



PSYC 503

Selected Topics in Psychology (Positive Psychology)

Winter 2014

Instructor:	Dr. K. Edwin Sheppard	Lecture Location:	SS 117
Phone:	403-220-8970	Lecture Days/Time:	M/W/F: 11:00-11:50
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Office Hours:	TBA		

Course Description and Goals

A large portion of psychological research has focused on deficits and disability. In recent years, researchers have directed their attention toward the area of positive psychology, which is the scientific and applied approach to uncovering people's strengths and promoting their positive functioning. This course will examine topics relevant to the nature of happiness and psychological well-being. This course is designed to focus on students' interests in positive psychology and to enhance their written and oral presentation skills.

Prerequisites

PSYC 200 – Principles of Psychology I

PSYC 201 – Principles of Psychology II

PSYC 312 – Experimental Design and Quantitative Methods for Psychology

Required Text

Snyder, C. R., Lopez, S. J., & Pedrotti, J. T. (2011). *Positive Psychology: The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths (2nd Ed.)*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Course Readings

The instructor will select Readings for the first two seminars, and the references for these articles will be posted on blackboard on week prior to each class. For subsequent classes, students presenting research seminars will select all readings. The presenting student will make these readings available to the class at least one week prior to the seminar (references available on Blackboard). On weeks when no student seminars are scheduled, we will choose a topic as a group and each bring an article to discuss during this time.

Note that you can expect the reading load to be quite heavy in this course. As this is an upper-year seminar course, I will assume that you are a serious scholar interested in getting as much as possible out of the course. Accordingly, I will expect you to have completed all the readings and to have thought about what you read before each seminar. Like most things, what you get out of the readings will depend on what you put into them.

Evaluation

Course Component	Weighting	Date
Seminar participation	15%	Weekly
Seminar presentation and article critique	20%	Scheduled at the beginning of the term
Thought Papers	15%	Throughout the term
Research Paper and Presentation	50%	Friday April 11 th (in class)

Seminar Participation (15%):

The main emphasis here will be on the quality of contributions, not the quantity, but you **must contribute during the seminar**. Attendance each class will be assumed. Note that quality contributions are easier to make if you've given yourself time to read **and** think about the material before class.

Each student will be responsible for generating 2-3 discussion questions from the weekly assigned readings and based on the seminar presentations for that week. All discussion questions will be submitted via Blackboard in a weekly discussion group for the selected topic. Weekly seminar leaders will be required to select discussion questions from the class submissions and facilitate a discussion session. Discussion questions will be marked on completion and quality of thought put into the question.

Seminar Presentation (20%):

You will be responsible for leading one lecture during the course (50 minutes). This involves preparing a presentation on your chosen topic, selecting 1-2 class readings, and guiding the discussion during your lecture. You must provide students in the class (and the instructor) with a copy of the readings that you have chosen for your topic **at least one week before your seminar date**. Plan to present for 30 minutes with 10-15 minutes for discussion and questions.

Thought Papers (3 at 5% each):

You will be expected to write 3 short (maximum 3 pages-double spaced) thought papers that discuss your response to some aspect(s) of the past week's readings, journal article(s) and/or class discussion. All thought papers should also include 3-4 discussion questions at the end (not included in the 3 pages).

You are required to submit 3 thought papers throughout the term. Thoughts papers will be due at the beginning of the week and will refer to discussions, readings and/or articles from the previous week. Students are responsible for ensuring that they submit two thought papers throughout the term, but are free to pick the topics/weeks that they wish to discuss in their thought paper.

Thought papers are due in **HARDCOPY** at the beginning of the class the Monday after the topic has been covered in class. Electronic submissions will not be accepted. A 10% penalty will be assessed for each day that the paper is late. It is your responsibility to ensure that I receive the assignment on time.

Research Paper (35%) and Presentation (15%):

You will be required to write a research proposal related to a specific area of positive psychology that is of interest to you. You are free to choose any topic so long as it is relevant to the course content and provided it is not directly related to your current thesis research. **Students must arrange to meet with**

the instructor to discuss their proposal no later than March 21st. Failure to do so will result in a 5% penalty of the final paper grade. **See Blackboard for more details.**

You will also be required to prepare a 20-25 minute presentation that discusses your final research proposal in class. **See Blackboard for more details.**

Electronic Submission of Assignments / Papers

E-mailed assignments will NOT be accepted in this course. Written assignments must be handed in at the beginning of class. Late assignments may be submitted to the Psychology Office in the assignment drop box. Late assignments (those not submitted at the beginning of class) will be assessed a penalty of 10% per day. Early assignments may be handed in to the same location as late assignments (but will of course not be assessed a penalty).

Department of Psychology Criteria for Letter Grades

Psychology professors use the following criteria when assigning letter grades:

A+ grade: Exceptional Performance. An A+ grade indicates near perfect performance on multiple choice and short answer exams. For research papers/essays/course projects/presentations, an A+ grade is awarded for exceptional work deserving of special recognition and is therefore not a common grade.

A, A- Range: Excellent Performance. Superior understanding of course material. Written work is very strong in terms of critical and original thinking, content, organization, and the expression of ideas, and demonstrates student's thorough knowledge of subject matter.

B Range: Good Performance. Above average understanding of course material. Written work shows evidence of critical thinking and attention to organization and editing but could be improved in form and/or content.

C Range: Satisfactory Performance. Adequate understanding of course material. Knowledge of basic concepts and terminology is demonstrated. Written work is satisfactory and meets essential requirements but could be improved significantly in form and content. Note: All prerequisites for courses offered by the Faculty of Arts must be met with a minimum grade of C-.

D range: Marginally meets standards. Minimal understanding of subject matter. Written work is marginally acceptable and meets basic requirements but requires substantial improvements in form and content. Student has not mastered course material at a level sufficient for advancement into more senior courses in the same or related subjects.

F grade: Course standards not met. Inadequate understanding of subject matter. Written work does not meet basic requirements. Student has not demonstrated knowledge of course material at a level sufficient for course credit.

Grading Scale

A+	96-100%	B+	80-84%	C+	67-71%	D+	54-58%
A	90-95%	B	76-79%	C	63-66%	D	50-53%
A-	85-89%	B-	72-75%	C-	59-62%	F	0-49%

As stated in the University Calendar, it is at the instructor's discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of term work and final examinations is between two letter grades.

To determine final letter grades, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (e.g., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90% = A but 89.4% will be rounded down to 89% = A-).

Tentative Lecture Schedule

Date	Topic/Activity/Readings/Due Date (revise and add columns & rows as necessary)
W Jan 8	Winter term lectures begin. Introduction to positive psychology
F Jan 10	Introduction to positive psychology continued
M Jan 13	Introduction to positive psychology continued
W Jan 15	Introduction to positive psychology continued
F Jan 17	Introduction to positive psychology continued
M Jan 20	Presentation 1 Last day to add or swap Winter Term half courses. Last day for change of registration from audit to credit or credit to audit.
W Jan 22	Presentation 2
F Jan 24	Presentation 3 Fee payment deadline for Winter Term fees.
M Jan 27	Presentation 4
W Jan 29	Presentation 5
F Jan 31	Presentation 6
M Feb 3	Presentation 7
W Feb 5	Presentation 8
F Feb 7	Presentation 9
M Feb 10	Presentation 10
W Feb 12	Presentation 11
F Feb 14	Presentation 12
Feb 16-23	Reading Week. No lectures. University open (except Family Day).
M Feb 17	Alberta Family Day, University closed (except Taylor Family Digital Library, Law, Medical, Gallagher and Business Libraries). No lectures.
M Feb 24	No lecture – time to work on paper presentations
W Feb 26	Presentation 13
F Feb 28	Presentation 14
M Mar 3	Presentation 15
W Mar 5	Presentation 16
F Mar 7	Presentation 17
M Mar 10	Presentation 18

W Mar 12	Presentation 19
F Mar 14	Presentation 20
M Mar 17	Paper Presentation 1 / 2
W Mar 19	Paper Presentation 3 / 4
F Mar 21	Paper Presentation 5 / 6
M Mar 24	Paper Presentation 7 / 8
W Mar 26	Paper Presentation 9 / 10
F Mar 28	Paper Presentation 11 / 12
M Mar 31	Paper Presentation 13 / 14
W Apr 2	Paper Presentation 15 / 16
F Apr 4	Paper Presentation 17 / 18
M Apr 7	Paper Presentation 19 / 20
W Apr 9	No lecture – time to work on your research paper
F Apr 11	Research paper due in class
M Apr 14	No class Winter Term Lectures End. Last day to withdraw from full courses and Winter Term half courses.
Apr 19-29	Winter Term Final Examinations.

Reappraisal of Grades

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (e.g., term paper, essay, test) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within 15 days of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class; no reappraisal of term work is permitted after the 15 days. If not satisfied, the student shall immediately take the matter to the Head of the department offering the course, who will arrange for a reassessment of the work within the next 15 days. The reappraisal of term work may cause the grade to be raised, lowered, or to remain the same. If the student is not satisfied with the decision and wishes to appeal, the student shall address a letter of appeal to the Dean of the faculty offering the course within 15 days of the unfavourable decision. In the letter, the student must clearly and fully state the decision being appealed, the grounds for appeal, and the remedies being sought, along with any special circumstances that warrant an appeal of the reappraisal. The student should include as much written documentation as possible.

Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. Consequently, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Students should examine sections of the University Calendar that present a Statement of Intellectual honesty and definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct.

Academic Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of this course.

Absence From A Test/Exam

Makeup tests/exams are NOT an option without an official University medical excuse (see the University Calendar). A completed Physician/Counselor Statement will be required to confirm absence from a test/exam for health reasons; the student will be required to pay any cost associated with this Statement. Students who miss a test/exam have 48 hours to contact the instructor and to schedule a makeup test/exam. Students who do not schedule a makeup test/exam with the instructor within this 48-hour period forfeit the right to a makeup test/exam. At the instructor's discretion, a makeup test/exam may differ significantly (in form and/or content) from a regularly scheduled test/exam. Except in extenuating circumstances (documented by an official University medical excuse), a makeup test/exam must be written within 2 weeks of the missed test/exam.

Travel During Exams

Consistent with University regulations, students are expected to be available to write scheduled exams at any time during the official December and April examination periods. Requests to write a make-up exam because of conflicting travel plans (e.g., flight bookings) will NOT be considered except under exceptional circumstances. Students are advised to wait until the final examination schedule is posted before making any travel arrangements.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act

The FOIP legislation disallows the practice of having student's retrieve tests and assignments from a public place. Therefore, tests and assignments may be returned to students during class/lab, or during office hours, or via the Department Office (Admin 255), or will be made available only for viewing during exam review sessions scheduled by the Department. Tests and assignments will be shredded after one year. Instructors should take care to not link students' names with their grades, UCIDs, or other FOIP-sensitive information.

Course Credits for Research Participation (Max 2% of final grade)

Students in most psychology courses are eligible to participate in Departmentally-approved research and earn credits toward their final grades. A maximum of two credits (2%) per course, including this course, may be applied to an individual's final grade. **To get 2%** added to the final grade in a full-year course, like this one, you have to acquire **a total of 4 bonus credits** towards the course. These credits may be acquired in the Fall and/or the Winter Session. The demand for timeslots may exceed the supply in a given term. Thus, students are not guaranteed that there will be enough studies available to them to meet their credit requirements. Students should seek studies early in the term and should frequently check for open timeslots. Students can create an account and participate in Departmentally-approved research studies at <http://ucalgary.sona-systems.com>. The last day to participate in studies and to assign or reassign earned credits to courses is **Apr 14th, 2014**.

Evacuation Assembly Point

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>
Please check this website and note the nearest assembly point for this course.

Student Organizations

Psychology students may wish to join the Psychology Undergraduate Students' Association (PSYCHS). They are located in Administration 170 and may be contacted at 403-220-5567.

Student Union VP Academic: Phone: 403-220-3911

suvpaca@ucalgary.ca

Student Union Faculty Rep.: Phone: 403-220-3913

socialscirep@su.ucalgary.ca

Student Ombudsman's Office

The Office of the Student Ombudsmen provides independent, impartial and confidential support for students who require assistance and advice in addressing issues and concerns related to their academic careers. The office can be reached at 403-220-6420 or ombuds@ucalgary.ca (<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>).

Safewalk

The safewalk program provides volunteers to walk students safely to their destination anywhere on campus. This service is free and available 24 hrs/day, 365 days a year.
Call 403-220-5333.

Important Dates

The last day to drop this course with no "W" notation and **still receive a tuition fee refund** is **January 17th, 2014**. Last day for registration/change of registration is **January 20th, 2014**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **April 14th, 2014**.