

**Enhancing Happiness & Life Satisfaction**  
**EDPS 5063/6063-090**  
*Fall 2024 Syllabus*

**Instructor:** Eric Alta, PhD  
**Instructor Email:** eric.alta@utah.edu  
**Teaching Assistant:** Jenny Nguyen

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. To expose you to research, concepts, and tools from the field of positive psychology proven to improve a sense of well-being, resiliency, and happiness.
2. To encourage critical thinking and high academic standards in responding to the content we cover.
3. To encourage the design and practice of well-being routines, with the intention of generating proactiveness in efforts to improve a sense of happiness & well-being.
4. To connect you to resources at and outside of the University of Utah to support the well-being areas we focus on.
5. To generate dialogue with friends, family, and peers on the topics of happiness and well-being that we cover.

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

As with most things in life, the amount of time and energy you invest in our content will determine how much you gain. To access the full potential of this course, students should complete all assigned readings and videos, engage in discussion threads, choose thoughtful well-being practices, and think critically about how you would like to apply the material to your personal and professional life.

**COURSE DESIGN**

Our course will begin with a 1-week introductory module. After this, each module will be 2-weeks in length, and will focus on a different core well-being topic. An overview of each learning module will outline the focus and content for that unit. After reviewing the assigned material, you will have three core assignments to complete- a discussion post, a well-being practice log, and a module content quiz. I've intentionally tried to make the scope of assigned content manageable for each two-week module, with the intention that you read and watch it all! It will be clear through your discussion post responses and quiz results if you have not.

Use our introductory module to review this syllabus in its entirety, familiarize yourself with the Canvas course design, and cover the introductory material. The themes and dates of our learning modules this semester are as follows:

**Module 1: Introduction to Positive Psychology**

*August 19th – 25<sup>th</sup>*

**Module 2: Mental Strategies for Happiness**

*August 26th – September 8<sup>th</sup>*

**Module 3: Nature, Diet, and Sleep**

*September 9th – 22<sup>nd</sup>*

**Module 4: Movement & Play**

*September 23rd – October 6<sup>th</sup>*

---

***FALL BREAK: October 7th - 13th***

----

**Module 5: Social Connectedness**

*October 14th - 27<sup>th</sup>*

**Module 6: Compassion**

*October 28th – November 10<sup>th</sup>*

**Module 7: Purpose & Gratitude**

*November 11th – November 24<sup>th</sup>*

**Module 8: Integration & Reflections on Happiness**

*November 25th – December 5th (Thanksgiving Break Nov. 28th-Dec. 1)*

**Finals: December 9th -13th**

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Assigned Content**

1. Read and watch all assigned content, as outlined in each module overview.

*Note: There are no required textbooks for this course. Assigned readings will be uploaded to Canvas or will be available through the Marriot Library E-reserve. There are some externally linked articles through the New York Times. You can access these through the Marriot Library online portal as a student.*

**Happiness Discussion Teams**

1. Students will rotate through different “Happiness Discussion Teams” each module. Students will be asked to respond to a series of prompts regarding the assigned content from that module. You are expected to post in each discussion thread by the end of the modules first week (Sunday at 11:59pm). At least 1 comment to a peer is due by the end of the module. Posts must reference assigned content from that module in order to receive full credit.

*Happiness Discussion posts are worth 5 points. Students must demonstrate engaged and relevant awareness of questions and content in their posts (4 points) and respond to at least 1 peer (1 point). Discussion threads will close at the end of each learning module.*

### **Well-Being Practice Log**

1. Students will design a different well-being practice related to each module theme. The practice you choose should align with the content of the given module, and ideally, should integrate naturally into your life. If it is unnecessarily burdensome or time-consuming, you will be much less likely to continue with it once our course ends. Your posts should be 2 paragraphs in length, and should include:
  - A description of the practice you chose. Describe why you choose it and what was the structure of the practice. Include any details you feel are relevant (e.g., sleep hour tracking, emotion ratings, movement schedule).
  - A brief overview of how the practice went. What worked? What didn't? How impactful was it? Do you have intentions to continue?

*Well-being practice logs are worth 4 points (2 points for the described practice and 2 points for reflection on implementation).*

### **Module Content Quizzes**

1. Students will complete a quiz at the end of each module. Module content quizzes will be multiple choice and will reference assigned readings and videos from that module.

*Module content quizzes are worth 5 points each.*

### **Mock Presentation**

1. Students will use content from the positive psychology literature and talks presented in our class, as well as evidence-based material from outside of our class, to design a mock presentation on 1-3 topics that we covered, to a focus demographic of their choosing. The presentation should be designed specifically for this target audience, with the intention of promoting a greater sense of well-being and happiness in their lives and/or work. Example demographics are college students experiencing stress, athletes aiming to cultivate more positive self-talk, healthcare workers or educators experiencing burnout, and veterans managing trauma symptoms. Further details on the core requirements of the mock presentation are provided on Canvas.

*The Mock Presentation assignment is worth 20 points.*

### **Course Evaluation**

1. Ongoing student feedback is important to me! This helps in the continued improvement of course content and design, as well as my own development as a teacher. Although not graded, your honest feedback is very appreciated!

### **GRADING**

Grading is based on the course requirements outlined above. Below is a break-down of the point valuation for each assignment:

<u>Points</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
28	Team Discussion Posts ( <i>4 points per post, 7 posts for Modules 1-7</i> )
5	Discussion Post Responses ( <i>1 point/response, 5 responses for Modules 2-6</i> )
20	Well-Being Practices ( <i>Modules 2-6, 4 points per submission</i> )
29	Module Content Quizzes ( <i>4 points for Module 1, 5 points for Modules 2-6</i> )
20	Mock Presentation
<i>Ungraded but appreciated!</i>	Course Survey & Feedback

**TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 102**

### **GRADING**

100-94% = A	< 94-90% = A-	< 90-87% = B+
<87-84% = B	< 84-80% = B-	< 80-77% = C+
<77-74% = C	< 74-70% = C-	< 70-67% = D+
<67-64% = D	< 64-60% = D-	< 60% = F/E

### **PLANNING YOUR TIME**

It is highly encouraged that you cover the assigned content at the start of each module. Course content informs your discussion posts and well-being practices. It will also be critical to achieving a passing grade on module content quizzes. It will be clear if you are not covering assigned course content from the quality and depth of your team discussion posts. You will not receive full credit in your posts if this seems to be the case.

### **LATE POLICY & COMMUNICATION**

**All assignments must be submitted in Canvas by the designated due date.** All late assignments will be deducted 5% of their achieved grade for each day late, until there is no longer an achievable score. If you anticipate needing an extension on assigned coursework, you must communicate with the instructor in advance- providing an adequate reason for an extension, and collaboratively creating a plan to accommodate your needs. Please use Canvas Inbox to communicate with the instructor.

### **CO-CREATING A SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Our class involves a large amount of discussion. Consideration for classmate's diverse experiences and perspectives is expected. Please help me in creating an environment where diverse views are welcome. Consider how an online environment eliminates simple non-verbal cues like tone, jokes, or emotion. If you disagree with a classmate, you are welcome to express so in a respectful manner. If you feel a student has misinterpreted you, stay engaged to clarify your meaning in a manner that isn't blaming. Assume good intentions of your classmates. Strive to uphold a climate of trust and support in our class. Use of profanity or direct/indirect insults which defame a person's character, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, etc. are inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

## GENERAL WELL-BEING RESOURCES

1. [Headspace for Students](#)
2. [Calm](#)
3. [Greater Good Magazine](#)
4. [Action for Happiness](#)
5. [Atlas of Emotions](#)

## UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

1. [University of Utah Counseling Center](#): *Individual and group therapy services and mental health programming for university students.*
2. [University of Utah Mindfulness Center](#): *Offer skill-building workshops and mindfulness programs for university students.*
3. [University of Utah Center for Campus Wellness](#): *Provide free student services and programs related to student medical, emotional, and educational wellness.*
4. [University of Utah Student Success Advocates](#): *Tailored mentoring and academic support for students. Schedule an appointment and meet anywhere on campus!*
5. [University of Utah Writing Center](#): *Free in-person, online, and asynchronous writing support for all students by appointment.*
6. [University of Utah Financial Wellness Center](#): *This center provides confidential financial counseling for students regarding budgeting, scholarship access, paying for school, credit, taxes, student loans, and more.*
7. [University of Utah Veterans Support Center](#): *Academic, emotional, financial, and professional support for student veterans.*
8. [University of Utah LGBT Resource Center](#): *Supports LGBTQIA+ students navigating university systems, exploring identities, finding community, and developing as leaders.*
9. [Center for Disability & Access](#): *Support students in obtaining academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.*

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

### *Use of Generative AI*

It is expected that students will adhere to generally accepted standards of academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one's work, and/or inappropriately collaborating. This includes the use of generative AI tools that has not been cited or use documented or authorized. Students will also be expected to adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession/discipline for which the student is preparing. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty or who violates the professional and ethical standards for the profession/discipline for which the student is preparing, may be subject to academic sanctions as per the University of Utah's Student Code:

<http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>

### *Plagiarism*

If you are unaware of the specific rules regarding plagiarism, please consult the "What is Plagiarism?" resource through the University of Utah Health Sciences Library. Plagiarism is a serious matter. If a student is found plagiarizing material, they will be reported immediately to the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs. They will also fail the assignment, and potentially the entire course. Please consult the [University of Utah Academic Policies on Student](#)

Performance, Academic Conduct, and Professional and Ethical Conduct for further details. To learn more about the different formats of plagiarism, and how to avoid them, please watch 10 Types of Plagiarism.

### ***Safety Statement***

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit: [safeu.utah.edu](http://safeu.utah.edu).

### ***Nondiscrimination***

Discrimination is defined at the University of Utah as less than favorable treatment based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or status as a civilian or veteran. Sexual harassment is also a form of discrimination. The University of Utah expects community members to treat one another with respect. Any behavior leading to or resulting in sexual abuse, harassment, or intimidation of another person, or any unwanted objectionable sexual attention towards another person is sexual harassment and will not be tolerated.

University of Utah students are entitled to participate in university programs and activities free of sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, or status as a person with a disability.

### ***Addressing Sexual Misconduct***

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

### ***Student Code***

The Student Code is spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article II of the code. The code also specifies prescribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully to become aware of these issues. Students will receive sanctions for violating one or more of these prescriptions. For more information on the Student Code of Academic Conduct visit: <http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html>.

### **POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY CERTIFICATE PROGRAM**

If you are interested in other positive psychology courses, or in pursuing the "Applied Positive Psychology Undergraduate Certificate" through the Department of Educational Psychology, [visit this website for more details](#).