

**ADVANCED THEORIES OF COUNSELING: POSITIVE COUNSELING THEORY & PRACTICE**  
**15:297:637 (Section 90)**  
**3 Credits Online**  
**Spring 2015**

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<b>Office Hours:</b> By Appointment	<b>Prerequisites or other limitations:</b> None
<b>Mode of Instruction:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input type="checkbox"/> Seminar <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<b>Permission required:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes  Contact Instructor for SP#

**Learning Goals:**

- Understand the underlying theory and concepts of positive psychology;
- Understand and use positive psychology principles and interventions in your own life and with your clients/students; &
- Understand the role of positive relationships and enabling institutions in increasing happiness and well-being.

**Course Description:**

The field of psychology was born out of a desire to study the human condition, both our challenges and triumphs. However, traditional psychological research and practice has focused largely on diagnosing and treating human's limitations, with less attention paid to our strengths. Positive Counseling Theory & Practice will provide an in-depth discussion of Positive Psychology, a field that helps practitioners transition from trying to undo the worst things in life to trying to build the best things in life. In this course we will cover the theory and research of Positive Psychology, as well as how to conduct positive assessment, diagnosis, and counseling interventions. The course incorporates activities intended to engage and instruct counselors in using character strengths such as optimism, gratitude, forgiveness, generosity, and others to promote enhanced well-being and happiness in family, school, work, and community settings.

**Class Materials/ Textbooks:**

Peterson, C. (2006). A primer in positive psychology. New York: Oxford University Press.

Peterson, C. & Seligman M. E. P. (Eds.) (2004). Character strengths and virtues. A handbook of classification. Oxford: Oxford University Press, & Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

**eCollege:** <https://ecollege.rutgers.edu/students.jsp>

**Other description of course purposes, context, methods, etc:**

**Course Structure:** The course will be delivered fully online through the eCollege course management system. Accessing the course on eCollege requires the internet and a supported web browser (Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari). There will be a blend of activities using eCollege such as watching posted video clips and participating in threaded discussions. It is extremely important that you complete the assignments by the due dates.

**Technical Assistance:** People in this course will be using different types of computers and software, and you may experience technical problems from time to time. If you are having technology problems, such as linking to email, accessing eCollege, problems downloading and viewing documents, password problems, or other tech problems, you must first contact the HELP Desk at 1-877-778-8437. The Help Desk staff is trained to address many different types of technology problems. If it turns out that there is a problem that I must correct, The Help Desk staff will contact me.

**Readings & Threaded Discussions/Participation:** Students are expected to read assigned material in order to fruitfully participate in threaded discussions with classmates each week. Your active participation will contribute to the learning process for all involved. The more each of us gives, the richer the experiences will be for all of us. Assessments and additional readings may be assigned throughout the course.

**Expectations of Professionalism / Student Rights and Responsibilities:**

1. To ask for clarification at any time.
2. Have access to all required textbooks and assigned articles.
3. Have access to and utilize the internet.
4. Frequently check your email for course announcements.
5. Actively participate in weekly threaded discussion questions.
6. Students have the right to express opinions in a respectful and timely manner.

**Grading Policy:**

A	90 – 100
B+	85 – 89
B	80 – 84
C+	75 – 79
C	70 – 74
D	60 – 70
F	< 60

**Assignments:**

**500 POINTS TOTAL**

**\*\* All assignments listed below must be submitted in your eCollege Dropbox, EXCEPT the Serious Introduction and Threaded Discussions, which will be in Threaded Discussions \*\***

1. **Completed Pre- Assessment Packet Due (10 points) – Due 1/22:** Assessments can be found on eCollege in Doc Sharing in the Pre- & Post-Assessment Packet folder. *Complete these BEFORE writing your Serious Introduction.*
2. **SERIOUS INTRODUCTION EXERCISE (1-2 short paragraphs) (20 points) – Due 1/22:** In the Threaded Discussion on eCollege, you will introduce yourself to your classmates, telling them your field of study, why you're taking this course, and using the "Serious Introduction" model discussed in Peterson (2006), p. 25-28, briefly describe an event that shows your character "at your best."
3. **THE OPENED DOOR EXERCISE (20 points) – Due 2/12:** You will write about three times in your life when an important door closed on you and consider what doors opened after these important doors closed. Sheet with detailed instructions on eCollege in Doc Sharing in the Course Exercise & Assignment Descriptions folder.
4. **RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS THROUGH USE OF CHARACTER STRENGTHS EXERCISE (For one week) (20 points) – Due 2/26:** You will carry out one act of kindness a day for five consecutive days using each of your top five character strengths, and you will write a reflection about your experience. Sheet with detailed instructions on eCollege in Doc Sharing in the Course Exercise & Assignment Descriptions folder.
5. **FORGIVENESS LETTER (20 points) – Due 3/12:** You will write a letter to someone whom you feel has committed a transgression that has negatively impacted you, pledge to forgive the transgressor (if appropriate), but **DO NOT SEND** or discuss the contents of the letter with the person you write it to. You will also write a reflection on your forgiveness letter experience. Sheet with detailed instructions on eCollege in Doc Sharing in the Course Exercise & Assignment Descriptions folder.

6. **THREE GOOD THINGS GRATITUDE JOURNAL (For one month/four weeks) (40 points) – Due 4/2:** You will keep a Gratitude Journal (in a Word doc) for one month/four weeks in which you will write down three good things that happened to you each day for four consecutive weeks, and you will write a reflection about your journaling experience. Sheet with detailed instructions on eCollege in Doc Sharing in the Course Exercise & Assignment Descriptions folder.
7. **GRATITUDE LETTER & DELIVERY (40 points) – Due 4/16:** You will write a detailed letter of gratitude to a person to whom you are most grateful but have never formally expressed your gratitude, personally deliver and read the letter to this individual, and write a reflection upon your experience. Sheet with detailed instructions on eCollege in Doc Sharing in the Course Exercise & Assignment Descriptions folder.
8. **CHANGING A HABIT/BEHAVIOR PAPER (6-8 pages) (60 points) – Due 4/30:** You will decide on a habit or characteristic in yourself that you want to improve/change. You will devise an action plan to outline what you will specifically do to change your behavior, utilizing positive psychology strategies learned in class, including leveraging your strengths. Sheet with detailed instructions on eCollege in Doc Sharing in the Course Exercise & Assignment Descriptions folder.
9. **Completed Post- Assessment Packet Due (10 points) – Due 4/30:** Assessments can be found on eCollege in Doc Sharing in the Pre- & Post-Assessment Packet folder. *Complete these AFTER all of your other course assignments have been completed and handed in.*

**THREADED DISCUSSIONS/PARTICIPATION (20 points each week for a TOTAL of 260 points): Starting the second week,** our class will hold threaded discussions on eCollege, with two questions posted per week in response to textbook material, videos watched, and/or exercises engaged in. *Questions will be geared toward how you can **apply** the material to your work and life.* You can consider these the online equivalent of comments and responses you might have during a classroom discussion. **You will post a 100-200 word response to each of the two weekly questions, as well as a reply to at least one classmate's response per question (totaling at least two replies of 50-100 words each).** In your responses/replies, utilize a combination of course material and real-life experience. Please note that both quantity and quality are important considerations when it comes to participation. For example, a message which says simply, "I agree," does not constitute a substantial reply because it does not add anything of substance to the discussion. You must add something of substance to the discussion—this would consist of new ideas, your perspectives, pointed follow-up questions, etc. **All responses/replies are due by midnight Thursday each week. I will post questions for the following week on Thursdays.**

#### **Academic Integrity Policy:**

The Office of Student Conduct supervises issues related to violations of academic integrity (see <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>). Please familiarize yourself with the university policy on academic integrity at [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI\\_Policy\\_2013.pdf](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_2013.pdf)

#### **Office of Disability Services:**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

**Course Schedule:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
Week of 1/19	Peterson, Ch 1: What is Positive Psychology Peterson, Ch 2: Learning About Positive Psychology	<b>Completed Pre- Assessment Packet Due SERIOUS INTRODUCTION Due</b>
Week of 1/26	Peterson, Ch 3: Pleasure & Positive Experiences Peterson, Ch 7: Values	
Week of 2/2	Peterson, Ch 4: Happiness	
Week of 2/9	Peterson, Ch 5: Positive Thinking	<b>THE OPENED DOOR EXERCISE Due</b>
Week of 2/16	Peterson, Ch 8: Interests, Abilities, & Accomplishments Peterson, Ch 9: Wellness	
Week of 2/23	Peterson, Ch 6: Character Strengths Peterson & Seligman, Ch 1: Intro to a Manual of the Sanities	<b>RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS EXERCISE THROUGH USE OF CHARACTER STRENGTHS EXERCISE Due</b>
Week of 3/2	Peterson & Seligman – (1) Intro to <i>Strengths of Wisdom &amp; Knowledge</i> : p. 95-107; (2) Ch 4: Creativity, Deliberate Interventions p. 120-122; (3) Ch 5: Curiosity, Deliberate Interventions p. 140; (4) Ch 6: Open-Mindedness, Deliberate Interventions p. 157-158; (5) Ch 7: Love of Learning, Deliberate Interventions p. 173-178; and (6) Ch 8: Perspective, Deliberate Interventions p. 194-195	
Week of 3/9	Peterson & Seligman – (1) Intro to <i>Strengths of Transcendence</i> : p. 519-535; (2) Ch 23: Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence, Deliberate Interventions p. 550-551; (3) Ch 24: Gratitude, Deliberate Interventions p. 566-567; (4) Ch 25: Hope, Deliberate Interventions p. 580-581; (5) Ch 26: Humor, Deliberate Interventions p. 596-597; and (6) Ch 27: Spirituality, Deliberate Interventions p. 618-619	<b>FORGIVENESS LETTER EXERCISE Due</b>
<b>Week of 3/16</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS</b>	
Week of 3/23	Peterson & Seligman – (1) Intro to <i>Strengths of Justice</i> : p. 357-368; (2) Ch 16: Citizenship, Deliberate Interventions p. 385-387; (3) Ch 17: Fairness, Deliberate Interventions p. 410-411; and (4) Ch 18: Leadership, Deliberate Interventions p. 424-426	
Week of 3/30	Peterson & Seligman – (1) Intro to <i>Strengths of Temperance</i> : p. 431-444; (2) Ch 19: Forgiveness & Mercy, Deliberate Interventions p. 457-458; (3) Ch 20: Humility & Modesty, Deliberate Interventions p. 472-474; (4) Ch 21: Prudence, Deliberate Interventions p. 496; and (5) Ch 22: Self-Regulation, Deliberate Interventions p. 513-514	<b>THREE GOOD THINGS GRATITUDE JOURNAL EXERCISE Due</b>
Week of 4/6	Peterson & Seligman – (1) Intro to <i>Strengths of Courage</i> : p. 199-212; (2) Ch 9: Bravery, Deliberate Interventions p. 224-227; (3) Ch 10: Persistence, Deliberate Interventions p. 245; (4) Ch 11: Integrity, Deliberate Interventions p. 268-269; and (5) Ch 12: Vitality, Deliberate Interventions p. 287-288	
Week of 4/13	Peterson & Seligman – (1) Intro to <i>Strengths of Humanity</i> : p. 293-302; (2) Ch 13: Love, Deliberate Interventions p. 321-322; (3) Ch 14: Kindness, Deliberate Interventions p. 333; and (4) Ch 15: Social Intelligence, Deliberate Interventions p. 351	<b>GRATITUDE LETTER, DELIVERY, &amp; PAPER Due</b>
Week of 4/20	Peterson, Chapter 10: Positive Interpersonal Relationships Peterson, Chapter 11: Enabling Institutions	
Week of 4/27	Peterson, Chapter 12: The Future of Positive Psychology	<b>CHANGING A HABIT PAPER Due Completed Post- Assessment Packet Due</b>