



CIEE Seville, Spain

Course name:	POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY
Course number:	PSYC 3001CSCS
Programs offering course:	Liberal Arts, Advanced Liberal Arts, Business and Society, Teaching Development and Communication, New Media and Journalism Programs
Language of instruction:	Spanish
U.S. semester credits:	3 credits
Contact hours:	45 hours
Term:	Spring 2018

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Psychology has done thousands of studies of unhappiness, anxiety, depression, distress, personality disorders and so on. Only recently has Psychology begun to study the theories, concepts and techniques that enhance well-being and happiness.

Positive psychology is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of **love, work, and play**. Positive Psychology has three central concerns: positive emotions, positive individual traits, and positive institutions. Understanding **positive emotions** entails the study of contentment with the past, happiness in the present, and hope for the future. Understanding **positive individual traits** consists of the study of the strengths and virtues, such as the capacity for love and work, courage, compassion, resilience, creativity, curiosity, integrity, self-knowledge, moderation, self-control, and wisdom. Understanding **positive institutions** entails the study of



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the strengths that foster better communities, such as justice, responsibility, civility, parenting, nurturance, work ethic, leadership, teamwork, purpose, and tolerance. Positive psychology studies how human beings prosper in the face of adversity. It attempts to identify and enhance the human strengths and virtues that make life worth living and allow individuals and communities to thrive.

This course explores the concepts, research, techniques, and exercises that enhance well-being and happiness.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will construct critical knowledge about the science of positive psychology.
- Students will develop an understanding of the 6 dimensions of happiness/subjective well-being (Courage, Justice, Humanity, Temperance, Transcendence and Wisdom) and the 24 strengths.
- Students will become familiar with the empirical measurements and tools used in positive psychology and will be able to apply them to themselves and others and interpret the scores.
- Hands-on experience with many of the key concepts in positive psychology.
- A solid sense of how to distinguish between science and intuition on a topic about which most people have a strong intuitive basis.
- A toolkit for putting scientific findings and theories into real-world practice.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

As an introductory course, there are no specific pre-requisites. A student does not have to have previously studied psychology. The course requires an enthusiasm and disposition to study and complete projects at the university level. This usually guarantees success for the achievement of the course objectives.



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METHODOLOGY

- The methodology is based on the constructivist model; we will begin to work based on your previous ideas about the topic, we will debate and connect ideas with our own experience in order to achieve meaningful knowledge.
- Most of the work will be done during the classes; however, you will have to read and do some exercises at home, especially to prepare your final project (Project-based learning). I will explain it in detail during the classes.
- Participation is essential. You are the one who constructs your knowledge! I will give you lot of information and guide you in this process, but in the end what you learn will depend on your implication.
- All the students must prepare an **experiential final project** (for this reason I will try not to assign you too much homework). Your final project will be presented in class. You are free to choose the topic and the way to do it, but I will help you. While you are exposing a topic, you are the leader of the class and should keep the attention of the rest of the class. This class-leadership attitude should be a good exercise for your academic and professional development.
- The ultimate goal is for students to experience the positive psychology construct first hand, self-reflect in a meaningful way, and, as a result, gain insight into the mechanisms and processes of the “good life.”
- The presentation comprises three parts:
 - An explanation of the main ideas and concepts of your topic, illustrated with some videos, photos, etc. (20 minutes)
 - An activity in which the rest of the class is involved and has an active participation (it could be a test, an outdoor exercise, etc.. 20 minutes)
 - Final debate and discussion (15 minutes)

The structure of a typical class would be:

- Students' previous ideas about the topic. What do I know about it?



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- Presentation of the topic (using different resources, multisensory ones). What do others know about it?
- Work based on your own experiences. How can I link what others say and what I think?
- Discussion and feedback. What have I learned?, What would I like to know more and how?
- Each theme has at the end a series of assessing activities to be completed by the student. These activities must be done before their correction and discussion in class. This is an important part of the class so keep in mind that you would lower your final grade if do not bring the activities by the scheduled day.
- Each theme will be accompanied by a wide range of questionnaires and tests. This will give us the opportunity to deepen our knowledge on each theme and develop a critical thinking.
- All the activities should be sent to castrilf@stjohns.edu in a doc. file.
- During this course we will watch one or two positive psychology movies, which will help us discuss key points.

ASSESSMENT AND FINAL GRADE

The evaluation will be in accordance with the policies of CIEE

CIEE classes are not graded on a curve nor is there extra credit work. The final grade will be based upon the following criteria:

- The average grade of the **two theoretical examinations** represents **40%** of the final grade.
- The correct completion of all course **activities** represents **25%** of the final grade. Activities turned late, but during the same week, will receive 50% less, and 75% less for those activities more than one week late.
- **Active class participation** will also be factored into the final grade **20%**: asking questions, reflecting, and even questioning the professor's comments can increase the grade! (as well as Spanish level!)
- The **final project 15%**.



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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance policy

Students are not allowed to miss class. For each absence, the participation portion of the grade will be lowered. Hence, it will be very difficult to receive a 10 in the class. Please keep this in mind.

If a student misses class twice without a valid excuse (a *note from a physician in the event of an illness*), then the professor will automatically lower the final grade by 0.5 points (on a 10 point scale) for each class missed thereafter. Students with 6 or more absences will fail the course.

Students should arrive to class on-time. Arriving late for a class will count as an absence.

*Notes from a physician will only be valid and admitted by the Resident Director if the doctor confirms that the visit could not have been arranged at another time, or that the student was too ill to attend class that day.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to act in accordance with their university and CIEE's standards of conduct concerning plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Use of online translators for work in Spanish will result in an automatic failure.

Linguistic Resource Center

Students are encouraged to use the Writing Center for help with class activities as well as for the final essay.

WEEKLY COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: The science of Positive Psychology: an Introduction

Main Readings:



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- Seligman, M.E.P. & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55 (1), 5-14.
- Gable, S.L., & Haidt, J. (2005). What (and why) is positive psychology? *Review of General Psychology*, 9, 103-110.

Week 2: Universal Virtues? The high Six across History and East and West Cultures

Main Reading:

- Peterson, C. & Seligman, M. (2004) *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pages 33-53.

Week 3: Understanding Emotions

Main Readings:

- Hefferon, K; Ilona Boniwell, I. (2011) *Positive Psychology: Theory, Research And Applications*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Pages 22-44.
- Compton, W. Hoffman, E. (2013). *Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness and Flourishing*, 2nd Edition. Wadsworth: Cengage Learning. Pages: 23-44.

Week 4: Happiness and Subjective Wellbeing

Main Reading:

- Hefferon, K; Ilona Boniwell, I. (2011) *Positive Psychology: Theory, Research And Applications*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Pages 44-76.

Week 5: Eudaimonic Wellbeing

Main Reading:

- Hefferon, K; Ilona Boniwell, I. (2011) *Positive Psychology: Theory, Research And Applications*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Pages 76-94

Week 6: Optimism, Explanatory Style and Hope

Main reading:

- Hefferon, K; Ilona Boniwell, I. (2011) *Positive Psychology: Theory, Research And Applications*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Pages 94-114.

- **Mid-Term Exam on the previous topics.**

Week 7: Resilience, Post-traumatic Growth and Positive Ageing

Positive psychology movie (TBA) and debate

Main reading:

- Hefferon, K; Ilona Boniwell, I. (2011) *Positive Psychology: Theory, Research And Applications*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Pages 114-136.

Week 8: Living in the Present: Flow vs. Mindfulness

Main readings:

- Nakamura, J. & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2009). Flow theory and research. In C.R. Snyder & S. Lopez (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, pp. 195-206. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, K.W., Ryan, R.M. & Creswell, J.D. (2007). Mindfulness: Theoretical foundations and evidence for its salutary effects. *Psychological Inquiry*, 18, 211-237.

Week 9: Creativity

Main readings:

- Amabile, T. M. (2001). Beyond talent: John Irving and the passionate craft of creativity. *American Psychologist*, 56, 333-336.

- Thrash, T. M. & Elliot, A. J. (2003). Inspiration as a psychological construct. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 871-889.

Week 10: Positive education

Main readings:

- Seligman, M.E.P., Ernst, R.M., Gillham, J., Reivich, K., & Linkins, M. (2009). Positive education: positive psychology and classroom interventions. *Oxford Review of Education*, 35, 293-311.
- Oades, L.G., Robinson, P., Green, S. & Spence, G.B. (2011). Towards a positive university. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 6, 432-439.

Week 11: Cross-Cultural Advancements in Positive Psychology

After reading:

- Lopez, S.J., Prosser, E.C., Edwards, L.M., Magyar-Moe, J.L., Neufeld, J.E. & Rasmussen, H.N. (2005) 'Putting positive psychology in a multicultural context', in C.R. Snyder & S.J. Lopez (eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology*, pp. 700-714, Oxford University Press, New York, NY.

We will choose a **film** among *Koyla* (Czech) *Colors of Paradise* (2000- Iranian), *Salam Bombay* (1988-Indian); *Cinema Paradiso* (Italian)

And will **debate** about different conceptualizations of well-being among cultures and societies.

Week 12: final project presentations and final exam



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OUT OF CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- Conference at the Department of Psychology of the University of Sevilla. Guest speaker (TBA)
- Visiting some Spanish and European institutions in order to measure happiness in different workplaces (TBA)

BASIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

Compton, W. Hoffman, E. (2013). *Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness and Flourishing*, 2nd Edition. Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.

Hefferon, K; Ilona Boniwell, I. (2011) *Positive Psychology: Theory, Research and Applications*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Peterson, C. & Seligman, M. (2004) *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Siegel, R. (2009) *Harvard Medical School Positive Psychology: Harnessing the power of happiness, personal strength, and mindfulness*. Boston: Harvard University Press

Snyder, C.R & Lopez, S.J (eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press