

MS 3XP3 Ministry and Positive Psychology

CLASS TIME: MTWRF

CLASSROOM:

PROFESSOR: Wade C. Rowatt, Ph.D.

OFFICE/PHONE:

OFFICE HOURS:

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Course Description

Positive psychology is a sub-discipline in psychology in which, “positive emotions, traits, and processes are scientifically studied with a view to generating knowledge that will facilitate living pleasant, engaged, and meaningful lives” (Carr, 2011). The primary aims of this course will be to learn and apply positive psychology to the work of ministry. We will study how people think, feel, relate with, and minister to one another. We’ll examine how to increase human flourishing by increasing positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and accomplishment. Example topics of study include gratitude, forgiveness, hope, grit, post-traumatic growth, meaning-making, awe, learned optimism, flow, and other character strength/virtues and processes.

Specializations

Christian Worldview, Counselling and Spiritual Care, Pastoral Studies

Course Objectives

Knowing...

- To learn about positive psychological concepts and processes.
- To know the major theories of positive psychology and human flourishing.
- To develop an understanding of human flourishing in the context of ministering.
- To increase awareness of psychological and theological perspectives about how and why some people and groups thrive and flourish.

Being...

1. To gain self-awareness as a ministering person through self-reflection on and self-evaluation of one’s own positive qualities.

Doing...

- To read and discuss articles and chapters about positive psychology and human flourish.
- To communicate clearly, concisely, and accurately when speaking and writing about basic and applied topics.
- To develop a repertoire of activities and exercises for use in flourishing and ministry.
- To practice and apply new positive psychological interventions in ministry experiences with diverse individuals across the lifespan.

Required Texts, Readings

Carr, A. (2011). *Positive psychology: The science of human happiness and human strengths*. New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN: 9780415602365 (paperback)

Seligman, M.E.P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York, NY: Free Press. ISBN: 978-1-4391-9075-3

Representative chapters and journal articles from: *Journal of Positive Psychology*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Psychological Science*, *Psychological Bulletin*, and edited books (e.g., Wong, 2013; Markman et al., 2013).

Course Requirements

1. Read chapters and journal article assignments on a daily basis. Please read as much of Carr's *Positive Psychology* textbook as you can before the first day of class. You will be called upon to demonstrate your knowledge of the assigned literature from time to time.
2. Lead and participate in class discussions. It is important for each student to be an active contributor to the thinking in this field, and leadership of this course, rather than a passive recipient of information. **Toward this end, each student is required to lead or co-lead discussion one or more class sessions. To plan ahead, if your last name begins with the letter A-I, please be prepared to lead discussion about Carr chapters 1-3; J-R chapters 4-6; S-Z chapters 7-9.** Carr's (2011) text includes personal development questions after each chapter. Feel free to use those to stimulate discussion. To encourage active participation, it is my practice to call on students (gently) to lead class discussion of required readings. Such discussions proceed more professionally if they are based on a thoughtfully prepared outline of the chapter/article, rather than your memory, highlighting or marginal notes.
3. Outline readings. To facilitate your analysis of the readings, each article or chapter should be outlined or condensed using the following format, and completed by the day of the assignment. The outline need be no longer than a page or two, and written in a form that can be delivered to the class or used as a refresher in the future. I will collect at least **four outlines** as evidence of each students' preparation. The outline should address the main concepts, supporting evidence, threats to validity, counter-arguments, and/or potential applications to your life, work, and ministry.
4. Write and turn in a **ministry application paper** (due June 10, 2016 or earlier): See instructions on the following page.
5. Write and turn in a **book review** (due June 10, 2016 or earlier): A book review on Seligman's *Flourish* (or a comparable book) is due by June 10, 2016 or earlier.

Grading

Class participation and discussion leadership (due May 9-13)*:	10%
Outlines of readings (4 total; due May 9-13):	30%
Ministry application paper/proposal (due June 10 or before):	30%
Book review (due June 10 or before):	30%

* **Notes:** Class participation includes attendance and participation during class discussions and leadership of class discussions. Some outlines of the readings are to be completed before coming to the class during which they will be discussed. Some outlines may be turned in after May 13.

Grade scale

The letter grade *you earn* will be assigned using the following scale.

A+ = 90-100, A = 85-89, A- = 80-84, B+ = 77-79, B = 73-76, B- = 70-72, C+=67-69, C = 63-66, C- = 60-62, D+=57-59, D=53-56, D-=50-52, F=0-49

Book Review Guidelines (5-7 pages, double-spaced)

1. Include a reference (i.e., Author, Title, Publisher, Year of publication).
2. Provide a brief statement about the author and his or her background.
3. State the purpose of the book and the methodology of the author.
4. How well did the author accomplish the stated purpose?
5. Summarize the most important chapters in sentence form.
6. Give your brief understanding of the main points.
7. What were the strengths and weaknesses of this book?
8. How would you hope to use this in your current and/or future ministry?
9. Would you recommend this book to others? Who? Why?
10. If you use other reviews or sources, please be clear about giving credit and cite the source(s), and include a References section.
11. Turn in your book review by email to wade_rowatt@baylor.edu by June 10 or sooner.

MINISTRY APPLICATION PAPER/PROPOSAL
MS 3XP3: MINISTRY AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Instructions: Type a 10 to 12 page paper in which you discuss how theory and specific research from positive psychology can be applied to your specialization (i.e., Christian Worldview, Counselling and Spiritual Care, Pastoral Studies). A higher-quality paper will integrate research findings about specific concepts or principles when discussing professional issues and applications. A lower-quality paper will simply describe concepts or principles with minimal application or insight beyond the basic research.

1. Professional writing style: The writing style should conform to the college's guidelines: <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>
2. Academic honesty/integrity: This assignment is to be completed by you independently. Please do not communicate about the content of this assignment verbally, nonverbally, electronically, in handwriting, by phone, text-message --or in any other way--with anyone else (other than the course instructor). This is not a collaborative assignment. Please be sure you understand what constitutes academic honesty/integrity and dishonesty before completing this assignment: <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>
3. An electronic copy of your paper, along with this signed page, **is due by 11:59pm, Friday, June 10, 2016 (or sooner)**. Please turn in your paper by email to: wade_rowatt@baylor.edu

If you have questions about this assignment, please contact Dr. Wade C. Rowatt.

Academic Integrity Assurance

I certify that I am the sole author of this assignment and that I did not consult anyone else when completing this assignment.

(Signed Name)

(Printed Name)

(Date)

MDC Course Policies

A. Textbook Purchase

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3 : phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

B. Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

C. Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

D. Style

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses

<http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

Disclaimer

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

Ministry and Positive Psychology
Course Topics & Schedule of Readings
(*Note: order and readings subject to change*)

Day 1: Chapter/Readings/Topics

Carr 1: Happiness (Subjective well-being, positive emotions, measuring happiness, etiology of happiness)
Carr 2: Positive traits (personality trait theory, Values in Action Inventory of Strengths)
Carr 3: Hope and optimism (positive illusions, optimism, attribution theory/style)

Day 2:

Carr 4: Flow (self-determination theory, motivation)
Carr 5: Emotional intelligence
Carr 6: Giftedness, creativity, wisdom

Kross, E., & Grossmann, I. (2012). Boosting wisdom: distance from the self enhances wise reasoning, attitudes, and behavior. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 141(1), 43ff.

Day 3:

Carr 7: Positive self (agentic/communal traits, self-esteem, self-efficacy, defense mechanisms, coping)
Carr 8: Positive relationships
Carr 9: Positive psychological therapy (quality of life, post-traumatic growth)

Day 4: Meaning

Baumeister, R. F., Vohs, K. D., Aaker, J., & Gabrielsky, E. N. (2013). Some key differences between a happy life and a meaningful life. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 8, 505-516.

Park, C. L. (2010). Making sense of the meaning literature: An integrative review of meaning making and its effects on adjustment to stressful life events. *Psychological Bulletin*, 136, 257-301.

Steger, M. F. (2012). Experiencing meaning in life: Optimal functioning at the nexus of spirituality, psychopathology, and well-being. In P. T. P. Wong (Eds.), *The human quest for meaning* (2nd Ed) pp. 165-184. New York: Routledge.

Day 5: Gratitude, forgiveness, humility, wrap-up

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 and social psychology*, 84(2), 377

Fehr, R., Gelfand, M. J., & Nag, M. (2010). The road to forgiveness: a meta-analytic synthesis of its situational and dispositional correlates. *Psychological bulletin*, 136(5), 894.

Davis, D. E., Worthington Jr, E. L., & Hook, J. N. (2010). Humility: Review of measurement strategies and conceptualization as personality judgment. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 5(4), 243-252.

Additional Recommended Readings

Happiness/Quality of Life/Interventions

DeNeve, K. M., & Cooper, H. (1998). The happy personality: a meta-analysis of 137 personality traits and subjective well-being. *Psychological bulletin*, 124(2), 197ff.

Frisch, M. B. (2005). *Quality of life therapy: Applying a life satisfaction approach to positive psychology and cognitive therapy*. John Wiley & Sons.

Lyubomirsky, S. (2013). *The myths of happiness: What should make you happy, but doesn't, what shouldn't make you happy, but does*. Penguin.

Flow

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). *Finding flow: The psychology of engagement with everyday life*. Basic Books.

Meaning

Eagleton, T. (2007). *The meaning of life: A very short introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Frankl, V. (1946). *Man's search for meaning*. Beacon Publishers.

Heintzelman, S.J., & King, L.A. (2014). Life is pretty meaningful. *American Psychologist*, 69, 561-574.

Markman, K. D., Proulx, T., & Lindberg, M. J. (2013). *The psychology of meaning*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Van Tongeren, D. R., Hook, J. N., & Davis, D. E. (2013). Defensive religion as a source of meaning in life: A dual mediational model. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 5, 227-232.

Wong, P. T. (Ed.). (2013). *The human quest for meaning: Theories, research, and applications*. Routledge.

Motivation

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55, 68-78

Relationships

Gottman, J., & Silver, N. (2015). *The seven principles for making marriage work: A practical guide from the country's foremost relationship expert*. Harmony.

Fredrickson, B. (2013). *Love 2.0: How our supreme emotion affects everything we think, do, feel, and become*.