

# PSYC 9: POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

## Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2023
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture per week (48 total per quarter)
Advisory:	PSYC 1 or 1H, and one of the following: ENGL 1A or 1AH or ESLL 26.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area IV: Social & Behavioral Sciences
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

## Student Learning Outcomes

- Apply positive psychology concepts, theories, and research findings as these relate to everyday life.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the major theories, research, and content areas of positive psychology.
- Identify the strengths and limitations of different research designs used by positive psychologists.

## Description

Focuses on the empirical investigations of human potential and the development of strengths. Topics include but are not limited to wisdom, emotional intelligence, mindfulness, happiness and well-being, empathy, compassion, gratitude, forgiveness, courage, and resilience. Emphasis on analyzing theories, research methods, and empirical evidence regarding their relationships to each other and applications to everyday life, such as finding meaning in life and career, work productivity, and positive relationships. Includes application component where students assess their strengths in these areas, learn to develop them, and practice applying them to their own lives.

## Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of major theories and research findings in the field of positive psychology
- Analyze research methods (including measures, interventions, and research paradigms)
- Evaluate evidence for the validity, both internal and external, of empirical claims in contemporary positive psychology research
- Compare the research findings in positive psychology to research in traditional fields of psychology, including neuroscience, cognitive information processing, lifespan development, social psychology, personality theory, and clinical psychology
- Apply positive psychology theory to situations of daily life

- Demonstrate proficiency in social science writing and in utilizing APA style
- Gain a better understanding of self and others in the world
- Demonstrate critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes
- Evaluate empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of psychology as a science
- Assess the basic model and applications of evolutionary psychology and systems theory

## Course Content

- Positive psychology
  - Positive psychology (e.g., building human strengths, balance in human functioning)
  - Eastern and Western cultures, and history of positive psychology
    - Individualist vs. collectivist cultures
    - Triandis
    - Greek philosophy
    - Eastern philosophy and psychology models of development
    - Humanistic psychology (Maslow)
    - Application to everyday life (wisdom skills)
- Evolutionary psychology
  - Genetic predispositions vs. genetic determinism
  - Adaptations vs. byproducts (why are we the way we are?)
  - Models of development in evolutionary psychology
  - Evolutionary clinical psychology
- Emotions
  - Definitions
  - Theories (traditional and contemporary models)
  - Research
  - A systems theory conceptualization of emotions
  - Models in psychology (e.g., cognitive-behavioral therapy and mindfulness)
  - Cognitive-behavioral therapy
  - Acceptance commitment therapy
  - Dialectical behavioral therapy
  - Practice and applications
- Emotional intelligence
  - Theories and models
  - Assessments (e.g., self report vs. performance-based)
  - Training for emotional intelligence
  - Research outcomes in applied settings (e.g., school, workplace performance)
- Multiple intelligences and creativity
  - Theories and models (e.g., Gardner, Sternberg)
  - Research
  - Applications
- Wisdom
  - Definitions and models (e.g., lifespan development, Western psychological science)
  - Eastern philosophies (e.g., Confucianism, Taoism)
  - Research (e.g., Baltes)
  - Application

- g. Mindfulness
  - i. Theory
  - ii. Western models
  - iii. Eastern models
    - 1. Research (e.g., mindfulness in development)
    - 2. Applications
- h. Positive psychology measures/assessments
  - i. Areas of assessments
  - ii. Research studies using above assessments
  - iii. Applications
- i. Happiness and life satisfaction
  - i. Theories and models (e.g., Seligman)
  - ii. Research
  - iii. Applications (e.g., money, kindness)
- j. Love, relationships, and sexuality
  - i. Theories
    - 1. Western and Eastern cultural differences
  - ii. Research (e.g., Gottman, Robins)
  - iii. Applications
- k. Optimism and resilience
  - i. Theories (e.g., Seligman)
  - ii. Domains of applications
- l. Health, stress, coping
  - i. Theories (e.g., medical model, prevention model, systems models)
  - ii. Research
  - iii. Short and long term effects of stress and anger
  - iv. Efficacy of intervention
  - v. Efficacy of prevention
  - vi. Applications
- m. Gratitude
  - i. Theories (e.g., Emmons)
  - ii. Research (e.g., Keltner)
  - iii. Applications
- n. Empathy and compassion
  - i. Theories
    - 1. Definitions of empathy and compassion
  - ii. Emotion
  - iii. Behavior (e.g., evolutionary psychology)
  - iv. Research
    - v. Implications to emotions
    - vi. Impact on helping behaviors
    - vii. Applications
- o. Humility and awe
  - i. Theories and definitions
  - ii. Research (e.g., emotions, relationships, workplace)
  - iii. Applications
- p. Courage
  - i. Theory and definitions
  - ii. Research
  - iii. Applications
- q. Flow
  - i. Theories (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi)
  - ii. Research
  - iii. Applications (e.g., school, work, sports)

- r. Resilience and hardiness
  - i. Theory
  - ii. Research
  - iii. Applications
- s. Forgiveness
  - i. Theory
    - 1. Models of forgiveness
  - ii. Research (e.g., Luskin, relationships, natural disasters)
  - iii. Applications
- t. Altruism and pro-social behavior
  - i. Theories and definitions
  - ii. Evolutionary psychology
  - iii. Social psychology (e.g., protecting, sacrificing)
  - iv. Research
    - v. Applications (e.g., justice, equality)
- u. Positive work
  - i. Theory (e.g., workplace performance, career with meaning)
  - ii. Research (e.g., emotional intelligence at work)
  - iii. Applications

## Lab Content

Not applicable.

## Special Facilities and/or Equipment

When taught as an online distance learning section, students and faculty need ongoing and continuous internet and email access.

## Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Quizzes

Examinations (multiple choice and/or short answer, essay questions)

Problem-solving exercises

Paper(s) integrating personal observations/experiences to theories and research findings in positive psychology

Research project (individual or group)

## Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture

Class discussions

Active learning exercises

Group work

Films

## Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Lopez, S.J., J.T. Pedrotti, and C.R. Snyder. [Handbook of Positive Psychology: The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths, 4th ed.](#) 2018.

Snyder, C.R., S.J. Lopez, L.M. Edwards, and S.C. Marques (editors). [Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology, 3rd ed.](#) 2021.

Zelenski, J.. Positive Psychology The Science of Well-Being, 1st ed.. 2019.

## **Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments**

- a. Past and current journal articles on various topics in the field of positive psychology
- b. Application papers: 2-3 pages in APA format, not including abstract, title page, or references

## **Discipline(s)**

Psychology