

College of San Mateo
Official Course Outline

1. **COURSE ID:** PSYC 310 **TITLE:** Positive Psychology
Units: 3.0 units **Hours/Semester:** 48.0-54.0 Lecture hours; 96.0-108.0 Homework hours; 144.0-162.0 Total Student Learning hours
Method of Grading: Letter Grade Only
Recommended Preparation:
 Completion of or concurrent enrollment in ENGL 100 or ENGL 105.
2. **COURSE DESIGNATION:**
Degree Credit
Transfer credit: CSU; UC
AA/AS Degree Requirements:
 CSM - GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: E5b. Social Science
 CSM - GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: E5d. Career Exploration and Self-Development
CSU GE:
 CSU GE Area E: LIFELONG LEARNING AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT: E1
3. **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:**
Catalog Description:
 Introduces positive psychology, the scientific study of human strengths, well-being and happiness. Surveys the research, theories, and ideas about human health and happiness. Students will explore topics in the field of positive psychology including but not limited to wellness, optimism, flow, happiness, and positive thinking.
4. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME(S) (SLO'S):**
 Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:
 1. Identify and evaluate research that supports the principles, strategies, and skills of positive psychology.
 2. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the research methods and assessments in positive psychology.
 3. Demonstrate awareness of strengths and virtues and learn strategies to increase well-being and overall quality of life.
5. **SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**
 Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:
 1. Describe the important theories, concepts and current research findings in positive psychology.
 2. Identify and evaluate research that supports the principles, the strategies, and the skills of positive psychology.
 3. Understand the relative contributions of nature and nurture to one's level of happiness
 4. Compare and contrast positive affect, positive emotion, happiness, and well-being.
 5. Analyze the respective roles of positive subjective experiences, positive individual traits and positive institutions in the creation and maintenance of positive, meaningful lives
 6. Evaluate the truth of popular claims regarding the nature of happiness, and the influences on happiness, through the discovery, evaluation and interpretation of credible evidence
 7. Select and use correct measures to evaluate dimensions of subjective well-being and be able to interpret results of these measures.
 8. Explain the VIA classification system of character.
 9. Differentiate between the human strengths of wisdom and courage and identify how these strengths contribute to subjective well-being.
 10. Compare and contrast the processes and effects of mindfulness and flow.
 11. Increase awareness of strengths and virtues and learn strategies to increase well-being and overall quality of life.
 12. Identify and apply positive psychology techniques & principles to enhance health, happiness and well-being
6. **COURSE CONTENT:**
Lecture Content:
 1. What is Positive Psychology
 - A. Humanistic psychology
 - a. Moving from negative to positive, abnormal to growth-orientation

- B. Relationship of humanistic psychology to positive psychology
 - a. Martin Seligman and the movement of positive psychology
- C. Eastern and Western perspectives on positive psychology
- D. The pillars of positive psychology
- E. Research methods applied to the study of positivity
 - a. Descriptive methods: survey, case study
 - b. Experimental design
 - c. Self-report
- 2. Learning About Positive Psychology
 - A. Nurturing strengths
 - B. Gratitude
 - C. Forgiveness
 - D. Fun versus philanthropy
- 3. Pleasure and Positive Experience
 - A. Pleasure
 - B. Physiology and psychology of emotions
 - a. Darwinian construction of emotions
 - b. Cognitive appraisal of emotions
 - C. Positive emotions
 - D. Mere exposure effect
 - E. Endowment effect
 - F. Broaden-and-build theory
 - G. Positive affect & hedonic capacity
 - H. Csikszentmihalyi and FLOW
- 4. Happiness
 - A. Hedonism
 - B. Eudaimonia
 - C. Engagement
 - D. Explaining and measuring happiness
 - a. Hedonism
 - i. Experiencing and sampling method
 - b. Desire theory
 - c. Objective list theory
 - d. Quality of life
 - e. Subjective well-being
 - f. Measures of happiness
 - g. Consequences of happiness
 - h. Boosting happiness
- 5. Positive Thinking
 - A. Cognitive psychology
 - a. The Pollyanna principle
 - b. Consciousness and selective attention to the negative
 - B. What is optimism
 - a. Optimism and individual difference
 - C. Dispositional optimism
 - D. Optimism vs pessimism
 - E. Explanatory style
 - F. Hope
 - G. Issues in optimism
- 6. Character Strengths
 - A. The role of culture in developing strengths
 - B. Issues in studying good character
 - C. Identification of character strengths
 - D. VIA classification of character strengths and virtues
 - E. Assessment of character strengths
- 7. Values
 - A. Functions of values
 - B. What values are and are not
 - C. Cataloging values
 - D. Measuring values

- E. Universal structure of human values
- F. Origin of values
- 8. Interests, Abilities, and Accomplishments
 - A. Interests
 - B. Abilities
 - a. Intelligence
 - C. Accomplishments
- 9. Wellness
 - A. Health and illness throughout history
 - B. Mind-body dualism
 - C. Mind-body fields
 - a. Health psychology
 - b. Behavioral medicine
 - c. Psychoneuroimmunology
 - D. Wellness promotion
 - E. Mental health, resilience, and coping
- 10. Positive Interpersonal Relationships
 - A. Love and attachment
 - B. Equity theory
 - C. Affiliation, liking, and friendship
- 11. Enabling Institutions
 - A. Social groupings
 - B. Features of enabling institutions
 - C. The good family
 - D. The good school
 - E. The good workplace
 - F. The good society
 - G. The good religion
- 12. The Future of Positive Psychology
 - A. The neurobiology of pleasure
 - B. Natural history of the good life
 - C. Why don't people seek out what will make them happy
 - D. Can the psychological good life be deliberately created
 - E. Is a psychological utopia possible
 - F. Peace

7. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

Typical methods of instruction may include:

- A. Lecture
- B. Activity
- C. Directed Study
- D. Discussion
- E. Guest Speakers

8. REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Representative assignments in this course may include, but are not limited to the following:

Writing Assignments:

- A. Research Paper: Students select an area of Positive Psychology for in-depth research into the scientific literature and methodologies. Paper to be written in APA format.
- B. Reflective paper integrating a research-based perspective upon character strengths as identified by assessment methods of positive psychology. Assess strengths upon influence of personal well-being. Paper written in APA format.
- C. Paper applying research-based principles of positive psychology to an individual case, a community, or an institution in order to enhance overall functioning and infuse structure with core facets of positive psychology.

Reading Assignments:

- A. Reading of academic research-based text, approximately 30-40 pages per week
- B. Reading of scholarly journal articles and research in the field of positive psychology

Other Outside Assignments:

Library research to locate scholarly journals and scientific articles in topic areas of positive psychology.
Oral presentation and written synthesis of article research and findings (APA format).

9. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF EVALUATION

Representative methods of evaluation may include:

- A. Class Participation
- B. Class Work
- C. Exams/Tests
- D. Group Projects
- E. Homework
- F. Oral Presentation
- G. Papers
- H. Portfolios
- I. Projects
- J. Quizzes
- K. Research Projects
- L. Written examination

10. REPRESENTATIVE TEXT(S):

Possible textbooks include:

- A. Shane, L., Teramoto Pedrotti, J. & Snyder, C.R. *Positive psychology: The scientific and practical explorations of human strengths*, 4th ed. SAGE Publications, 2019
- B. Compton, W. & Hoffman, E. *Positive psychology: The science of happiness and flourishing*, 4th ed. SAGE, 2023
- C. Cheavens J. S. & Feldman D. B. *The science and application of positive psychology*, ed. Cambridge University Press, 2022

Origination Date: September 2023

Curriculum Committee Approval Date: November 2023

Effective Term: Fall 2024

Course Originator: Michelle Mullane