

Psychological Fitness (PSYC 461) Section 008. Spring 2012. 3:00 - 4:15 pm TR in Robinson A101

Professor: Jerome L. Short, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: 1:45 - 2:45 Tuesdays & Thursdays

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Welcome! This course will introduce you to the theory and practice of psychological health promotion. You will have the opportunity to practice multiple psychological exercises to enhance your psychological health. I expect you to attend class regularly and to complete all reading assignments before each class. I will use class time for lectures, discussions, videos, and class demonstrations of psychological exercises.

*Last day to add : January 31 *Last day to drop: February 24

Requirements.

One Exam. Your exam is worth 100 points. The exam is 80% multiple choice (40 questions worth 2 points each) and 20% short answer questions (4 questions worth from 4 to 6 points each) based on classroom activities and the readings. The exam is cumulative. Two exams will be offered and if you take both of them, you will receive credit for your higher score. One exam will be during the semester and another exam will be during the final exam period.

Movie Review. Your movie review is worth 50 points. I will assign you to a group of three students who will watch a movie focused on character strengths. You will discuss it, and then group members will write a 5 to 7 page paper together or alone to describe: 1) three character strengths that apply to one of the main characters with examples; 2) three theoretical causes of the character strengths for that character; 3) three cultural views of the character's use of character strengths with examples; 4) the three most important missing character strengths and why with examples; and 5) three points of agreement and three points of disagreement in your group discussions. I will provide the list of movies.

Psychological Exercise Project. This project is worth 50 points and you will write a report in the form of a single-participant scientific study that one might find in an issue of *Clinical Case Studies*. The report should include Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion sections with a minimum of three references from psychology journals. Your report can range from 7 to 12 pages. I will provide you standardized measures to assess yourself twice. In between, you will implement at least 5 psychological exercises to help maintain or improve your psychological fitness.

Creative Project. This project is worth 100 points. You have a lot of options to carry out this project, but you must submit a proposal for the professor to approve. The project must focus on some aspect of psychological fitness and could include an instructional brochure or workbook for a target group; instructional website, dvd, or cd; a story book illustrating character strengths; a plan for a workshop or retreat; developing a series of new psychological exercises; a TED lecture <http://www.ted.com> ; an application for a smartphone; a traditional research paper (7 to 10 pages and minimum of 10 references), or other ideas.

Missed Exam. You can make-up a missed exam if you have a note from a physician that you could not attend the exam. The professor will consider other reasons for missing an exam and will decide whether or not to allow the student to make-up the exam. Make-up exams may have a different format from the original exam.

Extra Credit. You can earn up to 6 points of extra credit that is added onto your point total for the class. There are two ways to earn these points. First, you can participate as a volunteer for three hours in psychology department research (2 points per hour). Alternatively, you can write a psychology journal article summary and critique on a content area covered by your book that is three typed pages (2 points per page).

Honor Code: The Honor Code of George Mason University deals specifically with cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Students should be familiar with the code and connected policies, set out at <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies>. This course will be conducted in accordance with those policies.

Academic Accommodations. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Grading. I will base your final grade on your point total as defined below.

A+ = 291 - 300 (97% or more)	A = 279 - 290 (93 - 96%)	A- = 270 - 278 (90 - 92%)
B+ = 261 - 269 (87 - 89%)	B = 249 - 260 (83 - 86%)	B- = 240 - 248 (80 - 82%)
C+ = 231 - 239 (77 - 79%)	C = 219 - 230 (73 - 76%)	C- = 210 - 218 (70 - 72%)
D = 180 - 209 (60 - 69%)	F = 000 - 179 (below 60%).	

Course Topics, Assignments, and Exam Dates.

1/24 **Psychological Fitness** Compton, W.C. (2005). Interventions for enhanced well-being (pp. 175-195). *Introduction to positive psychology*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

1/26 Seligman, M.E.P., Steen, T.A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: Empirical validation of interventions. *American Psychologist*, 60(5), 410-421.

Walsh, R. (2011). Lifestyle and mental health. *American Psychologist*, 66(7), 579-592.

1/31 Seligman, M.E.P., & Fowler, R.D. (2011). Comprehensive soldier fitness and the future of psychology. *American Psychologist*, 66(1), 82-86.

Park, N., Peterson, C., & Seligman, M.E.P. (2004). Strengths of character and well-being. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 23(5), 603-619.

2/2 **Healthy Thinking** Carver, C.S., & Connor-Smith, J. (2010). Personality and coping. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 61, 679-704.

2/7 * Complete measures for time 1 for Psychological Exercise Project * Carver, C.S., Scheier, M.F., & Segerstrom, S.C. (2010). Optimism. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 30, 879-889.

2/9 Meevissen, Y.M.C., Peters, M.L., & Alberts, H.J.E.M. (2011). Become more optimistic by imagining a best possible self: Effects of a two week intervention. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 42, 371-378.

2/14 Emmons, R.A., & Mishra, A. (2011). Why gratitude enhances well-being: What we know, what we need to know. In K.M. Sheldon, T.B. Kashdan, & M.F. Steger (Editors), *Designing positive psychology: Taking stock and moving forward* (pp. 248-262). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

2/16 Brown, K. W., Ryan, R. M., & Creswell, J. D. (2007). Mindfulness: Theoretical foundations and evidence for its salutary effects. *Psychological Inquiry*, 18, 211-237.

2/21 **Healthy Identity** Markus, H.R., & Kitayama, S. (2010). Cultures and selves: A cycle of mutual constitution. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(4), 420-430.

2/23 ** Movie Review Due ** Plaut, V.C., Markus, H.R., & Lachman, M.E. (2002). Place matters: Consensual features and regional variation in American well-being and self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83(1), 160-184.

2/28 McKnight, P.E., & Kashdan, T.B. (2009). Purpose in life as a system that creates and sustains health and well-being: An integrative, testable theory. *Review of General Psychology*, 13, 242-251.

3/1 **Moral Health** Schulman, M. (2002). How we become moral: The sources of moral motivation. In C.R. Snyder & S.J. Lopez (editors): *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 499-512). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

3/6 * Complete Measures for Time 2 for Psychological Fitness Project * Pargament, K.I., & Sweeney, P.J. (2011). Building spiritual fitness in the army. *American Psychologist*, 66(1), 58-64.

3/8 **Healthy Behaviors** Baumeister, R. F., Gailliot, M. T., DeWall, C. N. & Oaten, M. (2006). Self-regulation and personality: Strength-boosting interventions and trait moderators of ego depletion. *Journal of Personality*, 74, 1773-1802.

3/13 * No Class *

3/15 * No Class *

3/20 Reynolds, E. K., MacPherson, L., Tull, M. T., Baruch, D. E., & Lejuez, C. W. (2011). Integration of the brief Behavioral Activation Treatment for Depression (BATD) into a college orientation program: Depression and alcohol outcomes. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 1-10.

3/22 Brick, C.A., Seely, D.L., & Palermo, T.M. (2010). Association between sleep hygiene and sleep quality in medical students. *Behavioral Sleep Medicine*, 8(2), 113-121.

3/27 ** Psychological Exercise Project Due ** Rozin, P., & Hormes, J.M. (2010). Psychology and sensory marketing, with a focus on food. In A. Krishna (ed.), *Sensory marketing: Research on the sensuality of products* (pp. 303-321). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

3/29 **Emotional Health** Fredrickson, B.L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 218-226.

4/3 * Proposal for Creative Project Due * Quoidbach, J., Berry, E.V., Hansenne, M., & Mikolajczak, M. (2010). Positive emotion regulation and well-being: Comparing the impact of eight savoring and dampening strategies. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 49, 368-373.

4/5 Algoe, S.B., & Haidt, J. (2009). Witnessing excellence in action: the 'other-praising' emotions of elevation, gratitude, and admiration. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4(2), 105-127.

4/10 Algoe, S.B., & Fredrickson, B.L. (2011). Emotional fitness and the movement of affective science from lab to field. *American Psychologist*, 66(1), 35-42.

4/12 ** EXAM 1 **

4/17 **Healthy Relationships** Gable, S.L., & Gosnell, C.L. (2011). The positive side of close relationships. In K.M. Sheldon, T.B. Kashdan, & M.F. Steger (Editors), *Designing positive psychology: Taking stock and moving forward* (pp. 265-279). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

4/19 Cacioppo, J.T., Reis, H.T., & Zautra, A.J. (2011). Social resilience: The value of social fitness with an application to the military. *American Psychologist*, 66(1), 43-51.

4/24 ** Creative Project Due ** Gottman, J.M., Gottman, J.S., & Atkins, C.L. (2011). The comprehensive soldier fitness program: Family skills component. *American Psychologist*, 66(1), 35-42.

4/26 **Sexual Health** Stephenson, K.R., Ahrhold, T.K., & Meston, C.M. (2011). The association between sexual motives and sexual satisfaction: Gender differences and categorical comparisons. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 40(3), 607-618.

5/1 Bancroft, J., Long, J.S., & McCabe, J. (2011). Sexual well-being: A comparison of U.S. black and white women in heterosexual relationships. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 40(4), 725-740.

5/3 Review

5/15 ** EXAM 2 ** (1:30 – 4:15)