

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY**  
**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS**  
**50:830:461; 56:830: 674; 56:606:602**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**Fall, 2010**

Instructor:	Dr. Charlotte N. Markey	Lecture:	Wed, 6:00-8:40pm
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Office Phone:	856.225.6332	Office hours:	Wed, 5:00-6:00pm
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:**

This course focuses on understanding psychological processes that influence health, contribute to our happiness, and provide a sense of meaning in our lives. Topics to be discussed include: stress and coping, personality and health, health behaviors, the context and providers of health care, factors that promote happiness, strategies to improve happiness, and ways individuals create meaning in their lives. The changing health care environment and the need to understand the role of individuals' lifestyles in determining their health and well-being is emphasized.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

- 1) Lyubomirsky, S. (2007). *The How of Happiness: A New Approach to Getting the Life You Want*. New York: Penguin Books. Available on the web at Amazon.com.
- 2) Frankl, V. (2006). *Man's Search for Meaning*. Boston: Beacon Press. Available on the web at Amazon.com. Note: this book has been published several times; the first publication date is 1959.
- 3) In addition to reading these two books, we will read several articles. These articles will be available via the course sakai web page – consult the course schedule to determine when they should be read. In addition, during some classes you will be asked to do brief readings as a part of class activities; these will be supplied by the instructor. You will be expected to do additional reading for the week that you act as the class discussion leader.

Please read all assigned readings BEFORE they are covered in class.

**GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**1) ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION:** Class attendance and participation is expected. Because this class is a seminar (i.e., I will not usually be lecturing, rather we will all discuss the relevant topics), much of the learning that will take place this semester will be *in the classroom*. Thus, this component of your grade will be based on the following criteria: (1) Did you attend class? and (2) Did you contribute to the intellectual climate in class (by listening to the professor and your classmates and participating in discussions and exercises)?

**2) READING NOTES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** Because each class will involve a discussion of the assigned readings, it is important that we all come to class prepared. In order to facilitate this preparation, you will be expected to turn in “evidence” that you have completed the readings in the form of *1-2 pages* of notes and *at least two* discussion questions. The format of these notes is not important (a paragraph summary, bullet points, etc.), but they should be completed so that they are helpful to you during class discussions. These notes will also be helpful for use on the take-home final exam. As you read through the assignments, make note of questions you have that might be interesting for us to discuss as a class (you do not need to have the answers to these questions, rather think of issues that are provocative and important for us to discuss; these should NOT be yes/no questions or questions with answers easily identified in the readings). These notes and questions are due each Tuesday via the Sakai course web page. (Note: The first outline/ discussion questions are due on Sunday, Sept. 5.) Please cut and paste them into the Sakai web page to submit the assignment (do NOT add as an attachment). For your own benefit, having a copy of your notes and questions in class is a good idea.

**3) CLASS DISCUSSION FACILITATOR:** Each week a different student will be responsible for helping to lead the class discussion of the assigned readings. It is expected that the facilitator will come to class with questions and ideas to promote discussion. Further, the facilitator should bring in material to complement the assigned readings (this may be in the form of a journal article to share or information from a different discipline). This portion of your grade will be determined based on: (1) your degree of preparation and (2) your creativity in thinking about the topic for the week and introducing additional information about that topic. You should NOT prepare power point slides or a formal presentation; the tone of the class should remain informal and comfortable.

**4) BEHAVIOR CHANGE PAPER:** The topics discussed in this class are both theoretical and applied in nature. To further your understanding of class material, you will be asked to apply some of the information we discuss in class to your own life. Early in the semester (Sept. 15) you will be asked to identify a behavioral change that would contribute to your health and/or happiness. Examples may include: exercising regularly, eating more fruit, better stress management, spending more time with family, quitting smoking, etc. Throughout the semester we will be discussing the benefits of maintaining behaviors conducive to our health and well-being, and you will be encouraged to try to make positive changes in your own lives. Toward the end of the semester, you will turn in a 3 page paper describing the success (or lack of success) you have had in changing the behavior you identified earlier in the semester. You will NOT be evaluated in terms of your success in achieving your behavioral goal, but in terms of your understanding of why you were or were not successful. Questions your paper should address include: (1) why do you think it is important to change this behavior (i.e., what research is relevant to suggest this change is important)? (2) how does theory and research in psychology contribute to your understanding of your success (or lack of) in changing your behavior? (3) how is this (and any) behavior change consistent with ideas presented by models of behavior change? More information about this assignment will be provided in class. This assignment is due on Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> in class.

**5) FINAL PROJECT:** Your final project for this course will be a critique of media messages focused on health and happiness. Additional information about this project will be forthcoming. Generally, you will be expected to collect 1 media message (e.g., You Tube clip, magazine articles, advertisements, T.V. commercials, etc.) about a product supposedly designed to improve your health or happiness and present this media message to the class along with leading some discussion and critique of this message. You will be expected to use information from our course to help you relay whether or not

the media message is positive/ harmful/ helpful to people's attempts to be healthy, happy, and create meaning in their lives. This presentation is intended to be brief and informal (you will NOT stand in front of the class but will remain seated). Presentations will take place on Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> in class.

**6) EXAM:** At the end of this course, you will be evaluated on your understanding of the material by taking an exam. The exact nature of this exam has yet to be determined. This exam will NOT be multiple choice and will not be a primary contributor to your final course grade; instead, it will be intended to provide me with information about what you found interesting in the course and what you learned from the course. Additional information about the final exam will be forthcoming.

### **GRADING:**

Grades will be computed as follows:

Attendance and participation	20%
Class outlines/ discussion questions	30%
Class discussion facilitator	10%
Behavior change paper	15%
Final presentation	10%
Final Exam	15%

### **GENERAL COURSE POLICIES:**

- 1) This class will be most rewarding for you if you are an active participant in class and view this experience as a collaborative enterprise. To this end, throughout the semester you are encouraged to communicate with your professor (during class and during office hours) and are expected to keep up with all readings and assignments.
- 2) Additional information about this class, and a copy of the syllabus is available on the instructor's web page (<http://www.crab.rutgers.edu/~chmarkey/home.html>) and the course Sakai web page (sakai.rutgers.edu). Being unaware of course requirements and expectations is not an excuse for failing to complete any of the assignments in this course.

- 3) If you are in class, you will be expected to be attentive, participate, stay the entire class time, and be prepared for any activities and exams scheduled for that day. You will be asked to leave class if you do any of the following:

- ~Talk on your cell phone (turn phones off!)
- ~Text on your cell phone
- ~Open your lap top computer or blackberry
- ~Pass notes to classmates
- ~Sleep

You attendance in this course is voluntary. If you do not wish to be in class or prefer to do any of these activities instead of being in class, then you should leave.

- 4) If you miss a class, you are expected to obtain class notes from a classmate and to stay on top of any of the activities/ discussions missed. It is your responsibility to become informed of any announcements made in class.

- 5) **Power point slides presented in class will not be available** except in class (i.e., these will NOT be posted on the web). If you miss class, you should obtain notes from a classmate and read the relevant readings. Classes are designed to aid in your understanding of the assigned readings, focus you on the most important material, and offer an opportunity to further your understanding through class discussion. (In other words, power point slides are not a substitute for class attendance and participation thus will not be available outside of class.)
- 6) Academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) cheating on exams and plagiarism. Students caught participate in academic dishonesty will receive a score of zero on the relevant assignment. In addition, instances of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Scholastic Conduct Committee. Sanctions for academic dishonesty range from failing an assignment to failing a course or expulsion from the University. For additional information about Rutgers' policies concerning academic dishonesty refer to: <http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>.
- 7) For disability accommodations, please call the Disability Services Coordinator Associate Dean Thomas DiValerio, (856) 225-2663, [tdivaler@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:tdivaler@camden.rutgers.edu), Campus Center, Room #326. Students who require special accommodations should also contact the instructor within the first few days of class.

#### Course Schedule

The following is a *tentative* schedule for this course. Dates may change slightly depending on our *actual* progress in covering the material. Readings are available via interlibrary loan and sakai unless they are in the Lyubomirsky and Frankl books.

Week	Topics to be Discussed	Readings
Week 1 Sept. 1	What is health psychology? Why should you care? Why the study of happiness is important	1) Sarafino, Overview of Psychology and Health 2) Lyubomirsky, (2007) Foreward
Week 2 Sept. 8	Beliefs and health	1) Powell et al., Religion and Spirituality 2) Talbot, Placebo from NY Times 3) Hamburg (2000) (2 pages) 4) Friedman, Ch 1 of Self-Healing Personality book
Week 3 Sept. 15	Personality, health, and happiness	1) Friedman (2008) 2) Friedman et al. (2010) 3) Friedman, Ch 2 of Self-Healing Personality book <b>Behavior Change Topic Due</b>
Week 4 Sept. 22	Stress and coping	1) Folkman and Moskowitz (2000) 2) Carver and Connor-Smith (2010) 3) Carver, Stress, Coping and Health, pp. 117-128 4) Maddi – Hardiness (2005) (2 pages)
Week 5 Sept. 29	Social influences on health and happiness	1) Taylor, Social Support, pp 145 – 158 2) Gladwell, Outliers - Introduction 3) Gouin et al., Marital Behavior-Wound Healing 4) Markey et al., 2007

Week 6 Oct. 6	Health behaviors	1) Polivy & Herman, If at First You Don't Succeed... 2) Ogden, Health beliefs and behaviors (Ch 2) 3) NYT – paying for others' bad habits
Week 7 Oct. 13	Health care providers and patients	1) Hall & Roter, Physician-Patient Communication, pp. 325-329, 335-348 2) Kidder, The Good Doctor
Week 8 Oct. 20	Health care What is a life "worth"?	1) Kaplan, Uncertainty, Variability, and Resource Allocation in the Health Care Decision Process 2) Brief newspaper articles about health care (read as many as you can): The Public Imperative, Unhealthy America, Are We Going to Let John Die, Clarity on Health Care, Rewanda's Health Care
Week 9 Oct. 27	The meaning of life	1) Frankl, "Man's Search for Meaning" (entire book)
Week 10 Nov. 3	Happiness	1) Lyubomirsky, Part 1, pp. 14 - 79
Week 11 Nov. 10	Happiness and depression	1) Andrews & Thompson (2009) 2) NYT re: Upside of Depression 3) Read from Coyne at: <a href="http://whyevolutionistrue.wordpress.com/2009/08/29/is-depression-an-evolutionary-adaptation-part-1/">http://whyevolutionistrue.wordpress.com/2009/08/29/is-depression-an-evolutionary-adaptation-part-1/</a>
Week 12 Nov. 17	Becoming happier	1) Lyubomirsky, Part 2, chapters 4-6 2) Diener et al. - Hedonic treadmill <i>Behavior Change Papers Due</i>
Week 13 Nov. 25	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY	
Week 14 Dec. 1	Becoming happier, cont. Begin final presentations (cultural prescriptions of health and happiness in the popular media and your responses)	1) Lyubomirsky, Part 2, chapters 7-9 Part 3 and Afterward
Week 15 Dec. 8	Final presentations Wrap-up and review	

**Final Exam TBD**