

# HONR-300TK

## Psychology of Happiness

### Course Information

Course: HONR-300TK The Psychology of Happiness (4 Credits)  
Term: Fall 2024  
Delivery: Face-to-face, discussion-based  
In-person Meetings: 1:50-3:20pm MW in Blair 115

### Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. William Davis  
Office: Blair Hall 111  
Student Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 3:30-5:00pm, [by appointment](#), or drop by if my door is open  
Email: [davisw4@wittenberg.edu](mailto:davisw4@wittenberg.edu)

**Important Note:** Include "HONR-300" in the subject line of your emails to help me get back to you as soon as possible. Please also be sure to check your Witt email and our Moodle site at least once per day since this is the primary way that I communicate with you outside of class.

### Course Description

Introduction to psychological research on the causes, correlates, and outcomes of happiness. We will critically examine theory and research on happiness as well as a wide range of related topics including meaning in life, strengths and virtues, coping, authenticity, gratitude, flow, spirituality, and optimism.

### Course Outcomes

**By the end of this course, successful students will be able to:**

1. Explain the difference between hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives on well-being
2. Explain theory and research behind psychological well-being interventions
3. Apply psychological research and principles to improve their own lives
4. Critically evaluate theory and research on the psychology of happiness
5. Conduct a literature review and summarize existing psychological research on a topic
6. Deliver a concise and professional presentation

### This course contributes to the following Connections Curriculum Learning Outcomes:

1. **LO 2:** Students will write effectively, considering audience and purpose.
2. **LO 9:** Students will analyze social systems or human behaviors using knowledge, theories, or methods appropriate to the social sciences

## Required Texts and Materials

You **do not** need to purchase any textbooks for this course. Readings relevant to each week's topic (academic journal articles, chapters from edited books, or other materials) will be posted on Moodle and/or Perusall for you to read and comment on before each class meeting.

## Course Assessments

The following table lists the assessments in this course and how they are connected to the course outcomes and program and general education outcomes listed above.

| Assessments                                    | Course Outcomes | General Education Outcomes | % of Final Grade |
|--|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Weekly Activities and Reflection Papers        | 1, 2, 3, 4      | 1, 2                       | 20%              |
| Participation in Online Discussion of Readings | 1, 2, 4         | 1, 2                       | 20%              |
| Leading Discussion and In-Class Participation  | 1, 2, 4, 6      | 1                          | 15%              |
| Mini-Midterm and Integrative Reflections       | 1, 2, 4         | 1                          | 10%              |
| Major Paper(s) / Project(s)                    | 4, 5, 6         | 1, 2                       | 35%              |

## Assignments and Grading

### Participation (55% of total)

This is a discussion-based course and you **MUST** actively participate to do well. Your participation grade will be determined by the following components:

#### Weekly Activities and Reflection Papers (20% of total)

At the end of most class meetings, you will be assigned an activity or topic for you to consider for the next week. This assignment will usually include a brief reflection paper (at least 300 words) on the activity or topic that will be due by the beginning of the next class meeting.

#### Participation in Online Discussion of Readings (20% of total)

You will participate in discussion for each of our weekly readings using the Perusall platform. You will receive credit for posting thoughtful questions and comments that engage with the material. Your questions and comments should be posted by the end of the day before we discuss a reading in class.

#### Leading Discussion and In-Class Participation (15% of total)

Because this is a discussion-based course, you **MUST** actively participate in class discussion. You will lead discussion for one or more of our weekly readings. Using the questions and comments posted online for the reading, you will guide and facilitate the discussion of that reading for the class. You should be very familiar with your reading in order to identify the key points and answer potential questions from the class. When we begin discussing your paper, you may be asked to briefly summarize the key points for the class.

### Mini-Midterm and Integrative Reflections (10% of total)

You will have one week to complete a take-home mini-midterm exam that covers content from the first several weeks of class. The information covered in the first few weeks of class serves as a foundation that we build upon for the rest of the semester, so it is especially important that you fully understand it. Occasionally, we will also have integrative reflection assignments in which you will discuss and apply the information we have learned over the course of several weeks. These assignments will give you an opportunity to draw out connections between our different topics and consider how they can be applied to the real world and your own life.

### Major Paper(s) / Project(s) (35% of total)

You will propose an integrative and culminating paper or project (or multiple smaller papers/projects) in this course. Your proposed paper or project must apply knowledge, theories, or methods you have learned about in this course to analyze a psychological topic related to happiness. Students in consultation with the professor will determine specific expectations for this assignment. In general, this assignment will include submitting a proposal, presenting your work to the class in some fashion, providing and receiving peer-feedback, intensive revision, and a final product submitted by the end of the semester. One possible paper/project could be a research proposal in which you propose actual research that tests a novel research question related to our course topics. Another possibility could be a review paper summarizing the psychological research on a particular topic related to our course. You are also encouraged to propose alternative projects that creatively integrate and demonstrate your mastery of the course content or related topics.

| Assignment Participation                        | % of Final Grade |
|---|------------------|
| Weekly Activities and Reflection Papers         | 20%              |
| Participation in Online Discussion (Perusall)   | 20%              |
| Leading Discussion and In-Class Participation   | 15%              |
| <b>Mini-Midterm and Integrative Reflections</b> | <b>10%</b>       |
| <b>Major Paper(s) / Project(s)</b>              |                  |
| Paper / Project Proposal(s)                     | 5%               |
| Paper / Project Presentation(s)                 | 5%               |
| Peer-feedback and Revision Activities           | 5%               |
| Final Revised Paper(s) / Project(s)             | 20%              |

### Grading Scale

Your final percentage grade in the course will be rounded to the nearest whole number to determine your letter grade according to the scale below.

| Percent | Letter Grade | Percent | Letter Grade |
|---------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| 97-100  | A+           | 77-79   | C+           |
| 93-96   | A            | 73-76   | C            |
| 90-92   | A-           | 70-72   | C-           |
| 87-89   | B+           | 67-69   | D+           |
| 83-86   | B            | 63-66   | D            |
| 80-82   | B-           | 60-62   | D-           |
|         |              | < 60    | F            |

## **Guidelines for Success**

### **Moodle**

All class announcements and assignments will be posted on Moodle. You should get in the habit of checking our Moodle site at least once daily.

### **Technical Assistance**

If you experience any technical issues related to this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. The Solution Center can also help you if you are having trouble with Moodle or printing an assignment.

### **Communication (Email & Course Messages)**

The best way to get in touch with me is by email ([davisw4@wittenberg.edu](mailto:davisw4@wittenberg.edu)). Include "HONR-300" in the subject line of your emails to help me get back to you as soon as possible. I will do my best to respond to all emails within 24 hours from Monday through Friday. If it has been more than 24 hours during those times and you have not received a response, please feel free to send a follow-up email. Sometimes messages just get lost or buried in my inbox and I may miss them.

I may post announcements on our course Moodle page in the Announcements forum. You should also receive a copy of any announcements via email. Please get in the habit of checking both your Witt email and our course Moodle page at least once a day so that you are aware of any changes, assignments, and upcoming deadlines.

### **Accessibility and ADA Accommodations**

Wittenberg University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, learning, chronic health, physical, hearing, vision and neurological, or temporary medical conditions, etc.), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, you must register with the Accessibility Services office by emailing [accessibilityservices@wittenberg.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@wittenberg.edu). You can also find information on the Accessibility Services webpage found at [www.wittenberg.edu/success](http://www.wittenberg.edu/success). Please note that services are confidential, may take time to put into place, and are not retroactive. The Accessibility Services Office is located in the COMPASS: Sweet Success Center, Thomas Library, on the first floor.

### **Honor Code**

All academic work submitted at Wittenberg will carry the honor statement: "I affirm that my work upholds the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity at Wittenberg, and that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance." Any student found to be in violation of the Wittenberg University [Code of Academic Integrity](#) could receive a failing grade and be referred to the Honor Council.

### **Time Commitment**

For each credit hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction, students are expected to engage in two hours of out of class course related work each week for approximately fifteen weeks. A four-credit course requires eight hours per week of out of class work.

### **Student Counseling Services**

If you are struggling with stress, anxiety, depression, or any other personal crisis, the student counseling services offered by Wittenberg are a valuable resource. The Counseling Services [website](#) has more information about the

services they offer. You can also call them at (937) 327-7946 or stop by the Counseling Center in 210 Shouplin Center.

## **Course Policies**

### **Attendance Policy**

Because a large part of this course is discussion-based, **you are expected to attend each of our class meetings** except in the event of an excused absence such as an illness or personal emergency. You will find yourself quickly falling behind and losing many points if you miss class, do not complete the readings, or do not submit completed assignments. If you know ahead of time that you will be unable to attend a class meeting, or if you miss class due to an unanticipated event, please inform me as soon as possible so we can consider our options. You are still responsible for any material covered on a day you are absent. If you have more than two **unexcused** absences, your final grade in the course may be reduced by **one-third of a full letter grade** for each additional unexcused absence (e.g., a B would become a B-).

### **Make-up and Extension Policy**

Make-up assignments or extensions may be granted in the event of an excused absence such as an illness or personal emergency. You need to contact me by email as soon as possible if you need to request an extension on an assignment so that we can discuss our options. For some assignments, extensions may not be possible (e.g., discussion participation). If an extension is possible, the assignment grade may be reduced by a specified amount (e.g., one-third of a full letter grade) for each day it is late (e.g., a B would become a B-).

If you are having difficulty keeping up with the class assignments and submitting your work before deadlines, please contact me immediately and I will do my best to work with you to overcome these difficulties.

### **Syllabus Change Statement**

Course instructors reserve the right to adjust this syllabus and content to meet the needs of students and to address course outcomes. In the event of substantive changes, students will be notified via an announcement in class or via Moodle.

# Calendar of Course Topics, Assignments, and Activities

A preliminary list of course topics and associated readings is provided below. I fully expect that topics and readings will change throughout the semester based on the interests of students and our class discussions. Any changes to the assigned readings or calendar will be posted on Moodle and announced in class.

## Course Topics, Calendar of Activities, Major Assignment Dates

### Week 1 Introduction to the Course and Foundations

M 8/26 First Day – No Readings

W 8/28 “How to Read a Journal Article” Selected Readings  
Oades & Mossman, 2017

Perusall Discussion of Readings (Practice)  
**Add a profile picture to Moodle**  
**Submit a brief autobiography**

### Week 2 Hedonia, Eudaimonia, and Beyond

M 9/2 **LABOR DAY – NO CLASS**

Perusall Discussion of Readings

W 9/4 Lucas & Diener, 2008  
Ryff, 2014  
Oishi & Westgate, 2022

Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Reflection: Happiness Interviews**

### Week 3 Waves, Criticisms and Critiques

M 9/9 Lomas et al., 2020  
Ryff, 2022

Perusall Discussion of Readings

W 9/11 van Zyl et al., 2024  
van Tongeren, 2024

Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Reflection: Positive Psychology Measures**

### Week 4 WEIRD People, The New Science of SWB

M 9/16 Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010

Perusall Discussion of Readings

W 9/18 Diener et al., 2017

Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Mini-Midterm Due on Friday (9/20)**

### Week 5 National Accounts of SWB, The Happiest People

M 9/23 Diener, 2000  
Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2015

Perusall Discussion of Readings

W 9/25 Diener & Seligman, 2002  
Diener, Seligman, Choi, & Oishi, 2018

Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Reflection: Savoring Expedition**

### Week 6 Individualism, Language Across Cultures

M 9/30 Becker & Marecek, 2008  
Lomas, 2016

Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Reflection: The Good Life in Different Cultures**

W 10/2 **Writing/Project Workshop**

Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Submit Paper/Project Proposal Draft**

**Week 7 Positive Emotions, Coping with Changes**

M 10/7 Fredrickson, 2013

Perusall Discussion of Readings

W 10/9 Diener, Lucas, & Scollon, 2006  
Bonanno, 2006 and Kashdan, 2017Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Reflection: Observing Emotional Expressions**  
**Paper/Project Proposal Draft Feedback Returned****Week 8 The Need to Belong and The Need to Be Different**M 10/14 **FALL BREAK – NO CLASS**W 10/16 Baumeister & Leary, 1995  
Hornsey & Jetten, 2004Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Reflection: Meditation Practice****Week 9 Relationships, Mini-Presentations**M 10/21 Finkel, Simpson, & Eastwick, 2017  
McNulty, 2010

Perusall Discussion of Readings

W 10/23 **Project/Paper Mini-Presentations****Project/Paper Mini-Presentations****Week 10 Social Media and FOMO, Gratitude and Creativity**M 10/28 Verduyn, 2017  
Przybylski et al., 2013

Perusall Discussion of Readings

W 10/30 Kaufman &amp; Beghetto, 2009

Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Reflection: Commercial Media Fast****Week 11 Narrative Identity and Nostalgia, Expressive Writing**M 11/4 McAdams & McLean, 2013  
Sedikides & Wildschut, 2018Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Reflection: Narrative Identity**

W 11/6 Pennebaker &amp; Chung, 2007

Perusall Discussion of Readings

**Week 12 Authenticity, Spending Money for Happiness**M 11/11 Rivera et al., 2019  
**OR** Chen, 2019Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Reflection: Expressive Writing**W 11/13 Gilovich & Gallo, 2020  
Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2014Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Submit Paper/Project Draft or Progress Update****Week 13 Meaning in Life and SDT in the Workplace, Racism**M 11/18 Steger, 2017  
Manganelli et al., 2018

Perusall Discussion of Readings

W 11/20 Salter, Adams, & Perez, 2008  
Roberts & Rizzo, 2020Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Reflection: Academic Motivation**  
**Paper/Project Feedback Returned**

**Week 14 Personality, Gratitude**

M 11/25 Friedman & Kern, 2014  
Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010

Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Reflection: Gratitude Intervention**

W 11/27 **THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS**

**Week 15 Virtues, Dark Sides of Happiness, Positive Universities**

M 12/2 Niemiec, 2013  
Gruber, Mauss, & Tamir, 2011

Perusall Discussion of Readings  
**Reflection: Applying Character Strengths**

W 12/4 Oades, Robinson, Green, & Spence, 2011

Perusall Discussion of Readings

**Week 16 Final Exams**

M 12/9 Final Exam period is 8:00-11:00am on Monday 12/9

**Final Paper/Project Due During Finals**