

THE FLOURISHING LIFE

How to Live a Meaningful, Accomplished, Joyful Life

Winter Term – 2019

Professor Douglas A. Smith

Overview

It is not an accident that certain people live with accomplishment, meaning and joy ... what positive psychologists call “flourishing.” They do so by consistently practicing certain skills. The purpose of this course is to provide you with a deep understanding of these skills, to grasp why they lead to a flourishing life and to provide tools to practice these skills. This course is designed to enable you to flourish even in the face of the setbacks we all encounter.

The course is founded on the emerging science of positive psychology. Since 1998, when Martin P. Seligman became President of the American Psychological Association, the study of what leads to happiness or flourishing has been an increasingly important part of the field of psychology. In positive psychology, an individual is considered flourishing if he/she has the core features and at least three of the additional features captured below.

CORE FEATURES	ADDITIONAL FEATURES
Positive Emotions	Self-Esteem
Engagement	Optimism
Interest	Resilience
Meaning	Vitality
Purpose	Self-Determination
	Positive Relationships

Within the United States only about 16% of our population is flourishing, while 33% of our population is languishing, meaning they have some form of mental illness, are socially and/or psychologically not well adjusted or are addicted to alcohol or drugs. Those who flourish do better in most every aspect of life. They have healthier, more enduring relationships, do better in their life work, are more creative and expansive in their thinking, are less likely to harm others, have greater resilience, are less likely to abuse alcohol or use drugs, have

- ***Man's Search for Meaning*** by Viktor Frankl,
- ***Happiness; The Art of Living with Peace, Confidence and Joy*** by Douglas A Smith (provided by professor)
- Numerous articles authored by leaders in the field of positive psychology including Martin Seligman, David Myers, Mihal Csikszentmihalyi, Sonja Lyubomirsky, Ed Deiner and Nathan Branden.

Grading/Expectations:

Grading is "S" (Successful), "U" (Unsuccessful) and "D" (work was unsatisfactory, but sufficient to earn credit). Grading criteria are class participation (the class uses extensive dialogue both in small groups and as a total class), preparation (you **must** come to class having read and reflected on assigned reading), and performance in individual work assignments and performance in group activity. In the final week of the course, students work in groups to summarize what they have learned and to do new research of the subject of flourishing. ***This group project will require that you be on campus the weekend of January 19 & 20.***

Timing/Location:

The class will begin on Thursday, January 3 and runs through Thursday, January 24 meeting from 9:30AM-1:30PM Wednesday/Thursday/Friday and 1:00-4:30PM on Mondays. If a student will not be attending class because of illness, they are required to call the professor in advance at 614-286-5955. ***Consistent class attendance and thorough preparation is required.*** Class is held in 157 Percy Julian Science Center.

	MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Jan 3-4			INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW (Context and Connection before Content) DEFINING FLOURISHING (What the heck is flourishing anyway?) EMOTIONS (Positive & Negative they each play a role) Reading Assignment... <i>What Happy People Know</i> – Ch. 1 “What are the Causes /Consequences of Happiness” by David Myers “In Defense of Teaching Happiness”, letter to Kate Knaul by professor Smith	BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS (It’s hard to live with people ... impossible to live without them) IS HAPPINESS WORTHY OF STUDY (Can I really become happier and, if so, will it change my life?) Reading Assignment... “Who is Happy” by Myers & Deiner <i>Happiness: The Art of Living with Peace, Confidence and Joy</i> Prologue & Chapters 1 to 4
Jan 7-11	PURPOSEFUL LIVING AND FLOURISHING (Why not just drift through life?) WHAT CORRELATES WITH HAPPINESS ... WHAT DOESN’T? (The answers will surprise you) Reading Assignment... <i>What Happy People Know</i> –Ch. 2&3 “A Balanced Psychology and a Full Life” by Seligman, Parks and Steen <i>Man’s Search for Meaning</i> Prf & Part 1	WHAT DOES THE MIND HAVE TO DO WITH HAPPINESS? (Everything!!) CHOICES THAT DO <u>NOT</u> LEAD TO A FLOURISHING LIFE (Traps we all fall into ... including your professor) Reading Assignment... <i>What Happy People Know 4&5</i> <i>Happiness: The Art of Living with Peace</i> ... Chapter 9	CHOICES THAT DO <u>NOT</u> LEAD TO FLOURISHING LIFE (continued ... because there are a lot of traps!) Reading Assignment... <i>What Happy People Know</i> – 6&7 “The Forgiveness Boost” by Richard Light, The Atlantic Monthly	SKILLS THAT LEAD TO PEACE WITH THE PAST (Giving up forever the notion that we can change the past) Reading Assignment... <i>Man’s Search for Meaning</i> – Part 2 <i>What Happy People Know</i> – Ch. 8
Jan 14-18	SKILLS THAT LEAD TO CONFIDENCE ABOUT THE FUTURE (Preparing for the future, while accepting that we cannot control it) Reading Assignment... <i>Happiness: The Art of Living with Peace ... Chapters 10-13</i> “Tales of the Super Survivors” by David Brooks, NY Times	RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF SETBACKS (Developing GRIT!) Reading Assignment... <i>What Happy People Know</i> Ch. 9 & Epilogue	SKILLS THAT LEAD TO LIVING IN THE PRESENT (Happiness is found in the present, but you have to be there to find it) Reading Assignment... None. Complete Mission statements!	SKILLS THAT LEAD TO LIVING IN THE PRESENT (continued ... because at any moment the mind just might shatter time and burst into now!) “THE ONE THING” (A love of life and life of love) (MISSION STATEMENTS DUE) TEAMS ASSIGNED AND WORK BEGUN ON COURSE SUMMARIES Reading Assignment... “How Successful People Stay Calm” by Travis Bradberry
Jan 21-24	Guest Speaker DENNIS BLAND “LIAPOP” (A man who exemplifies the quality of “Flourishing”) Reading Assignment... ”Our urgent Need for Self-Esteem” by Nathan Branden	SELF-ESTEEM AND THE FLOURISHING LIFE (Can’t have one without the other) Reading Assignment... <i>Adult Years</i> by Frederick Hudson, Prologue	COURSE SUMMARY (By student teams ... What did you learn? What can you add?) COURSE SUMMARY (By professor ... sharing new insights you have brought me over the past 3 weeks) EVALUATION /FEEDBACK EXTENDED CHECK OUT	