American University of Central Asia

Psychology Department

**PSY 363 - Happiness: Private/Public Feeling**

Fall 2022

Course Syllabus

**Instructor:** Mohira Suyarkulova, PhD, Associate Professor, Psychology, AUCA

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Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 11:00-13:00 or by appointment via email

**Brief description:**

Is happiness a private emotion or a collective project? Where are the sources of happiness located? Should we look for happiness in hedonistic pursuits, in love, romance, family, or in our work and creative pursuits? Is it a personal responsibility or is happiness determined by our environment? Why is ‘positive thinking’ making us more miserable? These and other questions are at the center of the new elective course “Happiness: private/public feeling”. In this course students will read a broad range of sources that try to tackle these issues from the perspective of psychology, the social sciences, and the humanities. While we do not promise that you will become happier as a result of completing this course, you will be able to better understand the sources of your distress and misery, and will become aware that another world is possible.

**Learning objectives and outcomes**:

* To engage students in an interdisciplinary thinking on happiness;
* Understand and articulate key concepts, findings, and controversies in field of happiness studies;
* Understand the research methods (including measures, interventions, and research paradigms) used in happiness research;
* Articulate from in- and out-of-classroom experiences of such activities as lectures, class exercises, discussions and self-exploration and self-reflection exercises a perspective on how happiness research is (or is not) relevant to students’ lives.

**Core texts:**

* Hill, Nicholas, Svendt Brinkmann & Anders Petersen, eds. [Critical Happiness Studies](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dEI3lN6Pf88pA_yUcHdd7rc37EgE2FT7/view?usp=sharing). Routledge, 2020
* Mick Power. [Understanding Happiness: A Critical Review of Positive Psychology](https://drive.google.com/file/d/11nvqd8gSn_xqPashPxrplbZIrX1KRX8g/view?usp=sharing). Routledge, 2015
* Bagdasarova, Nina, Georgy Mamedov & Mohira Suyarkulova. [Kniga o schast’e dlya molodykh (i ne ochen’) LGBT-(i ne tol’ko) lyudei](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UYBrMwxU20Z60F5vPt6Q7VCTamvUgQbH/view?usp=sharing). Books for Development, 2021

**Class schedule (Lect/Sem on Mon & Wed at 14:10-15:25, room 301)**

| **Week/Dates** | **Topic** | **Assigned readings/work\*** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1/Sept 5 & 7 | Introductions and ice-breakers | -come prepared with questions about the course |
| 2/Sept 12 & 14 | Setting the scene: pursuit of happiness | -Read the syllabus  - Complete the Authentic Happiness Inventory [questionnaire](https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/testcenter)  -Write a one-page account of what you think happiness is |
| 3/Sept 19 & 21 | What is this thing called happiness? | [Power, Ch 1](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NhNq7fS-J1RSTv39rzCp8gNMffO6_vE0/view?usp=sharing) |
| 4/Sept 26 & 28 | Happiness Studies and Its Discontents | [Hill et al, Introduction](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jIubsL0MapQXHOO-wg2JyCOhC5nfT8nz/view?usp=sharing) |
| 5/Oct 3 & 5 | Measuring Happiness | [Weimann et al 2014, Ch 7](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LwPgpr_Ixnr6wjVdL5wL5paXxGQRNDei/view?usp=sharing) |
| 6/Oct 10 & 12 | Anatomy of Happiness | [Kringelbach & Berridge 2010](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3008658/) |
| 7/Oct 17 & 19 | No classes | Reading quiz 1 |
| 8/Oct 24 & 26 | History of Happiness | [Stearns 2012](https://hbr.org/2012/01/the-history-of-happiness) & [McMahon 2004](https://www.amacad.org/publication/history-happiness-400-bc-ad-1780) |
| 9/Oct 31 & Nov 2 | Geography of Happiness | [Veenhoven 2012](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IL8dJS1uBsJANllferlfTbPrnYoJsL0w/view?usp=sharing) |
| 10/Nov 7 & 9 | No classes | Reading quiz 2 |
| 11/Nov 14 & 16 | Chronography of Happiness | [Stibich 2020](https://www.verywellmind.com/aging-the-secret-to-happiness-2224100) & [Beja 2017](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XQqxRj0tJ30rYf3tFc2JJLULoOVy00yy/view?usp=sharing) |
| 12/Nov 21 & 23 | Ideology of Happiness | [Ehrenreich 2009](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WwpmY2wb-IHmTzYwWR6C1SlZJiF4b8Tm/view?usp=sharing) |
| 13/ Nov 28 & 30 | Recipes for Happiness? | With Nina Bagdasarova & Georgy Mamedov ([OpenDemocracy 2021](https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/bagdasarova-mamedov-suyarkulova-we-need-a-left-wing-idea-happiness/)) |
| 14/ Dec 5 & 7 | Practicum | Reading quiz 3  Journals and papers due |
| 15/Dec 12 & 14 | Course wrap-up and evaluation | Look back at your account of happiness and re-do the questionnaire |
| 16/Dec 18-23 | Final exams |  |

\*Note: All readings are available in the course [Google Drive folder](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1gzxWeD9audzg0-11yBYMW6-9wXQJGU3Q?usp=sharing). Generally, there is usually no more than one assigned reading per week and **all the readings are required**. It is essential that all students come to each seminar meeting having read the assigned readings and prepared to discuss those readings. There will be **three reading quizzes** during the semester, **worth 15% of your final grade**.

**Course assessment structure:**

| Attendance and participation: 20% |  |  | **A** | 94-100 | **C+** | 77-79 | **D-** | 60-63 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Reading quizzes: 3X5%=15% |  |  | **A-** | 90-93 | **C** | 74-76 | **F** | 0-59 |
| Self-observation journal: 25% |  |  | **B+** | 87-89 | **C-** | 70-73 |  |  |
| Presentation: 20% |  |  | **B** | 84-86 | **D+** | 67-69 |  |  |
| Final paper: 20% |  |  | **B-** | 80-83 | **D** | 64-66 |  |  |

**Attendance and participation**

Your attendance and participation score is dependent on how consistently you attend classes, how frequently you participate in class discussions, and the quality of your contributions. This will also include various in- and out-of-class learning activities and small writing assignments that will be graded pass/no pass.

**Presentations**

Between weeks 4 and 10 of the semester you will present to the class during our seminar meetings. Your presentation should make use of the assigned readings but is not just a rehearsal of the texts we cover. It is your responsibility to help your peers understand the material. All presenters are expected to engage the audience, prepare questions for discussion/games/quizzes, as well as useful handouts/learning aids.

**Reading quizzes**

There will be three quizzes throughout the semester to track your progress and to make sure you are keeping up with the assigned readings. The quizzes may be in multiple choice questions format, or ask for definitions of key terms as well as short written answers to questions related to the course material we are covering in class.

**Self-observation journal**

The field of positive psychology claims that up to 40 percent of personal happiness is up to individuals to achieve through practice of various ‘habits’ such as mindfulness, gratitude and engaging in activities conducive to the state of ‘flow’. Between weeks 3 and 11 of the semester all students will practice one or more of these [‘recipes’ for happiness](https://ggia.berkeley.edu/) (for instance, doing [mindfulness exercises](https://drive.google.com/file/d/12n97hB0WGBdQ_r2m0FIxoevZDnPqH6kM/view?usp=sharing) or keeping [a gratitude journal](https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/gratitude_journal)) and keep a self-observation journal. There need to be at least 8 entries in the journal - each at least 300 words long. Each journal entry should contain the description of your mental state and emotions before the practice, the description of the practice itself and how you felt while engaging in the practice, and how your mental states and emotions changed over time as you continued the practice.

**Final paper**

Your final paper is a critical engagement with positive psychology and your own experiences documented in your journals. You should refer to the required readings as well as literature from the additional reading list. The papers are expected to be between 5 and 8 pages long with proper citations and bibliography (APA format). All submissions will be checked for plagiarism.

**honour code**

All work submitted must be free of plagiarism and meet the standards outlined in the AUCA Honour Code. Students are responsible for informing themselves regarding the rules of academic honesty and integrity.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in an F for the assignment and possible suspension from the university.

Students are expected to show a respectful and collegial attitude towards the faculty and fellow students, be punctual and submit all assignments according to deadlines stated in this syllabus or otherwise announced by the instructor.

**Additional reading list (recommended for final papers and presentations)**:

Oishi, Shigehiro et al, “Concepts of Happiness Across Time and Cultures”, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 39(5), 2013: 559­–577;

Buettner, Dan, Nelson, Toben and Ruut Veenhoven, “Ways to Greater Happiness: A Delphi Study”, *Journal of Happiness Studies* (2020) 21:2789–2806;

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly and Jeremy Hunter, “Happiness in Everyday Life: The Uses of Experience Sampling”, *Journal of Happiness Studies* 4, 2003: 185–199;

Baumeister, Roy and Mark Leary, “The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation”, *Psychological Bulletin* 117 (3), 1995: 497-529;

*Introduction* to David Smail’s *The Origins of Unhappiness: A New Understanding of Personal Distress* (1993/2015);

Keltner, Dacher & Jonathan Haidt “Approaching awe, a moral, spiritual, and aesthetic emotion”, *Cognition and Emotion,* 17(2), 2003: 297-314;

Chapter 1, “What’s Wrong with Happiness?” of Lynne Segal’s *Radical Happiness: Moments of Collective Joy* (Verso, 2017);

“Introduction: Why Happiness? Why Now?” to Sara Ahmed’s *The Promise of Happiness* (Duke University Press, 2010);

McGlynn et al, “More than Happiness: Aliveness and Struggle in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer Lives”, *Sexualities* 0(0), 2020: 1–22