

Positive Psychology

Center for European Studies

Positive Psychology

Full course description

Positive psychology was introduced by Martin Seligman around 2000 and can be viewed as a supplementary approach to clinical psychology. The positive psychological movement formulated three aims: (1) to focus on well-being and happiness instead of abnormal behaviour and psychopathology, (2) to be concerned with building positive qualities and strengths instead of repairing damage and (3) to prevent future problems instead of correcting past and present problems.

The course, POS2002 Positive Psychology, will start with a general introduction to the field of positive psychology. The main concepts will be introduced and clarified, and an overview of the results of happiness studies will be presented. In subsequent meetings, various more specific topics will be discussed by means of lectures and group discussions. There will be ample room to gain hands on experience with positive psychological techniques ranging from simple journaling exercises to mindfulness meditation. A scientific evidence-based approach will be leading. We will provide participants with the tools to be able to evaluate and design research in the area of positive psychology, but also with the skills to apply some important intervention techniques.

The instructional approach will include lectures, interactive meetings, group discussions, practical workshops and student presentations. Final assessment will be by means of an individual paper on a topic of choice within the field of positive psychology. On the last day of the course a student conference is held where each student presents his paper (review or research proposal) either by poster or through an oral presentation. Halfway through the course an abstract has to be handed in on the basis of which a selection of candidates for oral presentations will be made.

Course objectives

This programme is intended to familiarise students with the concepts and ideas of positive psychology; provide in depth knowledge on selected topics within the field; be able to judge and design a positive psychological research project; and to give students hands on experience with some important positive psychology intervention techniques.

Prerequisites

Some background in Psychology. Knowledge on designing a research study is helpful but not mandatory.

A minimum of 8 students is required for the class to take place.

Recommended reading

Students are strongly encouraged to search for their own literature at the university library where they have a large number of relevant articles and books at their disposal. If you are interested in buying a textbook, we recommend one of the following (please note that it is not mandatory to buy one of these books. The books below are suggested readings):

Positive Psychology: Theory, Research And Applications by Kate Hefferon & Ilona Boniwell (2011) ISBN-10: 0335241956 | ISBN-13: 978-0335241958

Applied Positive Psychology: Improving Everyday Life, Health, Schools, Work, and Society by Stewart I. Donaldson, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Jeanne Nakamura (2011) ISBN-10: 0415877822 | ISBN-13: 978-0415877824

Positive Psychology in Practice by P. Alex Linley, Stephen Joseph (2004) ISBN-10: 0471459062 | ISBN-13: 978-0471459064

POS2002

Period 6

15 Jul 2024 - 1 Aug 2024

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinators:

[E. Smeets](#)

[S. van der Laan](#)

Teaching methods:

Assignment(s), Lecture(s), Paper(s), PBL, Presentation(s), Work in subgroups

Assessment methods:

Assignment, Final paper, Presentation

Keywords:

▪ **Psychology** ▪ **Happiness** ▪ **Mindfulness** ▪ **Well-being** ▪ **Intervention techniques** ▪ **Clinical Psychology** ▪ **Strengths**

Days:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday