

PSY-493
POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY
Mon / Wed: 15.30-16.45
Fall 2013
3 credits

Instructor: Eduardo Jáuregui, Ph.D.
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COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Description:

Positive Psychology offers us a scientific and systematic understanding of the emotions, traits, and institutions which enable individuals and communities to thrive and attain happiness. The course will cover the latest theories and research findings in the emerging field of Positive Psychology, with the aim of challenging students to examine and enrich their own lives on the basis of what they learn. Representative topics, such humor, optimism, savouring, mindfulness, gratitude, love, flow, values, accomplishments, and character strengths, will be examined through readings, discussions and exercises.

Course Objectives: This course seeks firstly to arouse the curiosity and interest of students towards the pursuit of happiness and what it means to live a good life. It will challenge their preconceived notions regarding these issues, and to approach them from a scientific perspective and with the tools of empirical research. It aims to transmit to students the major theories and methods employed, as well as numerous empirical studies and findings relevant to issues such as positive emotions, positive traits and positive institutions. The course aspires to engage students through extended and organized class interactions in the form of debates and discussions, as well as group class presentations. In addition, it will encourage students to put many of these ideas and findings into practice in their own lives, and to transmit them to others.

Course Outcomes: In its educational mission Saint Louis University is committed to the following five dimensions: 1) Scholarship and knowledge, 2) Intellectual inquiry and communication, 3) Community building, 4) Leadership and service, 5) Spirituality and values. This Positive Psychology course contributes to the educational mission of Saint Louis University by requiring students to:

Scholarship and Knowledge	Understand and explain the place of positive psychology within the more general discipline of psychology Identify the major theories and lines of research associated with the field Identify the various components of the good life and the results of research supporting the place and importance of each
Intellectual Inquiry and Communication	Awaken their own and others' curiosity and enthusiasm regarding the topic of positive psychology Apply scientific methods to the study of happiness, positive emotions and the good life Evaluate different empirical approaches to the study of these topics Challenge their own and others' preconceived notions regarding these issues. Locate the most appropriate reliable and reputable sources for research topics, using resources such as the SLU library databases. Analyze, summarize, synthesize and evaluate research materials Prepare essays that shown their own reflection and understanding of specific topics Present theories, research, and opinions via effective oral communication and

debate

Community Building/ Leadership and Service	Provide an effective contribution to a group project Contribute through class discussions to the understanding and ability of individual peers and of whole group Develop and apply skills and strengths (optimism, sense of humor, gratitude...), both in the self and in others, that support leadership, community building and service
Spirituality and Values	Discover and articulate his/her own values and strengths, as well as ways of developing them Develop a scientific understanding of the place and importance of values and a spiritual dimension in human psychology Practice mindfulness meditation, gratitude exercises and other methods proven to promote psychological wellbeing and personal growth and development. Adhere to academic honesty policies

Text: - A PRIMER IN POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY – Christopher Peterson, Oxford University Press, 2006.

Note: Additional readings and handouts will be included during the course

Reading Assignment: There will be a reading assignment each week. You are required to prepare *before* each class, as a major part of the course will be conducted through discussions and exercises based on the reading you have done.

Group Presentations: Students will be assigned to groups which will take turns in presenting specific topics to the class and leading class discussions on these topics.

Practical Assignments: Students will be encouraged to put theory into practice with a number of practical take-home assignments intended to improve their own lives. These are strictly voluntary and will not be graded.

Examinations and Other Assignments:

Final Examination. A final exam will be held at the end of the semester.

Essays. Two midterm essays will be set during the course of the semester.

Class Participation. Your active participation in discussions, group presentations and exercises is an essential part of this course. Though there is no absence policy, this portion of your grade may be influenced by an excess of absences (more than three) as well as frequent lateness to class.

<u>Grading Criteria</u>	Class Participation	10%
	1st essay	25%
	2nd essay	25%
	Final Examination	40%

Lateness of assignments: Essays must be handed in by the date assigned, unless an acceptable, documented reason for missing the due date is provided. Late assignments will be marked down half a grade if handed in 1-3 days late, and a whole grade if handed in later than 3 days late.

Course Schedule

Week 1-2 Introduction to Positive Psychology

September 17: last day to drop a class

Week 3 Humor
Week 4 Pleasure and Positive Emotions
Week 5 Satisfaction about the Past
Week 6 Flow

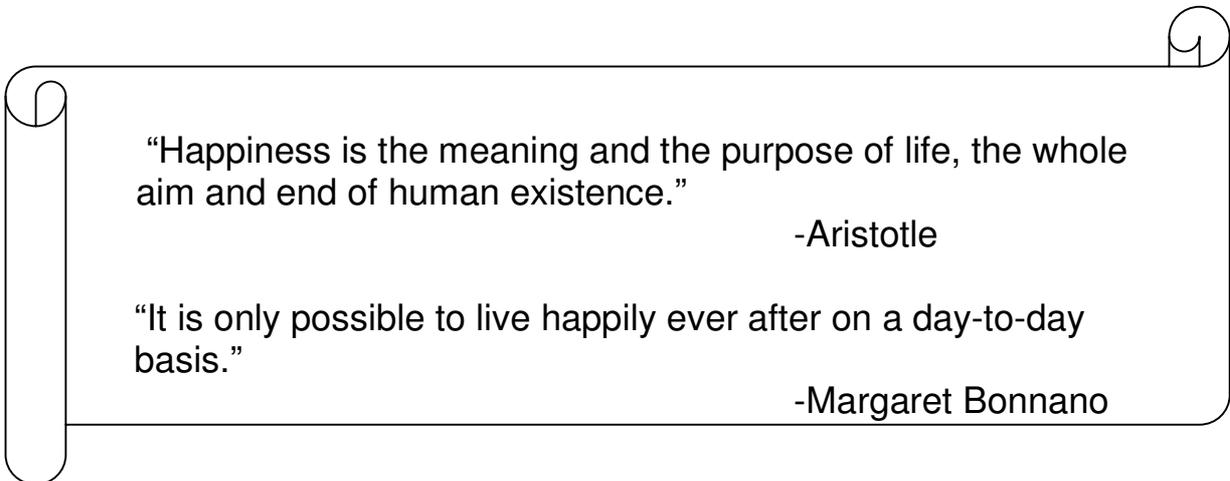
October 16: First Midterm Essay hand-in

Week 7 Optimism
Week 8 Happiness
Week 9 Values
Week 10 Interests, Abilities, and Accomplishments
Week 11 Wellness

November 13: Second Midterm Essay hand-in

Week 12 Love
Week 13 Enabling Institutions
Week 14 The Future of Positive Psychology
Week 15 Wrap-up and Review for Final Examination

Final Exam: December 19th from 15:30-18:30



Accommodation Statement

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning_resources.html.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at +34 915 54 58 58, ext. 204, send an e-mail to counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu, or to visit the Counseling Office (San Ignacio Hall). Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity, such as would be expected at a Jesuit, Catholic institution. As members of this community, students, faculty, and staff members share the responsibility to maintain this environment. Academic dishonesty violates it. Although not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, it can be said in general that soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of any work submitted toward academic credit is dishonest. It not only violates the mutual trust necessary between faculty and students but also undermines the validity of the University's evaluation of students and takes unfair advantage of fellow students. Further, it is the responsibility of any student who observes such dishonest conduct to call it to the attention of a faculty member or administrator.

Examples of academic dishonesty would be copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed-book exam, submitting materials authored by or editorially revised by another person but presented as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, tampering with another student's work, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage in an act of academic dishonesty.

Where there is clear indication of such dishonesty, a faculty member or administrator has the responsibility to apply appropriate sanctions. Investigations of violations will be conducted in accord with standards and procedures of the school or college through which the course or research is offered. Recommendations of sanctions to be imposed will be made to the dean of the school or college in which the student is enrolled. Possible sanctions for a violation of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University. The complete SLU Academic Honesty Policy can be found at the following link: http://spain.slu.edu/academics/academic_advising/docs/Academic_integrity.pdf