**Course Description**

“Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact.”

William James, Founder of American Psychology

Within the last two decades, a new orientation with interesting historical roots has emerged in the psychological study of human behavior. Positive psychology focuses on explaining, predicting, and enhancing the strengths and virtues that help individuals and communities thrive. This course will include a review of the historical and philosophical foundations of positive psychology. We will explore theories of what brings us happiness, including money, fame, power, beauty and pleasure, and applications of the science of positive psychology with attention to human strengths and virtues (e.g. integrity, altruism, hope, gratitude, wisdom, courage), positive affect (e.g., love, friendship), resilience, coping, workplace implications, and positive development across the lifespan. Special features will include an exploration of how positive psychology principles can enhance planning for one’s own professional development and how travel, and a sense of adventure, can improve our lives.

**Credit Hour Policy Statement**

This class meets the federal credit hour policy of 1 hour of class and 2 hours outside of class for each earned hour of credit; our class will meet for 8 hours per week with an expected 16 hours of work outside of class, for five weeks, for an expected total of 120 hours of coursework for the earned three hours of academic credit.

**General Education Objective**

This course does not meet a general education objective, but rather is a special topics course in Psychology.

**Learning Objectives**

At the conclusion of this course, successful students will be able to:

**Content:**
- Recognize and demonstrate understanding of terminology, concepts, and theories in positive psychology
- Describe differences between positive psychology and traditional orientations in psychology
- Identify most prominent contributors to the positive psychology literature

**Critical Thinking:**
- Critically evaluate and integrate the positive psychology scientific literature in informed science-based conclusions
- Apply positive psychology to address psychological questions and problems

**Communication:**
- Demonstrate professional quality expression in writing and speaking
- Effectively read and discuss primary sources in psychology
- Use positive psychology principles to enhance personal and professional interactions
Integrity/Values
- Exhibit skill in recognizing human strengths in generating positive outcomes
- Enact intentional strategies that reflect a positive orientation

Project Management/Professional Development
- Exercise efficient and productive management of projects on both an individual and group level
- Articulate a reasonable pathway for professional development following graduation.

Assessment and Grading Criteria
Your grade in this course will be based on six components:
- Exams (2 @ 100 points each; a midterm and a final exam) 200 points in total
- Inventories (4 @ 25 points each for completion and one-page response) 100 points in total
- Gratitude Project 50 points
- Possible Selves Project & Presentation 100 points
- Positive Psychology Critique 50 points

In summary, you can earn up to 500 points for your work in this course.

Teaching Methods

Key Text(s):

Additional readings will be made available to you.

Other Class Materials: Access to your home institutions library, to access journal articles, will be necessary. Additionally, you will also need access to https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/ to complete required inventories and access additional resources.

Teaching Methods: Our course time will be spent in discussion and consultation with both the instructor and your fellow students and in lecture; on at least two occasions you will be responsible for presenting your work during class time, and you will be expected to contribute to class discussions daily.
## Further Information about the Course

### ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

#### INVENTORIES
You will be completing a series of inventories throughout the course to help you develop facility with the concepts and methods used in positive psychology. Most inventories correspond to the reading assignment that explores the construct.

**Primary Outcomes Related to Inventory Completion and Reflection**

**Content:** Recognize and demonstrate understanding of terminology, concepts, and theories

**Critical Thinking:** Critically evaluate and integrate the positive psychology scientific literature in informed science-based conclusions

**Communication:** Use positive psychology principles to enhance personal and professional interactions

**Integrity/Values:** Exhibit skill in recognizing human strengths in generating positive outcomes

**VIA Survey of Character Strengths**
Go to this website: https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/. Create an account so you can login to “Questionnaires.” You will need to provide some profile information. Then click on ‘VIA Survey of Character Strengths.” The survey has 240 questions so hang in there to completion. At the end it will provide a hierarchy of your personal strengths. List the top ten and briefly discuss whether any of the resulting insights surprised you. Feel free to linger on the website and complete any other inventories that intrigue you. This instrument is one of the classic measurement tools in the area of positive psychology.

**Other Inventories**
In all remaining cases, complete the assigned inventory, which will be available at the website above or online. Provide a one-page reflection on whether you think the outcomes represent valid conclusions. Make suggestions for ways in which the instrument might be improved. The following inventories would be good, not necessary, choices for the completion of your inventory work; note VIA strengths is required, above.

- Emotional Awareness Questionnaire
- Learned Optimism Test
- Career Futures Inventory
- Close Relationship Inventory

### OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

**Gratitude Project**
This project requires you to identify someone who has been instrumental in helping you become the person you are. Write a letter of gratitude identifying why the impact was so profound and then present the document either in print, over the phone/Skype, or in person. Provide a one-page reflection following its presentation.

**Primary Outcome Related to Project:**

**Integrity/Values:** Enact intentional strategies that reflect a positive orientation.

**Possible Selves Project**
This project is represents an opportunity to explore what your future may hold to help you live the most satisfying life possible. The emphasis will be on trying to identify and pursue a preferred occupational
pathway, but you may expand your musings to take into account any dimension that would have a significant impact. We will dedicate one day of class to exploring these future views. Consequently, you may develop a creative poster, design a web site, draft a poem or song, write a short story. Pick a format that allows you to be playful but still keeps you on point in considering what your future may bring from the standpoint of the work world. If you are a senior, I encourage you to develop a current resume that would support securing your future vision. I’ll be happy to provide feedback on the resume’s effectiveness.

**Primary Outcome Related to Project:**
Professional Development: Articulate a reasonable pathway for professional development following graduation.

**Positive Psychology Critique**
We will have spent an enormous amount of time studying positive psychology from the standpoint of its burgeoning and favorable literature. However, there also exists a serious backlash developing against positive psychology. In the interest of fairness, one class will be devoted to this perspective but you must track down your own article for the discussion. Provide a one-page summary of the article, including a citation in APA format to prepare you for this discussion. You will be presenting on your article in class.

**Primary Outcome Related to Project:**
Critical Thinking: Critically evaluate and integrate the positive psychology scientific literature in informed science-based conclusions

**EXAMS**
There will be two exams in the course—a midterm and a final, reflecting the content learned in the course prior to the scheduled exam. Details on the format of the exam will be forthcoming, and you will have the full class period to complete the exam.

### Schedule of Topics and Assignments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>In-class</th>
<th>Reading Assignments</th>
<th>Due in class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28-May</td>
<td>Course introduction, syllabus review, assignment review</td>
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<tr>
<td>29-May</td>
<td>What is Positive Psychology, how is it different from traditional Psychology, and why does it matter?</td>
<td>Chapters 1 &amp; 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-May</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>VIA Strengths complete; one-page review</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-May</td>
<td>Positive Psychology in Context</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
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<td>4-Jun</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
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<td>5-Jun</td>
<td>Positive Emotional States and Processes</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
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<td>6-Jun</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
<td>Inventory two complete; one-page review</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-Jun</td>
<td><strong>Exam One</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11-Jun</td>
<td>Positive Cognitive States and Processes</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
<td>Inventory three complete; one page review</td>
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<td>12-Jun</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Chapter/Assignment</td>
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<td>13-Jun</td>
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<td>Chapter 10</td>
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<td>14-Jun</td>
<td>Long weekend—no class</td>
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<td>18-Jun</td>
<td>Prosocial Behavior; Discuss</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gratitude projects</td>
<td>Gratitude letter &amp; response</td>
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<td>19-Jun</td>
<td>Positive Psychology Critiques</td>
<td>Critiques due &amp; presented</td>
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<td>20-Jun</td>
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<td>Chapter 12</td>
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<td>21-Jun</td>
<td>Positive Environments</td>
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<td>25-Jun</td>
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<td>Inventory four complete; one page review</td>
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<td>26-Jun</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>27-Jun</td>
<td>Last day of class; Possible Selves Projects</td>
<td>Possible Selves Project due &amp; presented</td>
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**Attendance Policy**

Harlaxton College operates a mandatory attendance policy that is binding on all faculty and students.

In the Summer Semester only ONE unexcused absence will be allowable. Additional unexcused absences will attract an overall grade penalty of a third-of-a-letter grade for each unexcused absence (e.g. one additional unexcused absence would result in an A- being reduced to a B+).

Students are responsible for the academic consequences of their failure to attend class.

**Drop/Add and Withdrawal Policy**

The course is subject to the UE drop/add policy as modified to apply to a summer semester of study in the UK context.

**Disability Policy**

It is the policy of the University of Evansville (Harlaxton College) to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. University of Evansville students should contact the Office of Counselling and Health Education to seek help with this. Students from Partner Universities/Colleges should contact their own relevant student support office. For assistance whilst at Harlaxton students should contact the College Secretary whose office is located adjacent to the Principal’s office.

Written notification to faculty from the College Secretary is required for academic accommodations to be implemented.

**Honor Code**

All students at the University of Evansville (Harlaxton College) agree to and are bound by the principles and practice of the honor code:

‘I understand that any work I submit for course credit will imply that I have adhered to this Academic Honor Code: I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid, nor will I tolerate an environment that condones the use of unauthorized aid.’

The full Honor Code is available online: [https://www.evansville.edu/offices/deanstudents/downloads/honorcode.pdf](https://www.evansville.edu/offices/deanstudents/downloads/honorcode.pdf)