



Positive Psychology PSY336H1S – LEC5101 – Winter 2025

Course Description: This course will encompass a review of the field of positive psychology, the study of happiness and fulfillment. Topics include personal growth, meaning, hedonic and eudaimonic approaches to well-being, gratitude, awe, flow states, mindfulness and meditation.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Knowledge: By the end of this course, you should be able to name and apply theories in the area of the positive psychology. Moreover, you should understand key research methods used in psychology to explore topics related to positive psychology.
2. Application: By the end of this course, you should be able to apply findings in positive psychology to your life and current events.
3. Scientific Thinking: By the end of this course, you should be able to retrieve and critically evaluate information from scholarly and non-scholarly (popular media) sources.
4. Communication: By the end of this course, you should have improved your ability to construct arguments and to communicate your thoughts verbally and in writing.
5. Professional Development: By the end of this course, you should have improved your time-management skills and ability to respond appropriately to constructive feedback.

Prerequisites: PSY201H1/ ECO220Y1/ EEB225H1/ GGR270H1/ IRW220H1/ POL222H1/ SOC202H1/ STA220H1/ STA238H1/ STA248H1/ STA288H1/ PSY201H5/ STA215H5/ STA220H5/ PSYB07H3/ STAB22H3/ STAB23H3/ STAB57H3, (PSY220H1/ PSY220H5/ PSYB10H3/ SOC213H1)/ (PSY230H1/ PSY230H5/ PSYB30H3)/ (PSY240H1/ PSY240H5/ PSYB32H3)

Corequisites: None

Exclusions: PSY324H5

Recommended Preparation: None

Credit Value: 0.5

Instructor: Vignash Tharmaratnam

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-3 pm on Zoom

Teaching Assistant: Geneva Mariotti

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Office Hours: All office hours will be online by appointment

Lectures: Lectures will take place on Tuesdays from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Lectures are in-person in room HS 108. Lecture slides will be posted on Quercus on a weekly basis the night before the lecture. The course website on Quercus can be found at <https://q.utoronto.ca/>.

Quercus Info: This course uses the University's learning management system, Quercus, to post information about the course. This includes posting readings and other materials required to complete course assessments, as well as sharing important announcements and updates. New information and resources will be posted regularly as we move through the term, so please make it a habit to log in to the site on a regular, even daily, basis. To access the course website, go to the UofT Quercus log-in page at <https://q.utoronto.ca>. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, you should see the link or "card" for "PSY336H1 F LEC0101 Positive Psychology". You may need to scroll through other cards to find this. SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT GRADES POSTED ONLINE: Please note that any grades posted are for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, including any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved and posted on ACORN at the end of the course. Please contact me as soon as possible if you think there is an error in any grade posted on Quercus.

Readings:

Textbook: [Cheavens, J.S., & Feldman, D.B. \(2022\). The Science and Application of Positive Psychology, 1st edition. Cambridge University Press. ISBN-13: 9781108460835](#)– Rentable on VitalSource (click the hyperlink!).

NOTE: Depending on the topic being discussed, there also may be articles posted on Quercus to supplement the textbook readings.

Email: When you e-mail, please include "PSY336" in the subject heading. Responses to emails will be made as soon as possible, please expect at least 48-hours for a reply, longer on weekends.

Evaluation:

Midterm Test (40%) (during class time, **in person** – February 25th)

- The midterm test will consist of multiple-choice questions covering the first half of the course. **Content covered will include all lecture and readings assigned for the first half of the course.** More details as the course progresses.

Term Paper Outline (5%) (Due March 2nd before midnight)

- Students will be asked to complete an outline of their term paper, acting as a rough guide for writing their final term paper. More details as the course progresses.

Term Paper (15%) (Due March 30th before midnight)

- Students will be asked to write a 4–6-page argumentative thesis paper related to positive psychology. More details as the course progresses.

Final Exam (40%) (during the exam period, **in-person**)

- The final exam will consist of multiple-choice questions covering the second half of the course. This is a non-cumulative final, and the questions will cover only the second half of the course. **Content covered will include all lecture and readings assigned for the second half of the course.** More details as the course progresses.

Course Timetable:

Date	Readings
Jan 7	Course Overview Chapter 1: What Is Positive Psychology and Why Do We Need It? Chapter 2: Myths and Misunderstandings about the Science of Positive Psychology
Jan 14	Chapter 3: Positive Emotional Experiences
Jan 21	Chapter 4: Transcendence: Meaning, Purpose, Spirituality, and Religion
Jan 28	Chapter 5: Present-Moment Focus Mindfulness, Savoring, and Flow
Feb 4	Chapter 8: Virtues, Values, and Character Strengths
Feb 11	Chapter 9: Successful Aging
Feb 18	READING WEEK
Feb 25	MIDTERM TEST
Mar 4	Chapter 10: Love and Relationships
Mar 11	Chapter 11: Perspective-Taking Gratitude and Forgiveness
Mar 18	Chapter 12: Prosocial Behavior
Mar 25	Chapter 14: Positive Mental Health Interventions and Initiatives
Apr 1	CATCH-UP LECTURE

Assignment Submission: All assignments (term paper outline and term paper) will be due before 11:59pm on their due date. These assignments are to be submitted on Quercus in the “Assignments” area. These papers should be written according to the formatting requirements stated below. It’s your responsibility to ensure you have a properly working internet connection and save your work while you are completing it. I recommend you send yourself many emails with updated Word document drafts throughout the writing process, or using Google Docs to save a copy online. It is your responsibility to save frequently and have up-to-date drafts saved in more than one place. Please avoid last-minute submissions.

Missed Assignments and Tests:

Students can only submit ONE ACORN absence per semester as documentation for missing assignments and tests. Other forms that are valid to provide documentation for missing assignments include (but are not limited to) Verification of Illness (VOI) documents, a College Registrar’s Office (RO) letter, or an Accessibility Letter. Please submit a supporting document for your late assignment submission or missed test within one week of due date or test date respectively, otherwise you will receive a zero. **Late penalties for the term paper outline and term paper are -10% per day. To be excused for a late assignment submission, you must notify as soon as possible, and no later than one week after missing the submission due date.** For missed tests, once appropriate documentation is submitted, a make-up test will be rescheduled at a later date.

Assignment Grading Review: You can request an office hour from your TA to review your

assignments within two weeks of releasing the grades on Quercus. Any individual meetings outside of these office hours are up to the TA's discretion, but you have two weeks from the release of the grades to request to review your assignments. Your TA will hold office hours on Zoom, or whichever platform works best, to allow you to review your assignment.

Grade Appeals: If after meeting with your TA you are still dissatisfied with the grading of your assignments, you can submit a written appeal request to your instructor detailing why you think you deserve a higher grade. You cannot submit an appeal if you have not first met with your TA. You have two weeks from when the marks are released to submit an appeal, but only after meeting with the TA. Any appeal request made after this time frame will not be considered. Be aware that your mark may stay the same, go up, or go down.

Writing: One of the main objectives of this course is for you to develop your skills as a critical thinker and writer. There are many writing resources at UofT to help you improve your writing (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice>). Please see the section about writing help in this syllabus as well as additional information about writing help on Quercus. I have uploaded information about effective, persuasive scientific writing as well as student examples of high-quality writing on Quercus. Please review this information before you write your paper.

Plagiarism: Submitting a paper that you did not write, recycling papers you have written for other classes, copying and pasting without quote or citations, or poorly summarizing material by changing only a few words ALL constitutes plagiarism. Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://teaching.utoronto.ca/ed-tech/teaching-technology/pdt/pdt-faq/>).

Academic Integrity: All students, faculty and staff are expected to follow the University's guidelines and policies on academic integrity. For students, this means following the standards of academic honesty when writing assignments, collaborating with fellow students, and writing tests and exams. Ensure that the work you submit for grading represents your own honest efforts. Plagiarism—representing someone else's work as your own or submitting work that you have previously submitted for marks in another class or program—is a serious offence that can result in sanctions. Speak to me or your TA for advice on anything that you find unclear. To learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the UofT writing support website at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, please see <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>.

Religious Accommodations: As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of cultural and religious traditions. For my part, I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory

holidays. Further to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course activity (such as a test or in-class assignment) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Accessibility and Diversity: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an acute or ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) during the first week of the class by visiting <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as/new-registration>. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will assess your situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your needs or condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS. If you are registered with AS, please notify me so that I am aware of the accommodations you may need throughout the semester.

Academic Success: If you need help with time management, goal setting, study tips, and/or taking good notes, you can meet with a learning strategist at Academic Success to learn some helpful strategies: <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc>.

Accommodation for Personal Reasons: There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical reasons. If you have concerns, speak to me or to an advisor in your College Registrar's office; they can help you to decide if you want to request an extension or accommodation. They may be able to provide you with a College Registrar's letter of support to give to your instructors, and importantly, connect you with other resources on campus for help with your situation.

Mental Health and Well-Being: As a student, you may experience challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation, financial concerns, family worries and so forth. These factors may affect your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate fully in daily activities. Everyone feels stressed now and then – it is a normal part of university life. Some days are better than others, and there is no wrong time to reach out.

There are resources for every situation and every level of stress. There are many helpful resources available through your College Registrar or through Student Life (<http://studentlife.utoronto.ca> and <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed>). An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. Please take the time to inform yourself of available resources.

Specific Medical Circumstances: If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and

severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. You can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI. For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.