

Communication and The Art of Happiness – COM 452

Professor:

Email:

Fax:

Office hours

Communication Apprentices (who answer questions, give peer feedback, and help)

This syllabus is a living document and, except for grade and absence policies, may be subject to change (per advance announcement in class, *email*, or *Blackboard*).

In this senior-level seminar, we will examine how communication behaviors relate to constructing happiness and wellbeing. Topics include gratitude, forgiveness, social support, appreciation, social networks and communicative contagion of mood—intersecting with issues of dyadic, group and organizational communication. Auxiliary readings come from a variety of disciplines, including psychology, management, sociology, positive organizational scholarship, and appreciative inquiry.

Weekly course activities include reading, field exercises, and journal writing. The course includes two exams, a happiness project paper and a one-on-one instructor meeting.

Learning Outcomes... Upon successful completion of this course:

- Students will develop an in-depth understanding on how subjective well-being is created through their communication, behavior, and interaction.
- Students will determine, track, and analyze their own subjective well-being over the course of the class.
- Students will grasp major concepts and theories associated with happiness, including areas of research related to kindness, optimism, savoring, flow, organizational well-being, meditation, spirituality, affection, exercise, affection, generous communication and listening.
- Students will practice (and write regular journal entries about) activities and interventions associated with the topics covered in class.
- Students will learn and viscerally experience the concept of emotional contagion as they share their happiness project journey with others.
- Students will cultivate and create critical-thinking, writing, leadership, and communication skills.

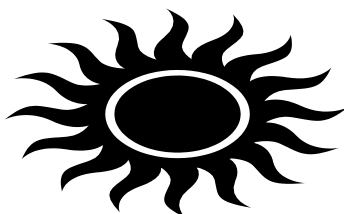
Course Readings

Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness: A scientific approach to getting the life you want*. New York: Penguin.

Additional Readings – Available via Blackboard and listed below on course schedule.

Assignments and Grading (out of 500 points total)

Assignment	Points
Extra Credit	+ ()
Exams (2)	200
Presence, Participation, & Syllabus Mastery Points	75
Reflection and Activity Journal	50
Happiness Worksheets and Apprentice Meeting	25
Happiness Advice and Interview Paper	75
Happiness Project Term Project, Documentation, and Instructor Meeting	75
Absence or civility deductions: -5 points missed class; -2.5 points being late / leaving early, up to -15 points per incivility incident	- ()
Total	Up to 500



Outstanding – above expectations	Good – above average	Satisfactory – meets min. requirements	Unsatisfactory	Failing or academic dishonesty
A+ 485 – 500 pts	B+ 435 – 449 pts	C+ 385 – 399 pts		
A 465 – 484 pts	B 415 – 434 pts	C 350 – 384 pts	D 300–349 pts	E below 299 pts
A- 450 – 464 pts	B- 400 – 414 pts			XE - academic dishonesty

Some good news up front...Extra Credit / Bonus Point Opportunities

This course provides two opportunities to earn extra credit / bonus points.

1. Complete 11, rather than 10, of the journal activities (up to 5 bonus points)
2. Read an auxiliary article related to course topic and provide the class with an overview (verbally or written). Propose article first. Points awarded vary.

Exams (up to 200 pts)

There will be two exams during the semester that are a combination of questions including those that are closed answer (e.g., T/F, multiple choice, or matching) and open answer/essay/application. The exams test understanding, synthesis, and application of concepts covered in class, as well as those covered in your text and other assigned readings. To succeed, it's important to carefully read and understand the assigned readings, take integrative course notes, and be able to synthesize and identify examples for concepts covered.

Presence, Participation & Syllabus Mastery Points (up to 75 pts)

Punctual attendance and focused attention for the full class period is required for succeeding in this class. And, to earn As and Bs in participation, students will additionally regularly provide thoughtful, appropriate verbal participation informed by the class readings. Students should listen alertly, take notes, concentrate on course material rather than external distractions, and provide enthusiastic and supportive interaction with other class members. Assignments are explained in class, and many activities/mini-assignments are completed during class. Being present is integral to fulfilling and getting credit for these activities.

The syllabus provides a clear course map, and students will be rewarded for reading, appreciating, and mastering its contents via impromptu class “syllabus reward quizzes”.

An absence in this class equates to missing any one class for more than 15 minutes. Every absence over two absences will result in a 5 point deduction from your final grade. Late arrivals or early departures (of 15 or fewer minutes) will result in a 2.5 point deduction. These deductions can significantly affect your course grade. If you cannot attend 3/2, 3/25 or 4/20 you should drop this course.

If you miss more than two classes (even if the absences are university-excused or due to emergency), and would like to bolster attendance/participation, you can do so by reading an auxiliary article related to the topic and providing the class with an overview (verbally or written). Propose topic first. Points depend on article breadth and quality of overview.

Reflection & Activity Journal (up to 50 pts)

A primary part of this class is maintaining a Blackboard journal that responds to weekly discussion questions and activities. Completing the assigned reading and the activity *before you write the journal entry* is integral for writing a meaningful response. The journal prompts are located in the schedule of classes, below. Students should use the Blackboard journaling function (demonstrated and explained in the first class period).

Points awarded depend on:

- a. Did it attend to logistical details?
 1. Followed the **FORMATTING DIRECTIONS** listed below (on p. 4)
 2. Submitted on time (due *before* class)
 3. 500 words or more in length
 4. Available during class (either printed or electronically)
 5. Well-written (using good grammar, punctuation, sentence structure)
- b. Did it provide enough details and evidence to show that the activity was accomplished completely and in full?

[have integrity about this; if it wasn't completely accomplished, just say so, and note ways to accomplish it in future]
- c. Did it adequately attend to *all parts* of the journal question prompt?
- d. Did it incorporate related concepts from the course readings?

[this will be more applicable to some entries than others; however a main part of being able to journal thoughtfully about these activities is incorporating the research that supports them]

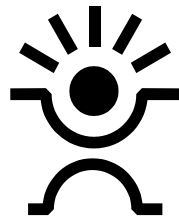
Cont. below...

Cont. from above... Reflection & Activity Journal (up to 50 pts)

Please follow these **FORMATTING DIRECTIONS** for submission:

1. Draft response in a separate word-processing program (e.g. Microsoft Word) and save a copy for yourself as back-up.
2. Include the word count of your response at the end (e.g., word count: 583).
Journal entries are to be about 500 or more words each.
3. Use black print, single-spaced, and a standard readable font.
4. *Copy and paste* response into Blackboard. *Do not attach* as a separate document.
5. Title your journal entry for the class session in which they are due: E.g. “Class 2 – Reflection on Survey Results”

Note: Student journals are not visible to other students in the class. The student assistants regularly provide peer feedback and comments. The professor evaluates the journal’s grade and may provide additional feedback. If you desire specific feedback about a particular journal response, you are invited to make this request.



Term Long “Happiness Project”

Over the term, you will engage in your own “Happiness Project” by adopting goals and engaging in a variety of activities related to two or more topics. You will make these activities part of your regular practice during the term, and share a plan for how you will continue, modify, or increase specific happiness practices into the future.

By week five, choose at least two areas to focus upon for improving happiness. Across the term, cultivate these areas in your own daily life in a way that is a clear intervention (something new and different than your regular routine). Keep a visual or written record of these activities (trust me, you’ll need this record to succeed).

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. Gratitude | i. Spreading positivity through emotional contagion |
| b. Optimism | j. Forgiveness |
| c. Avoiding social comparison | k. Finding Flow |
| d. Acts of kindness | l. Savoring |
| e. Increasing affection | m. Committing to goals |
| f. Generosity in conversation | n. Spirituality, meditation, mindfulness |
| g. Coping strategies that curb stress, anxiety, or negativity (e.g., Therapeutic Writing) | o. Faking it to make it |
| h. Limiting complaining | p. Cultivating specific strengths |

Happiness Worksheets and Apprentice Meeting (up to 25 pts)

You will turn in a goal worksheet for this project, meet with the class apprentice to review goals, and turn in accountability worksheets across the term.

Happiness Advice & Interview Paper (up to 75 pts):

Happiness is contagious, and one way you can create happiness in yourself and others is through communication about your class project with others. A key activity in this course will be interviewing two people (one expert and one friend or family member) and writing a 5-page double-spaced typed paper that provides informed advice on how your friend or family member (or people like them) might effectively increase their subjective well-being. The paper will apply class discussions, expertise on interviewing, research from class readings and from four 4 additional scholarly research articles (from Blackboard or library), and data from two (2) interviews.

You are encouraged to work with another student, in which case the paper should be ~7 pages and include research from at least six (6) supplemental research articles and data from four (4) interviews. Co-authors will receive the same grade, so you are advised to choose a partner with care.

Experts should be asked questions that elicit their expertise related to happiness, their stories, and advice (e.g., “As a yoga instructor, why do you include meditation in your class? What effects have you seen it had on your students?). Your friend or family member interviewee should be asked questions that access their challenges, goals, dreams, problems, or areas that they would like to focus on in terms of their subjective well-being. You should also offer the friend or family member some informed advice based off the research and get their feedback (e.g., “Research shows that forgiveness is really about ourselves and not about condoning others. What do you think about that?”).

The paper should provide insight on the two areas of happiness—based upon the research, the expert interview, and the specific needs of your friend or family member. Basically, you’re practicing how to translate research to practice and provide really good advice for your family member or friend. Strong papers also do the following:

1. Clearly relate the interviews to empirical research associated with communication and happiness. This includes substantial and specific review and reference of on-point articles and course materials.
2. Evidence informed interviewing practice (based on our readings and course lecture) and rich interview interaction (through insightful questions and specific informative interview responses).
3. Provide specific, doable, practical, informed advice. It should be targeted specifically to the person (or type of person) at hand, should be feasible, based on the research and analysis, and specific.
4. Are well-organized, beautifully written, engaging, provide strong support for claims made and uphold all aspects of academic integrity. References should be in APA format, Times New Roman 12-pt font, and double-spaced with 1-inch margins.
5. Provide a list of interview questions (as informed through our readings) and a summary or transcription of answers in the appendix (this appendix does not count in the page length and may be longer than the actual paper, which is fine).

Paper due through “safe assignment” on Blackboard before class begins.

Happiness Project Research, Documentation & Instructor Meeting (up to 75 pts)

You will do research about your happiness areas, provide documentation of your activities, and meet with the instructor one-on-one during week 16. Final documentation is due to Blackboard and should include:

1. A single-spaced APA bibliography of readings associated with happiness activities, including at least four (4) scholarly articles external to the class readings that are *directly* associated with your 2-3 area(s) of intervention (from Blackboard or library)
2. A one-page, single-spaced, list of key research *findings* associated these areas
3. A specific list and appendix documentation of your happiness intervention activities (e.g., journals; photos; letters written, etc.). Basically *show* everything you've done.

Students should bring a hard copy of all of the above, and also their goal & accountability worksheets, to the meeting in a single packet to turn in. During the interactive one-on-one presentation / meeting, the instructor will ask questions and engage in discussion about 1) what the research has to say about the areas chosen for the happiness project, and 2) the specific activities you have taken to create a meaningful intervention.

To succeed in this assignment, students should: 1) thoroughly read, understand, and take notes on the readings associated with the project so that they can converse about key findings; 2) engage in a significant set of happiness activities across the term; 3) discuss these activities in an organized, informed, professional, and lively manner.

Students will be graded on their preparedness, expertise, enthusiasm, and evidence that they have engaged in a meaningful happiness intervention. The grading scale on p. 2 serves as a reminder of the type of performance expected for different grades (e.g., an A = going above and beyond expectations; a C = meeting minimum requirements).

Course Policies

Use of Personal Electronic Devices in Class

The latest research suggests that focus, comprehension, recall of ideas, and information processing increase when students hand-write their class notes and read from physical paper. During class, please take notes by hand, and make handwritten notes on printed readings. For information: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/03/science/whats-lost-as-handwriting-fades.html>, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/elements/2014/06/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom.html>, and <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/reading-paper-screens/>.

Many of us are irresistibly drawn to our electronic devices. In the classroom, put them away and turn off any buzzer, beeper or vibrator. If, for some reason, you are involved in an emergency situation in which you must access a hand-held device, let me know before class.

If there is an activity in which use of the internet will enhance our collective work, I'll alert the class. *Otherwise, in choosing to take COM 452, you agree to go screen and keyboard free.*

Unique Academic Needs: Students with unique academic needs who desire special accommodations should contact me in the first couple sessions to discuss options and document their needs with ASU's disability resource center (<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/lab/>).

Blackboard and Technology Help: The following provides a helpful resource: <http://asu.force.com/kb/articles/Informational/Blackboard-Help-for-Students/>

Norms of Civility:

Please arrive on time and stay for the entire class period, keep an alert and enthusiastic presence, pay attention to course material rather than other distractions (e.g., electronic devices), listen supportively and attentively, speak one at a time, avoid eating odiferous or noisy food, and help others stay focused. When we speak about sensitive, personal or painful issues, please provide a safe and supportive classroom environment by respecting each others' confidences. Violations of any of these requests may result in up to a 15 point grade deduction per incident.

Please make yourself familiar with ASU's policy on "Handling Disruptive, Threatening, or Violent Individuals on Campus" at <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm104-02.html>, which explains how interfering with the peaceful conduct of university-related activities or remaining on campus grounds after a request to leave may be considered a crime. An instructor may also withdraw a student from a course with a mark of "W" or "E" when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process.

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to understand and abide with ASU's policies for academic integrity, available here: <https://provost.asu.edu/index.php?q=academicintegrity>. Assignments with integrity are written at the collegiate level, with clear and appropriate organization, full sentence structure, grammar and spelling. When referring to material from the text, class notes, or any other source (including Internet webpages), using quotation marks and appropriate citation is ethically and stylistically required.

Students are warned against cheating or plagiarizing on any assignment or exam, large or small. Plagiarizing includes copying from other students, past coursework, the Internet, the text, or other published sources without proper citation. It also includes excessive "help" or "editing" on assignments from others (if in doubt, ask me). Students found to be in violation of academic integrity guidelines will face disciplinary action which may include being suspended or expelled from the College or University, given an XE on the transcript, referred to Student Judicial Affairs and/or having his/her name kept on file. Student assignments are routinely checked against plagiarism-detection websites and files of past student papers, so do your own work and cite all sources.

Course content, including lectures, are copyrighted material and students may not sell notes taken during the conduct of the course (see [ASU's](http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd304-06.html), "Commercial Note Taking Services" policy at: <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd304-06.html>).

Absences, Due Dates, Late or Incomplete Work:

Assignments will be marked down up to 10% each day and will not be accepted more than two weeks past their due date (and none will be accepted after April 29). In-class work (e.g., exams, presentations and class activities) will receive credit only on the day they are due.

Incompletes are discouraged and only available if you: 1) experience serious documented illness or emergency; 2) finish more than half the coursework, 3) negotiate the incomplete before 4/29.

If you miss class or a due date because of an unavoidable emergency and wish to be excused, notify Dr. Tracy within 24 hours, following up with documentation / explanation. Students who miss a class due to a university-excused absence (e.g., participation in an ASU athletic event or practice of a religious holiday) should alert Dr. Tracy in the first two weeks of class (and must still make up the points). The following websites explain ASU's policies: <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd304-04.html>; <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd304-02.html>.

Supplemental Readings (Even more resources available on Blackboard website)

Topic	Supplemental Resources
Happiness a science?	Norrish, J. M., & Vella-Brodrick, D. A. (2008). Is the Study of Happiness a Worthy Scientific Pursuit? <i>Social Indicators Research</i> , 87, 393-407.
Gratitude & Positive Thinking	Emmons, R. A., McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , 84, 377-389. MacLeod, A. I.K., & Moore, R. (2000). Positive thinking revisited: Positive cognitions, well-being, and mental health. <i>Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy</i> , 7, 1-10.
Kindness & Social Connections	Otake, K., Shimai, S., Tanaka-Matsumi, J., Otsui, K., & Fredrickson, B. (2006). Happy people become happier through kindness: A counting kindnesses intervention. <i>7</i> (3), 361-375. Thoits, P. A. (1995). Stress, coping, and social support processes: Where are we? What next? <i>Journal of health & social behavior</i> , 35, 53-79. Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of facebook 'friends': Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. <i>Journal of computer-mediated communication</i> , 12, 1143-1168. Helliwell, J. F. Putnam, R. D. (2004). The social context of well-being. <i>Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society of London</i> , 359, 1435-1446.
Caring for your body & soul	Bartlett, S. J., Piedmont, R., Bilderback, A., Matsumoto, A. K. Bathon, J. M. (2003). Spirituality, well-being, and quality of life in people with rheumatoid arthritis. <i>Arthritis and rheumatism</i> , 49, 778-783. Andréasson, P., & Dimberg, U. (2008). Emotional empathy and facial feedback. <i>Nonverbal Behavior</i> , 32, 215-224.
Happiness at Work	Gavin, J. H., & Mason, R. O. (2004). The virtuous organization: The value of happiness in the workplace. <i>Organizational Dynamics</i> , 33, 379-392. Barge, J. K. & Oliver, C. (2003). Working with appreciation in managerial practice. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> , 28, 124-142. Heaphy, E. D., & Dutton, J. E. (2008). Positive social interactions and the human body at work: Linking organizations and physiology. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> , 33, 137-162. Heaphy, E. D., & Dutton, J. E. (2008). Positive social interactions and the human body at work: Linking organizations and physiology. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> , 33, 137-162. Ledford, G. E., Jr. (1999). Comment: Happiness and productivity revisited. <i>Journal of organizational behavior</i> , 20, 25-30.