

# PSYC 157: Psychology and the Good Life

## Spring 2018

### Instructor Information

Professor: Laurie Santos

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Office Hours: Schedule via email

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### Course Description

This course will teach you a set of scientifically validated strategies for living a more satisfying life. Throughout the course, we'll explore what new results in psychological science teach us about how to be happier, how to feel less stressed, and how to flourish more. We'll then have a chance to put these scientific findings into practice by building the sorts of habits that will allow us to live a happier and more fulfilling life. We'll also discuss how to apply these findings beyond our own lives to make our communities and our planet better too.

The course begins by introducing some misconceptions that you too may have about what makes for a satisfying life. We'll see that many things we think matter for our happiness— wealth, material possessions, and even good grades— simply don't. In fact, recent studies suggest that these goals may even undermine our sense of wellbeing. We'll then take a good hard look at the psychological biases and dumb features of our mind that lead us astray, biases that make it hard for us to see what makes us happy and make us seek out the wrong sorts of things. We'll then discuss what psychology research shows about what we really should strive for to live a satisfying life. Having gotten our life goals straight, we'll talk about how to put these new life goals into practice. We'll review scientifically validated strategies for harnessing our cognitive biases to live a better and more satisfying life. We'll also talk about how to prevent procrastination and how to harness our automatic processes to better achieve our goals. We'll end the course by thinking critically about how to use what we've learned both to hack our own happiness and to make a difference in our communities.

### Why This Course Now?

I developed this course for three reasons. **First, I want to share what my field of psychological science has taught us about how to live a better life.** Psychology has a lot to say about fixing human problems— from the big global ones to the tiny personal ones. That said, empirically oriented psychologists aren't often as creative as they should be about applying their findings to real world problems. This course is my attempt to critically synthesize what psychologists have learned so far about making our lives better, both on a global and local scale. It's a work in progress, but I think it's a good start.

The second reason I developed this course is for you. As a Head of College, I've come to realize that undergraduate students are way more unhappy/stressed out/worried about the future than people

often realize. Particularly at Yale, **I think undergrads are really anxious about their own life choices and interested in finding answers to the big questions:** What sort of choices will make me happy? What sort of job should I get? How can I lead a fulfilling life? What does it mean to be successful? What does it mean to be a good person? These are some big questions, but I think that the science of psychology can provide important hints about how to make wiser choices and how to live a life that's much happier. I also just love the idea of sending off a whole cohort of Yalies who are armed with a better understanding of their own psychological biases. I want students to use this knowledge to make society and their own lives a little bit better.

Third, undergrads aren't the only ones struggling with these issues. In all honestly, **this course is just as much for me as it is for you.** After over twenty years of training in psychology, I still marvel at how bad my intuitions are. I also fall prey to the biases that give rise to poor choices and less happiness. The final reason I designed this course is to live a better life myself. By critically looking at everything empirical psychology teaches us about how to live a better life, I hope to better synthesize tips for better living so that I can use them too.

### **Course Requirements**

**Midterm Exam (March 1 in class).** The midterm will cover all material up to and including Feb 28. Unless you have a Dean's Excuse, you must take the midterm during this timeslot. Students with Dean's Excuses will take a make-up midterm with a different format.

**Final Research Paper (8-15 pages double-spaced due on WEDNESDAY MAY 2 at 5pm via email).** The research project will allow you to design, run, and write up your own self-improvement project (aka "The Hack Yo'Self Project"). Specific information about the Hack Yo'Self Project will be provided later this semester. Note that there will be a penalty for projects that are handed in late and no material will be accepted after the end of Final Exams Period without a Dean's Excuse. (But hopefully by then you will have learned about how to stop procrastination so that shouldn't be an issue.)

**Final Research Paper Proposal (1-2 pages due on THURSDAY MARCH 29 at 5pm via email).** In order to make sure you're on the right track, we'd also like you to submit a final research paper proposal that outlines the self-improvement project you're proposing to conduct. More details on the proposal will be handed out later. Again, there will be a penalty for proposals that are handed in late without a Dean's Excuse.

**Quizzes (5 total, but only your best 3 count toward your grade).** Every few weeks, you will receive a problem set that is to be used as a study guide. You do not have to hand in the answers to the problem set. However, in the week after each problem set is handed out, there will be a 10-minute in-class quiz. **The quiz will be taken directly from one of the questions on the problem set.** It is therefore to your advantage to look over and answer all of the questions on the problem set before the quiz. The goal of these quizzes is to help you better learn the material, but it also has a consequence of helping you to improve your grade. There will be five quizzes in total, but only your best three quiz grades will count towards your final grade. Even if you have a Dean's Excuse, **there are NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES** (since there is no fair way to give a make-up quiz using a different question). If you miss a quiz for any reason, that quiz will need to be one of the two that you drop.

## Course Grade\*\*\*

- 20% In-Class Quizzes (best 3 out of 5)
- 35% Midterm Exam
- 10% Final Research Paper proposal (1-2 pages double-spaced)
- 35% Final Research Paper (8-15 pages double-spaced)

*\*\*\* Warning: As you'll soon learn, psychological research shows that overly focusing on extrinsic rewards like grades is likely to 1) diminish your interest in the course material, 2) undermine your enjoyment of the class and 3) impede your future understanding of everything you're studying. For this reason, Professor Santos strongly encourages you to consider either 1) taking a learning mindset rather than a performance mindset toward the material (i.e., don't focus too much on your final course grade!) or 2) taking this particular course Credit/D/F. At the very least, she hopes that— for this particular course— you will agree to try NOT to pay attention to the sorts of extrinsic motivations that may undermine your ability to enjoy the course material.*

## Required Readings— All Available for Free!

As Silliman Head of College, I see the kind of stress that students go through at the start of every semester having to pay for expensive textbooks. Since my goal is to make all of you *less* stressed rather than more, **I've chosen to assign only course materials that you can get for free**, either because they are available on the internet already (e.g., free short online lectures) or because I can provide them as PDFs for free via [Yale's Fair Use Policy](#). This means that I sometimes need to assign readings that cover content that won't be in the lectures, but I'll let you know if there are parts that you can skip. All of the stuff you need to read will be available as PDFs on Canvas at the start of the term.

## PowerPoint Slides and Lecture Notes— Also Available for Free!

Before each class, Professor Santos will provide a pdf of her **Lecture Notes** on Canvas. These Lecture Notes will cover all of the main points she'll discuss in class, including definitions (so you don't need to scribble them down). She'll also add references to all the papers she talks about in class in case you want to look them up and read more about the studies she discusses.

After class each day, Professor Santos will also provide a pdf of her **PowerPoint slides**. Note that PowerPoint slides are provided *after* class because Professor Santos is usually working on her slides right up until lecture starts. Since she wants to be sure you get the exact slides she uses, she'll provide her PowerPoint slides as soon as she can after class.

## Course Requirements + "Course Rewirements"

My hope is that most students will take this course not just because they want to learn about theories of how to live a happier life— instead, **I want students to take this course because they personally want to live a happier life themselves.**

The problem— as you'll see in the first week of class— is that psychological science shows that merely learning about the empirical findings and theories is not enough to achieve real behavior change. (Indeed, as we'll see, the idea that merely knowing about psychological theories is enough to change our behavior is one of the many important cognitive fallacies we'll talk about in the

course). **The path to becoming happier and more successful requires more than just learning the material— it involves actually putting in work to set up the right habits and mindset.** As you'll learn more in the next few weeks, putting in this sort of work is the only way to rewire your bad habits and strategies.

And that's why **this course has two different sets of requirements.** The first set of requirements includes the usual sorts of Yale course requirements: the readings and assessments (exams, paper, etc.) that are typical of a Yale course. These requirements will factor into your final Yale course grade. But (as we'll see in class) the final grade you get in this course is unlikely to matter all that much for your actual happiness or personal success. The only way this course will make you happier is if you use the course as an impetus to put better habits into place— habits that will allow you to live a happier and more fulfilling life. **And that's why this course has a second set of requirements, which I will (somewhat cheesily) refer to as your “Course Rewirements”).** The goal of the rewirements is “rewire” your automatic habits and strategies. The rewirements are a series of activities and exercises aimed at making you happier, healthier, and more resilient. Like course requirements, you will have a set of rewirements that are due each week, and these rewirements will also require some time and hard work. In fact, the rewirements will sometimes involve *even more time and hard work* than the course requirements, even though they won't be factored into your final course grade. But if you're taking this course to improve your life— to become happier and more successful at the things that really matter— then you must take the rewirements just as seriously as the other course requirements. All of the rewirements are listed by date at the end of the syllabus. I'll also remind you about them in class as well.

To show just how seriously we'd like you to take the course rewirements, **we've developed an app— ReWi—** to support many of the rewirements for the course. (Yes, welcome to the first course in Yale's history to have its own app!). Many of the course rewirements can be done through the ReWi app, which should be available a few weeks into the course. Extra special thanks to the Center for Teaching and Learning for funding this new app, and our amazing app developer Felipe Pires '19 for creating ReWi, and Hanah Lee '20 for the awesome ReWi logo.

### **Other Important Course Policies**

**Academic Honesty.** People who take this course know that cheating is stupid— it won't allow you to achieve any of the things you want (e.g., an understanding of the material, a happier life, etc.). The midterm and quizzes are closed book, which means the use of any written material or any form of collaboration is forbidden. People who take this course also know that plagiarism is wrong. The use of any words or ideas from other sources—including papers written by other students and online sources such as Wikipedia—has to be explicitly and clearly acknowledged. You are also not allowed to share any written material for your paper. This means that you CANNOT show other individuals your paper drafts or share any written material with them. This includes through online crowdsharing sites.

The Bottom Line: Don't cheat, okay? It will get you in trouble. And it will also show that you missed nearly all of the tips presented in the course for how to live a happier and more meaningful life. All suspected cases of cheating will make be reported to the Yale College Executive Committee. For more useful tips and a complete discussion on Yale's rules about academic honesty, see:

<https://ctl.yale.edu/writing/using-sources>

**Grade Disputes.** People taking this course will soon realize that one's grade doesn't really matter all that much for one's happiness. If you have a mathematical error in grading, contact Professor Santos and she will update your record. If you have a question about how a TF graded one of your quizzes/exams, please contact the TF who graded it and he/she/they will explain what material you missed. Note that— in the spirit of what we'll learning in the course— **we would like you to frame your questions in terms of learning goals rather than performance goals** (we'll talk more about this in class). In the unlikely event that you still feel you received an unfair grade after talking with the TF, you can opt to have all your assignments formally regarded by Professor Santos at the end of the semester. To do so, you must resubmit ALL of your work (midterm, all quizzes, papers) at the end of the semester as well as a formal cover letter indicating why you feel your work deserves to be re-graded. Professor Santos will review cover letters and decide whether or not to re-grade a student's materials on a case-by-case basis. Note, however, that Professor Santos will realize that any student who ask for re-grade has missed the main principles of happiness and learning motivations that she taught in class, and this is likely to make her grouchy and thus a much harsher grader than the TFs were.

**Sharing Course Materials.** All of the materials I share with you through the Canvas server (including my powerpoint slides and lecture notes) are copyrighted. I can share these copyrighted materials with you via Yale's Fair Use policy, but it is illegal for you to share these copyrighted materials. Please do not post any course materials on online crowdsourced study sites (e.g., CourseHero, etc). Posting any course materials could get you (and me... gasp!) into lot of legal trouble. Violations of this policy will be reported to the Yale College Executive Committee.

**Recording of Lectures.** This should probably go without saying, but you are not allowed to film or record my lectures without my permission. Unauthorized video or audio recording of any lecture material is prohibited and will be reported the Yale College Executive Committee and to the Yale Provost Office. Also: creepy.

### **No Electronic Devices Allowed in Class Except in Designated Laptop Areas**

As we'll learn in class, the use of laptops, tablets, and cellphones in the classroom can impair learning (for example, see [this paper](#) and [this paper](#)). **For this reason, laptops, tablets and other devices may not be used during this class.** Please have all laptops, cellphones, and tablets away at all times.

However— as you'll see in class— Professor Santos is a big advocate of “libertarian paternalism,” which means that she doesn't like forcing you to do things even if those things will ultimately make you happier. For this reason, **you will have a chance to opt-out of the laptop policy by opting-in to a designated “laptop” seating area of the classroom (the only area in class in which laptops and tablets may be used)**<sup>1</sup>.

**If you are interested in opting-in and sitting in this special laptop section, you must send an email to [laurie.santos@yale.edu](mailto:laurie.santos@yale.edu) no later than 5pm on January 30.** No more laptop sign-ups will be accepted after this date. If you do sit in the laptop section, please do not use your devices for non-class related online activities (e.g., texting, social networking, etc.).

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<sup>1</sup> With props to the economist David Laibson from whom I stole this “opt-in” laptop policy.

## Dates and Topics

1. Jan 16 Introduction: Why Psychology & The Good Life? (ReWi #1)
2. Jan 18 Should We Strive for Happiness + Why Your Mind Sucks
3. Jan 23 The Wrong Path to Happiness: What We Shouldn't Want I (ReWi #2)
4. Jan 25 The Wrong Path to Happiness: What We Shouldn't Want II
5. Jan 30 Why We Get It Wrong: We Get Used to Stuff (QUIZ #1 + ReWi #3)
6. Feb 1 Why We Get It Wrong: We Don't Realize That Context Matters
7. Feb 6 Why We Get It Wrong: We Don't Realize That Situations Matters (ReWi #4)
8. Feb 8 Why We Get It Wrong: Our Emotions Lead Us Astray
9. Feb 13 Why We Get It Wrong: Our Habits Lead Us Astray (QUIZ #2 + ReWi #5)
10. Feb 15 What Does Lead to Happiness I: Gratitude & Community
11. Feb 20 What Does Lead to Happiness II: Healthy Behaviors (ReWi #6)
12. Feb 22 Special Guest Lecture: [Mike Norton](#)
13. Feb 27 What Does Lead to Happiness Part III: Finding Meaning (ReWi #7)
14. Mar 1 MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS
15. Mar 6 Time Affluence: What Would You Do If You Had Extra Time? (ReWi #8)
16. Mar 8 Achieving Better Goals I: The Right Mindset
- SPRING BREAK!!! (ReWi #9)
17. Mar 27 Achieving Better Goals II: Harnessing Our Biases (ReWi #10)
18. Mar 29 Special Guest Lecture: [Hedy Kober](#) (PROPOSAL DUE)
19. Apr 3 Special Guest Lecture: [Tamar Gendler](#) (ReWi #11)
20. Apr 5 Achieving Better Goals III: Ending Procrastination (QUIZ #3)
21. Apr 10 Achieving Better Goals IV: Harnessing & Reappraising Situations (ReWi #12)
22. Apr 12 Achieving Better Goals V: Implementing Intentions
23. Apr 17 Achieving Better Goals VI: People Power (QUIZ #4 + ReWi #13)
24. Apr 19 Strategies in Practice I: Helping Others
25. Apr 24 Strategies in Practice II: Helping the Planet (ReWi #14)
26. Apr 26 Conclusion: What Have We Learned About the Good Life? (QUIZ #5)

RESEARCH PROJECT: Due Wednesday May 2 at 5pm via email

## Course Readings/Requirements by Date

### **Lecture 1 (Jan 16): Introduction: Why Psychology & The Good Life?**

Santos, L. R. & Gendler, T. S. (2015). Knowing is not half the battle. In M. J. Brockman (Ed.) *This Idea Must Die: Scientific Theories that are Blocking Progress*. New York: Harper Collins. 314-316.

Denizet-Lewis, B. (2017) Why Are More American Teenagers Than Ever Suffering From Severe Anxiety? *New York Times*. October 11, 2017.

### **Lecture 2 (Jan 18): Should We Strive for Happiness + Why Your Mind Sucks**

Watch two short Sonja Lyubomirsky videos from the Greater Good Science Center:  
“What Determines Happiness”: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_URP3-V1sY4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_URP3-V1sY4)  
“Happiness Takes Work”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6T7QGITKZGg>

Kurtz, J. L., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). Towards a durable happiness. In S. J. Lopez & J. G. Rettew (Eds.), *The Positive Psychology Perspective Series (Vol. 4)*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group. 21-36

Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C. R. (2009) Chapter 1. *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness (updated edition)*. New York: Penguin. (pp. 17-22).

### **Lecture 3 (Jan 23): What Doesn't Lead to Happiness I**

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). If we are so rich, why aren't we happy. *American Psychologist*, 54, 821-824 (Just read up to p. 824, stop before “Psychological Approaches to Happiness” section)

Kohn, A. (1993). “How'm I Doin'” (pp. 155-159) & “The Straight-A Student: A Cautionary Tale” (pp. 203-205). *Punished by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

### **Lecture 4 (Jan 25): What Doesn't Lead to Happiness II**

Kross, E., Verduyn, P., Demiralp, E., Park, J., Lee, D. S., Lin, N., Shablack, H., Jonides, J. & Ybarra, O. (2013). Facebook use predicts declines in subjective well-being in young adults. *PLoS One* 8(8). e69841.

Lyubomirsky, S. (2014) “Part 1: Connections” (pp. 15-16) and “I'll Be Happy When... I'm Married to the Right Person” (pp. 17-33). *The Myths of Happiness: What Should Make You Happy, but Doesn't, What Shouldn't Make You Happy, but Does*. New York: Penguin Press.

### **Lecture 5 (Jan 30): Why We Get It Wrong: We Get Used to Stuff (Quiz #1)**

Watch Dan Gilbert's TED Talk “Surprising Science of Happiness”  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/dan\\_gilbert\\_asks\\_why\\_are\\_we\\_happy?](https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_gilbert_asks_why_are_we_happy?)

Wilson, T. D., & Gilbert, D. T. (2005). Affective forecasting: Knowing what to want. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 14(3), 131-134.

Hamblin, J. (2014). Buy experiences, not things. *The Atlantic*, Oct 7, 2014.

Recommended: Gilbert, D. T., Pinel, E. C., Wilson, T. D., Blumberg, S. J., & Wheatley, T. P. (1998). Immune neglect: A source of durability bias in affective forecasting. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75, 617-638.

### **Lecture 6 (Feb 1): Why We Get It Wrong: We Don't Realize That Context Matters**

Watch this short video from Wireless Philosophy's Cognitive Biases Series:  
<http://www.wi-phi.com/video/cognitive-biases-reference-dependence-and-loss-aversion>

Kahneman, D. & Tversky, A. (1984). 1983 APA Award Addresses: Choices, values, & frames. *American Psychologist*, 39(4), 341-350.

Recommended: Kahneman, D. (2002). Maps of bounded rationality: A perspective on intuitive judgment and choice. *Noble Prize Lecture, December 8, 2002*. 449-465. (You can also watch Kahneman's Noble Prize lecture here: [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/economic-sciences/laureates/2002/kahneman-lecture.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/economic-sciences/laureates/2002/kahneman-lecture.html))

### **Lecture 7 (Feb 6): Why We Get It Wrong: We Don't Realize the Situation Matters**

Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C. R. (2009) Chapter 3: Following the herd. *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness (updated edition)*. New York: Penguin. 53-73.

Turner, J. C. (1992). Classic studies of social influence. *Social Influence*. Bristol, PA: Open University Press. 8-17.

Ariely, D. (2012). Why we lie. *Wall Street Journal*, C1-2.

Recommended: Doris, J. M. (1998). Persons, situations, and virtue ethics. *Nous*, 32(4), 504-530.

### **Lecture 8 (Feb 8): Why We Get It Wrong: Our Emotions Lead Us Astray**

Watch one video from Wireless Philosophy's Cognitive Biases Series:  
<http://www.wi-phi.com/video/cognitive-biases-alief>

Danziger, S., Levav, J., & Avnaim-Pesso, L. (2011). Extraneous factors in judicial decisions. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 108, 6889-6892.

Ariely, D., & Loewenstein, G. (2006). The heat of the moment: The effect of sexual arousal on sexual decision making. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 19, 87-98. (Note: This reading has themes related to sexual violence. Be forewarned).



Recommended: Gendler, T. S. (2008). Alief and belief. *Journal of Philosophy*. 634-663.

### **Lecture 9 (Feb 13) Why We Get It Wrong: Our Habits Lead Us Astray (QUIZ #2)**

Bargh, J. A., & Chartrand, T. L. (1999). The unbearable automaticity of being. *American Psychologist*, 54, 462-479.

Neal, D. T., Wood, W., & Quinn, J. M. (2006). Habits—A repeat performance. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 15(4), 198-202.

### **Lecture 10 (Feb 15): What Does Lead to Happiness: Gratitude & Community**

Dunn, E. W., Aknin, L. B., & Norton, M. I. (2008). Spending money on others promotes happiness. *Science*, 319, 1687-1688.

Piliavin (2003). Doing well by doing good. In L. C. M. Keyes & J. Haidt (Eds.) *Flourishing: Positive Psychology and the Life Well-Lived*. Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association. 227-247.

Myers, D. G. (2000). The funds, friends, and faith of happy people. *American Psychologist*, 55, 56-67.

Recommended: Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 88, 377-389.

### **Lecture 11 (Feb 20): What Does Lead to Happiness: Healthy Behaviors**

Brown, K. W. & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 84, 822-848.

Dalai Lama. (2003). The monk in the lab. *The New York Times*, April 26, 2003.

Callaghan, P. (2004). Exercise: A neglected intervention in mental health care? *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 11, 476-483

APA (2004). More sleep would make us happier, healthier and safer. *Psychology in Action: American Psychological Association website*. February, 2004.

<http://www.apa.org/action/resources/research-in-action/sleep-deprivation.aspx>

### **Special Guest Lecture (Feb 22): Mike Norton**

Watch Michael Norton's TED Talk:

[http://www.ted.com/talks/michael\\_norton\\_how\\_to\\_buy\\_happiness](http://www.ted.com/talks/michael_norton_how_to_buy_happiness)

Recommended: Whillans, A. V., Dunn, E. W., Smeets, P., Bekkers, R., & Norton, M. I. (2017). Buying time promotes happiness. *Proceedings from the National Academy of Sciences*, 114. 8523-8527.

## **Lecture 12 (Feb 27) What Does Lead to Happiness: Finding Meaning**

Seligman, M. E. (2004). Chapters 8-10. *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*. Simon and Schuster.

Esfahani-Smith, E. (2013). There's more to life than being happy. *The Atlantic*, January 9, 2013. (Read online: <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/01/theres-more-to-life-than-being-happy/266805>)

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). If we are so rich, why aren't we happy. *American Psychologist*, 54, 824-827 (Read the rest of the article starting at "Psychological Approaches to Happiness" section)

Recommended: Watch Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's TED talk:  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/mihaly\\_csikszentmihalyi\\_on\\_flow](https://www.ted.com/talks/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_on_flow)

Recommended: Watch Dan Ariely's TED Talk:  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/dan\\_ariely\\_what\\_makes\\_us\\_feel\\_good\\_about\\_our\\_work](https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_ariely_what_makes_us_feel_good_about_our_work)

## **Midterm Exam (Mar 1)**

### **Special Event (Mar 6): Time Affluence: What Would You Do If You Had Extra Time?**

Whillans, A. & Dunn, E. (2017). To promote happiness, choose time over money. *Behavioral Scientist*. November 14, 2017.

## **Lecture 13 (Mar 8) Achieving Our Goals: The Right Mindset**

Yeager, D. S., & Dweck, C. S. (2012). Mindsets that promote resilience: When students believe that personal characteristics can be developed. *Educational Psychologist*, 47, 302-314.

Dweck, C. S. (2007). The secret to raising smart kids. *Scientific American Mind*, 18(6), 36-43.

Recommended: Doskoch, P. (2005). The Winning Edge. *Psychology Today*.  
(Read online: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200511/the-winning-edge>)

## **SPRING BREAK!!**

## **Lecture 14 (Mar 27): Achieving Our Goals: Harnessing Our Biases (PROPOSAL DUE)**

Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C. R. (2009) Chapter 1. *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness (updated edition)*. New York: Penguin. (pp. 22-39).

Watch three videos from Wireless Philosophy's Cognitive Biases Series:  
<http://www.wi-phi.com/video/cognitive-biases-mental-accounting>

<http://www.wi-phi.com/video/cognitive-biases-anchoring>  
<http://www.wi-phi.com/video/cognitive-biases-peak-end-effect>

### **Special Guest Lecture: Hedy Kober**

Paulson, S., Davidson, R. J., Jha, A., & Kabat-Zinn, J. (2013). Becoming conscious: the science of mindfulness. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1303, 87–104.

Recommended: Harrington, A., & Dunne, J. D. (2015). When mindfulness is therapy: Ethical qualms, historical perspectives. *American Psychologist*, 70(7), 621–31

### **Special Guest Lecture (Apr 3): Tamar Gendler**

Haidt, J. (2006) Chapter 1: The Divided Self. *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*. Basic Books.

### **Lecture 15 (Apr 5): Achieving Our Goals: Ending Procrastination (QUIZ #3)**

Marano, H. E. (2003). Ending Procrastination. *Psychology Today*.

Basco, M. R. (1999). The perfect trap. *Psychology Today*, 32(3), 30-4.

Ariely, D., & Wertenbroch, K. (2002). Procrastination, deadlines, and performance: Self-control by precommitment. *Psychological Science*, 13, 219-224.

Recommended: Mischel, W., Shoda, Y., & Rodriguez, M. I. (1989). Delay of gratification in children. *Science*, 244, 933-938.

Also recommended: Watch Tim Urban's TED Talk "Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator"  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/tim\\_urban\\_inside\\_the\\_mind\\_of\\_a\\_master\\_procrastinator](https://www.ted.com/talks/tim_urban_inside_the_mind_of_a_master_procrastinator)

### **Lecture 16 (Apr 10): Achieving Our Goals: Harnessing & Reappraising Situations**

Duckworth, A. L., Gendler, T. S., & Gross, J. J. (2016). Situational strategies for self-control. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 11(1), 35-55.

Recommended: Wansink, B. (2004). Environmental factors that increase the food intake and consumption volume of unknowing consumers. *Annual Review of Nutrition*, 24, 455-479.

### **Lecture 17 (Apr 12): Achieving Our Goals: Implementing Intentions (QUIZ #4)**

Gollwitzer, P. M. (1999). Implementation intentions: Strong effects of simple plans. *American Psychologist*, 54, 493-503.

Oettingen, G., Wittchen, M., & Gollwitzer, P. (2013). Regulating goal pursuit through mental contrasting with implementation intentions. In E. A. Locke & G. P. Latham (Eds.), *New Developments in Goal Setting and Task Performance*. New York, NY: Routledge. 523-548.

### **Lecture 18 (Apr 17): Achieving Our Goals: People Power & Making it Personal**

Re-read: Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C. R. (2009) Chapter 3: Following the Herd. *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness (updated edition)*. New York: Penguin. 53-73.

Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., & Akert, R. M. (2004). Chapter 8. *Social Psychology, Fourth Edition*. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall. 281-296.

### **Lecture 19 (Apr 19) Strategies in Practice I: Helping Others**

Walton, G. M. (2014). The new science of wise psychological interventions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 23, 73-82.

Bowles, S. (2009). When economic incentives backfire. *Harvard Business Review*, 87, 22-23.

Sunstein, C. R. (2014). Nudging: a very short guide. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 37(4), 583-588.

### **Lecture 20 (Apr 24) Strategies in Practice II: Helping the Planet (QUIZ #5)**

Lehner, M., Mont, O., & Heiskanen, E. (2016). Nudging—A promising tool for sustainable consumption behaviour? *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 134, 166-177.

Kasser, T., & Brown, K. W. (2003). On time, happiness, and ecological footprints. In J. deGraaf (Ed.), *Take Back Your Time: Fighting Overwork and Time Poverty in America* (pp. 107–112). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

### **Lecture 21 (Apr 26) Final Lecture: What We've Learned About Rewiring Our Lives**

Recommended: Seuss. (2003). *Oh, The Places You'll Go!*. HarperCollins UK.

Recommended: Deresiewicz, W. (2014). Chapter 6: Inventing your life. *Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation Of The American Elite And The Way To A Meaningful Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

## Course Requirements by Date

### ReWi #1: Jan 16-18

**Measure Your Happiness Levels.** Some time this week, go online to the UPenn Authentic Happiness Website (<http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu>) and take the “Authentic Happiness Inventory.” This short quiz is a scientifically-validated measure of your levels of happiness. Write down your score. This first score will serve as a baseline throughout the semester of how your happiness levels change.

### ReWi #2 (Jan 23-25)

**Finding Your Signature Strengths.** This week you will have an opportunity to identify and use your character strengths. The first step is to identify your character strengths. (IMPORTANT: Please do this as early in the week as possible). To identify your character strengths, take the online character strengths test which is available on the VIA website (<http://www.viasurvey.org/> then click to register). The test comprises 240 questions and takes 30 minutes or so. There are no right/wrong answers, and there are no better/worse answers. The key is to be authentic, so that you can derive the most from the experience. Encourage your roommates, friends, and family to take the questionnaire too, so that you can discuss your respective scores and the idea behind the VIA with them.

After taking the test, you will get the ranking of your 24 strengths. Print it out and then look at your top 10. Choose one of your top character strengths. Each day for the following week, try to use this strength in a new way. For example, if curiosity is one of your strengths, sneak into a lecture on a topic you know nothing about; if kindness is your strength, perform an anonymous favor for someone; and so on. Try to use your strengths at least once per day all week long. We’ll learn more about character strengths in lecture on February 27.

### ReWi #3 (Jan 30-Feb 1)

**Daily Gratitude Journal.** For the next 7 days, you will spend each night writing down at least five things for which you are grateful. Use the “gratitude” tool of the ReWi app. Quickly jot down five things for which you’re grateful. They can be little things or big things. You can just write a word or short phrase, but as you write these things down, be mindful of the things you’re writing (e.g., imagine the person you’re writing about, re-experience the experience you chose, etc.). This exercise should take at least five minutes. You can take a photo of things you’re thankful for too. Do this each night for the whole week. We’ll learn more about gratitude in lecture on February 15.

### ReWi #4 (Feb 6-8)

**Random Acts of Kindness.** This week, perform seven acts of kindness (one per day!) beyond what you normally do. These do not have to be over-the-top or time-intensive acts, but try to do one new act each day. For example, help your roommate with something, give a few dollars or some time to a cause you believe in, say something kind to a stranger, write a thank you note, give blood, and so on. The acts can be spontaneous or pre-planned. At the end of the day, list your random act of

kindness on the ReWi app and savor how you feel when you jot it down. We'll learn more about the importance of kind acts in lecture on February 15.

### **ReWi #5 (Feb 13-15)**

**Make A Social Connection.** This week, spend each day making a new social connection. It can be a small quick act— chatting to someone new in the courtyard, asking a dining hall worker about her day, or even chatting to the barista at a coffee shop. We also encourage you to take at least one day a week to form a bigger connection— take a whole hour to connect with someone you care about— a roommate, a friend from home, a family member, etc. The key is that you take the time needed to make a real social connection— one in which you can genuinely connect with another person. . At the end of the day, list the social connection you made on the ReWi app and notice how you feel when you jot it down. You'll learn more about the importance of social connection in lecture on February 15.

### **ReWi #6 (Feb 20-22)**

**Meditate!** For the next 7 days, spend (at least) 10 minutes per day meditating. Set aside a location and time (write it in your calendar!) and find somewhere quiet where you won't be disturbed while you're meditating. Then use the ReWi app's "meditation" button to begin. If you're new to meditation, try one of the guided meditations we've provided in the ReWi app. And remember— meditation isn't about the meditation itself; it's about building a skill that we can use later. Lots of people find it hard at first, but stick with it and see if it allows you to make more intentional decisions in your daily life. You'll learn more about the importance of meditation in lecture on February 20.

### **ReWi #7 (Feb 27-Mar 1)**

**Let's Get Physical.** As you saw in class last week, exercise is a healthy practice that can increase our wellbeing. For the next week, spend each day getting your body moving with at least 20 minutes of exercise. Set aside a location and time (write it in your calendar!). Then hit the treadmill at the gym, do an online yoga class (there are some good ones at <http://yogaglo.com>), or throw on some headphones and dance around your room to cheesy pop songs (Professor Santos will share her own cheesy dance list on Canvas). This isn't supposed to be a marathon-level of activity; it's just to get your body moving a bit more than usual (Note: if you have physical limitations that prevent you from doing this weeks activity, do plan to skip it for obvious reasons). As soon as you're done, log your activity on the ReWi app. When you log your activity, be sure to take a moment to notice how much better you feel after getting some exercise in.

### **ReWi #8 (Mar 6-8)**

**Be A Benefit Finder.** As we saw in class a few weeks ago, thinking in terms of benefits can increase our wellbeing. This week, we'll use writing to help us become a better benefit finder. Specifically, set the Meditation timer in the ReWi app for five minutes, grab a piece of paper, and spend that time jotting down some memories about a recent negative event in your life. Be sure to pick an event that you are comfortable writing about. Spend the first five minutes writing as a fault-finder. Then

when the timer rings, reset it for another five minutes and write about that same event as a benefit-finder. Think about what you learned from this event, and the reasons there are to be grateful that this event occurred. Remember being a benefit-finder is not about being happy regardless of what happens to us, but rather it's about accepting what has happened as a fact and then making the best of it. Try to find a silver lining and learn something from what you experienced.

### **ReWi #9: Spring Break**

**Savor a Beautiful Day.** As you saw in class a few weeks ago, spending time to savor our experiences can increase wellbeing. For this rewirement, you will spend your spring break doing even more savoring than usual. Pick a date within the next two weeks to set aside at least three hours (or full day, if you can) to experience your perfect day. Plan this “savor time” with stuff that you enjoy. As you do these activities, practice “savoring” techniques, such as sharing it with another person, keeping souvenirs and losing killjoy thinking. You should also make note of what you did using the “Savoring” tool on the ReWi app. As we learned in class, practicing the technique of savoring intensifies and lengthens the positive emotions that come with doing something you love. Continue to practice savoring in other ways over break. Every night over break, make a note of what you savored in the ReWi app. When you do, be sure to take a moment to remember the activity.

### **ReWi #10 (Mar 27-Mar 29)**

**Sleep!** As you heard in class, getting a bit more sleep is a quick way to increase your wellbeing. For this rewirement, you must get at least seven hours of sleep for at least three nights over the next week. I know, I know. You're super busy this week. And there's that problem set. Etc. Etc. But sleep is going to make you feel better— both physically and mentally. As we saw in class, sleep can also benefit your heart, weight, mood, and more. Plus you now have permission from Professor Santos to “treat yo'self” and get your snooze on. So pick three nights this week. Put them in your calendar. And get some much needed sleep. Also be sure to practice good sleep hygiene too— no devices before bed and try to avoid caffeine and alcohol on the days you're getting your sleep on.

### **ReWi #11 (Apr 3- Apr 5)**

**Make a Strengths Date.** This week, we'll return to the signature strengths we learned about in Week 2 to make a “strengths date.” Plan a one hour time block with someone else in class (or another friend that's willing to also take the VIA Strengths test). Once your classmate, partner, friend, or family member takes the VIA Signature Strength Survey, print out both of your results and look them over. Where do you match up and what are the strengths you share together. Then take as many of your top strengths as you see fit, and sculpt a one-hour (or longer!) activity together that taps into the individual strengths for both you and your friend. For example, if you both score high on “curious” then try new activity where you can learn something together. The idea is to join forces and share time together (at least one full hour) where you both get to experience your signature strengths in action. Be sure to take a picture of your “date” and log it in the ReWi app under the “Savoring” tool (or just write a note about what you did).

### **ReWi #12 (Apr 10-12)**

**WOOP It Up.** This week, we'll harness mental contrasting and implementation intentions to work on our own behavior change. As we learned in class, the WOOP method enables you to identify an important *wish* or goal, imagine both the *outcome* and *obstacle*, then make a *plan* to overcome the barriers preventing you from accomplishing your desires. This week, you'll pick your own goal to work on. Ever morning when you wake up, login to the "Goals" tab on the ReWi app. It will walk you through all these steps which will take a few minutes. Then see if WOOP-ing your goals makes a difference throughout the week. As we learned in class, when think about and visualize our own goals and have a plan to achieve them, we often harness the power of our automatic systems to feel empowered and become more successful.

### **ReWi #13 (Apr 17-19)**

**The Gratitude Letter/Visit.** Think of one person, still living, who made a big difference in your life but whom you never properly thanked. Find a quiet spot when you have a half-hour and write a 300-word, heartfelt testimony to that person, explaining how he or she touched your life and why he or she is meaningful to you. If you'd like to take it to the next level, schedule a time to visit this person in person and share your latter. Call the person and say you want to visit without explaining why. At the visit, read the letter aloud. Gratitude is a powerful tool for increasing happiness because it intensifies positive memories and forges social bonds. For this reason, this is likely to be one of the most intense rewirement exercises of the entire semester.

### **ReWi #14 (Apr 24-26):**

**How Has Your Authentic Happiness Changed?** To see if this class has helped you, re-take the "Authentic Happiness Inventory" (under the "Happiness Survey" tab) that you took at the beginning of the semester. Have you improved your scores at all? Are you feeling more ready to take on behavior changes in your? Are you experiencing more positive emotions? Are you ready to go through this reading week/finals period with a bit more resilience?