

Course Syllabus

Course Information

Course Motto: “Life is not determined by what you want. Life is determined by the choices you make.” Mr. Seaver, Junior High School Teacher. [Citation](#)

Course Instructor: Michael Weigold

Office Location: 3064 Weimer Hall

Office Hours: Live via zoom by appointment or by email with a 24-hour response time.

Course Communications: Email via Canvas or at mweigold@jou.ufl.edu. Expect a response within 24-48 business hours.

Credit Hours: 3

Social and Behavioral Sciences (S): Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures, or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes, or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

Description: Happiness is a terminal goal in many, if not most, people’s lives. The pursuit of happiness is now a pressing question because while many Americans lead lives that are richer, healthier, and freer than at any time in history, evidence suggests they are less happy now than ever before (see [here Links to an external site.](#)for research detecting this trend well before the current pandemic). Why are Americans less happy, and what can they (and you) do to live a happier, more fulfilling life? Social scientists from many disciplines have examined the behaviors and habits that do and do not predict long-term happiness. This course uses a multidisciplinary social science perspective to share these practices and encourages you to adopt one to enhance your well-being.

This course uses a three-pronged approach to a social science approach to understanding happiness:

1. Understand what makes us happy (principles drawn from social science research).

2. Understand how we know (methods of social science used to understand human emotion, thought, and behavior).
3. Apply what we know (to make your life richer and more satisfying).

Prerequisites: none

Prerequisites, Requirements, Materials, and Methods

Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback• Technology• Methods

You will have two **required textbooks**:

1. Lyubormirsky, S. (2007). [The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want. New York: Penguin Press](#)[Links to an external site.](#)
2. Bhattacharjee, A. [Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices - Open Textbook Library](#) [Links to an external site.](#)(umn.edu) (free download pdf)

Plus, choose **1 key text** related to a semester-long personal activity:

1. Increase mutual understanding by mastering communication skills: Bento Leal, [12-Day Communication Challenge](#)[Links to an external site.](#)
2. Take control over your life by learning how to create good habits and eliminate bad ones: James Clear, [Atomic Habits](#) [Links to an external site.](#)

All other resources will be provided in Canvas.

The sources of images used in the course lectures can be found in this [document with image sources](#)

[Actions](#)

Grades

For information on current UF grading policies visit Grades and Grading Policies (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>).[Links to an external site.](#)

Your grade in this class is calculated by summing the points from several activities listed below. There are 385 possible points. The points needed for each grade are as follows:

A = 347 or higher

A- = 339 - 346

B+ = 327 - 338

B = 316 - 326

B- = 308 - 315

C+ = 300 - 307

C = 270 - 299

D = 231- 269

E = 230 or below

Module quizzes (135 points). Most weeks include a quiz covering all module activities. There are 12 quizzes. Quizzes open Wednesdays at 5 am and must be completed by 11 pm on that day. They only take about 5 minutes and consist of 5 questions. They are multiple choice. You may not take a missed quiz without advance notification and approval, with exceptions outlined in UF policy. All quizzes are in Canvas. Quizzes are in Honorlock. You may use **paper notes** during the quiz, but no electronic devices, tablets, or digital aids of any kind. If you are using paper notes, show these to the screen during the Honorlock scan of your room and raise them in front of the camera when you are consulting them. Do not look side to side during assessments.

Activity posts (50 points). Each activity post is worth 10 pts. There are a total of 5 activity posts. The activity post is where you describe your experience with a happiness activity for the class. The first activity, which all students will do, is a meditation activity. The remaining four posts cover your experiences with an activity you've chosen. This semester you can choose to become a better communicator or to master your habits. Which one you do is up to you. Each activity has a TEXT associated with it that you will purchase, read, and will serve as a guide as you implement your activity. You should do this as soon as possible.

Here is information on [what a good activity post is like](#).

Choose one based on your belief about which activity will bring you the greatest amount of happiness IF you were to adopt the activity for the rest of your life.

Idea posts (50 points), 5 total @ 10 pts each deal with questions related to happiness that are raised in a module. You should try to answer these questions thoughtfully and reflect on how your own life relates to the questions. Here is info on [good idea posts](#).

Research Project (50 points). You will conduct original research by doing Interviews and reporting on happiness as reflected among a diverse group of people.

Activity group presentation / Team Presentation (1 presentation worth 50 points). You will collaborate with others who have chosen the same activity as you. The collaboration will take the form of a presentation to the class about your experiences. You will record the presentation with all participants having a speaking role. Here is info on [how to do well on your group presentation](#).

Exam (1 exam worth 50 points). The exam is multiple choice. Unlike the quizzes, there are no aids permitted on the exam. It is 50 questions and will last for 50 minutes.

Course Schedule

Orientation: Course Overview

Module 1: What Is Happiness?

Module 2: How Happy Are You?

Module 3: Choosing Activities for Lifelong Happiness

Module 4: The Mind: Anxiety, Depression, Gratitude

Module 5: Resources for Happiness, Part 1: Others

Module 6: Resources for Happiness, Part 2: Love

Module 7: Resources for Happiness, Part 3: Wealth

Module 8: Resources for Happiness, Part 4: Fitness

Module 9: Resources for Happiness, Part 5: Purpose

Module 10: The Role of Time in Happiness

Module 11: The Role of the Self in Happiness

Module 12: Setting Goals, Managing Oneself, Grit

Module 13: Making Repairs: Apologizing and Forgiving

Module 14: Student Presentations: Communication, Habits

Exam

Policies

Course Policies

- UF Policies

Attendance Policy

This class is asynchronous. This is good and bad. The good part is the convenience. The bad part is the freedom to put other priorities ahead of regular progress. You are

unlikely to do well, and will definitely not benefit and grow if you do not reserve a specific time each week to complete work in the class.

Aside from the circumstances mentioned in the Make-up Policy section, I ask that you **notify me IN ADVANCE for permission to miss assignments**. Excused extensions may be made for circumstances that are beyond your control and documented. In general, if you contact me after a due date it is not accepted, except in those situations described in UF's attendance policies, which can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>Links to an external site.

Quiz/Exam Policies

Required: Most modules have a quiz that is available early and closes by 11 pm on the assigned date. The exception is modules the quiz day is a holiday, in which case the quiz opens the following weekday.

You may access written notes during a quiz, but not online materials (you will be in a proctoring system). You should work on all quizzes without assistance from other students, study aids, websites, content sites such as Quizlet, etc. In other words, the quiz answers are yours and reflect what you've learned from the material. To do otherwise is a violation of the UF Honor Code. The exam covers all material in the class, including lectures and readings.

Make-Up Policy

Students may make up work related to university-excused absences or with the permission of the instructor. In the latter case, you must notify me in advance of the due date and explain the issues you are facing submitting work on time. Approved excuses are generally ones that can be documented and are not under the student's control. For example, if you are ill, notify me in advance of the assignment due date and see a doctor who can provide a note.

Assignment Policy

Deadlines for assignments are listed in the syllabus. Students should submit work on the dates indicated except where university policy provides an exemption.

Class Community

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. Students should feel free to express their opinions but do so in a way that respects the rights of others who disagree.

Behaviors that detract from an environment that promotes learning will be penalized. Help yourself to learn and help others to learn as well. Make your philosophy one of maturity, as defined by author Stephen Covey:

“Maturity is the balance between courage and consideration. If a person can express his feelings and convictions with courage balanced with consideration for the feelings and

convictions of another person, he is mature, particularly if the issue is very important to both parties.”

Getting Help

Technical Help
• Student Support

For issues with technical difficulties for Canvas or any other course technologies, please contact the UF Help Desk at: <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu> or [Links to an external site.](#) (352) 392-HELP (4357).

A request for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from the Help Desk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem.

Disclaimer

This syllabus represents the instructor’s current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.