

First Year Seminar
Happiness: Mind, Body, Society
Fall 2018

Instructor: Yioula Sigounas
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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 2:15-3:15

Instructor: Khoa Le Nguyen
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Office Hours: Friday 11:00am-1:00pm

Class Time: MWF 1:25 PM – 2:15 PM

Class Location: Bingham 317

Course Description:

Happiness: Mind, Body, Society is an interdisciplinary freshman seminar that will introduce you to the study of positive human emotions and well-being. This class will be taught from the perspectives of anthropology and positive psychology. Until recently, anthropologists rarely considered how people through history and across cultures felt or interpreted emotions. However, there has been new interest in understanding how sensory perceptions differ among individuals and populations, how happiness reflects societal arrangements, and how emotions can produce transformative individual and collective actions. In this class, you will learn how different societies (including our own) value, produce, and experience happiness. From the standpoint of positive psychology, you will learn a quantitative approach to empirically examine topics such as: the practical benefits of being happy, the psychological and environmental factors that make individuals and societies happy, the components of happiness, and how (and why) happiness differs across cultures. These questions are studied from various scopes, from genomes and neurons to individuals' subjective experience, eventually zooming out to group happiness and society's collective wellbeing. This course will use theoretical, ethnographic, scientific, and historical texts; films; lectures; and small group discussions to engage with different ways of understanding happiness.

Maximum class size: 25 students

Week/ Theme	Class	Assignment	In-class activities
1: Intro to positive psychology and cultural anthropology	Wed (8/22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring in an artifact with special meaning to you and prepare to share a story about why you chose it. 	We will all introduce ourselves and Yioula and Khoa will give an overview of the course.
	Fri (8/24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Nordstrom: "Happiness (is not a warm gun)" 	Yioula introduces the anthropology of happiness – or what it might be, if it exists
2	Mon (8/27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal due Read Gable and Haidt (2005): "What (and Why) Is Positive Psychology?" 	Khoa introduces Positive Psychology
	Wed (8/29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch Carol Dweck's talk on fixed and growth mindset 	Writing workshop & writing center classroom visit
	Fri (8/31)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparative Essay due in class 	Discuss field notebooks Work on group project proposal
	Mon (9/3) LABOR DAY NO CLASS		
3 Hedonism	Wed (9/5) Hedonism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First draft of group proposal due in class Read Mead: <i>Coming of Age in Samoa</i>, chapter 5 Journal due 	Yioula takes a look at hedonism in anthropology
	Fri (9/7)		Revise group project proposal

4	Mon (9/10) Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final draft group proposal due in class • Read Ho: <i>Liquidated</i>, pages 39-54 • Journal due 	Yioula discusses controversies in anthropology surrounding hedonism
	Wed (9/12) Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ronaldo: "Grief and the Headhunter's Rage" 	Watch film: Chagnon's "The Ax Fight" (31 minutes)
	Fri (9/14)		Improv
5	Mon (9/17) Positive emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal due • Read Fredrickson (2013): "Positive Emotions Broaden and Build (pages 1-36)" 	Khoa introduces positive emotions
	Wed (9/19) Seeking happiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Lyubomirsky & Layous (2013): "How Do Simple Positive Activities Increase Well-Being?" 	Khoa discusses the effective and ineffective pursuit of happiness
	Fri (9/21)		Activity day (TBD)
6: The Good Life and Eudaimonia	Mon (9/24) Positive Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal due • Read Fowler & Christakis (2008): Dynamic spread of happiness in a large social network: longitudinal analysis over 20 years in the Framingham Heart Study. 	Khoa: Positive relationships and the good Life
	Wed (9/26) Meaning & purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch Laura King's talk • Read Wrzesniewski et al. (1997): Jobs, careers, and callings: People's relations to their work 	Khoa: Meaning and purpose

	Fri (9/28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch Tracy Chevalier's talk 	Ackland Art Museum
7	Mon (10/1) Flow and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal due • Read Fritz & Avsec (2007): The experience of flow and subjective well-being of music students. 	Khoa: Introduction of Flow and Engagement
	Wed (10/3) Virtues and Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Proyer et al. (2015). "Strengths-based positive psychology interventions: a randomized placebo-controlled online trial on long-term effects for a signature strength- vs. a lesser strengths-intervention" • Complete VIA strength survey and bring your results to class 	Khoa: VIA strengths and how to apply them
	Fri (10/5)		Catch-up/Activity Day (TBD)
8	Mon (10/8) <i>Review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal due 	Review course thus far and explain midterm
	Wed (10/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIDTERM ACTIVITY 	
	Fri (10/12) NO CLASS - UNIVERSITY DAY		
9: Simplicity	Mon (10/15) Mindfulness and Self-Compassion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal due • Read Bishop et al (2004): Mindfulness: A Proposed Operational Definition 	Guest Lecture on meditation and mindfulness

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Neff & Knox (2017): Self-Compassion 	
	Wed (10/17)		Engage in a Variety of Meditation Practices
	Fri (10/19) NO CLASS – FALL BREAK		
10	Mon (10/22) Simplicity in anthropology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnography and Field Notebook due in class • Read Paxon: <i>Life of Cheese</i>, pages 1-30 • Journal due 	Yioula: Simplicity in anthropology
	Wed (10/24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Deeb: <i>Leisurely Islam</i>, pages 1-35 	Yioula: Simplicity in anthropology
	Fri (10/26)		In-class Assignment: Scavenger Hunt searching for happiness depictions across cultures and historical periods
11:	Mon (10/29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed: The Promise of Happiness, pages 50-88 	Yioula: We discuss findings from Friday
	Wed (10/31) Happiness through service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Malkki: <i>The Need to Help</i>, pages 133-165 	Yioula: Happiness through charitable works
	Fri (11/2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Literature search tips and tricks: http://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2016/09/literature-search-tips.aspx 	Workshop on literature search & review
12	Mon (11/5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal due 	Yioula: Happiness through service

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Fannon: Black Skin, White Mask, pages 89-120 	
	Wed (11/7) Psychology and morality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Post (2005): "It's good to be good" 	Khoa: Compassion, altruism, and schadenfreude
	Fri (11/9)		Volunteering
Society	Mon (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal due • Read Latour: We Have Never Been Modern, pages 13-30 	Yioula: Technology as utopia in Science and Technology Studies/Anthropology
13	Wed (11/14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Twenge et al (2018): Decreases in Psychological Well-Being Among American Adolescents After 2012 and Links to Screen Time During the Rise of Smartphone Technology 	Khoa: Social media, smartphone, and well-being
	Fri (11/16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Literature Review due 	Relationship building
14	Mon (11/19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feo: "Memory, Masks, Masculinities," pages 17-29 	Yioula: Technology and society
	Wed (11/21) – Fri (11/23) NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING		
15	Mon (11/26) - Fri (11/30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal due on Monday (11-26) 	FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

16	Mon (12/3) Happy Community and Society	• Journal due	Khoa: Structural factors affecting societal happiness
	Wed (12/5) Last day of class		Laughing meditation and yoga

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Understand a range of academic and theoretical perspectives in the study of happiness from the perspectives of anthropology and positive psychology
- Use enhanced oral and written communication skills to articulate how biological, psychological, and cultural ideas shape our understanding and experiences of happiness
- Apply new and enhanced skills in critical thinking and collaboration developed in learning how happiness is defined in different psychological, biological, and cultural contexts
- Employ integrated methodologies derived from anthropology and positive psychology to understand and better achieve happiness and wellbeing.

Grade Distribution:

Participation and Attendance	10%
Journal Reflections	15%
Comparative Essay (Due 8/31)	15%
Group Project Proposal (Due 9/10)	10%
Field Notes and Ethnography (Due 10/22)	15%
Psychological Literature Review (Due 11/16)	15%
Final Presentation (Due 11/26, 11/28, 11/30)	20%

Final Grade Scoring:

A+ = 98-100% B+ = 88-89.9% C+ = 78-79.9% D+ = 68-69.9% F = 59.9% and below

A = 92-97.9% B = 82-87.9% C = 72-77.9% D = 62-67.9%

A- = 90-91.9% B- = 80-81.9% C- = 70-71.9% D- = 60-61.9%

Participation and Attendance: You are expected to have completed the assigned readings listed on the syllabus and come to class prepared to contribute to class discussion. A sign-in sheet or small quiz on the readings will be circulated at the beginning of class in order to assess attendance. Absences are excused if they are due to illness, family emergency, class/professional trips, or religious reasons. However, if you will miss a class, you must email both instructors before the missed class.

Journal Reflections: Each week, you will write a short piece (no longer than one page, double-spaced) reflecting on an assignment. Some weeks, you will be asked to complete a happiness-promoting activity that we have been studying in class. Your journal reflection should be a description of how you experienced the activity. Other weeks, you will be asked to think about some anthropological theme raised in class, or describe places outside of the classroom you saw topics discussed in class in action.

Comparative essay: This is your first writing assignment. Using Nordstrom's text and the material you learned in class, discuss how an anthropologist might approach the study of happiness. Similarly, using Gable and Haidt's article and material from class, discuss how a positive psychologist might approach the study of happiness. Next, describe three similarities and two differences in how psychology and anthropology speak to the topic of happiness. Lastly, how might you benefit intellectually and personally from these two approaches? There's no one right answer to this last question, as long as you provide a solid argument and examples.

Group Project Proposal: This is the first part of a semester-long group project. In groups of three or four, you will jointly decide on one activity to collectively participate in over the course of the semester, which you predict will increase your happiness.¹ You will submit a single project proposal write-up for your group of approximately 300 words explaining what activity you plan to do, how you plan to do it, and how you predict the activity will affect your happiness. You will select components (or indices) of happiness that you wish to measure and choose ways to track these indices over time.

Field notes and ethnography: This is the second part of a semester-long group project. The team will participate in your chosen activity a minimum of six different times over the course of the semester. Each of you will write one page of ethnographic field notes after each session. On a final page, each of you should explain why you thought this activity would lead to happiness and how the activity ultimately did or did not meet that expectation. You will submit your own 7 page "field notebook" as an individual written project.

Psychological Literature Review: This is the third part of a semester-long group project. Each group will become science experts on your activity of choice. Each of you is responsible for finding three empirical psychology articles which present some evidence regarding the effectiveness of their activity. The group as a whole should have at least six non-overlapping articles. Each one of you will submit a 2-3 page, double-spaced paper that summarizes and synthesizes your three articles. Simply describing the studies is not sufficient. The paper should integrate and organize various methods and findings into a coherent narrative that makes an argument about your chosen activity. It should also include your reactions to the articles, including whether your personal experience agrees with the findings, the questions you may have, and any ideas and speculations you have after considering your own experience and the scientific findings.

¹ It should go without saying that NO proposals including harmful or unlawful activities will be accepted.

Final Presentation: This is the fourth and final part of a semester-long group project. Together with your group, you will present your findings to the class. You will be expected to provide some sort of visual element to your presentation, whether this is a PowerPoint, a Prezi, a poster, a video, or something else. Presentations should include a description of the project, the hypotheses, the findings, as well as some of the scientific research found. You will be evaluated on organization, visual appeal, thoroughness, and clarity.

Additional Policies:

Electronics (i.e. laptops, cell phones...)

- No laptops in class without prior approval by the instructor
- Please turn off all phones prior to the start of class.

Student Expectations:

1. You will come to class prepared to engage in discussion and with your assignment completed.
2. You will arrive on time for each class period.
3. You will adhere to the Honor Code.
4. You will approach all material and other students with respect, thoughtfulness, and an open mind. Please come prepared to debate and be critical of ideas; however, listen with respect to everyone's ideas and wait your turn to talk. Additionally, your comments/questions should address the larger ideas and not a particular individual in the class.

Grade Discussion Policy

If you have questions regarding your grade on an exam or assignment, we ask that you speak to one of us 48 hours after and within two weeks of the date your grade was announced. Please arrange to ask questions during office hours or by appointment, and please come prepared to discuss specifically what concerns you about your grade (i.e. do not just ask “why did I get a ...”). Discussions of grades will be most productive if your concerns have been carefully thought out before you address them with us. Grades falling outside of the two-week window, and the final exam, will not be discussed.

Accommodations Statement

We would like to make our class an accessible space for everyone. You are invited to optimize your classroom experience in a way that will maximize your learning, while still respecting the needs of others to do the same. You may sit wherever you like in the classroom, bring in food or beverages, make audio recordings of class with the instructor's permission, photograph notes on the board, use assistive devices, etc. Lastly, if there is something we, as a class, can do to improve our learning environment, please do not hesitate to ask.

Honor Code

All students are to follow the UNC Honor Code. For details, click on the following link:

<https://studentconduct-unc-edu.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/honor-system/philosophy>

If you have any questions or concerns about the Honor Code or Honor Code violations, please bring them to our attention during office hours.

Changes to the course

The instructors reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates (excluding the officially scheduled final examination), when unforeseen circumstances occur. These changes will be announced as early as possible so that students can adjust their schedules.

Reading Materials:

There are no required texts to buy for this class. All readings will be posted in the resources tab on Sakai.