Syllabus – Fall 2025 – PSYC 3315 – Positive Psychology MW 2:00pm – 3:20pm

HPR 262

Instructor Information: Kristie Allen, M.A.

Hello! My name is Kristie Allen. I serve as a lecturer for the Department of Psychology and Counseling. I graduated from Grand Valley State University (Allendale, MI) with my Bachelors in Psychology and later from UT Tyler with my Masters in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. I am passionate about working with college students to find meaning in their coursework and a greater purpose in their educational journey. Positive psychology is a fascinating field because it shifts the focus from what's wrong with people to what makes life worth living. By studying strengths, resilience, gratitude, meaning, and flourishing, students can develop the tools to live with intention, cultivate well-being, and contribute to the world with authenticity and purpose. It empowers students to not only understand the science of happiness but to apply it to create a more psychologically abundant life. I am looking forward to diving into this fascinating topic with you all this semester! The best way to contact me is to send a message through CANVAS. I usually respond to messages within one business day, Monday through Friday. Weekend availability will vary. You can also e- mail me directly at kallen@uttyler.edu or call me at (903) 566-6177.

Each Wednesday, I will be available from 12:30pm-2:00pm in my Office (HPR 214) or via ZOOM for Office Hours. If this time does not work for you, we can arrange a time by appointment .

Join Zoom Meeting
https://uttyler.zoom.us/j/82203054072?pwd=dCcy4cNoXq7R3SoSZ21VCbFSH5gPRC.1Links to an external site.

Meeting ID: 822 0305 4072
Passcode: 444092

I am committed to facilitating a learning environment that is equitable, inclusive and welcoming and that fosters a climate of mutual respect and full participation. I expect you all to demonstrate that same level of respect to one another. Please be kind, open-minded, and receptive to feedback as that is the best way to ensure you get the most you can out of this class.

Personal Applications & Impact

It is impossible to study Psychology without thinking about our own lived experiences – that would take all the fun out of it! However, some topics we study may not be relevant to your own experiences, and your own experiences may not be consistent with the material presented. This does not mean that the research I present is inaccurate or that your experiences are "wrong". No psychological study will account for every person's experiences. In addition, some of the material in this class may provoke strong feelings about your past experiences or current life. It is a specific goal of this course to make sure you become good consumers of psychological information and sometimes that will mean challenging your own prior beliefs, values, and experiences.

Course Catalog Description:

This course is intended to introduce students to the study of Positive Psychology, the scientific
study of optimal human functioning. Positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and
accomplishments will be related to well-being

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Analyze historical and contemporary philosophical perspectives on happiness, including how thinkers such as Aristotle, Budhists, the Stoics, and modern existentialists have defined a good or meaningful life.
- Evaluate the scientific research on the biological, psychological, and social determinants of happiness, including the roles of genetics, brain function, personality traits, relationships, and social environments.
- Apply empirically supported interventions (e.g., gratitude exercises, strengths-based approaches, mindfulness practices) to enhance well-being in oneself and others.
- Explore how individuals find meaning and purpose in life, and assess the impact of value-driven living on long-term well-being and resilience.
- Critically examine the cultural and ethical implications of positive psychology, including when the pursuit of happiness may be harmful, exclusionary, or overly individualistic.

Textbook(s):

There will be NO textbook for this course! We will primarily be using the Happiness Lab podcast and supplemental readings and resources to pro

Evaluation and Grading:

Exams	There will be 2 exams completed via Canvas. Each exam will have 50 questions worth 2 points each	200
In-Class Activities	There will be 6 in-class activities, each worth 20 points (I will drop the lowest one so if you miss one, this is your freebie). These are noted on the course outline so you can make sure you are present and plan ahead. If you miss class you will miss the points.	100
Follow Up Meeting w/ 5393 Student	After the 10/22 in-class activity, you will be responsible for meeting with your 5393 Motivational Interviewer one more time via Zoom	5
Attendance	You will all start the class with 25 points for attendance on Canvas. You are allowed to miss 3 classes with no penalty. Once you surpass 3 classes, I will begin taking off 5 points per absence.	25
Course Reflection: A Discussion Board Post	See Canvas for Instructions	20
Pop Quizzes	There will be 12 pop quizzes based on the assigned required listening and/or reading for that day worth 5-points each. I will drop the lowest 2.	50
In Search of the Good Life: Your Very Own Podcast Episode	See Canvas for Instructions	100
Total Points		500

Extra Credit: I will give extra credit questions on each exam. You will also have the opportunity to complete a 25 point extra credit summary of an episode we did not cover from the Happiness Lab

450-500 points: A

400-449 points: B

350-399 points: C

300-349 points: D

<300 points: F

Course Flow – What Can You Expect?

The first 10 minutes of class will be considered an interactive study hall. Because our main educational material for this course is a Podcast, I would expect students to take notes and/or download the transcript to review those first few minutes of class.

If we have a Pop Quiz (remember, there are 12 throughout the semester!) we will spend minutes 10-25 completing that assessment.

The remainder of class will be focused on lecture, in-class activities, and small group work. I will allow a 10 minute break sometime in the middle of class and will take attendance after that.

Attendance

A 2010 meta-analysis of the relationship between class attendance in college and college grades found that class attendance is a better predictor of college grades than any other known predictor of academic performance (Crede et al., 2010). Much of our learning will happen while working with peers and through our group discussions. These are learning experiences that are almost impossible to make up individually. I will take attendance using Mentimeter each class meeting. You are allowed 3 absences over the course of the semester. There is no need to e-mail me or let me know you will be missing. You will all start out with 25 points (5% of overall grade) in the Canvas gradebook. Once you surpass 3 absences, I will start deducting 5 points for each absence

Important Note – Because I clearly define which days we will be completing in-class activities, I firmly advise against missing any of those days as I will not provide you the opportunity to makeup that work.

Credé, M., Roch, S. G., & Kieszczynka, U. M. (2010). Class attendance in college: A meta-analytic review of the relationship of class attendance with grades and student characteristics. Review of Educational Research, 80(2), 272-295.

Exams:

- Exams will open Wednesdays after class at 3:20pm and will remain open until 11:59pm on Friday evening.
- You may use the OERs, Power Points, notes, but NOT another person. Do not rely on these items exclusively because of the time constraints. You really need to KNOW the material.
- Each exam will be 50 questions, true/false and multiple choice.
- Exams will be timed at 120 minutes.
- Please study as if this was an in-person quiz!
- Please read the section on academic dishonesty. It is not tolerated *AT ALL*. If cheating is suspected, you will be reported to the Office of Student Affairs

In Search of the Good Life: Your Very Own Podcast Interview

For this assignment, students will condut a 10-15 minute interview with someone they believe leads a "good life"—not necessarily someone who is always cheerful, but someone who seems to embody well-being, meaning, resilience, or joy in an authentic way. The goal is to explore how this person defines happiness, what practices or mindsets contribute to their sense of flourishing, and how their life experience reflects themes from Positive Psychology.

Assignment Components:

1. **Interview Preparation (Pre-Interview Write-Up – 1 page, 14 points)**

- Identify the person they plan to interview and briefly explain why.
- Draft 6–10 thoughtful, open-ended questions aligned with course themes (e.g., purpose, strengths, gratitude, mindset, resilience, awe, social connection).
- Example questions (PLEASE DO NOT just copy these; come up with your own!):
  - How do you define happiness or a "good life"?
  - What helps you get through difficult times?
  - What role do relationships or community play in your well-being?
  - What daily habits, beliefs, or values contribute to your sense of fulfillment?
  - Have your views on happiness changed over time?

2. **Conduct the Interview (56 points)**

- Meet in person or virtually
- Record (with permission)
  - NOTE: During your introduction, I want you to say, "Do I have your permission to record this interview," and then wait for their affirmative response.
- Aim for a conversational, respectful tone—not a rigid Q&A.
- Upload recording to YouTube. You can make the video unlisted and submit the link to Professor Allen.

3. **Happiness Audit Summary & Analysis (1-2 pages, 30 points)**

- Summarize key insights from the interview.
- Reflect on how the person's life aligns (or doesn't) with theories and research from the course (e.g., PERMA model, growth mindset, self-compassion, optimism, resilience, etc.).
- Offer your personal reflection: What did you learn from this person? How might it influence your own pursuit of a meaningful life?

Course Schedule:

**Note – this syllabus is a living, breathing document! This means changes and additions to required reading and listening may be implemented. I will only do so with app

Week 1		
Monday	August 25	Syllabus Day
Wednesday	August 27	An Introduction to Positive Psychology Required Listening: The Man Who Invented Happiness Science: Marty Seligman (The Happiness Lab)
Week 2		
Monday	September 1	LABOR DAY; No In-Person Class
Wednesday	September 3	The Philosophy of Happiness (Part 1) Required Listening: Happiness Lessons of the Ancients: Aristotle (The Happiness Lab) Happiness Lessons of the Ancients: Plato (The Happiness Lab)

		Required Reading: Pages 2-9 of: Symons, X., & VanderWeele, T. (2024). Aristotelian flourishing and contemporary philosophical theories of wellbeing. Journal of Happiness Studies, 25(1), 26.
Week 3		
Monday	September 8	The Psychology and Neuroscience of Happiness In-Class Activity
Wednesday	September 10	The Philosophy of Happiness (Part 2) Required Listening: Happiness Lessons of the Ancients: The Buddha (The Happiness Lab) Guest Lecture??
Week 4		
Monday	September 15	Does Our Personality and Life Circumstances Matter When it Comes to Happiness? Required Listening: You Can Change (The Happiness Lab) The Introvert's Guide to Extroversion (The Happiness Lab)
Wednesday	September 17	Mindset and Positive Thinking Required Listening: How to Adopt a Growth Mindset (The Happiness Lab) Don't Accentuate the Positive (The Happiness Lab)
Week 5		
Monday	September 22	Optimism Required Listening: Can You Become a "Practical Optimist"? (The Happiness Lab)
Wednesday	September 24	Self-Compassion and Embracing Imperfection Required Listening: How to Grow After Adversity (The Happiness Lab)

		How to Embrace Imperfection (The Happiness Lab) In-Class Activity
Week 6		
Monday	September 29	Emotions as Data Required Listening: Emotions are Data... So Listen to Them (The Happiness Lab) Stop Stressing About Stress (The Happiness Lab)
Wednesday	October 1	Hacking Our Emotions Required Listening: How to Identify Your Negative Emotions (The Happiness Lab) Hack Your Emotions (The Happiness Lab)
Week 7		
Monday	October 6	Friendship Required Listening: The Secret to Making Friends as an Adult (The Happiness Lab) How to Make Friends and Compliment People (The Happiness Lab) In-Class Activity
Wednesday	October 8	Romance Required Listening: Why the “Good Enough” Relationship Beats the “Perfect Partner” (The Happiness Lab) Date Like a Scientist (The Happiness Lab)
Week 8		
Monday	October 13	Can Money Buy Happiness? Required Listening: The Unhappy Millionaire (The Happiness Lab) Demonic Possessions (The Happiness Lab) Pre-Interview Write-Up for Podcast Episode Due by 11:59pm

Wednesday	October 15**	Exam 1 Review – Attendance Optional
Week 9		
Monday	October 20	Social Comparison Required Listening: A Silver Lining (The Happiness Lab)
Wednesday	October 22	Motivational Interviewing w/ 5393 In-Class activity
Week 10		
Monday	October 27	Playfulness Guest Lecture??
Wednesday	October 29	Altruism and Prosocial Behavior Required Listening: Psychopaths and Superheroes (The Happiness Lab) Ask for Help... And Spread Happiness (The Happiness Lab)
Week 11		
Monday	November 3	Living an Awe-Some Life Required Listening: The Power of Awe (The Happiness Lab) In-Class Activity
Wednesday	November 5	Psychological Richness Required Listening: How to Lead the Richest Life Possible (The Happiness Lab)
Week 12		
Monday	November 10	Moral Injury

		Guest Lecture??
Wednesday	November 12	The Gift of Mortality Required Listening: A Matter of Life and Death (The Happiness Lab) In-Class Activity In Search of the Good Life: Your Very Own Podcast Episode (Happiness Audit Summary & Analysis + Recording Link) Due by 11:59pm
Week 13		
Monday	November 17	Gratitude Required Listening: Grateful Expectations (The Happiness Lab) In-Class Activity
Wednesday	November 19	Work Day; No In-Person Class Course Reflection Discussion Board Post Due by 11:59pm
Week 14 - Thanksgiving Break – November 24 – November 28		
Week 15		
Monday	December 1	Happiness at Work Required Listening: How to Thrive at Work (The Happiness Lab) Five Tips to be Happier at Work (The Happiness Lab)
Wednesday	December 3	Exam 2 Review – Attendance Optional
Final Exam Week Exam 2 Due Wednesday, December 11 by 11:59pm		

Academic Dishonesty:

Canvas has tools that shows when/if a student has plagiarized information. It will generate a report once you submit your work and any information matching other

sources will be highlighted in a document. I am sure you know that this would be considered to violate our Academic Dishonesty Policy and you will be turned into the Student Affairs office for review. Your work must be original and in your own words. I cannot stress enough; make sure ALL of your work is ORIGINAL. If you aren't sure if the work you are about to submit abides by the academic dishonesty policy of the university) don't submit it. You know if the work you are submitting is completely original. Make sure that you always include in-text citations as well as a Works Cited page in APA format with all of your work. For assistance with APA formatting, you may visit the writing center on campus and find this site to be helpful:

https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/.

University Policies

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus- (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

carry/index.php

UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors.

Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products.

There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit

www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Fall 2025 Census Date – September 8

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the

Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W, grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit

https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices, (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.the SAR office located in the University Center #3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

- "Cheating, includes, but is not limited to:
  - copying from another student's test paper;
  - using during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
  - failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
  - possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes,. The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
  - using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
  - collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
  - discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
  - divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructor has designated that the examination is not to be

removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
- paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or information about an unadministered test, test key, homework solution or computer program;
- falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of U. T. Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and,
- misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.
- "Plagiarism, includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as agift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for
- "Collusion, includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic
- All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism

CEP Vision and Mission and Program Standards

CEP Vision

The CEP will be a global leader in responding to needs in the fields of education, psychology, and counseling, with a focus on the East Texas region, by creating innovative academic and scholarly pathways and partnerships.

CEP Mission

The mission of the CEP is to prepare competent and passionate professionals in the fields of education, psychology, and counseling; to advance knowledge and expertise; and to impact these fields locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.