assessing the originality of student writing.

**Participation & Conduct in Class:** In our structured and unstructured discussions and dialogues, we will have many opportunities to explore challenging issues and increase our understandings of different perspectives. A positive learning environment relies upon creating an atmosphere where diverse perspectives can be expressed. Each student is encouraged to take an active part in class discussions and activities. Honest and respectful dialogue is expected. Disagreement and challenging of ideas in a supportive and sensitive manner is encouraged. Hostility and disrespectful behaviour is not acceptable. In the time we share together over this term, please honour the uniqueness of your fellow classmates and appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from each other. Please respect each others' opinions and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. Just as we expect others to listen attentively to our own views, we must reciprocate and listen to others when they speak, most especially when we

disagree with them. In this class, our emphasis will be on engaging in the mutual exploration of issues as presented in the course readings as scholars, rather than in defending points of view we have formed outside the classroom.

**Harassment/Discrimination:** The University of Toronto is a richly diverse community and as such is committed to providing an environment free of any form of harassment, misconduct, or discrimination. In this course, I seek to foster a civil, respectful, and open-minded climate in which we can all work together to develop a better understanding of key questions and debates through meaningful dialogue. As such, I expect all involved with this course to refrain from actions or behaviours that intimidate, humiliate, or demean persons or groups or that undermine their security or self-esteem based on traits related to race, religion, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, disability, receipt of public assistance or record of offences.

### Academic & Other Resources

**Accessibility Services (AS):** Students with diverse learning needs are welcome in this course. If you have an ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, I encourage you to register with Accessibility Services (AS) (<http://accessibility.utoronto.ca>) at the beginning of the academic year. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will then assess your specific situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

**Academic Success Centre:** “Academic Success professional staff are dedicated to helping you reach your highest learning potential. Every student is capable of achieving academic excellence, but not all learning takes place in the classroom, and not everyone learns in the same way. Your life is more complex than your academic responsibilities, so [they] look at the whole picture and take an individualized approach to supporting you. [They] know there is no ‘right’ way to get through university, and [they] welcome the opportunity to explore strategies that might help you find greater balance between life and learning.” Check out their study spaces, attend a workshop or meet with a learning strategist here: <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc/about-us>

**Mental health, well-being:** As a student, you may experience challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation, financial concerns, family worries, or general anxiety about the state of the world. These factors may affect your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate fully in daily activities. All of us benefit from support and guidance during times of struggle; there is no shame in needing help or in asking for help. There are many helpful resources available through Student Life ([www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed](http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed)) and Counselling and Psychological Services (<http://www.caps.utoronto.ca/main.htm>). An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. Please take the time to inform yourself of available resources and do not hesitate to seek assistance from

your Teaching Assistant or from me to help learn what supports are available. We are here to support you!

**Writing:** As a student here at the University of Toronto, you are expected to write well. The university provides its students with a number of resources to help them achieve this. For more information on campus writing centres and writing courses, please visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>.

**English Language Resources:** For anyone who would like to advance their understanding and command of English, there are many supports available at UofT: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/english-language-learning>

### Tips for Success

Everyone has different learning preferences and strategies that work best for them. However, there are a few things that everyone can do to ensure they receive the best possible grade in this course:

1. “Attend” lecture weekly (aka come to class, watch the live stream, or recordings). When listening to lectures avoid other distractions. Put your phone away, close other windows on your computer, and take notes.
2. After watching lectures review the lecture slides. Compare these to your notes. Reorganizing and combining this information can help you to consolidate and remember it.
3. Do all the readings. Required readings will be covered on the assessments. Read and take notes. Most students find it helpful to read more than once.
4. Study hard. Review your notes, make flashcards, form a study group.
5. Come to office hours! The instructor and the TA are here to help you. If you have any concerns or questions regarding the course or material, please email us with questions or to set up a virtual appointment!

### Contingency Planning

Given the global pandemic and the inherent uncertainties, I want to briefly address our back up plan for the course should the situation worsen and we are no longer able to meet in person. If this occurs, I will still deliver our lectures at the regular class time over zoom and provide options for students to attend synchronously or asynchronously. In-person discussion groups and would move to zoom. The plan for assignments, assessments, and online office hours, would remain the same as this can all be completed remotely.

### Course Readings

#### Lecture 1: Introduction to Positive Psychology

- Syllabus
- Gable, S. L. & Haidt, J. (2005) What (and why) is positive psychology? *Review of General Psychology, Vol 9(2)*, 103-110.

- Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive Psychology. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14. **Pages 5-7 only (up to the “about this issue” section)**

### **Lecture 2: Definitions of Happiness & Well-Being**

- Tov, B. W. (2018). Well-being concepts and components. In E. Diener, S. Oishi, & L. Tay (Eds.) *Handbook of Well-Being*. Salt Lake City, U.T: DEF Publishers.  
<https://www.nobascholar.com/chapters/12>
- Joshanloo, M., Van de Vliert, E., & Jose, P. E. (2021). Four fundamental distinctions in conceptions of wellbeing across cultures. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Positive Education* (pp. 675-703). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

#### *Optional:*

- Ryan & Deci (2001). On happiness & human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 141-166. **Read only pages 141-148**

### **Lecture 3: Positive Thinking**

- Sheldon, K. M., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2007). Is it possible to become happier? (And if so, how?). *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 1, 129-145.
- Sheldon, K. M., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2019). Revisiting the sustainable happiness pie chart: Can happiness be successfully pursued? *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 16, 145-154.

#### *Optional:*

- Wilson, T. D., & Gilbert, D. T. (2005). Affective forecasting: Knowing what to want. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 14, 131-134.

### **Lecture 4: Positive Emotions**

- Fredrickson, B.L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden and build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, 56, 218-226.
- Catalino, L. I., Algoe, S. B., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2014). Prioritizing positivity: An effective approach to pursuing happiness? *Emotion*, 14, 1155-1161.

#### *Optional:*

- Peterson, C. (2000). The future of optimism. *American Psychologist*, 55, 44-55.

### **Lecture 5: Motivation & Engagement**

- Ryan, R.M. & Deci, E.L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55, 68-78.

### **Lecture 6: Goals, Value, & Money**

- Kasser, T. (2016). Materialistic values and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 67, 489-514.
- Buttrick, N., & Oishi, S. (2023). Money and happiness: A consideration of history and psychological mechanisms. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 120(13), e2301893120.

### **Lecture 7: Peak Experiences**

- Nakamura, J., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2016). The Experience of flow: Theory and research. In C. R. Snyder, S. J. Lopez, L. M. Edwards, & S. C. Marques (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Shapiro, S. L., Jazaieri, H., & de Sousa, S. (2016). Meditation and Positive Psychology. In C. R. Snyder, S. J. Lopez, L. M. Edwards, & S. C. Marques (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

### **Lecture 8: Meaning & The Self**

- Neff, K. D. (2011). Self-compassion, self-esteem, and well-being. *Social and personality psychology compass*, 5, 1-12.
- Heintzelman, S. J., & King, L. A. (2014). Life is pretty meaningful. *American Psychologist*, 69, 561-574.

### **Lecture 9: (Pro)social Emotions & Behaviours**

- McCullough, M. E., Kimeldorf, M. B., & Cohen, A. D. (2008). An adaptation for altruism? The social causes, social effects, and social evolution of gratitude. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17, 281-285.
- Stellar, J. E., Gordon, A. M., Piff, P. K., Cordaro, D., Anderson, C. L., Bai, Y., ... & Keltner, D. (2017). Self-transcendent emotions and their social functions: Compassion, gratitude, and awe bind us to others through prosociality. *Emotion Review*, 9, 200-207

#### *Optional:*

- Gable & Bromberg (2018). Healthy Social bonds: A necessary condition for well-being. In E. Diener, S. Oishi, & L. Tay (Eds.), *Handbook of well-being*. Salt Lake City, UT: DEF Publishers. <https://www.nobascholar.com/chapters/65/download.pdf>

### **Lecture 10: Resilience & Well-Being in the Digital Age**

- Harms, P. D., Brady, L., Wood, D., & Silard, A. (2018). Resilience and well-being. *Handbook of well-being*. Salt Lake City, UT: DEF Publishers. <https://www.nobascholar.com/chapters/4/download.pdf>
- Kushlev, K. (2018). Media technology and well-being: A complementarity-interference model. *Handbook of well-being. Noba Scholar Handbook series: Subjective well-being*. Salt Lake City, UT: DEF publishers. DOI: nobascholar.com.

#### *Optional:*

- Shaw, J., McLean, K. C., Taylor, B., Swartout, K., & Querna, K. (2016). Beyond resilience: Why we need to look at systems too. *Psychology of Violence*, 6, 34-41.

### **Lecture 11: Positive Institutions**

- Kim-Prieto, C., & Miller, L. (2018). Intersection of religion and subjective well-being. *Handbook of well-being*. Salt Lake City, UT: DEF Publishers. <https://www.nobascholar.com/chapters/70/download.pdf>
- Oades, L. G., Robinson, P., Green, S., & Spence, G. B. (2011). Towards a positive university. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 6, 432-439.

## Course Calendar

Week	Lect	Date	Lecture Topic	Required Readings	Assignments	Positivity Exercises (Optional)
1	1	Sept 12th	Introduction to Positive Psychology	Syllabus; Gable & Haidt (2005); Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) Pages 5-7 only (up to the "about this issue" section)		
2	2	Sept 19th	Definitions of Happiness & Well-being	Tov (2018); Joshanloo et al (2021)	<b>Intake Poll Due</b>	Start: Exercise 1-Character Strengths
3	3	Sept 26th	Models of Well-Being & Positive Thinking	Sheldon & Lyubomirsky (2007); Sheldon & Lyubomirsky (2019)	Book Club 0: Introductions	Due: Exercise 1- Character Strengths
4	4	Oct 3rd	Positive Emotions	Fredrickson (2001); Catalino et al (2014)	Book Club 1	Start: Exercise 2- Savouring
5	5	Oct 10th	Motivation & Engagement	Ryan & Deci (2000)	Book Club 2	Due: Exercise 2- Savouring
6	6	Oct 17th	Goals, Values, & Money	Kasser (2016); Buttrick & Oishi (2023)	Book Club 3	Start: Exercise 3- Goals
7		Oct 24th	<b>MIDTERM</b>			
8	7	Oct 31st	Peak Experiences	Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi (2016); Shapiro (2016)	Book Club 4	Due: Exercise 3- Goals Start: Exercise 4- Mindfulness
9		Nov 7th	<b>READING WEEK</b>			
10	8	Nov 14th	Meaning & The Self	Neff (2011); Heinzelman & King (2014)	Book Club 5	Due: Exercise 4- Mindfulness Start: Exercise 5- Self-Compassion
11	9	Nov 21st	(Pro)social Emotions & Behaviours	McCullough, et al. (2008); Stellar et al (2017)		Due Exercise 5- Self-Compassion Start: Exercise 6- Gratitude
12	10	Nov 28th	Resilience & Well-Being In the Digital Age	Harms et al (2018); Kushlev (2018)		Due: Exercise 6- Gratitude
13	11	Dec 5th	Positive Institutions	Kim-Prieto & Miller (2018); Oades et al. (2011)	<b>Book Review Paper Due</b>	
			<b>FINAL ASSESSMENT</b> TBA during final assessment period			