

Syllabus IDS 2935 Quest



What can social science tell us about happiness and living a happier life?

IDS 2935

3 credits Spring 2022 Taught asynchronously online

Instructor: Michael Weigold 3064 Weimer Hall

Office Hours: Live via zoom by appointment or by email with 24 hr response time.

Course Communications: email via Canvas or at mweigold@jou.ufl.edu

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.

You have 2 required textbooks:

Lyubormirsky, S. (2007). [The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want.](#) New York: Penguin Press. REQUIRED

Bhattacharjee, A. [Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices - Open Textbook Library \(umn.edu\) \(free download pdf\)](#)

Plus choose 1 KEY TEXT related to a semester-long personal activity. **Choose 1:**

- Increase understanding between you and others by acquiring **communication skills**: Bento Leal, [12-Day Communication Challenge](#).
- Take control over your life by learning how to **acquire good habits** and **eliminate bad ones**: James Clear, [Atomic Habits](#).

Materials and Supplies Fees: None

Course Description: 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 incorporate in your life to live a more fulfilling life.

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills:

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](#) 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).

Instructional Methods: The objectives of the course are achieved through lectures, videos, readings, class participation, original individual activities, quizzes, a group project, and an exam.

Course Policies:

Attendance Policy: This class is asynchronous. For many 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 if you do not reserve a specific time each week to complete work in the class. I

I ask that aside from circumstances clearly described at the link below you notify me IN ADVANCE for permission to miss assignments. Legitimate reasons usually are uncontrollable and can be documented. In general, if you contact me after something is

due I will not accept it, 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>

Quiz/Exam Dates/Policies (Required: Most modules have a quiz that is available on Monday morning at early and closes by 11pm. The exception is modules where Monday is a holiday, in which case the quiz opens on Tuesday. 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 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 students 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.

Course Technology: The class materials are in Canvas. All work should be submitted there. Check your email daily for updates on the course and announcements. Videos and other content can be found on the Web and in LinkedIn Learning. Links to this content is in your Canvas shell.

I hope that you will provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. You will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>."

UF Policies:

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities: "Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to me when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester."

University Policy on Academic Conduct: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Class Demeanor or Netiquette: 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:

For issues with technical difficulties for Canvas or any other course technologies, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>
- (352) 392-HELP (4357)
- Walk-in: HUB 132

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.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Grading Policies:

- For information on current UF grading policies visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Your grade in this class is calculated from several activities that add up to 350 points.

A = 322 or higher, A- = 315, B+ = 308, B = 287, B- = 280, C+ = 273, C = 245, C- = 232, D = 210, E = <210

Your points come from these areas:

1) **Module quizzes (100 points)**. Most weeks include a quiz for your module activities. There are 12 quizzes @ 8.33 points each. Quizzes open Mondays at 5 am and must be completed by 11pm on that day. They only take about 5 minutes and consist of 5 questions. Most but not all 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.

2) **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 describe an activity you've chosen. This semester you can choose to become a better communicator or to acquire a good habit and drop a bad one. Which 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 on day 1.

To find out what a good activity post is like, read more [HERE](#)

You will 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.

3) **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.

4) **Research Project (50 points)** Due Nov 8. Interviews and reporting on happiness as shared by a diverse group of people.

5) **Activity group 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 individual experiences. You will do the presentation live For more on doing well in your group presentation, read [HERE](#)

6) **Exam**: (1 exam worth 50 points) The exam is open-ended and deals ONLY with information from LIVE LECTURES, including the group presentations. It is meant to encourage you to pay careful attention to these. You are strongly encouraged to take notes during live lectures and group presentations to have study materials for the exam.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Course overview

Week 2: What is happiness?

Week 3: Choosing happiness activities

Week 4: Who is happy?

Week 5: Gratitude

Week 6: People

Week 7: Stress, hardship, trauma

Week 8: Perspectives on time

Week 9: Self management, goals, and grit

Week 10: Mental and spiritual fitness

Week 11: Five how's of happiness

Week 12: Money and love

Week 13: Create presentations

Week 14: Post presentations

Week 15: Exam