



University of  
New Haven

## *Positive Psychology*

### SECTION I: Course Overview

**Course Code:** PSY334FCO

**Subject Area(s):** Psychology

**Prerequisites:** See Below

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Total Contact Hours:** 45

**Recommended Credits:** 3

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will take you through the recent science of positive psychology, which aims to ‘understand, test, discover and promote the factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive’ (Sheldon et al., 2000). In particular, positive psychology comprises the scientific exploration of well-being, happiness, flow, personal strengths, compassion, creativity, and characteristics of positive groups and institutions that enable their development. In this sense, rather than focusing solely on the happiness of individuals and on a self-centered approach, positive psychology also concentrates on happiness and flourishing at a group-level.

We will look at how individuals and groups flourish and how increasing the well-being of one will have a positive effect on the other. The first part of this course reviews the theory and research on positive psychology, while the second part focuses on theoretical conflicts and real-world applications. Every session will incorporate experiential learning and exercises aimed at increasing personal well-being and at facilitating students’ understanding of the fundamental questions in the field. Ultimately, the students will be able to utilize a more accurate and objective (rather than intuitive) understanding of concepts of positive psychology such as happiness, well-being, and compassion.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Critically analyze key concepts and theories in positive psychology.
- Evaluate gathered research findings in the existing literature.
- Test the applicability of existing theory.
- Explain evidence-based methods of positive psychology interventions in case studies.

### PREREQUISITES

Prior to enrollment, this course requires you to have completed an introductory course in Psychology.

## SECTION II: Instructor & Course Details

### INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

<b>Name:</b>	TBA
<b>Contact Information:</b>	TBA
<b>Term:</b>	SEMESTER

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

This class will meet once weekly for 150 minutes each session. All students are expected to arrive on time and prepared for the day's class session.

CEA enforces a mandatory attendance policy. You are therefore expected to attend all regularly scheduled class sessions, including any field trips, site visits, guest lectures, etc. that are assigned by the instructor. The table below shows the number of class sessions you may miss before receiving a grade penalty.

ALLOWED ABSENCES – FALL & SPRING SEMESTERS		
Courses Meeting X day(s) Per Week	Allowed Absence(s)	Automatic Failing Grade at Xth absence
Courses meeting 1 day(s) per week	1 Absence	4 <sup>th</sup> Absence

For every additional absence beyond the allowed number, your final course grade will drop down to the subsequent letter grade (ex: A+ to A). As a student, you should understand that the grade penalties will apply if you are marked absent due to tardiness or leaving class early. In the table below, you will find the grade penalty associated with each excessive absence up to and including automatic course failure.

ATTENDANCE DOCKING PENALTIES				
Absence	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
Penalty	No Penalty	0.5 Grade Docked	1 Grade Docked	Automatic Failure
HIGHEST POSSIBLE GRADE AFTER ATTENDANCE PENALTIES				
Grade	A+	A	A-	F

CEA does not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. As such, no documentation is required for missing class. Similarly, excessive absences, and the grade penalty associated with each, will not be excused even if you are able to provide documentation that shows the absence was beyond your control. You should therefore only miss class when truly needed as illness or other unavoidable factors may force you to miss a class session later on in the term.

## GRADING & ASSESSMENT

The instructor will assess your progress towards the above-listed learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted and will count towards your final grade. The following section (Assessment Overview) will provide further details for each.

<b>Class Participation</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Presentation &amp; Reflection Paper</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>“Well-being Journey” Paper</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Case Study Paper</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Midterm Exam</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>20%</b>

The instructor will calculate your course grades using the CEA Grading Scale shown below. As a CEA student, you should understand that credit transfer decisions—including earned grades for courses taken abroad—are ultimately made by your home institution.

CEA GRADING SCALE			
Letter Grade	Numerical Grade	Percentage Range	Quality Points
A+	9.70 – 10.0	97.0 – 100%	4.00
A	9.40 – 9.69	94.0 – 96.9%	4.00
A-	9.00 – 9.39	90.0 – 93.9%	3.70
B+	8.70 – 8.99	87.0 – 89.9%	3.30
B	8.40 – 8.69	84.0 – 86.9%	3.00
B-	8.00 – 8.39	80.0 – 83.9%	2.70
C+	7.70 – 7.99	77.0 – 79.9%	2.30
C	7.40 – 7.69	74.0 – 76.9%	2.00
C-	7.00 – 7.39	70.0 – 73.9%	1.70
D	6.00 – 6.99	60.0 – 69.9%	1.00
F	0.00 – 5.99	0.00 – 59.9%	0.00
W	Withdrawal	N/A	0.00
INC	Incomplete	N/A	0.00

## ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Your course instructor will provide further details and instructions during class time.

**Class Participation (10%):** Student participation is mandatory for all courses taken at a CEA Study Center. The instructor will use the rubric below when determining your participation grade. All students should understand that attendance and punctuality are expected and will not count positively toward the participation grade. Every session will incorporate experiential learning and exercises aimed at increasing personal well-being and at facilitating students’ understanding of the fundamental questions in the field.

CLASS PARTICIPATION GRADING RUBRIC	
Student Participation Level	Grade
You make major & original contributions that spark discussion, offering critical comments clearly based on readings, research, & theoretical course topics.	<b>A+</b> (10.0 – 9.70)
You make significant contributions that demonstrate insight as well as knowledge of required readings & independent research.	<b>A/A-</b> (9.69 – 9.00)
You participate voluntarily and make useful contributions that are usually based upon some reflection and familiarity with required readings.	<b>B+/B</b> (8.99 – 8.40)
You make voluntary but infrequent comments that generally reiterate the basic points of the required readings.	<b>B-/C+</b> (8.39 – 7.70)
You make limited comments only when prompted and do not initiate debate or show a clear awareness of the importance of the readings.	<b>C/C-</b> (7.69 – 7.00)
You very rarely make comments and resist engagement with the subject. You are not prepared for class and/or discussion of course readings.	<b>D</b> (6.99 – 6.00)
You make irrelevant and tangential comments disruptive to class discussion. You are consistently unprepared for class and/or discussion of the course readings.	<b>F</b> (5.99 – 0.00)

**Class Presentation & Reflection Paper (15%):** Over the course of the semester, each student will be required to prepare a presentation (~20 minutes) in which they discuss two positive psychology practices found in scientific literature. In particular, students will have to address:

- 1) why they have chosen the two practices
- 2) how the two practices can complement one other
- 3) the link between the two practices and the topics / theories covered in class

Students will need to sign up for a presentation-day and meet with the instructor beforehand in order to avoid redundancy and overlaps. After the presentation, students will lead a group discussion and will follow up with a paper (max 1000 words, due the subsequent class meeting) in which they reflect on the points brought up in class, highlighting what—if anything—changed about their viewpoint as a result of the group discussion.

**“Well-being Journey” Paper (15%):** Students will be required to submit a more extensive reflection paper (max 2000 words) on their “Well-being Journey”. They will be asked to discuss their overall engagement with class activities, how their well-being has changed (or not) over the course of the semester, and what they have learned from the course. When discussing their personal experience, students are expected to refer to the readings assigned during the semester and to formulate a coherent theory based on their findings.

**Case Study Paper (20%):** Students will analyze and research a case provided by the instructor and then organize their findings in order to explain the interventions adopted and, if appropriate, provide further hypothetical recommendations. The instructor will supply additional paper guidelines and advice on resources in class.

**Midterm and Final Exams (20% each):** Each exam will include all concepts covered during the sessions leading up to the exam dates. There will be multiple choice questions, short-answer questions, and short essay-response questions.

## REQUIRED READINGS

Reading assignments for this course will come from the required text(s) and/or the selected reading(s) listed below. All required readings—whether assigned from the text or assigned as a selected reading—must be completed according to the due date assigned by the course instructor.

- I. REQUIRED TEXT(S):** The instructor will provide extracts from these textbooks to you in class (either in paper or electronic format). The required text(s) are listed below:

TEXTBOOK #1 - Hefferon, K. P. & Boniwell, I. (2011). *Positive Psychology: Theory, research and applications*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

TEXTBOOK #2 - Peterson, C. (2006). *A Primer in Positive Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- II. SELECTED READING(S):** The main selected readings for this course are listed below. You will not need to purchase these readings; the instructor will provide these selected readings to you in class (either in paper or electronic format). Additional selected papers will be discussed in class and posted on Moodle.

Fredrickson, B. (2001) The role of positive emotions in positive psychology – the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 218–26.

Fredrickson, B., Cohn, M. A., Coffey, K. A., Pek, J. and Finkel, S. M. (2008) Open hearts build lives: positive emotions, induced through loving-kindness meditation, build consequential personal resources. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95, 1045–62.

Isen, A.M. Positive affect. In Tim Dalgleish & M. J. Powers (eds.), *Handbook of Cognition and Emotion*. Wiley. pp. 25–521 (1999)

Lyubomirsky, S., King, L. A. and Diener, E. (2005) The Benefits of Frequent Positive Affect: Does Happiness Lead to Success? *Psychological Bulletin*, 131: 803–55.

Seligman, M. E. (1998). *Building human strength: Psychology forgotten mission*. PsycEXTRA Dataset. doi:10.1037/e529932010-003

Seligman, M. and Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000) “Positive psychology – an introduction”. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 5–14.

## RECOMMENDED READINGS

The recommended reading(s) and/or text(s) for this course are below. These recommended readings are not mandatory, but they will assist you with research and understanding course content.

Lyubomirsky, S. (2008) *The How of Happiness: A Practical Guide to Getting the Life you Want*. London: Sphere.

Seligman, M. E. P. (1991). *Learned optimism*. New York: Knopf.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In order to ensure your success abroad, CEA has provided the academic resources listed below. In addition to these resources, each CEA Study Center provides students with a physical library and study areas for group work. The Academic Affairs Office at each CEA Study Center also compiles a bank of detailed information regarding libraries, documentation centers, research institutes, and archival materials located in the host city.

*The instructor reserves the right to make changes or modifications to this syllabus as needed*

- **UNH Online Library:** As a CEA student, you will be given access to the online library of CEA's School of Record, the University of New Haven (UNH). You can use this online library to access databases and additional resources while performing research abroad. You may access the UNH online library [here](#) or through your MyCEA Account. You must comply with UNH Policies regarding library usage.
- **CEAClassroom – Moodle:** CEA instructors use Moodle, an interactive virtual learning environment. This web-based platform provides you with constant and direct access to the course syllabus, daily schedule of class lectures and assignments, non-textbook required readings, and additional resources. Moodle includes the normal array of forums, up-loadable and downloadable databases, wikis, and related academic support designed for helping you achieve the learning objectives listed in this syllabus.

During the first week of class, CEA academic staff and/or faculty will help you navigate through the many functions and resources Moodle provides. While you may print a hard copy version of the syllabus, you should always check Moodle for the most up-to-date information regarding this course. The instructor will use Moodle to make announcements and updates to the course and/or syllabus. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to all Moodle materials and that you monitor Moodle on a daily basis in case there are any changes made to course assignments or scheduling.

To access Moodle: Please log-in to your MyCEA account using your normal username and password. Click on the “While You’re Abroad Tab” and make sure you are under the “Academics” sub-menu. There you will see a link above your schedule that says “View Online Courses” select this link to be taken to your Moodle environment.

- **Online Reference & Research Tools:** The course instructor has identified the resources below to assist you with understanding course topics. You are encouraged to explore these and other avenues of research including the databases available via the UNH online library.
  - <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com>
  - <http://www.div17pospsych.com>
  - <http://peplab.web.unc.edu> (Positive Emotions and Psychophysiology Laboratory – Barbra Fredrickson)
  - <https://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu> (University of Pennsylvania website developed by the Dr. Martin E. P. Seligman, Professor of Psychology at Penn.)

**COURSE CALENDAR**  
**POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY**

SESSION	TOPICS	ACTIVITY	READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS
1	<p>Review Syllabus, Classroom Policies</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Intro:</b> Looking at Psychology from a Positive Perspective</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Psychology's Forgotten Mission</b></p>	<p>Course Overview Lecture &amp; Discussion</p>	<p>Chapter 1 of TEXTBOOK #1 Moodle Slides &amp; Papers</p>
2	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What Is Positive Psychology?</b> Origins</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Learning About Positive Psychology:</b> Not a Spectator Sport</p>	<p>Lecture &amp; Discussion In-class practical exercises</p>	<p>Chapter 2 of the TEXTBOOK #2 Moodle Slides &amp; Papers</p>
3	<p><b>Pleasure &amp; Positive Experience</b> <b>Hedonic Well-being</b></p>	<p>Lecture &amp; Discussion In-class practical exercises</p>	<p>Chapter 2 of TEXTBOOK #1 and Chapter 3 of TEXTBOOK #2 Moodle Slides &amp; Papers</p>
4	<p><b>Understanding Positive Emotions</b> <b>The Broaden &amp; Build Theory of Positive Emotions</b></p>	<p>Lecture &amp; Discussion In-class practical exercises</p>	<p>Chapter 2 of the TEXTBOOK #1 Moodle Slides &amp; Papers</p>
5	<p><b>Happiness &amp; Subjective Well-being</b> <b>Across Nations</b></p>	<p>Lecture &amp; Discussion</p>	<p>Chapter 3 of TEXTBOOK #1 and Chapter 4 of TEXTBOOK #2 Moodle Slides &amp; Papers</p>
6	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Flow</b> <b>Eudaimonic Well-being</b></p>	<p>Lecture &amp; Discussion In-class practical exercises <b>In-class presentations</b></p>	<p>Chapter 4 of the TEXTBOOK #1 Moodle Slides &amp; Papers <b>Case Study Paper Due</b></p>
7	<p><b>Strengths &amp; Positive Outcomes:</b> Classifications &amp; Measures</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Role of Culture in Developing Strengths &amp; Living Well</b></p>	<p>Lecture &amp; Discussion In-class practical exercises <b>In-class presentations</b></p>	<p>Chapter 6 of the TEXTBOOK #2 Moodle Slides &amp; Papers</p>

8	<b>Self-Efficacy, Optimism, &amp; Hope Gratitude &amp; Spirituality</b>	Lecture & Discussion In-class practical exercises <b>In-class presentations</b>	Chapter 5 of the TEXTBOOK #2 Moodle Slides & Papers
9	<b>Resilience, Post-traumatic Growth &amp; Positive Ageing Positive Dying</b>	Lecture & Discussion In-class practical exercises <b>In-class presentations</b>	Chapter 6 of TEXTBOOK #2 Moodle Slides & Papers
10	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>		
	<b>The Body in Positive Psychology: Heart Rate Variability</b>	Lecture & Discussion	Chapter 9 of TEXTBOOK #1 Moodle Slides & Papers
11	<b>Mindfulness Mind Wandering, Day Dreaming &amp; Creativity</b>	Lecture & Discussion In-class practical exercises <b>In-class presentations</b>	Moodle Slides & Papers
12	<b>The Science of Compassion Variety of Compassion-Focused Trainings &amp; their Efficacy</b>	Lecture & Discussion In-class practical exercises <b>In-class presentations</b>	Moodle Slides & Papers
13	<b>Positive Environments: Positive Schooling &amp; Good Work Positive Psychology Leadership Coaching &amp; Organizations</b>	Lecture & Discussion In-class practical exercises <b>In-class presentations</b>	Chapter 11 TEXTBOOK #2 Moodle Slides & Papers <b>“Well-being Journey” Paper due</b>
14	<b>Where Do We Go From Here: The Future of Positive Psychology Review</b>	Lecture & Discussion In-class practical exercises In-class review	Chapter 11 of TEXTBOOK #1 and Chapter 12 TEXTBOOK #2 Moodle Slides & Papers
15	<b>FINAL EXAM</b> Discussion - Concluding reflections		

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## SECTION III: CEA Academic Policies

The policies listed in this section outline general expectations for CEA students. You should carefully review these policies to ensure success in your courses and during your time abroad. Furthermore, as a participant in the CEA program, you are expected to review and understand all CEA Student Policies, including the academic policies outlined on our website. CEA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time. For the most up to date policies, please review the policies on our website.

Class & Instructor Policies can be found [here](#)

General Academic Policies can be found [here](#)