Welcome to the Neuroscience/Psychology of Happiness (positive life engagement)!

Brief Course Description: Examination of studies in neuroscience and positive psychology that explore the mental and behavioral actions leading to the self-reporting of a well-lived and fulfilling life. Exploration of the interaction of multiple variables in behavior and mental state, and the underlying neural circuits and mechanisms, that lead to increases in positive affect, and decreases in negative affect, respectively.

Expanded Course Description: Welcome to happiness: a neuroscience and psychology perspective! This course examines research in positive psychology and neuroscience that reveal the behavioral activities and mindsets that promote positive life engagement and the neural circuits that influence this. The course will examine the evidence that happiness is significantly influenced by genetics and mindset, with only a small component arising from life circumstances. Studies in positive psychology that reveal important factors in mental mindset, such as quality of interpersonal relationships, resilience, growth vs. fixed mindset, self-esteem formation, etc. will be critically evaluated and discussed. The neural pathways underlying the fight/flight/freeze response, stress/anxiety, attention, reward/pleasure/addiction, conditioned fear, learning and memory, parent/child and romantic relationship bonding, compassion/empathy, and habit formation will be reviewed and critically evaluated. Methods for altering these neural pathways and their associated cognitive states, such as pharmacological, behavioral, meditative, cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness-based stress reduction, will be demonstrated and discussed. The course will encourage students to critically evaluate and assess their assumptions about positive life engagement in their own situations and to explore, through critical discussion and final projects/papers, mechanisms that may facilitate their own understanding of the psychological/neuroscience factors involved in their unique situation and how to put practices into place that provide positive growth potential.

The goals for this course are:

- Learn what scientific studies in positive psychology tell us about happiness, fulfillment, gratitude, relationships, connectedness, internal narrative and biases, and stress/anxiety and depression.
• Learn the neural pathways involved in bonding with others, empathy, compassion, stress/anxiety, learning and memory, and personal world view construction.
• Learn both the theory and practice of methods that enhance positive life engagement and fulfillment.

**Instructor**

David A. McCormick  
(541) 250-0566 (text and voice)  
davidmc@uoregon.edu

**Teaching Assistants**

Check the canvas website for course TAs and their contact information.

Liz Riebe - (TA and Course Facilitator)
Email: eriebe2@uoregon.edu

Course Description

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Describe the factors that scientific studies in positive psychology have determined to influence a person’s sense of well-being.
- Describe the influence and interactions of relationships, community, career, income, health, exercise, and conditioning on long term mental and physical well-being.
- Describe the neural pathways and mechanisms involved in the stress response, pair-mate and parent-child bonding, empathy and compassion, learning and memory, conditioned fear/anxiety, and belief systems concerning the nature of the sensory and cognitive world.
- Describe the practice and potential mechanisms by which various therapies (cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness-based stress reduction, meditation) may reduce anxiety/stress in the nervous system and how it they may promote a more fulfilling life.
- Explain the usefulness of various behavioral practices on the development of a sense of personal well-being and the neural mechanisms that may underly this.
- Understand how to critically evaluate and discuss experiments that claim to examine the relationship between life-style, behavior, psychological factors and sense of well-being.
- Exhibit an in depth understanding of how the various influences/factors discussed in class influence the student’s own sense of well-being and learn how to effectively communicate this both orally and in writing.

Course Policies

What to do if I am Sick or Need to Miss Class?

This course is offered both in person and online. Thus, you have options. If you are taking this course in person, you are expected to attend the lectures and discussion sections in person – we will be taking attendance since participation is an important part of this course. However, if you feel at all sick, then you may email me (David McCormick – davidmc@uoregon.edu) or your TA (above) and let us know. We hope you feel better soon! You may then watch the pre-recorded lecture videos in canvas instead of attending the lecture. Similarly, if something unavoidable comes up that prevents you from attending lecture, email us and watch the pre-
recorded lectures. If you need to miss the discussion section – don’t worry! You can miss up to thee in person discussions/online discussion posts without it affecting your grade. If you are taking the online course, you may attend the in person lecture if you wish, since the lecture hall has room. You may miss 3 online discussion posts or discussion sections, and 3 quizzes, without it affecting your grade.

**Course Communication**

The best way to communicate with us is by email (see email addresses above and on Canvas). Please feel free to contact anyone in the teaching team with your questions and/or concerns. When emailing, please send messages from your UO email. We will do our best to respond within 24 hours Monday - Friday. We may or may not have the opportunity to respond to emails received on weekends. For the in-person version of this course, we will have weekly in-person office hours. For the online version of this course, we will also hold office hours through Zoom each week. Please drop in to ask questions or simply have a chat!

All information concerning the course will be delivered through the course Canvas site. Announcements and emails are archived there and automatically forwarded to your UO email and can even reach you by text. Be sure to adjust your settings to enable these things by going to Canvas > Account > Notifications. The site will feature a Q&A discussion so you can post questions to the teaching team or other students. You can also use the course Chat feature. In case of technical difficulties, including internet outages, you can reach us by phone at the numbers above.

*On Canvas, there is a “Chat” function. We highly recommend you post questions or comments using the Chat feature – we will be monitoring it and other students might also be able to answer your question!*

**Technical Requirements**

Log into canvas.uoregon.edu using your DuckID to access our class. If you have questions about accessing and using Canvas, visit the Canvas support page. Canvas and Technology Support also is available by phone or live chat:

541-346-4357 or livehelp.uoregon.edu

If you face Internet access challenges, visit Information Services “web page on going remote.”

**Access and Accommodations**

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please speak with us if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability related barriers to your participation. This includes barriers that are related to the online format of this class. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at
541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu. The AEC offers a wide range of support services including note-taking, testing services, sign language interpretation and adaptive technology. The AEC will provide us with a notification letter regarding the accommodations that are appropriate in your particular situation. In addition to requesting this letter be sent, it is important that you communicate with us directly so we can work together to eliminate any barriers to your success.

If you have disability related testing accommodations, please notify us as early in the term as possible to allow us time to determine the testing option that will work best for you.

**Respect for Diversity**

This course is a place where you will be treated with respect and we welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability and other visible and non-visible differences. All students are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class.

Class rosters are provided to instructors with students’ legal names. We will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise us of this preference early in the quarter (or before) so we may address you properly.

**Academic Integrity**

Since this course is both online and in person, all quizzes and tests are open book. While we fully support discussion and collaboration between students on the course materials, you are expected to take the quizzes and online tests without help from others. The answers to questions on the quizzes and midterm should come from the course materials. Only answers found in the course materials will be considered correct. Thus, you may not get credit for an answer that is found by googling the question, even if it is technically correct. Find the answers in the course material (the quizzes and midterm are meant to encourage engagement in the course). While vigorous discussion of your final research paper/project with others is encouraged, the final/paper project should be performed by you alone and in your own voice.

Any material that is quoted from another source needs to be clearly identified as a quote. If you choose a research project, as opposed to research paper, for your final, you may do the research project with up to 3 other classmates. Everyone, however, will be required to write their own report of the research project.

The University Student Conduct Code defines academic misconduct, which includes unauthorized help on assignments and examinations and the use of sources without acknowledgment. Academic misconduct is prohibited at UO. Happiness is not achieved by copying someone else’s work and passing it off as your own. To discourage such behavior, I will report misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards—consequences can include failure of this course. I will ask you to certify that your exams/papers are your own work. Exams are administered in Canvas and untimed. I have designed them with the
expectation that you will have access to course materials when you take them—and that’s just fine. Only material from the course will be considered correct answers to the exam and quiz questions. Please don’t just Google (internet search) the question and copy the answer you find. I will be looking to see evidence of critical thinking and your ability to put the concepts we’re working on into action in response to the exam prompts.

**Can I use Chat GPT and other AI for my Assignments?**

Chat-GPT and other AI writing tools are allowed to be used as part of this course. But, we ask that you consider the following questions carefully.

1) Am I using this tool to help me learn or just as an easy way to generate a response and get the assignment over with?

2) Am I sure that the information generated is true? Language generation models can generate fictitious facts including fictitious references!

3) Am I plagiarizing if I use a language-based AI model? The answer is YES, if you are copying the AI generated material and pasting it as your answer. The answer is NO if you use the AI generated material as inspiration or data to write your own response in your own words.

It is our policy to consider material contained within this course to be the correct answers to factual quiz and midterm questions. Our goal with quizzes and midterms is simply to promote engagement with the material - not to test your knowledge of the subject or your ability to google it or use Chat-GPT to answer the question. We think that you will really enjoy the material if you engage with it! :-) 

Prompts that ask you to share stories and feelings about your own life can't possibly come from Chat-GPT - it doesn't know your life. But, it could help you write your response in a way that better communicates how you are feeling or want to express yourself. Like everything, it is a tool and it is up to you to decide how to make the best of it (without letting it harm you).

Please remember that this course is to help you learn about yourself and to become a happier, more secure, and peaceful person. If using AI will help you achieve that, then go for it. If not, then don't. That is our policy :-) 

**Late and Make-up Policy**

It is very important that you keep pace with the weekly assignments, since we will be discussing these in detail during discussion sections. The weekly quizzes are meant to provide impetus for you to complete the materials in a timely manner. You may read and work ahead of schedule if you desire, but late quizzes will not be given (you can miss 3 without an effect on your grade). At the end of each week, the online quizzes for that week will no longer be available. There is a quiz for each of the 17 lectures. Only your top 14 scores will be counted towards your quiz grade.
The midterm exam will be available on one day only during the course. Written requests for alternate testing arrangements for this midterm due to conflicts with authorized and unavoidable university events must be made during the first two weeks of the term. Documentation must be included with all requests. A make up midterm will be essay/short answer questions. The final paper/project at the end of the term will be accepted for up to 5 days after the due date, with a 5% deduction to the score per day. Because these policies are firm, it is important you mark due dates on your calendar and plan your schedule accordingly.

Expectations

**Time Management**

In a typical week, the student should expect to spend an average of about 12-15 hours working on this course. This includes interacting with the read and viewing materials, watching or attending lectures, completing assignments and activities, posting in discussions online, participating in discussion sections, and working on the final project (work on this will begin early in the course). The student should try to make a practice of breaking big tasks into smaller chunks by doing a little every day. The lectures are recorded in 20-30 minute segments to make it easier for the student to view. PDFs of the lectures, with some basic notes, are provided so the student can follow along and take their own notes during the lecture. The student should read the material associated with each lecture and watch the associated TED talks or other videos. The student should take notes on the lectures, readings, and videos so that we can discuss them during discussion section. The student should note any questions they may have and attend drop-in office hours for help. To help inspire the student to keep pace with the course, there is a short quiz associated with each lecture and readings/videos. The student should make sure to take the two quizzes per week before the end of the week. Learning in this manner, rather than cramming during the week of exams, will make studying much more efficient and enhance the enjoyment of the course!

**Net-etiquette Guidelines**

When participating in online course activities, please use good “netiquette.” If emailing, use a subject line that clearly relates to your contribution. Write or speak in the first person when sharing your opinions and ideas but when addressing other students or discussing their ideas, use their names. Respect the privacy of your classmates and what they share in class. Understand that we may disagree and that exposure to other people’s opinions is part of the learning experience. Good netiquette also means using humor or sarcasm carefully, remembering that non-verbal cues (such as facial expressions) are not always possible or clear in a remote context.
In addition, your language should be free of profanity, appropriate for an academic context, and exhibit interest in, and courtesy for, others’ contributions. Be aware that typing in all capital letters indicates shouting. Certain breaches of netiquette can be considered disruptive behavior.

**Email Guidelines**

The University of Oregon has adopted university email addresses as an official means of communication. It is your responsibility to regularly check your UO email account in order to stay current with course communications.

While we will use canvas for submission of class material, please do not send emails from within Canvas. These messages are frequently delayed or never received. Please use your UO email account for sending messages.

Email is a very handy method for communicating with people, whether around the world or across campus. In some situations, email protocol is not as formal as paper communications. In others, (academics, jobs, etc.) there are some expectations of protocol. When communicating with me (or any faculty member) by email, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- The subject line should indicate the course number and the nature and topic of the email.
- You can address your instructor as “David”, “Dr. McCormick”, “Professor McCormick”, etc. but not as “Hey”. Email is a letter, not a text.
- Spell correctly and use appropriate punctuation.
- Always sign your messages with first and last name. Unsigned messages may not receive a response.

**Course Structure**

Introductory and course navigation videos are available on the canvas website for this course. Make sure to watch these short videos so that you can become oriented with the course. If you have any questions, email the instructor or TAs.

**Course Materials**

All course materials, including lectures, readings, and videos, are available free of charge on the canvas website.

**Course Activities**

- Each week there are two lectures to view or attend. Each lecture online is divided into 2 or 3 videos of approximately 20-30 minutes.
There are book chapters, articles, or scientific papers to read for each lecture.
There are videos to watch for each lecture – these are typically TED talks.
The student is required to post to the discussion sections online for each lecture and to respectfully comment on another student’s post.
There is a quiz for each lecture, that is due by the start of the discussion section each week. The quizzes are open book.
There are suggested activities, such as meditation, exercise, gratitude, to perform each week to help with building a healthy mindset. These are not graded – do them for your own benefit and to learn more from the class! 😊
Each Thursday or Friday we will meet in discussion section and discuss the weeks materials.

Grading

20% Lecture Preparation Quizzes (best 14 out of 17)
30% Midterm Exam
10% Final Research Paper proposal (2-3 pages double spaced)
30% Final Research Project or Research paper (6-8 page description of project and relevance to the science and practice of happiness and 1-2-page time journal; OR Final Research Paper, 6-8 pages, written on a topic of the student’s choice about the Neuroscience/Psychology of Happiness)
10% Classroom Participation. Attendance and participation in discussion section and online discussions will determine this grade. You are expected to attend discussion section and post to each online discussion prompt as well as comment respectfully on someone else's post. For in person class, attendance in lecture is encouraged (we will talk a lot about very important and interesting topics!) but not graded. For online, you are expected to watch the pre-recorded lectures, but this is also ungraded. You are allowed 3 misses for discussion section/online discussion posts before it affects your score.
5% Extra credit – The student may earn 5% extra credit through taking notes on the readings, videos, and/or activities that are assigned for each lecture. Extra credit is also given for submitting the gratitude letter during the week in which this is an activity, for attending meditation during meditation week, for submitting a well thought out letter to your future self at the end of the course, and for submitting a course evaluation at the end of the course. An example note-taking form is provided below. (0.5% extra-credit available per week.) You can even get extra credit for coming to your TA or professor’s office hours – so make sure you come see us!

Weekly activities (such as meditation, exercise, etc.) are suggested for the student’s benefit and are not graded. The student may earn extra credit by taking notes on their activities and associated thoughts/experiences.

Course grades and percentiles: A+: 97-100%; A: 93-96; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 83-86; B-: 80-82; C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-: 70-72; D+: 67-69; D: 63-66; D-: 60-62 F: <60%.
A range: Superior mastery of the material, as evidenced by midterm and quiz test scores. Active participation in lecture and discussion section. Thoughtful and effective analysis of the topic of the course as evidenced through the final research project or paper and proposal.

B range: Good mastery of the material, as evidenced by midterm and quiz test scores. Active participation in lecture and discussion section. Mostly clear analysis of the topic of the course as evidenced through the final research project or paper and proposal.

C range: Adequate mastery of the material, as evidenced by midterm and quiz test scores. Adequate participation in lecture and discussion section. Good, but with some gaps, analysis of the topic of the course as evidenced through the final research project or paper and proposal.

D range: Poor mastery of the material, as evidenced by midterm and quiz test scores. Relatively little participation in lecture and discussion section. Important gaps or errors in analysis of the topic of the course as evidenced through the final research project or paper and proposal.

F: Inadequate mastery of the material, as evidenced by midterm and quiz test scores. Little to no participation in lecture and discussion section. No evidence of significant effort in the analysis of the topic of the course as indicated by the final research project or paper and proposal.

**P/NP OPTION**

The student must receive a grade of C- or better (70/100) to receive a P (pass).

## Course Schedule

### Modules – Lectures, Reading, Viewing, Activities

Each module contains 5 components:

1) Lecture videos (2-3)
2) Readings
3) Videos (typically TED talks)
4) Activities
5) Quizzes

*To advance to the next module, it is required to have completed the previous module including the quiz.* Make sure to stay up to date on the material. Procrastinating is one of the problems that we will talk about in class.

### Course Dates and Topics of Discussion

#### Week 1:

**Module/Lecture 1:** Introduction: Overview of Course; What is Happiness and Why Study It?

**Discussion Sections:** Discussion/Experiential Section: Meet and Greet. The meaning of happiness and impediments to being happy – a deeper look. Discussion of our song/playlists.

#### Week 2:

**Module/Lecture 2:** What increases long term happiness

**Module/Lecture 3:** Impediments to happiness
**Discussion Sections**: Discussion/Experiential Section: What increases long term happiness and impediments to this.

**Week 3:**

- **Module/Lecture 4**: The Brain – an organ for creating the mind
- **Module/Lecture 5**: What causes stress and anxiety and how to overcome it.
- **Discussion Sections**: Discussion/Experiential Section: The Human Brain and How it works.

**Week 4:**

- **Module/Lecture 6**: Neural pathways of stress and anxiety
- **Module/Lecture 7**: How to change your internal narrative
- **Discussion Sections**: Discussion/Experiential Section: Meditation – Body Scan/Loving-Kindness/Mindfulness and Virtual Reality. Practices to reduce your stress, anxiety, and unskillful habits

**Week 5:**

- **Module/Lecture 8**: Neural pathways of reward, habit, addiction and how they affect our happiness
- **Module/Lecture 9**: Building better habits and reducing addictive behaviors
- **Discussion Sections**: Discussion/Experiential Section: Meditation – Body Scan/Loving-Kindness/Mindfulness and Virtual Reality. Practices to reduce your stress, anxiety, and unskillful habits

**Week 6:**

- **Midterm Exam on Canvas. 40-50 questions, mostly multiple choice, on Modules 1-9.**
- **Module/Lecture 10**: Neural pathways for empathy, compassion, connection
- **Discussion Sections**: Discussion/Experiential Section: Midterm review and Final Project Discussion.

**Week 7:**

- **Module/Lecture 11**: What does lead to happiness I: gratitude and generosity
- **Module/Lecture 12**: What does lead to happiness II: the importance of healthy social connections and relationships
- **Discussion Sections**: Discussion/Experiential Section: In Person: Taste/Touch/Visual experiments. Online: Discussion on gratitude/generosity/healthy relationships

**Week 8:**

- **Module/Lecture 13**: Neural pathways for bonding and relationships
Module/Lecture 14: Achieving better goals I: the right mindset
Discussion Sections: Discussion/Experiential Section: Discussion of favorite love/break up song and lyrics. Sexual health in relationships

Week 9:

Module/Lecture 15: Achieving Better Goals II: harnessing our biases
Discussion section – None – Thanksgiving break

Week 10:

Module/Lecture 16: Achieving Better Goals III: implementing intention and ending procrastination
Module/Lecture 17: Strategies in practice: helping others and helping the planet.

Discussion Sections: Final Project Discussion; We vs. Me – an action plan

Arrange Individual Sessions with your TA and/or Dr. McCormick to work on your final projects.

Week 11:
Final Paper or Final Project. Check Canvas for due date.

Detailed Course Schedule – Readings, Videos, and Activities

Week 1

Module/Lecture 1: Welcome, Course Introduction, and “What is Happiness and Why Study It?”:

At the beginning of the course, we will take a measure of your levels of happiness. Go to https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/questionnaires/authentic-happiness-inventory and take the “Authentic Happiness Inventory.” You will need to register to take the questionnaire. Keep track of your score – we will refer back to it at the end of the course, and see if we were successful in changing your levels of happiness! Be honest in your answers on the inventory. There is no grade and only you will know your score.


Watch these videos and write down your thoughts. Do you agree or disagree with their main points? Do you resonate with the speaker’s statements?
Emily Esfahani Smith - There's more to life than being happy
https://www.ted.com/talks/emily_esfahani_smith_there_s_more_to_life_than_being_happy

Dan Gilbert - The surprising science of happiness
https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_gilbert_the_surprising_science_of_happiness

Activity (week 1): Connect with other people. We will see that, for many of us, as goes the quality of our social connections, so goes the feelings of the quality of our life. So, for your first week in class, I want you to make new social connections. First, meet someone from this class that you don’t know. Find out something interesting about that person, and share something interesting about yourself. Since everyone in class has this assignment, it should be easy to strike up a conversation with a new person! Following this example of social connection, now make some new connections this week outside class. Perhaps the person that serves you coffee at Starbucks, or the person that serves you lunch in the dining facilities. Or someone at the grocery store, or a professor! Make at least one new social connection each day this week. Sometime during the week, spend an hour or more connecting with someone meaningful in your life. A friend, family member, loved one. The important point is that it needs to be quality time. Quality over quantity. Go for coffee, or a walk, or just skype. Keep track of your new social connections in your journal and how they made you feel (from positive to negative aspects). At the end of the quarter we will see if you are more or less at ease with social connections following all of our practices.

Take the online quiz on the above material.

Thursday and Friday Discussion/Experiential Section: Meet and Greet. The meaning of happiness and impediments to being happy – a deeper look. Discussion of our song/playlists.

Take the online quiz on the above material.

Week 2

Module/Lecture 2: What increases long term happiness

Read:
Read this online report: https://ourworldindata.org/happiness-and-life-satisfaction

Watch:
Robert Waldinger - What makes a good life? Lessons from the longest study on happiness
Module/Lecture 3: Impediments to Happiness

Read:

Don Miguel Ruiz (1997) The Four Agreements - Chapter 1

Read these online:

Steven Pinker: The world is an amazing place so why aren’t we happier
https://ideas.ted.com/the-world-is-an-amazing-place-so-why-arent-we-happier/ (Links to an external site.)

Lisa Varvogli: 7 Obstacles to Happiness and How to Overcome them
https://medium.com/@liza_98826/7-obstacles-to-happiness-and-how-to-overcome-them-6ecc04a366ae

Watch:
Brene Brown – The power of vulnerability
https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability?language=en

Interview with Kalpana Pot – available in Canvas

Take the online quiz on the above material.

Activity (week 2): Spreading Kindness. Every day this week do something kind for someone else, above and beyond what you normally do. Pay it forward by buying someone a cup of coffee at Starbucks (maybe the person behind you in line?). Pay for your friend’s lunch. Tell someone how much you appreciate a characteristic that you have always admired about them. Also do some larger activities over the quarter. Volunteer to plant trees in Eugene https://friendsoftrees.org/eugene/. Participate in a UO sustainability project https://emu.uoregon.edu/sustainability. Volunteer to take leftover food to a homeless shelter https://foodforlanecounty.org/. Give blood. Whatever you do, make sure it is about being kind, and not about rewarding yourself. Put in your journal what you did, how you felt, and how it relates to happiness.
Take the online quiz on the above material.

Thursday and Friday Discussion/Experiential Section: What increases long term happiness and impediments to this

Week 3

Module/Lecture 4: The Structure of the Brain – An Organ for Creating a Model of the World Including Biases and Best Guesses

Read:


Watch:

The Brain
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMKc8nfPATI

Anil Seth - Your brain hallucinates your conscious reality
https://www.ted.com/talks/anian_seth_your_brain_hallucinates_your_conscious_reality?referrer=playlist-how_your_brain_constructs_real

Isaac Lidsky - What reality are you creating for yourself?
https://www.ted.com/talks/isaac_lidsky_what_reality_are_you_creating_for_yourself?referrer=playlist-how_your_brain_constructs_real

Jill Bolte Taylor - My stroke of insight
https://www.ted.com/talks/jill_bolte_taylor_my_stroke_of_insight

Module/Lecture 5: What causes stress and anxiety and how to overcome it.

Watch:

Olivia Remes: How to cope with anxiety
https://www.ted.com/talks/olivia_remes_how_to_cope_with_anxiety?language=en (Links to an external site.)

Johann Hari: This could be why you are depressed or anxious
https://www.ted.com/talks/johann_hari_this_could_be_why_you_re_depressed_or_anxious?language=en
Read:

Students’ Guide to Dealing with College Stress

https://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/balancing-student-stress/

*Take the online quiz on the above material.*

**Activity (week 3): Discover Your Inner Strengths.** Making the best of your talents and inner strengths facilitates people’s life satisfaction and feelings of useful engagement in work/school.

Go to [http://www.viasurvey.org/](http://www.viasurvey.org/) and take the inner strength survey. Answer the 240 questions (about 30 minutes) honestly and accurately. It is important in order to get an accurate assessment of your strengths. Write down in your journal your top strengths and use at least one of them each day over the next week. Write in your journal how you used your inner strengths and how you may help them grow.

Also consider what strengths that you would like to grow. Try to push yourself each week to strengthen an area in which you are not strong by doing something each day that isn’t a great strength. Rapid development occurs often at the boundary of what you are comfortable with/capable of. Push the boundaries a bit! Note in your journal your experiences.

**Read:**


**Watch:**

Dan Ariely What makes us feel good about our work?


Angela Lee Duckworth Grit: The power of passion and perseverance


**Thursday and Friday** Discussion/Experiential Section: The Human Brain and How it works.

**Week 4**

**Module/Lecture 6:** Neural pathways of stress and anxiety

**Read:**

Read online: Brainfacts.org - The neuroscience of stress

https://www.brainfacts.org/thinking-sensing-and-behaving/emotions-stress-and-anxiety/2018/the-neuroscience-of-stress-061918?gclid=CjwKCAiArJjvBRACEiwAWiqq2mdX7CEQbStco0t_jp0-Ymryi2mHW-H1HI0iT8baJTBLxUbEb9pWBoCPgEQAvD_BwE&gclid=CjwKCAiArJjvBRACEiwAWiqq2mdX7CEQbStco0t_jp0-Ymryi2mHW-H1HI0iT8baJTBLxUbEb9pWBoCPgEQAvD_BwE

Watch:

Neuroscience of Anxiety
https://youtu.be/2wCbwpnIJsA

Stress, Portrait of a Killer - Robert Sapolsky
https://youtu.be/a58RrLUs4YE

Take the online quiz on the above material

Module/Lecture 7: How to change your internal narrative

Activity (week 4): Meditate! Every day this week, meditate for 15 minutes or more. Download the Headspace or Calm apps (no need to sign up for the service). Find a quiet place and meditate each day for 15 minutes or more. Keep notes in your journal about your experiences. There are groups available on campus for meditation as well. Weekly, I teach meditation for the course. See the front page of Canvas for details.

There are also meditation groups that meet in the Duck’s Nest https://health.uoregon.edu/ducknest.


For the Activity - Watch: Shauna Shapiro - The Power of Mindfulness: What you Practice Grows Stronger

For the Module - Read:

For the Module - Watch:
Kati Morton - What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
https://youtu.be/g7B3n9jobus
Zindel Segal - The Mindful Way Through Depression
https://youtu.be/1A4w3W94ygA
Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s TED talk:
https://www.ted.com/talks/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_flow_the_secret_to_happiness?language=en

Take the online quiz on the above material.

Thursday and Friday Discussion/Experiential Section: Meditation – Body Scan/Loving-Kindness/Mindfulness and Virtual Reality. Practices to reduce your stress, anxiety, and unskillful habits

Week 5

Module/Lecture 8: Neural Pathways – Reward, Habit, Addiction, and how they affect our happiness

Watch:
Reward pathway in the brain
https://youtu.be/YzCYuKX6zp8
Judson Brewer - A Simple Way To Break a Bad Habit
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-moW9jvvMr4

Read:


*Take the online quiz on the above material.*

**Module/Lecture 9:** Building better habits and reducing addictive behaviors

**Read:**


Atomic Habits. James Clearly Chapter 3.

The following is extra reading and not required:


**Watch:**

James Clear - Atomic Habits: How to get 1% better every day.

https://youtu.be/U_nzqnXWvSo

The Social Dilemma – available on Netflix. We will have a watch party and discussion of this interesting movie about the power of social networks to shape your mind and behavior. Here is a trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uacC5tcci0

*Take the online quiz on the above material.*

**Activity (week 5): Gratitude – a daily exercise.** During this week, write in your journal (before bed is a good time) all of the things you were grateful for during the day. Think of at least 5 items. Write a little as to why you are grateful for these things that occurred in your daily life. Savor those things for which you are grateful. Look for them in your daily life and see if you notice more each day. Gratitude has a way of growing, if you just give it a little water.

**Week 6**

Midterm Exam online.

**Module/Lecture 10:** Neural pathways for empathy, compassion, connection
Read:

Pfaff D. W. The Altruistic Brain - Chapters 2.

Pfaff D.W. The Altruistic Brain - Chapter 3.

Watch:

(Please Note: These talks contain discussion of sexual abuse, genocide, and other difficult topics; You may skip watching them if you choose. If you do watch, I recommend you watch with a friend and discuss the movies after)

Eve Ensler: Embrace your inner girl
https://youtu.be/YhG1Bgbsj2w

Clemantine Wamariya: War and what comes after.

Note: Clemantine Wamariya was a student and friend that I knew at Yale. She and I lived in the same residential college.

When Clemantine was six years old, the Rwandan Civil War forced her and her sister to flee their home in Kigali, leaving their parents and everything they knew behind. In this deeply personal talk, she tells the story of how she became a refugee, living in camps in seven countries over the next six years -- and how she's tried to make sense of what came after. (Note: Clemantine was one of the students in the college that I lived in at Yale and I came to know her from that connection.)

https://youtu.be/U4gR_cd6xOc

Watch:

We are having a special screening of the movie "Gratitude Revealed". Straub Hall, Oct. 26th, 5:45 pm. You will get 0.5% extra credit for attending. Woo Hoo!

It is an amazing, inspiring, and visually stunning movie that you won't want to miss.

I also highly recommend you watch the documentary movie “Buck” (2011) about Buck Brannanman - the original horse whisperer, who has an amazing ability to connect emotionally with horses owing to his difficult childhood.

You can rent it for a small fee (e.g. $3.99) from amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/Buck-Brannaman/dp/B00556VD70/ref=sr_1_2?keywords=buck+movie&qid=1583760718&sr=8-2 (Links to an external site.)
or on Youtube:
https://youtu.be/3eB263Go2_4

*Take the online quiz on the above material.*

Thursday and Friday Discussion/Experiential Section: Midterm Review

**Activity (week 6):** The Gratitude Letter/Visit. Think of one person, still living, who made a big difference in your life but whom you never properly thanked. Find a quiet spot when you have a half-hour and write a 300-word, heartfelt testimony to that person, explaining how he or she touched your life and why he or she is meaningful to you. If you’d like to take it to the next level, schedule a time to visit this person and share your letter. Call the person and say you want to visit without explaining why. At the visit, read the letter aloud. Gratitude is a powerful tool for increasing happiness because it intensifies positive memories and forges social bonds. For this reason, this is likely to be one of the most intense exercises of the entire quarter. *Submit your gratitude letter in Canvas for extra credit.*

Thursday and Friday Discussion/Experiential Section: Midterm review and Final Project Discussion.

**Week 7**

**Module/Lecture 11: May 3 – May 9** What does lead to happiness I: gratitude and generosity

Read:


You can also read this - but it isn't required (you won't be quizzed or tested on it)!

Watch:

Elizabeth Dunn  Helping Others Makes Us Happier – But It Matters How We Do It.

Louie Schwartzberg  Nature, Beauty, Gratitude

David Steindl-Rast  Want to be happy? Be grateful.
https://youtu.be/UtBsl3j0YRQ

*Take the online quiz on the above material.*

Module/Lecture 12: What does lead to happiness II: The importance of healthy social connections and relationships.

Activity (week 7): *Savor a Beautiful Day.* During this week, your assignment is to spend time outdoors. Hike up Spencer Butte or to Hendricks Park (which is within walking distance of campus). If you can’t do that, go for a walk in the wooded areas of campus. Do it by yourself, or with friends, but however you do it, walk quietly, in silence, and savor the beauty around you. Our minds are always so busy, immersed in our human world, we don’t recognize the beauty around us. Make sure you spend at least one hour this week savoring, in silence, that natural beauty. Try and use the meditative skills you learned in a previous exercise to quiet your mind and be present during your walk. Write about your experience in your journal.

Read:


Watch: Katie Hood. The difference between healthy and unhealthy love.
https://www.ted.com/talks/katie_hood_the_difference_between_healthy_and_unhealthy_love?language=en

*Take the online quiz on the above material.*

Thursday and Friday  Discussion/Experiential Section: In Person: Taste/Touch/Visual experiments. Online: Discussion on gratitude/generosity/healthy relationships

**Week 8**
Module/Lecture 13: Neural pathways of bonding and relationships

Read:


Pfaff D.W. The Altruistic Brain - Neural and Hormonal Mechanisms that Promote Prosocial Behavior - Chapter 4 101-130

Watch:

Helen Fisher – The brain in love
https://www.ted.com/talks/helen_fisher_the_brain_in_love?language=en

Helen Fisher – Technology hasn’t changed love; here’s why
https://www.ted.com/talks/helen_fisher_technology_hasn_t_changed_love_here_s_why

Take the online quiz on the above material.

Module/Lecture 14: Achieving Better Goals I: The right mindset

Activity (week 8): Exercise! The mind and body are intimately connected together. Exercise not only affects the state of your body, but also the state of your mind. It is a great stress reliever, and with time can increase your mood and even lessen depression. This week, exercise every day. Go to the rec, join a yoga class, dance alone or with friends, or simply go for a walk. Note in your journal how you feel after each round of exercise, and over the course of the week.

Read:


I also recommend the book (not required reading):

Mindset: The New Psychology of Success by Carol Dweck

Watch:

Anindya Kundu The boost students need to overcome obstacles
https://www.ted.com/talks/anindya_kundu_the_boost_students_need_to_overcome_obstacles?language=en
Sarah Kay  If I should have a daughter

https://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_kay_if_i_should_have_a_daughter/transcript?language=en

Fixed mindset vs. growth mindset

https://youtu.be/Xv2ar6AKvGc

Take the online quiz on the above material.

Thursday and Friday Discussion/Experiential Section: Discussion of favorite love/break up song and lyrics. Sexual health in relationships

Week 9

Module/Lecture 15: Achieving Better Goals II: Harnessing Our Biases

Read:


Watch:
12 Cognitive Biases Explained
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEwGBIr_Rlw&feature=youtu.be

Cognitive Bias Song
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RsbmjNLQkc&feature=youtu.be

Take the online quiz on the above material.

Module/Lecture 16: Achieving Better Goals III: Implementing Intention and Ending Procrastination

Activity (week 9): Sleep! The average college student is about 14 hours sleep deprived. That means that if the student is put in a room with nothing to do, no cell phones, computers, or games, they will sleep an extra 14 hours! Have you ever noticed how much you sleep when you have time off or go home for the weekend? Sleep is a critical function for the body, brain, and mind. Contrary to cultural bias, less sleep is NOT better. For this week’s activity, go to bed early, sleep in, get an extra hour of sleep each day. Keep notes in your journal as to how you feel each night and relate it to how much sleep you were able to get. It could take you many days to pay back your sleep debt, but it is worth it!
Here are some tips for good sleep: Don’t drink caffeine after mid-day; Don’t use your phone or ipad or other electronics in bed; Don’t exercise just before sleep (it tends to jazz up your mind and makes sleep less deep); Don’t drink alcohol before sleep; Don’t get into intense discussions or arguments (yikes!) before going to bed. Do loving-kindness meditation in your mind as you fall asleep. Treat yourself well and relax. It’s an assignment from your happiness professor!

Read:


Watch:

Tim Urban’s TED Talk “Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arj7oStGLkU

Take the online quiz on the above material.

Thursday and Friday Discussion/Experiential Section: None – Thanksgiving break

Week 10

Module/Lecture 17: Strategies in practice: Helping others and helping the planet

Read:

Why we need to be more emotional to save the world


You might also want to read (but not required)


Watch:

Nick Marks - The Happy Planet Index

https://www.ted.com/talks/nic_marks_the_happy_planet_index?language=en

Take the online quiz on the above material.

Discussion Sections: Final Project Discussion; We vs. Me – an action plan

Activity (week 10):

How Has Your Authentic Happiness Changed? Re-take the “Authentic Happiness Inventory”. https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/questionnaires/authentic-happiness-inventory ). Did your score change? How did it change? Even if it didn’t change, do you feel you now have the skills to develop more happiness, less stress, and more fulfillment in your life?

Write your future self a letter. Submit it online in canvas and I will make sure to forward it to you in exactly a year!

What was your experience during this year or past years? What have you learned that you want to remind your future self? How do you feel at this time and how do you feel about the future? What are you goals for the year, and what will you do that is different over the next 12 months. And finally, what you would you like to tell your future self?

Have fun and in a year, you can reread your letter and remember this unique time in your history.
Final Paper or Project

Final Project or Research Paper (30% of grade.) The student may select to do a final project of their choosing or write a final paper. Either way, the project or paper should be about the course material. The project could be, for example, a video, an “experiment” on how the student’s actions affect their happiness, an interview with siblings, parents, and grandparents about happiness, a blog or webpage that the student maintained throughout the quarter, etc. Either way, the project will need to be accompanied by a short journal of time spent (1-2 pages; be realistic – remember confabulation leads to unhappiness!) spent on the project (e.g. planning, designing, implementing, finishing, etc.) and a 6-8 page paper that introduces the project, tells the results, and discusses it with what was learned in class and with scientific studies the student read. The student should provide at least 3-5 references for their paper (at least 2-3 from outside materials)

Guidelines for Writing and Submitting the Final Project

Guidelines for a traditional or non-traditional project and how we will grade it!!

Check Canvas for due date and submission mechanism. Please submit the final project as a word document or PDF with your last name as the first word in the title of the saved document: such as mccormick_final_project.pdf. It will help us organize the proposals and respond to them.

Final Paper or Project Proposal

This course has a final paper/project. To help you develop your final paper/project, you will need to submit a proposal. Get familiar with the final paper/project format for this course by reading ALL of the below material and links.

This proposal is 10% of your grade - so please take care and do it well. The proposals are 2 pages and you must use the format provided. They are due on October 22nd at 11:59 pm. Submit by pressing the Start Assignment Button in the upper right of this screen. Since this final project format is more open than usual, we would like to make sure that it is appropriate for the course material. Please give an accurate and detailed description of your project or paper (e.g. topic, ideas, references, etc.) that will allow us to know that the project will help you learn about the science and practice of happiness. Use the rubric as a guide.

Please send to us your final paper/project proposal as a word document or PDF, using the appropriate form below, with your last name as the first word in the title of the saved document - for example, McCormick_finalprojectproposal. It will help us organize the proposals and respond to them. Thanks : - )
There are 4 different paths for doing your final project/paper. 1) Monk Month; 2) TinyBlueDot Project; 3) Traditional research paper; 4) Non-traditional Research Project. Most of you will probably choose the non-traditional research project. If you volunteered to be a TinyBlueDot Project participant, then you must follow those guidelines.

1) Monk Month
If you are interested in doing "Monk Month" read this and the sign up sheet is here. Here are the guidelines for your final project proposal for Monk Month.

2) TinyBlueDot Project
If you are one of the 50 students who were chosen to be part of the Tiny Blue Dot research project, then here are the guidelines for your project proposal.

3) Traditional Research Paper
If you are interested in doing a "traditional" research paper where you read literature and write about a topic of your choosing (and relate it to your own knowledge and experience), then follow these guidelines.

4) Non-Traditional Final Project
If you are interested in doing a "non-traditional" research project where you try a manipulation for about a month (e.g. eat well, exercise, meditate, make a blog, etc.) and see how it affects your life and emotional self, then follow these guidelines.

Monk Month
Monk Month – Living Deliberately
Monk Month Sign Up Sheet Here. Inspired by the class “Living Deliberately”, also known as “Monk Class” at the University of Pennsylvania (https://penntoday.upenn.edu/2013-04-11/latest-news/living-silently-celibate-and-technology-free), we are offering the opportunity to, as Timothy Leary famously said, “Turn on, Tune In, Drop out.”

In living with, and teaching, Buddhist monks in India, I found them to be among the most happy and peaceful people I have ever met. I am sure that part of this is the result of the
lifestyle that they lead – free of worldly possessions (owning just their robes and school materials and a few personal care essentials) and practicing the Buddhist Precepts.

If you are interested in doing “Monk Month” for your project – we are offering 3 levels. You will be asked to take a vow to follow the level of your choosing and to follow through with it whole-heartedly and to the best of your ability. Entering into this agreement should not be taken lightly. If you are experiencing difficulty during Monk Month, we are available to help.

The 5 precepts of Buddhism are:

1. Refrain from taking life
   Not killing any living being. For Buddhists, this includes animals, so many Buddhists choose to be vegetarian.

2. Refrain from taking what is not given
   Not stealing from anyone.

3. Refrain from the misuse of the senses
   Not having too much sensual pleasure. For example, not looking at people in a lustful way or cheating on your committed relationship.

4. Refrain from wrong speech
   Not lying or gossiping about other people.

5. Refrain from intoxicants that cloud the mind
   Not drinking alcohol or taking drugs, as these do not help you to think clearly.

Monk month –

For the first three weeks of the Final Project (during the month of November) you will commit to following one of the following three levels of behavior:

Level 1. Monk Light

- Follow the 5 Buddhist precepts, including practicing a vegetarian diet (or giving silent thanks to the animal's sacrifice of whose flesh you are about to eat), refraining from sensual pleasures, including refraining from pleasure seeking sex (whether with someone else or alone), sexual viewing of others (either directly or indirectly – e.g. porn) (Note: intimate interactions that are
practiced with love and care are allowed), practicing honest, but respectful speech (use these three criteria to speak – 1) Is it true? 2) Is it the right time to say this? 3) Is it beneficial to others to say this?) and NOT gossiping. No drinking alcohol or taking other mind-altering drugs (this does not include prescription medications such as anti-depressants and anxiolytics).

- Deactivate or remove all social media.
- Refrain from reading the news.
- No smoking or vaping.
- Journal for at least 30 minutes each night before bedtime about your feelings and thoughts throughout the day.

**Level 2 – Monk Medium**

In addition to all of the activities of level 1, you will also:

- Restrict use of cell phone and computer to school work only except for at most 1 hour per day of social interaction – texting, etc.
- Meditate daily for at least 30 minutes.
- Get 7-8 hours of sleep each night by going to bed by 10-11 pm each night and waking up by 6-7 am each day.
- Eat healthy – a balanced diet of healthy food (not pizza!).
- Exercise at least 4 of 7 days – e.g. walks in nature.
- Dress modestly (in a way that your grandmother would approve).

**Level 3 – Going Full Monk Mode (No, you do not need to shave your head and wear robes!)**

In addition to all of the activities of Levels 1 and 2, you will also:

- Restrict use of cell phone and computer to school work.
- Practice a vow of silence for the 3 weeks. You will communicate through written notes. If there are situations where you are required to speak, such as discussion sections in class, tell us about them and we will note your necessary exceptions.
- In addition to dressing modestly, forgo the use of makeup. Monks are hygienic, so you will do all your normal hygienic practices.
- No touching members of your potential physical or mental intimacy partner cohort (e.g. the opposite gender if you are hetero, same gender if gay, etc.)

>You are ALWAYS ALLOWED to use your cell phones or computers in cases of physical or mental emergency! Should you experience mental hardships during the three weeks, we will
be available to help and answer questions through text (541-250-0566) and email (davidmc@uoregon.edu or email your TA).

Tiny Blue Dot Project Volunteer Project Proposal Guidelines

Thank you so much for volunteering to help with the Tiny Blue Brain project! We are eternally grateful for your contribution.

You will still need to write a project proposal (worth 10% of your grade) and a Final Project (worth 30% of your grade).

- As part of the project, you will be meditating 4 or 5 nights a week.
- For your project, you should measure your emotional state before and after attending meditation and at the end of the day.
- You should do this for both your meditation days, as well as your non-meditation days, during the four weeks of meditation.
- Decide on some aspect of meditation that particularly interests you. What do you think will change with a regular practice of meditation? Do you believe there will be a change in your thought patterns or emotional state? What are your predictions?
- For your final project, you will be asked to review literature on your predictions and on meditation and compare it to your own experience.
- What was your overall experience with a regular practice of meditation? Will you keep it up going forward?
- Think of interesting questions that you would like to address in your project with your participation in this study.

Final Project Proposal - TinyBlueDot

Cut and Paste into a document and fill out - 2 pages. Submit as Word or PDF document through Canvas.

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Bi170 Happiness: a Neuroscience and Psychology Perspective - Non-traditional project
• Name:
• Date:
• TinyBlueDot Participant
• Topic you want to explore
• Hypothesis
• Why do you want to explore it?
• How does it relate to what we have or will discuss in class: neural and psychological mechanisms of happiness, life fulfillment, skillful engagement, etc.
• How will you explore your project? Give a detailed plan. If you are going to measure how something affects your mood or happiness, come up with a metric of how you will measure that mood change. For example, have a scale system in which you note your levels of anxiety, stress, contentedness, optimism, etc. from 1 to 10 before and after your activity. Then measure it again some hours later, to see if it lasts. Finally, to be somewhat scientific, you need a control - an activity that is similar but doesn't involve your manipulation. As an example, you might hypothesize that doing 30 minutes of meditation every day will slowly decrease your levels of anxiety over a month. As a control, you could take your measures of anxiety and stress before and after another activity, such as reading a book, that doesn't involve meditation.
• Why would it be meaningful to you and others?
• You will be asked to write at least a 6-8 page report on your non-traditional project and how it relates to the class. What would you write about with your project in this report?
• Reading/videos or other materials that you plan to use as a reference. List at least 3.

Final Project Proposal Grading Rubric

Is the project on a topic that will increase the students understanding of well-being/happiness in themselves and/or others? 1 point
Is the hypothesis clear and appropriate? 1 point

Is the project well thought out and well planned? 3 points
Is it clearly communicated how the project will lead to greater insight into the psychology or neuroscience of happiness? 2 points
Is it clear how the project relates to material in the class? 2 points
Does the student give at least 3 good quality references to material that will help inform the project? 1 point
Final Project/Paper Proposal
Traditional

First, you should read about the final paper expectations, so that you can make a good proposal for your paper.

TRADITIONAL final paper guidelines and grading rubric here

Next - make your propose your paper using the following instructions:

Proposal outlines: (cut and paste in a word document - fill out and submit through canvas)

Traditional paper/research paper proposal - 2 pages:

Bi170 Happiness: a Neuroscience and Psychology Perspective - Research Paper Proposal

Name:
Date:

Traditional – Final Paper

Are you one of the 50 chosen participates in the TinyBlueDot research project? Yes or No

Are you proposing to do Monk Month as your project? Yes or No. If Yes, what level? 1, 2 or 3.

- Topic you want to explore
- Hypothesis
- Why do you want to explore it?
- What are your initial thoughts and plans for this paper?
- How does it relate to what we have or will discuss in class: neural and psychological mechanisms of happiness, life fulfillment, skillful engagement, etc.
- Reading/videos or other materials that you plan to use as a reference. List at least 5.

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Here are some examples (Note: In previous years a hypothesis is not required as it is now and they were required to have only 3 references as opposed to 5 now):

Example Traditional Project Proposal 1
Download Example Traditional Project Proposal 1

Example Traditional Project Proposal 2
Download Example Traditional Project Proposal 2

Example Traditional Project Proposal 3
Download Example Traditional Project Proposal 3

Final Project/Paper Proposal Grading Rubric

Is the project/paper on a topic that will increase the students understanding of well-being/happiness in themselves and/or others? 1 point

Is the hypothesis clear and appropriate? 1 point

Is the topic well thought out and explained clearly? 3 points
Is it clearly communicated how the project will lead to greater insight into the psychology or neuroscience of happiness? 2 points
Is it clear how the project relates to material in the class? 2 points
Does the student give at least 5 good quality references to material that will help inform the project? 1 point

Final Project Proposal - Non-Traditional

First, you should read the guidelines for the non-traditional research project paper, to get familiar with what you will need to provide at the end of the term:

NON-TRADITIONAL final project guidelines and grading rubric here

Next, use the following guidelines to submit your proposal. Good luck and enjoy!

Cut and Paste into a document and fill out - 2 pages. Submit as Word or PDF document through Canvas. Last name as the first word in the document: e.g. McCormick_finalprojectproposal

Bi170 Happiness: a Neuroscience and Psychology Perspective - Non-traditional project

- Name:
• Date:
• Non-traditional (e.g. experiential practice such as meditation, journaling, exercise, healthy eating, poetry, art, webpage, blog, etc.).

• Are you one of the 50 chosen participates in the TinyBlueDot research project? Yes or No

Are you proposing to do Monk Month as your project? Yes or No. If Yes, what level? 1, 2 or 3.

Topic you want to explore

• Hypothesis
• Why do you want to explore it?
• How does it relate to what we have or will discuss in class: neural and psychological mechanisms of happiness, life fulfillment, skillful engagement, etc.
• How will you explore your project? Give a detailed plan. If you are going to measure how something affects your mood or happiness, come up with a metric of how you will measure that mood change. For example, have a scale system in which you note your levels of anxiety, stress, contentedness, optimism, etc. from 1 to 10 before and after your activity. Then measure it again some hours later, to see if it lasts. Finally, to be somewhat scientific, you need a control - an activity that is similar but doesn't involve your manipulation. As an example, you might hypothesize that doing 30 minutes of meditation every day will slowly decrease your levels of anxiety over a month. As a control, you could take your measures of anxiety and stress before and after another activity, such as reading a book, that doesn't involve meditation.
• Why would it be meaningful to you and others?
• You will be asked to write at least a 6-8 page report on your non-traditional project and how it relates to the class. What would you write about with your project in this report?
• Reading/videos or other materials that you plan to use as a reference. List at least 3.

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Example Non-Traditional Project Proposals

Example 1 Download Example 1
Example 2 Download Example 2
Example 3 Download Example 3

Final Project Proposal Grading Rubric
Is the project on a topic that will increase the students understanding of well-being/happiness in themselves and/or others? 1 point
Is the hypothesis clear and appropriate? 1 point
Is the project well thought out and well planned? 3 points
Is it clearly communicated how the project will lead to greater insight into the psychology or neuroscience of happiness? 2 points
Is it clear how the project relates to material in the class? 2 points
Does the student give at least 3 good quality references to material that will help inform the project? 1 point

**Final Paper or Project Report Guidelines**

**Final Paper - Traditional Research Paper**

**Guidelines for your traditional paper and how we will grade it!!**

**Final Project/Paper Topic Ideas Here**

**Traditional path** - Final paper: 6-8 pages (or more) double-spaced traditional research paper on a topic that interests you and which relates to this course. You will write an insightful synthesis of literature (books or primary research literature, or online talks/webpages that are scientific in content; meaning NOT pop culture) on your chosen topic. This would be an opportunity for you to read up on a topic of your choice and to relate what you read to your own personal experience, and the material we learned in class.

A basic science oriented research paper has these parts:

- Your name and date
- Did you participate in the TinyBlueDot research project? Yes or No
- Did you do Monk Month? Yes or No. If Yes, what level? 1, 2 or 3.
- Title
- Hypothesis – what are you proposing?
- Introduction (background)
- Results/Discussion - What did you find in your readings and how do these findings relate to your own personal experience and to what we read/discussed in class?
- References (at least 2 from scientific literature from outside the class)

REMEMBER: YOUR PAPER NEEDS TO HAVE AN EXPLICITLY STATED HYPOTHESIS AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE, UNDER THE TITLE.

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Here are some previous example projects (Note: in previous years, a hypothesis was not required as it is now):
Example Project 1 Download Example Project 1
Example Project 2 Download Example Project 2
Example Project 3 Download Example Project 3

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Grading Rubric: Final Paper

Your traditional paper will be graded based upon the following (30 pts total):

Is the paper relevant to the material in the class? 1 pt

How clear is your hypothesis? 2 pts

How well did your introduction set the stage for your paper? 5 pts

How well is the material you read for your paper presented? 6 pts

How well did you discuss the results/findings? Is there evidence of a clear synthesis of what you have read/learned? 10 pts

Writing mechanics – are there spelling and grammatical errors and are your sentences complete, etc? 5 pts

Do you give references (at least 5) that are clearly relevant to your project? Are at least 2 of the references from scientific literature from outside the class? 1 pt
Final Project - Non-Traditional

Guidelines for your Non-traditional project and how we will grade it!!

**Project and paper:** Your project could be doing something that **tests a hypothesis** about your own happiness or your own theories of happiness. Your project should get you thinking more deeply about your long-term happiness and how to achieve it. As such, your non-traditional project should have a hypothesis (e.g. "Daily mindfulness meditation will decrease levels of stress and anxiety") and your project should test that hypothesis. There are a wide variety of activities you could perform to examine your hypothesis. You would write some poetry or song lyrics, put together a play, make artwork, make a “Happiness” webpage or blog, try out meditation, interview a grandparent about happiness (like in "Storycorps" on NPR), eat healthier for a month (through conscious eating and consuming healthy foods), go for a run or hike each day, write gratitude letters daily, journal your daily thoughts and emotions. Be creative - do something that is meaningful to **YOU**!

If you are testing whether or not an activity affects your mood or happiness, then you will need to have a way to measure that (even if it is just subjective) before and after the activity. Create a multi-dimensional scale that measures different aspects of your emotional state, such as your level of anxiety, stress, comfort, happiness, joy, connectedness, peace, etc. on a scale of 1-10. Mark the scale honestly before and after the activity, and some time later (like a few hours) to see if the effects last. Include a space for making notes about your experience with each activity. Your project should also have a control - something that is similar to your activity, but is missing an important variable. For example, if you are testing the effects of healthy eating on your mood, you could also include days in which you eat your normal diet as a comparison. If you are testing the effects of meditation on your stress, you could sit quietly for the same amount of time as a comparison.

Here is a simple, but silly, example of a project: You introduce a hypothesis or theory ("I propose that eating Oreos increases long term happiness"), collect data ("Ask everyone how they feel after eating 1, 2, 5, 10, or 20 Oreos"), analyze the results ("How does feelings of happiness vary with Oreo consumption") and make a conclusion ("Eating one or two Oreos can make a person feel better for a short while, but eating 20 can make them miserable and feeling sick. There seems to be an optimal number of Oreos to consume for short term pleasure.") and discuss the results ("Doing something that is pleasurable may be best done in moderation and at the right time."). (Btw, your real paper should be more meaningful than Oreos, but even with this silly example, you could discuss the theory of a meaningful life in a deep manner.)
Some projects will be more observational and involve less of an experimental manipulation. For example, you might hypothesize that views of happiness change across generations and you might interview your grandparents, parents, aunt, uncles, brothers/sisters, friends, etc. to gather data to support or not your hypothesis. More observational studies are fine - just try and make it well controlled and "scientific". Contact us if you need help.

You should be doing your project over a period of a MONTH - not at the end of the course! So think about it early and plan ahead.

Here are Some Final Project/Paper Topic Ideas

**Written component (paper):** Since this is an academic class about happiness, your project will need to a report of **AT LEAST 6-8 pages of the findings of your project and on how your alternative project relates to the subject material in the class, including references to studies, books, educational videos, etc.** A traditional science oriented paper would have these sections (COPY AND PASTE THESE SECTION TITLES INTO YOUR DOCUMENT):

- Your name and Date
- Are you one of the 50 chosen participants in the TinyBlueDot research project? Yes or No
- Did you do Monk Month as your project? Yes or No. If Yes, what level? 1, 2 or 3.
- Title of your Project
- Hypothesis - what is your theory that you are testing/examining?
- Introduction (background)
- Methods (Detailed in your Methods and Timesheet)
- Results (what did you find when you did your non-traditional project)
- Discussion (what do your findings mean to you and, potentially others, in light of the topic, material in class, and what you have read/learned).
- References (at least one of the references from scientific literature outside the class)
- **REMEMBER: YOUR PAPER NEEDS TO HAVE AN EXPLICITLY STATED HYPOTHESIS AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE, UNDER THE TITLE.**

We will look for these basic elements in your 6-8 or more page paper on your non-traditional project. You don’t necessarily need to title each section with these titles, but we will look for these elements even if your project is a painting, poem, or dance performance, etc.

**Here are some examples of final projects that scored well last year:**

*Example Non-Traditional Final Project 1* [Download Example Non-Traditional Final Project 1]
In addition to your Non-Traditional Project - you will also need to KEEP AND SUBMIT A METHODS AND TIME SHEET.

**Grading Rubric: Project**

*Your non-traditional project will be graded based upon the following (30 pts total):*

- Is the project relevant to the material in the class?  1 pt
- How clear is your hypothesis?  2 pts
- How well did your project reflect your hypothesis?  3 pts
- Was the time you spent on your project and the methods appropriate and clearly stated?  8 pts (time sheet is 5 points of this 8 points)
- How well did you discuss your project? Is there evidence of a clear synthesis of your project with what you have read/learned?  10 pts
- Writing mechanics – does the paper have spelling and grammatical errors?  5 pts
- Do you give references (at least 3) that are clearly relevant to your project? Is at least one of the references from scientific literature from outside the class?  1 pt
Methods and Time Sheet - Non-Traditional Project

For a non-traditional project, please fill out the following time sheet, detailing how much time you spent on the project. An optimal number of hours on this project would be between 10 and 20 hours. This is your chance to do something meaningful to you that will help you look deeper into your own feelings, and get class credit for doing it!

TIME and METHODS SHEET for NON-TRADITIONAL PROJECTS (5 pts)

Name:

Name of Project:

What did you do for your project?

For example – I compared and contrasted three different types of meditation and their effects on my level of stress/anxiety and internal state of mind.

How much time did you spend preparing to do your project?

For example: I spent 4 hours reading about and learning different meditation techniques online at the following websites: headspace; calm; etc. and in reading the book “Mindfulness in Plain English” by Henapola Gunaratana (reference #).

How much time and what methods did you use to do your project?

For example: 7 hours meditating according to the following schedule:

I meditated 30 minutes a day for 14 days, using the Headspace app.

On days 1-4 I did mindfulness meditation listening to xxxxxxxxxx.

On days 5-10, I did loving-kindness meditation on my own using the following phrases: (Phrases here)

Finally, on days 6-14 I did body scan meditation, progressively paying attention to each part of my body.

Each meditation was done in my own room, on a chair, with my eyes closed, just before I went to sleep. I chose this location because it is quiet, especially at that time of day, resulting in fewer distractions. With each meditation I took three deep breaths to begin, sat in an attentive but comfortable poster, and closed my eyes, with my arms relaxed and hands folded in my lap. With mindfulness meditation I focused on my breath as the
rising and falling of my chest with each in-breath and out-breath. If my mind wandered, I gently brought my mind back to my breath. (and so on for other types of meditation.)

Both before and after meditation I noted my feelings and emotional state (see attached notes).

*How much time did you spend researching material for your project and writing the 6-8 or more page paper?*

*Did you spend other time on your project and how?*
Example Note Taking/Journal Entry

My Notes – Bi170 – Happiness: a Neuroscience and Psychology Perspective

Date:

Video/Reading/Activity:

What were the main points of this video/reading/activity?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Do I agree or disagree with these main points?

Why or why not?

Do the main points resonate with my own experience?

What did I learn from this that may help me with my life if I implemented it?

How did the reading/video make me feel (beyond a factual/intellectual level)?

What questions/topics do I have after reading/watching this material?