

**Psy 3633**  
**Happiness: Integrating Research Across Psychological Sciences**  
Fall 2009

3 Credits, Tuesday & Thursday 2:30-3:45 pm Elliott N423

Instructor: Angus MacDonald, III, Associate Professor  
Director, Translational Research in Cognitive & Affective  
Mechanisms (TRiCAM) Laboratory  
N426 Elliott Hall  
612-624-3813  
[angus@umn.edu](mailto:angus@umn.edu)  
Office hour: 11-12 am Monday and by appointment (email me)

**Short Description:** What is the nature of human happiness and fulfillment? To answer this, we will build on insights from many disciplines, including cognitive, personality and social psychology, biology, economics and even touching on philosophy and religion. The course approaches happiness from multiple levels of analysis to build an integrative approach to the feelings that make life worth living.

**Course objectives** include: (1) Learning the constituent properties of happiness, in terms of both basic mechanisms and individual differences; (2) Conceptualizing everyday, relevant and ancient questions in terms of objective evidence and experiment methodologies; (3) Scrutinizing popular and scholarly articles from diverse fields in terms of soundness of the assumptions and strength of data; (4) Drawing together arguments from diverse sources, and balancing evidence appropriately; and (5) Building a coherent account of the continuity and accumulation of understanding from a biological to a societal level. Course Topics include: Paradoxes of Happiness (Philosophy), History of Happiness, Measurement of Happiness Preference and Utility (Economic Approaches) Happiness and Context (Social Psychology) Flow (Social Psychology) Adaptation (Personality and Behavioral Genetics) Pleasure Centers (Neurobiology) Drugs of Abuse & Depression (Clinical). *Prerequisites:* Psych 1001 and Psychology Major, or Instructor Consent.

**Class Time:** 70% lecture, 30% discussion and application

**Syllabus & Texts:**

- Students are responsible for all material contained in this syllabus. -

1. Haidt, J. (2006). *The Happiness Hypothesis. Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*. NY, NY; Basic Books.
2. Gilbert, D. (2007). *Stumbling on Happiness*. NY, NY; Vintage Books.
3. Psy 3633 Reader

**Course Website:** <https://moodle.umn.edu/course/view.php?id=7072>.

## Revised Calendar

	Date	Topics	Reading:	Assignment	
1	8-Sep-09	Lecture	Overview & Paradoxes of Happiness	<i>Carroll (1874)</i> ; Martin (2008); Pew (2006)	
2	10-Sep-09	Lecture	History of Happiness	McMahon (2004)	
3	15-Sep-09	Lecture	Evolution of Happiness	Nee (2005); Cosmides (2006); Buss, D.M. (2000)	
4	17-Sep-09	Lecture	Mind Divided Against Itself	Haidt Ch 1 & 2; Oschner (2005)	
5	22-Sep-09	Lecture	Observing Happiness: Methods	Reichhart (2006); Kahneman (1998); Kahneman (2004); <i>optional -- Alchian (1953)</i>	
6	24-Sep-09	<b>Discussion</b>		Panksepp (2003); Wirtz (2003); Gilbert Ch 2 & 3	
7	29-Sep-09	Lecture	Emotional Mind	Davidson (2003); Gilbert 9; <i>Bradley (2001)</i>	
8	1-Oct-09	Lecture	Happiness Set-point	Haidt Ch 5; Lykken (1996)	
9	6-Oct-09	<b>Discussion</b>		<i>Napa Scollon (2005)</i> ; Diener (2006); Gilbert 10	Term paper topic selected
NIH	8-Oct-09	CANCEL			
10	13-Oct-09	Lecture	Preference and Utility	Easterlin (2003); Veenhoven (in press); Kahneman (2006)	
11	15-Oct-09	Lecture	Ethics	Haidt Ch 3; <i>Mill Ch 1 &amp; 2</i>	
12	20-Oct-09	<b>Discussion</b>	Ethics w/special guest: Prof. Valerie Tiberius	<i>Mill Ch 4</i> ; Naussbaum (2004); <i>Tiberius (2006)</i> ; <i>SEoP entry</i>	
13	22-Oct-09	<b>Discussion</b>		Gilbert 6, 7 & 8	Draft copy of table for partners due
14	27-Oct-09	Lecture	Love & Happiness	Haidt Ch 4, 6; <i>SciencePodcast (2008)</i>	Partners return draft copy
15	29-Oct-09	Lecture	Context of Happiness & Flow	<i>Dolan (2008)</i> ; <i>North (2008)</i> ; <i>TBA</i>	Exp 1 due
16	3-Nov-09	Lecture	Systems of Happiness	<i>Economist (2006)</i> ; <i>Thinley (2005)</i> ; <i>Oishi (1999)</i>	Final copy of table due
17	5-Nov-09	<b>Discussion</b>		<i>WolfShenk (2009)</i> ; Cross-National Collaborative Group (1992); <i>Rojas (2006)</i>	
18	10-Nov-09	Lecture	Pleasure Centers: Biology of Happiness	Tobler (2005); McClure (2003)	
19	12-Nov-09	Lecture	Shortcuts to Pleasure: Drugs of Abuse	Koob & Le Moal (1997); Redish (2004); Niven (1980)	
20	17-Nov-09	<b>Discussion</b>		Olds (1958); Kelly & Berridge (2002); Fujiwara (2007)	Draft copy of paper for partners due
21	19-Nov-09	Exam	Brain Science Exam		Partners return draft copy
22	24-Nov-09	Lecture	Unhappiness & Resilience	Haidt Ch 7	Penultimate Draft Due
	26-Nov-09	T-GIVING			
23	1-Dec-09	Lecture	Virtue / Eudamonia / Character Strengths	Haidt Ch 8; <i>McAdams (2008)</i>	
24	3-Dec-09	Lecture	Change	Dunn (2008); Seligman (2005)	Exp 2 Due
25	8-Dec-09	Lecture	Transcendence	Haidt Ch 9; <i>Wallace (2006)</i>	
26	10-Dec-09	<b>Discussion</b>		Davidson (2007); Kjaer (2002);	Final Paper Due
27	15-Dec-09	Lecture	Building Happiness on the Shoulders of Giants	Haidt Ch 10	

Updates to the reading list will be posted to the website. *Italics* – download available from website.

## Grading

Grades will be based on the following components:

- Class participation (6 pts)
- Pop cards (12 pts)
- Discussion summary (12 pts)
- Personal experiments (12 pts each), two of the following:
  - Survey/correlational
  - Longitudinal (e.g. pre-test/post-test)
  - Experimental (including a manipulated variable)
- Brain Science & Measurement Exam (12 pts)
- Term paper (6 + 6 + 16 + 6 = 34 pts)

**Class Participation (6 pts).** Students are expected to come to each class meeting, to have completed the assigned readings, and to participate in small and large group discussions. The final class participation grade depends largely on class participation in the discussion portion of the course but will also include contributions to the lecture as well. All students are expected to engage in the discussion of readings. Please consult the instructor in advance if this obligation will be onerous because of your particular circumstances.

**Pop cards (12 pts)** are an alternative to quizzes on reading material and invite students to freely relay what was important from a given reading. Students should come to every class prepared to describe the central ideas and importance of the reading materials assigned for that class. 1-6 pop cards will be assigned over the course of the semester, and their individual value will depend on the final number assigned. In 2008, each card was worth 3 pts, and incomplete zero card scores kept some students from receiving a better grade.

**Discussion summary (12 pts).** Discussion summaries are a way for you to grapple with one of the chapters or papers from an in-class discussion. Summaries should describe what happened during the class discussion, and where appropriate comment on particular points that lacked clarity, required more information or were particularly controversial. Discussion summaries should be between 1-2 double-spaced pages to be handed in the following class. It is recommended, though, that these be written as soon as possible following the paper presentation. In addition to recording the events of the discussion, the recorder should conclude each summary with a comment on what he or she felt were one or two key points raised by the reading.

**2 x Reports on personal experiment (12 pts each).** The personal experiment is an opportunity to reflect on a finding from the literature and apply it to your own life. At the same time, you get a chance to think about research design. You may

end-up doing many personal experiments over the course of the semester, and hopefully in the future as well. For the purposes of this course, though, you need do only two. *You may be asked to present your personal experiment to the class.*

To do a personal experiment,

1. Plan ahead. You cannot do a personal experimental at the last moment.
2. You will use one of the following methods: a) Survey/correlational design; b) Longitudinal (e.g. pre-test/post-test) design; Experimental (including a manipulated variable). Generally, you may not do two personal experiments of the same design.
3. Select a finding reported in the literature between an independent variable (e.g. something you do, have or obtain) and a dependent variable relevant to some aspect of happiness (e.g. sex, reward, flow, etc.).

Your paper should describe the finding in the literature, how your personal experiment relates to the finding, and what you found. Your report should consider whether you believe the any association is causal or just correlation, or whether a lack of association is because the original finding is false, is merely correlative, you are “exceptional,” or your measurement was faulty. These considerations should be summarized in 1-2 double-spaced pages. Each report is due at a different time as indicated on the syllabus.

**Brain Science & Measurement Exam (12 pts).** There will be a multiple-choice and short answer exam on the neural systems underlying gain and loss sensitive brain networks, as well as other brain regions implicated in joy, happiness and contentment. This exam will also cover methodological issues addressed over the course of the semester. This exam will be based on readings in the Psy 3633 Reader. Online resources and study materials will also be available through the webpage.

**Term paper (6 + 16 + 6 + 6% pts).** There is one term paper required for this course, however it is to be completed in a number of stages with due dates throughout the semester. The topic of this paper is to be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor as necessary. The topic of this paper must be selected early in the term (beginning of October). To choose effectively, it may be necessary to preview future course topics. A good Psy 3633 paper synthesizes, or combines, several empirical studies that address a similar question as follows:

1. **Table of Studies.** (6 pts.) The central findings of the studies reviewed should be summarized in a single table. For example, a term paper on the relationship between marriage and happiness might include a table in which each study was summarized on a single row, with separate columns reporting the 1) authors, 2) sample size 3) sex ratios in each sample, 3) the name of the measure of happiness, and 4) what the statistical analyses show with regard to the relationship between marriage and happiness.
2. **Penultimate Draft** (16 pts). The text of such a paper should characterize the nature of the question being asked, describe the various studies in a

- narrative format, and then describe what all the findings together mean. Papers should also shed light on important future questions to consider in that domain.
3. **Grammar & Mechanics** (6 pts). Good grammar and language mechanics are cornerstones of a clear Psy 3633 paper. You will provide 2 partners with a draft copy of your paper for feedback. (You will likewise receive 2 draft copies to comment on.) Your final grade will be the total of 3 scores of 0-2 pts for your paper and your two partner's papers.
  4. **Final Draft** (6 pts). This is your chance to integrate feedback from the penultimate version into a polished version. The final draft will not be returned.

**MacDonald's Mulligan Policy.** If you are unsatisfied with your score on a discussion report or personal experiment, you may attempt to replace the score. This is a mulligan, or a do-over. Only one mulligan project per student will be accepted over the course of the semester. Mulligan scores will replace the lowest score from other projects. This may take the form of an additional discussion report or personal experiment.

Alternatively, you may do an empirical article summary. An article summary is a 3-4 page, double-spaced paper. This should succinctly but logically describe the hypothesis, methods, results and conclusions of a relevant study. Given the limitations of space, authors are advised to focus on the inferential path between the data and the most important conclusions of the paper. That is, what did they find and what is the relevance of those findings? Students should be fair but critique the science appropriately.

**Timing.** Grade replacement projects will be due on the first class in December.


**Please note.** Unless the original score is very low, the marginal difference between the original score and a new score is likely to be small. Therefore, attempting to replace intermediate scores yields diminishing returns.

### Further Information:

Any student with a documented **disability** condition (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the instructor and Disability Services at the beginning of the semester.

Students may obtain help on specific aspects of the course by coming to regularly scheduled **office hours**. If a conflict exists, please email the instructor to arrange an alternative meeting time.

**Student Writing Support** (SWS) provides free writing instruction for all



Prof. MacDonald Letter-Grade  
Secret Decoder Ring

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 A+</li> <li>• 11 very high A</li> <li>• 10 A/A-</li> <li>• 9 A-/B+</li> <li>• 8 B+/B</li> <li>• 7 B/B-</li> <li>• 6 B-/C+</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 C</li> <li>• 4 C-</li> <li>• 3 D</li> <li>• &lt;3 F</li> </ul> <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 10px;">These values may be misleadingly good or bad. Remember: all grades are scaled as a % of the highest total in the class; the relationship between individual values and letter grades cannot be known until the end of class.</p>
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University of Minnesota students—graduate and undergraduate—at all stages of the writing process. In face-to-face and online collaborative consultations, SWS consultants help students develop productive writing habits and revision strategies. SWS consultants are teachers of writing: graduate and undergraduate teaching assistants and professional staff. Some consultants specialize in working with non-native speakers, and others have experience with writing in specific disciplines. Consulting is available by appointment through SWS.online and in 15 Nicholson Hall, and on a walk-in basis in 9 Appleby Hall. For more information, go to [writing.umn.edu/sws](http://writing.umn.edu/sws) or call 612.625.1893. Also see [http://writing.umn.edu/sws/quick\\_help.htm](http://writing.umn.edu/sws/quick_help.htm) (updated 9/09).

**Scholastic dishonesty** means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. *Scholastic dishonesty is expressly forbidden in this class.* Suspected scholastic dishonesty will be investigated and reported as necessary.