

American University of Central Asia
Psychology Department

PSY 363 - Happiness: Private/Public Feeling

Spring 2021

Course Syllabus

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Office hours: 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 love, romance, family, or 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.

Class schedule (Lecture/Seminar on Mondays & Wednesdays 15:35-16:50 via [Zoom](#))

Week/Dates	Topic	Assigned readings/work
1/Jan 11 & 13	Introductions and setting the scene	-Read the syllabus -Write a one-page account of what you think happiness is (due Jan 15)
2/Jan 18 & 20	What is this thing called happiness?	Oishi et al 2013
3/Jan 25 & 27	Happiness Studies and Its Discontents	Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter 2003
4/Feb 1 & 3	Hedonism, Eudiamonia and Well-Being	Buettner, Nelson & Veenhoven 2020
5/Feb 8 & 10	Love, Marriage and Parenthood	Baumeister & Leary 1995
6/Feb 15 & 17	Leisure, Work, Excellence and Creativity	Guest lecture - Nina Bagdasarova
7/Feb 22 & 24	Economics, Politics and Happiness	Smail 1993/2015, Introduction
8/Mar 1 & 3	Religion and Well-Being	Keltner & Haidt 2003
9/Mar 10	Midterm exam (Reflection #1)	Reflection paper due March 12
10/Mar 15 & 17	Happiness as Social Change	Segal 2017, Chapter 1
March 22-27 - Spring break - no classes!		
12/Mar 29 & 31	Feminist critique of happiness	Ahmed 2010, Introduction
13/ Apr 5 & 7	Reading week	Essay proposal (1 page) due Apr 9
14/ Apr 12 & 14	The queer art of failure?	McGlynn at al 2020
15/ Apr 19 & 21	Imagining the future - Georgy Mamedov	Sultanalieva 2018
16/ Apr 26 & 28	Practicing happiness - Elena Kosterina	Hayes & Smith 2005, Chapter 8
17/ May 3	Student symposium Course wrap-up and evaluations	-Student presentations of essays -Look back at the account of happiness you wrote in the beginning of the term. Do you still agree with what you wrote?
18/ May 10	Final exam (Reflection #2)	Reflection paper due May 14

Reading list:

Note: All readings are available in the course [Google Drive folder](#) (see above in the class schedule all the clickable links to the pdf files of the assigned readings). Please also note that additional readings may be assigned at the instructor's discretion throughout the semester. 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 **surprise reading quizzes** three times during the semester, **worth 15% of your final grade**.

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

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

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

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

Sultanalieva, Syinat, "Element 174", in *Sovsem Drugie: Sbornik feministskoi i kvir-fantastiki [Utterly Other: A collection of feminist and queer science fiction]*, STAB-Press, 2018

Hayes, Steven C., and Smith, Spencer. *Get Out of Your Mind and into Your Life : The New Acceptance and Commitment Therapy*. Oakland, CA, USA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc., 2005

Course assessment structure:

Attendance and participation: 10%
Reading quizzes: 3X5%=15%
Midterm exam (Reflection 1): 25%
Essay (7-8 pages): 30%
Final exam (Reflection 2): 20%

A	94-100	C+	77-79	D-	60-63
A-	90-93	C	74-76	F	0-59
B+	87-89	C-	70-73		
B	84-86	D+	67-69		
B-	80-83	D	64-66		

Essays (7-8 pages):

Your research project is an evidence-based analytic essay on a topic of your choosing based on the issues and texts that we discuss in this course.

Your essays must be no shorter than seven and no longer than eight pages, with your bibliography on the 9th page.

Formatting and essay content

Your essays must adhere to the following requirements:

- **A clear thesis** presented in the first paragraph and argued throughout. Include “In this essay I will argue that...”, or something similar.
- **A blueprint** near the beginning of your essay that clearly tells the reader how you will be arguing your thesis.
- **Evidence** to support your thesis in the form of ‘facts’. Ideas from existing research, and thoughtful, balanced analysis.
- Use at least 5 academic authors in your research proposals (at least three sources must be from ‘outside’ the course reading assignments) and at least ten academic sources in the final paper (at least six must be from ‘outside’ the course)
- A **bibliography** with a complete list of your sources.
- **Clear writing** with few grammatical errors.
- Times New Roman, 12-point, 2,5 cm margins, double-spaced, left-justified, no playing with the character spaces!
- Make sure to come up with **an interesting title!**
- **Number** each page in your paper.
- The grades will be earned in these assignments based on content, structure and mechanics.

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.

Midterm and final exams will take the form of individual reflection papers. You will have a chance to pick from a number of possible topics and formats to complete your midterm and final exams. Both are open-book, take-home exams and you will have a week to complete each one.

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.

Zoom etiquette for students:

To ensure a successful zoom classroom meeting, and engage in a productive learning environment, please keep the following “do’s and don’ts” in mind:

Do’s:	Don’t’s:
Find a clean, quiet space and dress appropriately	Enter a zoom that you weren't invited to, share the zoom access information for your class with others, or enter under a different name.
Let all household members know when and where you will be in class, and ask them not to disturb you	Take screenshots, cell phone pictures, or otherwise record the meeting, your classmates, or your instructor without express permission to do so.
Make sure your full name shows up appropriately	Change your name or change your zoom background during the meeting
Be aware of your background, lighting, and noise	Walk around, sleep or eat during the class meeting.
Mute until you are required to talk. Use the Zoom functions to communicate if needed (chat, raise your hand, answer yes/no, etc.)	Use the chat for side conversations with classmates.
Use an appropriate zoom background if you wish	Sit in front of a window or bright light, this will make your face too dark to see
Turn off/silence cell phone and close other windows on your computer	Have conversations with household members off camera
Be on time to class. Communicate with your instructor (via their preferred communication method listed on the syllabus) if you will be late or if you lose your connection during class.	Allow household members to walk around behind you during the meeting.
Pay attention! Maintain eye contact with the speaker on the screen.	Engage in texting, social media, work from other classes, or other distractions while in class.
Be prepared to take notes (on your computer or in a designated notebook) or to access course material (have textbook, or readings available).	Turn your camera off for the duration of the class unless otherwise instructed.

Tips on Reading Non-Fiction and Academic Texts by Georgy Mamedov

Reading academic texts constitutes the core of your learning experience in most university courses. Reading academic and non-fiction texts, however, is quite different from reading fiction, mass media long-reads or social media posts. Reading an academic text is not a passive process of consuming information, but an active and creative process of engaging with the text to be able to grasp the author's argument. These tips will help you get the most out of your reading assignments, and, hopefully, make your reading a joyful experience.

1. Before Reading:
 - Look up the author of the assigned text online. Wikipedia is probably the best resource for this. Knowing when and where the author lived; to which scientific disciplines/traditions his/her writing belongs; which political views he/she held, will help you better understand the content of the text;
 - Pay attention to the assigned text's metadata: when the text was written; where it was published; what the genre of the text is. This data on its own will provide you with the general idea of the language, structure and style of the text. Articles published in academic journals would normally be strictly structured, neutral in language texts in which the argument is supported by empirical data. Philosophical essays and some theoretical texts in humanities and social sciences are less structured, more speculative in formulating the argument and more poetic and metaphoric in language.
2. While Reading:
 - Read the text at least twice. The first round of reading will allow you to get the general outline of the text, while in the second and following rounds you will be able to grasp the nuances of the author's argument;
 - In the first round of reading use highlighter or take notes out, to mark the parts of the text which you find difficult to understand;
 - In the second round of reading revisit the highlighted parts. They might have got clarified after you completed the reading in the first round. If you still encounter words/terminology, names or historical facts/events which are not familiar to you, look them up in dictionaries or online. When reading texts in English do not use English-Russian dictionary or Russian language resources, use English-English dictionaries and English language resources only;
 - In the second, or third, round of reading use another color highlighter to mark the parts of the text which represent the core of the author's argument.
3. After Reading:
 - To make sure that your reading exercise was successful, try to formulate in your own words the general idea of the text in one written sentence. If you fail to come up with such a one-sentence summary – return to reading!
 - Formulate 2-3 questions to the text. These questions should not be factual, for this you have Google. The questions should either help you clarify the author's argument, or help you connect the author's ideas with other readings and/or your life experience. If you cannot formulate questions to the assigned text, it does not mean you understood everything. Quite the opposite. Remember: good texts do not provide answers, they generate questions.

Enjoy your reading!