

Current Issues Capstone Section 03

PSYC 190

Spring 2024 3 Unit(s) 01/24/2024 to 05/13/2024 Modified 01/22/2024

Course Description and Requisites

Integrative survey of current issues in psychology, how they developed and likely future directions. ½
Completion of the research methods requirement prior to enrollment in this course is recommended.

Prerequisite: PSYC 100W and senior standing.

Co/Prerequisite: PSYC 118 or PSYC 120

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

This classroom is a professional environment for you, and should be treated that way. There is a lot of interaction in this class, both with the professor and with your fellow students, so professionalism on your part is very important. **Turn your phone on silent before class begins and never, ever take your phone out during class.**

My office is room DMH 317. If I am not in my office, please email me. I will have regular office hours as posted at the top of this syllabus. If you cannot make one of these times, you can e-mail me or see me after class to set an appointment. I want to be available to you. The best time to catch me is right after class, but let me know if you need to see me at another time. With office hours it is first come, first served. If you do not want to wait or were not able to see me, please set a time with me individually. During office hours we can discuss course questions, psychology as a career, or other topics of interest to you.

Please be respectful of the thoughts, opinions, and experiences of others. Many of the topics in this class may have personal significance to some students. Please make a special effort to listen to one another.

A note about AI

The papers submitted in this class should be completely your writing - every word should be typed into the document by you, taken from your brain. You will need to cite the articles we read and the sources you use for your paper/presentation. If you get information from any AI source (e.g., Chat GPT) it needs to be

cited, which is tricky because it gets information from (typically) unknown sources. Also, there are already AI detection services, and I plan to use them. If you turn in AI-generated content as your own, I will submit it to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development/

Program Information

Program learning outcomes (PLOs) are skills and knowledge that students will have achieved upon completion of the Psychology BA degree. Each course in our curriculum contributes to one or more of these PLOs. The PLOs for the Psychology BA degree are:

1. Knowledge Base of Psychology. Students will be able to demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.
2. Research Methods in Psychology. Students will be able to design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.
3. Critical Thinking Skills. Students will be able to use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes.
4. Applications of Psychology. Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.
Values in Psychology. Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

Course Goals

The two primary goals of the course are (1) to provide students with a general understanding of the various constructs thought to be related to psychological well-being, and (2) to develop an ability to think critically about these constructs and the empirical study of them.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

CLO1: have a familiarity with the main constructs thought to be related to psychological well-being

CLO2: think critically about the empirical study of constructs related to psychological well-being

CLO3: understand, interpret, and apply knowledge gained from empirical studies of constructs related to psychological well-being

Course Materials

This course will not utilize a textbook, but instead students will utilize peer reviewed studies and readings provided by the instructor for each topic. Reading will be found on the course Canvas page.

Course Requirements and Assignments

The following assignments will make up your grade:

1. Well-Being Response Papers (11 Total)

In order to allow you to think critically about the readings and assignments for this course, you will turn in a 2-page, double-spaced reaction paper for each week's Well-Being assignment, and its relation to the reading you did for class. **You must turn in the paper electronically by 8:00am and bring a paper copy in class.**

In order to receive full credit, response papers based on Well-Being assignments **must include all of the following:**

1 – your personal reaction to the activity and what you found

2 – a description of the key points of **all** the assigned readings with a an application to your experience (i.e., did your experience match the research results, etc)- be sure to include at least two critical questions you can pose to the class. The emphasis should be on questions that will generate discussion, but they can be any type of question you want.

3 – sharing your experience and observations with other students in class

If you turn the paper in after I collect them in class, you will have a 10% penalty, with a 10% drop in grade possible each day after.

2. Group Presentation

The learning project you will engage in this course will consist of a group project utilizing your skills as a critical thinker and scholar to educate yourself and your classmates about a specific aspect of well-being. Each group will sign up for one of 4 additional topics, and will provide readings on the topic to the class as needed. The additional topics include:

Curiosity

Grit

Flow

Hope

You will work in small groups researching the topic of your research paper to create a class lecture on the topic. In total, you will be instructing the class for one whole class period.

- Your oral presentation should last approximately **45 minutes**, and should include all of the following:
 - Introduction of the topic

- **Academic** definition(s) of the topic
- Summary of **research literature** on the topic
- How topic relates to other constructs studied in the class
- Any research or literature on how topic can be used clinically or to help people
- In addition to your 45-minute presentation, you will also involve the class in a **Planned Group Activity** related to your topic, which should be followed by you leading the class in a large or small group(s) discussion. This part of your presentation should last approximately **20-30 minutes**.
- *Examples of the group activities:* focus groups discussing challenges and issues of defining your construct, prepared vignettes/role plays for class members to discuss, small group discussions of media articles related to your topic (you provide).
- Remember that for presentations, professionalism will be a large part of your grade. Despite the fun nature of some of the topics, you will be teaching the class about these constructs and should take this assignment seriously. Your presentations should be based on the **research literature**, and **should not contain references from webpages or other non-academic sources**, except as applied examples (i.e., videos, case examples, etc).

3. Individual Research paper

You will be required to write a 10- page paper on any of the constructs studied in the class. You can write your paper on your group topic if you wish, or select from any of the other topics in the class. Note: if you write your paper on your group topic, you must be very careful to make sure all of the writing is your own. If you turn in a paper with content written by another student, this will be considered plagiarism and you will fail the course. Your paper should include a comprehensive literature review and must be written in APA style.

Each paper should include:

1. **Scholarly** definition(s) of the topic (no webpages, dictionary, etc.)
2. Summary of **research literature** on the topic
3. How topic relates to other constructs studied in the class based on the literature
4. Any research or literature on how topic can be used to improve well-being

Even though these are fun things to think about, you should research thoroughly and take this assignment seriously. Your paper should be based on the **research literature**, and **should not contain references from webpages or other non-academic sources**.

Final Activity

This course will adopt a final, culminating activity which will be held during the finals examination time period. This culminating activity is required and will build on previous experiences in the course.

Grading Information

Grading is based on the sum of the following:

11 response papers, 10 points per paper (CLO1, CLO2, CLO3)

110 points

+

Presentation (CLO1, CLO2, CLO3)

100 points

+

1 term paper (CLO1, CLO2, CLO3)

100 points

310 points possible in the course

Breakdown

The grading policy for the course will be the following:

	A = 100 -93	A- = 92.9-90%
B+ = 89.9-87%	B = 86.9-83%	B- = 82.9-80%
C+ = 79.9-77%	C = 76.9-73%	C- = 72.9-70%
D+ = 69.9-67%	D = 66.9-63%	D- = 62.9-60%
F = 59.9-0% Unsatisfactory		

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance,

counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings	Due
Week 1			
1-25-24	Overview of the Course		
Week 2			
1-30-24	Get to know your tribe	Diener, E.& Seligman, M.E.P. (2002). Very Happy People.	
2-1-24	Get to know your tribe		
Week 3			

2-6-24	Introduction to Well-Being as a Concept and Goal, Defining & Measuring Well-Being	<p>Seligman, M.E.P. & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 55 (1), 5-14.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>McNulty, J. K., & Fincham, F. D. (2012). Beyond positive psychology? Toward a contextual view of psychological processes and well-being. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 67(2), 101.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Seligman, M. E., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: empirical validation of interventions. <i>American psychologist</i>, 60(5), 410.</p>	Response Paper 1
2-8-24			
Week 4			

2-13-24	Strengths-Based Approach	Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2009). Character strengths: Research and practice. <i>Journal of college and scharacter, 10(4)</i> , 1-10.	Response Paper 2
2-15-24		<p>AND</p> <p>Proyer, Gander, Wellenzohn, & Ruch (2015). Strengths-based positive psychology interventions: a randomized placebo-controlled online trial on long-term effects for a signature strengths- vs. a lesser strengths-intervention. <i>Frontiers in Psychology</i>.</p>	
Week 5			

<p>2-20-24</p> <p>2-22-24</p>	<p>Positive Emotions & Problems with Positivity</p>	<p>Fredrickson, B.L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden and build theory of positive emotions. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 56, 218-226.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Mauss, I.B., Tamir, M., Anderson, C.L. & Savino, N. (2010). Can seeking happiness make people unhappy? Paradoxical effects of valuing happiness. <i>Emotion</i>, 11, 807-815.</p>	<p>Response Paper 3</p>
<p>Week 6</p>			
<p>2-27-24</p> <p>2-29-24</p>	<p>Gratitude</p>	<p>Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: an experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. <i>Journal of personality and social psychology</i>, 84(2), 377.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Bono, G., Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2004). Gratitude in practice and the practice of gratitude. <i>Positive psychology in practice</i>, 464-481.</p>	<p>Response Paper 4</p>

Week 7

3-5-24	Awe	<p>Ballew, M. T., & Omoto, A. M. (2018). Absorption: How Nature Experiences Promote Awe and Other Positive Emotions. <i>Ecopsychology, 10</i>(1), 26-35.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Tyrväinen, L., Ojala, A., Korpela, K., Lanki, T., Tsunetsugu, Y., & Kagawa, T. (2014). The influence of urban green environments on stress relief measures: A field experiment. <i>Journal of Environmental Psychology, 38</i>, 1-9.</p>	Response paper 5
3-7-24			

Week 8

3-12-24	Meaning and Values	<p>Ryan, R.M. & Deci, E.L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 55, 68-78.</p> <p>AND</p>	Response paper 6
3-14-24		<p>King, L. A. (2001). The health benefits of writing about life goals. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin</i>, 27(7), 798-807.</p>	
Week 9			

<p>3-19-24</p>	<p>Savoring/Mindfulness</p>	<p>Brown, K. W., Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. <i>Journal of Personality & Social Psychology</i>, 84, 822-848.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Oman, D., Shapiro, S. L., Thoresen, C. E., Plante, T. G., & Flinders, T. (2008). Meditation lowers stress and supports forgiveness among college students: A randomized controlled trial. <i>Journal of American College Health</i>, 56(5), 569-578.</p>	<p>Response Paper 7</p>
<p>Week 10</p>			
<p>3-26-24</p>	<p>Meditation: Loving Kindness</p>	<p>Fredrickson, B. L., Cohn, M. A., Coffey, K. A., Pek, J., & Finkel, S. M. (2008). Open hearts build lives: positive emotions, induced through loving-kindness meditation, build consequential personal resources. <i>Journal of personality and social psychology</i>, 95(5), 1045.</p>	<p>Response Paper 8</p>
<p>3-28-24</p>			
<p>Week 11</p>			

4-2-24	spring break		live meaningfully :)
4-4-24			

Week 12

4-9-24	Generosity	Dunn, E., Aknin, L.B. & Norton, M.I. (2008). Spending money on others promotes happiness. <i>Science</i> , 319, 1687.	Response Paper 9
4-11-24		<p>AND</p> <p>Lyubomirsky, S, Sheldon, and Schkade. "Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change." <i>Review of General Psychology</i> 9.2 (2005): 111.</p>	

Week 13

4-16-24	Forgiveness	McCullough, Michael E., Lindsey M. Root, and Adam D. Cohen. "Writing about the benefits of an interpersonal transgression facilitates forgiveness." <i>Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology</i> 74.5 (2006): 887.	Response paper 10
4-18-24		<p>AND</p> <p>McCullough, M. E., & Witvliet, C. V. (2002). The psychology of forgiveness. <i>Handbook of positive psychology, 2</i>, 446-455.</p>	
Week 14			

4-23-24	Social Relationships & Love	Aron, A., Melinat, E., Aron, E. N., Vallone, R. D., & Bator, R. J. (1997). The experimental generation of interpersonal closeness: A procedure and some preliminary findings. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin</i> , 23(4), 363-377.	Response paper 11
4-25-24		<p>AND</p> <p>Holt-Lunstad J., Smith, T. B., & Layton, J. B. (2010) Social relationships and mortality risk: A meta-analytic review. <i>PLoS Med</i> 7(7)</p>	Term Papers Due 4-25-24 at 11:59pm
Week 15			
4-30-24	Presentations	Flow	
5-2-24	Presentations	curiosity	
Week 16			

5-7-24	Presentations	Grit	
5-9-24	Presentations	Hope	
5-19-24 7:15am - 9:30am	Final Exam		