Instructor: Corey Keyes  
203 Tarbutton, 404-727-7894  
Teaching Assistant: Chris Martin (chris.martin.e@gmail.com)

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the study and pursuit of happiness, integrating findings from positive psychology, psychiatry, behavioral genetics, neuroscience, economics, and sociology. In addition to science, happiness is a topic that is common to the core of politics and policy, education, law, religion, and philosophy. As such, happiness is a topic that has the potential to integrate and unite human beings through the shared pursuit of a better life. Most famously formulated in the American Declaration of Independence as unalienable right, “the pursuit of happiness” theme is an ancient and enduring ideal grounded in various Eastern, Hebrew, Greco-Roman, and Christian sources. This course will seek to introduce students to the new science of happiness through the engagement and connection of it to these ancient and enduring ideals embodied in the institutions of politics, policy, education, law, and religion.

Materials:

All other readings for this course will be empirical journal articles and book chapters that will be made available to you via the class Blackboard site. Periodically, you will be asked to complete online surveys and questionnaires that are relevant to the day’s topic.

Assignments:

(1) Journal assignments: You will be asked to do brief writing exercises on an assigned topic. Journal assignments are designed to help you apply the readings and prepare for class. Length of the assignments will vary between 1 and 2 pages but in no case should be more than 3 pages (all should be typed in12 pt. font, double spaced with 1 inch margins).

IMPORTANT: Post each journal assignment on Blackboard under the “assignments” section and no later than the Thursday before 2:30pm.

Check plus (i.e., ✓+) is awarded to assignments that meet all three of the following criteria: (1) represents college level (and junior level since this is SOC352) writing, (2) answers all of the questions or issues raised in the journal assignment description, and (3) incorporates explicitly key ideas from that week’s reading(s) into the assignment. All assignments are scored on a 0-10 scales, and a ✓+ represents a score of either a 9 or 10.
Check (i.e., ✓) is awarded to assignments that meet two out of the three following criteria: (1) represents college level (and junior level since this is SOC352) writing, (2) answers all of the questions or issues raised in the journal assignment description, and (3) incorporates explicitly key ideas from that week’s reading(s) into the assignment. All assignments are scored on a 0-10 scales, and a ✓ represents a score of 7.5 to 8.5.

Check (i.e., ✓-) is awarded to assignments that meet one out of the three following criteria: (1) represents college level (and junior level since this is SOC352) writing, (2) answers all of the questions or issues raised in the journal assignment description, and (3) incorporates explicitly key ideas from that week’s reading(s) into the assignment. All assignments are scored on a 0-10 scales, and a ✓- represents a score of 7.0 or less.

(2) Paper: Write an 8-12 page paper on the following topic: Perfectionism and Happiness. All papers must address this basic question of whether and why perfectionism is or is not (should or should not be) related with more or less happiness. You are free (meaning it is optional) to embed this topic into any population of interest, such as children, adolescents, aging, race and ethnicity, social stratification, gender ad infinitum. You should apply the information discussed in class, but you must also do some outside research and incorporate other literature - primarily articles or chapters - into your paper. In addition to clarity and logic of your writing, as well as basic grammar, etc., your paper will be graded on your ability to clearly relate the chosen topic to empirical sociological, social and psychological research. References can be in any format as long as it remains consistent throughout and it permits me to look up and locate your reference materials (DO NOT use Wikipedia or anything else that is not scientific – all science is peer reviewed and published either in a journal, an edited book, or in a sole-authored book published by a reputable scientist (someone with a PhD or MD). All papers must be double-spaced, 12 pt. font, and with 1-inch margins. VERY IMPORTANT: Because you are all writing on the same topic, your papers will be graded competitively in that I will look for those that distinguish themselves in terms of originality, creativity, social relevance, etc. Papers that end up reading and sound alike will come across as unoriginal and will be graded accordingly (down!).

The paper will be due no later than May 2nd (Note: Doors to Tarbutton Hall lock around 5 to 6pm). Place a printed copy in my faculty mailbox in Room 225 Tarbutton Hall or slide it under my office door (I will not accept any final papers emailed to me).

Grading:

Journal Assignments 60% of final grade
Paper 40%

Final grades will be based (and your paper will be graded) on the following scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>93 and above</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>83 to 86.99</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 to 79.99</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>73 to 76.99</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 to 69.99</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>59.99 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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Course Policies:

**Late assignments:** All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will receive a penalty of one grade step (e.g., A to A-) if they are handed in less than one day (24 hours) late. Your assignments will receive an additional grade step deduction for each day they are late (assignments that are between 24 and 48 hours late will receive a penalty of two grade steps (e.g., A to B+). This includes weekends and holidays. No assignments will be accepted after they are one week late. Hard copies of late assignments must be turned into my office. You should also email me a copy to verify the time at which it was completed.

**Emory Honor Code:** The Emory University honor code applies fully to this course. When you sign an exam or submit your assignments, you are pledging to the honor code. For reference, please consult: [http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html](http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html).

### Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Read</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/17</td>
<td></td>
<td>No Journal assignment</td>
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Does Happiness Stand a Chance? Does it Have a Foe?

Read:

Journal Assignment: Can you sustain or maintain any emotion for more than one hour? Tell me whether and how you succeeded. Did you find it natural or unnatural to try to sustain your feelings? Or, were emotions meant to be time-limited and therefore something you did not invest much in keeping but, rather, something you learn from, or are sources of information? Does the hedonic treadmill make people look like fools, our culture look like a bankrupt capitalistic nightmare, or both? Lastly, does this research suggest that happiness is best viewed as a destination or as a lifelong process?

Happiness: Does Prediction and Choice Have Any Effect?

Read:

Journal Assignment: Describe a time when you made an inaccurate affective forecast (when you thought something would make you angry and it didn’t; or you though something would make you happy and it didn’t). Why do you think you were so inaccurate and why are people so inaccurate? Was the point of making a forecast to really predict the future or feel more certain about the present, and if it is the latter, should you really care whether you are accurate? Choose one of the readings and describe the practical lesson for being happier.
### Money and Happiness

Read:

Journal Assignment: How much money do you think you will need to live a happy life and why? Do you believe that earning more money will bring you more happiness, why or why not? If you want to achieve a more lasting state of happiness, is it “wise” to spend the bulk of your adult life at working, working long hours, aspiring to pay raises and promotions?

### Class does not meet on 2/12

Class does not meet on 2/12 as Dr. Keyes is giving talks at Oregon State University on changing the university experience to promote student well-being (this invited talk was scheduled a year ago and I apologize for having to miss class).
Eudaimonia ("Eu" = Good; "daimon" = spirit)

Readings:

Journal Assignment: Your job is to answer the following five questions and to reflect on the reason(s) for your responses. These questions are meant to explore where, when, or how you feel most genuinely you or most authentic.

1) What motivates the kind of experiences or activities that you feel are most authentically you?
   A – wanting to adhere to a high social standard
   B – wanting to express yourself (what you want, need, or your feelings)
   C – I would regularly say both

2) In general, what process of learning about yourself would make you learn things that are most authentic about you?
   A – through activities that move toward, or meeting, high standards
   B – through activities that reflect experimentation and discovery
   C – I regularly learn both

3) What role does self control play in your life in terms of feeling most authentic?
   A – I feel most authentic when I’m in control of my feelings and behaviors
   B – I feel most authentic when I decrease the constraints or inhibitions on my feelings and behavior
   C – I regularly use both and feel authentic using both

4) Which of the following outcomes make you feel the most hypocritical or inauthentic?
   A – not living up to a standard
   B – not doing what I truly enjoy
   C – I would say both do and equally

5) What should be the goal of how a person approaches life?
   A – The point of life is to strive toward perfection
   B – The point of life is to reveal the imperfections of our existence
   C – I believe both are equally important goals
### Flow and Flourishing: Scientific Eudaimonia

**Read:**

**Journal Assignment:** Play a video game that (1) interests you and (2) you can do long enough that allows you to pass on to the next level of expertise or stage. Is this the applied version of the concept of flow? How could you design a society or workplace based on the concept of flow and the video game application (be creative, be cynical, but a defender, etc.)

### The Pursuit of Happiness: Play

**Read:** “Taking Play Seriously” from the February 17, 2008 *New York Times Magazine*

**Journal Assignment:** Go to [http://www.nifplay.org/states_play.html](http://www.nifplay.org/states_play.html) to learn about the various ways animals play. Then, make an inventory of your last week (5 or 7 days) as to whether and how frequently you engaged in any of the kinds of play described at the National Institute of Play’s website. Are you getting enough play, in your opinion, and could you or Emory make it more likely that you could experience more play (not just out of the classroom, off campus or in the PE building but in the classroom and on campus)? Can a person be happy and serious at the same time (can one be too serious to have happiness in one’s life)?
The Pursuit of Happiness: Simplicity and Callings

Read:

**Do both journal assignments:**

Journal Assignment 1: Do one thing this week that genuinely simplifies your life. Describe what you did to simplify your life for one week, why you chose that activity, and its effect on you. Also, do you agree with the pundits that happiness is harder to find now days because our lives are getting too complicated and busy, therefore, we must find ways to simplify ourselves and our lives.

Journal Assignment 2: Describe one of your passions in life. Next, describe your greatest asset, that is, one thing you are really good at doing. Next, describe one social problem or need in the world; that is, what you do think is “the world’s deepest hunger” right now? Does your greatest passion in life overlap with your greatest asset? Does your greatest passion in life overlap with the world’s ‘deepest hunger’? Does your greatest asset overlap with the world’s ‘deepest hunger’? Does it matter whether your passions, assets, and the world’s deepest hunger overlap?

The Pursuit of Happiness: Doing What is Just, What is Right


Listen and take notes:
http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/2008/revenge_forgiveness/

Journal Assignment: First, watch David Attenborough’s movie about “Gandhi” at http://crackle.com/c/Gandhi/Gandhi/2481106. Even if you’ve seen it before, watch it again, and this time take notes so that you can describe whether and how you think Gandhi was a happy person (what kind of happiness, how, what was the role of nonviolence, or “passive resistance,” why did Gandhi take so much suffering on himself and urged others to do the same as the best way to overcome British colonial rule?)

*** For students observing Passover today and tomorrow, attendance to this seminar is optional and you may deliver the journal assignment on Thursday March 28th.
### The Pursuit of Happiness: Contemplative Practices

**Listen:** Click on the link at the top left called “listen now” for this wonderful show on yoga: [http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/2009/yoga/](http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/2009/yoga/)


**Journal Assignment:** Go to [http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree.html](http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree.html) to view the various practices on the “Tree of Contemplative Practices.” Choose one practice that you (1) will research and write up a description of what it entails and why you think it helps you to pursue some form, or both forms (hedonic and eudaimonic) of happiness, and (2) actually perform this practice on your own and come to class prepared to either lead the class through an example of this practice and/or to describe it to the class during the seminar. VERY IMPORTANT: once you choose which practice you want to perform, send an email to the entire class via Blackboard so your fellow students know this practice “is taken,” because I want each of you to perform a different practice from the contemplative tree. DO NOT stake any claim via email to any practice until after the immediately prior seminar session is finished.

### The Pursuit of Happiness: Identifying the Source(s) of Unhappiness

**Read:** Ch. 3 from David Burns, “Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy.”

**Complete:** Complete the Dysfunctional Attitude Scale, score and interpret your scores.

**Journal Assignment:** Identify an event, situation, person, and place that makes you feel negatively (e.g., angry, frustrated, sad, guilty, uncooperative, unkind or wishing ill will, makes you act arrogant or be boastful, makes you feel imperfect or worthless, etc.). Can you identify one or more cognitive distortions (you must read Ch. 3 in order to know about cognitive distortions) that you use when you encounter the event, situation, person, and place that make you feel negatively? Then, take After the Dysfunctional Attitude Scale (DAS), score it and interpret your DAS score. Do you believe your “emotional vulnerabilities” help you to better understand why you use your particular cognitive distortion(s) and that your new awareness of how your automatic way of thinking may help on your path to pursuing lasting happiness?

In Class we will watch the PBS show on “The Buddha”: [http://www.pbs.org/thebuddha/program/](http://www.pbs.org/thebuddha/program/)
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| 4/16 | Read: Chapters 1-5 from “Zen and the Art of Happiness”
| 4/18 | Download “The Mindfulness App” from the Apple App Store (this app is free).
|      | Journal Assignment: Use the guided meditation from the Mindfulness app and engage in quiet meditation for at least 3 minutes each day for the following days: April 10 through April 15. The app keeps track of the “statistics” of your meditation and I will require you to allow me to see your statistics when you hand in this journal assignment. Your job is to decide for yourself whether and how engaging in meditation to better pursue happiness. |

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| 4/23 | Read: Chapters 6-10 from “Zen and the Art of Happiness”
| 4/25 | Journal Assignment: Use the guided meditation from the Mindfulness app and engage in quiet meditation for at least 3 minutes each day for the following days: April 17 through April 22. The app keeps track of the “statistics” of your meditation and I will require you to allow me to see your statistics when you hand in this journal assignment. Now that you have read the entire “Zen and the Art of Happiness” book, tell me how you can use a more mindful approach to life to pursue happiness. Can you really practice the ideas that you are the author of every next moment, that the universe does not make mistakes, and that happiness = acting as though what happens to you is the best possible thing that can happen to you now? |