

**HRIR 8820 SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR**

Flourishing: A Positive Organizational Scholarship Approach to  
Understanding Happiness and Well-being at Work

**Course Information:**

Spring Semester, 2015  
Tuesdays, 9:00-12:00  
CSOM 3-300x

**Instructor Contact Information:**

Instructor: Theresa M. Glomb  
Office: 3-259 CSOM  
Office Phone: 624-4863  
Email: tglomb@umn.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment

**Course Objectives:**

In this seminar you will be learning about a variety of topics from the emerging field of Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) and the related field of Positive Psychology. We will focus in-depth on the research and principles of POS and the approach to topics. Given that this is a relatively new field, my objectives for the course are to have you thinking about research in work and organizations from the POS perspective by sampling from the domain of research and topics that have been approached from this vantage point. Importantly, I want you to be able to think critically about your own research from the POS perspective. This is another “lens” through which you will be able to view your own and others’ research.

Students entering this course should chose to take it with this spirit of adventure and exploration. My hope is that as you learn about these academic topics, you will also learn about how to promote your own flourishing and well-being. One of the goals of this course is to develop your own skills to use these various practices to promote flourishing in yourself and those around you.

**Broad course requirements:**

- Read.  
This sounds like a given, but you will be expected to not only carefully read but also **reflect** upon the articles assigned each week. This goes for ALL articles, not just those you find most interesting or are leading discussion.
- Speak.  
This links up with the above requirement—you must come to class prepared to participate.  
Write.  
You will produce a number of writing assignments during the course (see below).
- Think.  
(Note that these are NOT in order of importance.)

## **Graded products:**

### **Class Participation (20%)**

Your grade will be based largely on your active participation in class. You will be evaluated (1) by me each week (2) by yourself at the end of the term and (3) your peers at the end of the term. Participation is more than just asking and responding to questions—it also includes evidence of preparation for class and active participation in discussions. For each class you should be prepared to talk about a reading that has been assigned, to offer some thoughts into the area, to answer questions posed by other students, etc. Your participation will also be much greater at certain times, for example, when you are assigned an article or when we are presenting. See the Participation Expectation document for more details.

### *Discussion Leaders*

Each week, leaders for the following week's readings will be assigned. As the leader, you will guide the discussion on a particular reading. This should not be a presentation, rather a discussion, so your classmates' participation will be critical. Writing some questions to jumpstart the discussion will help. Even though we will have discussion leaders you are expected to read ALL articles—not just those for which you are leading discussion.

### **“Setting the hook” introduction mini-paper (30%)**

Given the timeframe of the class, you will not be required to write a full research proposal. Instead, you will write the introductory pages of research article (approx 4-6 double spaced pages). These introductory pages will be for a project you could conduct from the broad domains of Positive Psychology, Positive Organizational Scholarship, or both. These introductory pages are the section before the literature review that provides an overview of why the topic is important, where the research has been (i.e., how has the area been approached or researched in the past), where the research is now (i.e., what are the critical issues), the strengths and weaknesses in the area, and your idea for a proposal to address the gap in the literature with enough detail that the reader will have a sense of what the study and paper will be about. Very often, papers are rejected because they do not make a theoretical or empirical contribution; this exercise will help you to articulate a contribution in a clear and compelling fashion. To help you in this effort, you will read Adam Grant's FTE paper in AMJ on “Setting the Hook” which will provide additional details.

You will be asked to turn in this section at least twice—a first draft is due a few weeks before the end of the course and a final draft is due on the last session. You will also present the idea in your setting the hook paper on the last day of class. You will have about 10 minutes for your informal presentation and discussion.

To further enrich our collaborative learning process, you will be paired with a writing partner in the class with whom you will share your first draft and ideas. Your responsibility as a writing partner is to comment on your partner's ideas and writing in a thorough and constructive manner.

### **Three Reaction Papers (30%)**

For three of the class sessions of your choosing (excluding the first and the last), you are required to submit an analysis of the week's readings in which you respond to the following three questions: (1) What do you see as the most generative idea covered in this week's readings? (2) In what ways is this idea most generative for you? (3) How might you use this idea in your work? Your reaction papers should be one single-spaced page.

### **Book review (20%)**

Each of you will review a popular press book related to the POS and Positive Psych area. I will randomly assign books at the first session. In your review you will focus on the integration of existing literature—where do they get it right, where do they get it wrong—and also on the practicality of any suggestions since many of these are “self-help” kinds of books. What did you learn? Will their suggestions be helpful? Accepted? How could it be improved? How could it be applied to the workplace?

All graded products will be evaluated using a 3-level system of “check,” “check plus,” and “check minus.” Typical good performance will be graded as a “check.” We expect the latter two categories to be relatively rare, but I do hope to be dazzled a few times in the term.

### **Ungraded (but equally important) products**

Throughout the course you will be expected to complete a variety of positive psychology exercises. ***This is not optional work.*** As scholars this will help us understand the phenomena of interest. One of the key goals in this course is to understand the mechanisms for the efficacy of positive practices, so our active participation in these will provide us personal insight. In most cases, these will not be graded because of the personal nature of these exercises. However, you will be expected to bring them in to class in the event they are fruitful for our discussions.

### **Required Readings**

Readings will be emailed for each topic. Readings not able to be uploaded easily will be made available for you to copy. Throughout the course there might be additional readings, websites, videos, TED talks, etc. that I might have you review—these would be considered required as well.

**Because our class activities and discussions are dependent on the readings, you are expected to read the materials assigned before they are discussed in class. As mentioned, your success in this course will largely depend on your attendance and participation in class.**

### **Examples of Questions You Should Be Prepared to Address in the Seminar Discussions**

*For empirical and theoretical papers:*

- What are the authors’ claims (or for empirical papers, what are the research questions)?
- Analyze the claims. Do you agree with the claims? Why or why not?
- What are the independent variables and what are the dependent variables? Try to draw a schematic of the relationships among the variables.
- What are the major strengths and weaknesses of these works?
- What are the practical implications?

*For empirical papers:*

- Is this sample adequate for the claims of generalizability made by the authors?
- How were the variables operationalized? Do these measures represent the conceptual claims??
- What is the research design? Can you think of any plausible alternative interpretations?
- How were the data analyzed? Are there better ways to examine these data?
- Overall, were the claims made for the meaning of this research credible? Why or why not?

*For the topical readings as a set:*

- In what ways do the readings build on, support or contradict one another (or on earlier readings)?
- Do you think this topic has a future or is it a fad that will fade?
- Where does the research need to go? What other topics and areas need to be integrated?
- What questions need to be addressed? How can we design research to address these questions?

### Course Schedule

Right now I have developed a **Tentative Course Schedule**. We are going to need to be very flexible in our scheduling, as things may come up along the way that we need to accommodate. However, we will try to anticipate changes as we go and stick to the schedule as much as possible.

#### Week 1 POS Overview

##### Goals/questions:

- Describe the positive perspective within psychology and organizational scholarship.
- Develop a logic for understanding the reasons to study positive perspectives
- Become familiar with views of positive processes as embedded within complex dynamic systems
- How does that positive perspective have relevance for our professional and personal practices as researchers/scholars?
- Establish a sense of the class
- Establish very high standards for participation and performance in the class

#### Exercise: Three Good Things (each night throughout course)

##### Readings:

- Seligman, M. E. P. & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14.
- Gable, S. L. & Haidt, J. (2005). What (and why) is positive psychology? *Review of General Psychology*, 9(2), 103-110.
- Linley, Joseph, Harrington, & Wood (2006) Positive psychology: Past, present, and (possible) future. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1, 3-16.
- Cameron, K. S., Dutton, J. E., & Quinn, R. E. (2003). Foundations of Positive Organizational Scholarship. In *Positive Organizational Scholarship*, pp. 3-13.
- Peterson & Seligman (2003). Positive Organizational Studies: Lessons from Positive Psychology. In *Positive Organizational Scholarship*, pp. 14-27.
- Cameron, K. S. & Spreitzer, G. M. (2011). Introduction: What Is Positive About Positive Organizational Scholarship? In *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Organizational Scholarship*. pp 1-14
- Finneman (2005). On being positive: Concerns and Counterpoints. *Academy of Management Review*, 31, 270-291.
- Grant (2011). Setting the Hook. AMJ FTE.

## Week 2 Positive Emotions

Goals/questions:

- What is the role of positive emotions in flourishing and well-being? What are the empirical outcomes to which positive emotions have been linked?
- How have positive emotions been studied at the individual, group, organizations, societal level and what can we learn from these levels of analysis issues?

### Exercise: Write your Legacy

Readings:

- Harker, L. A., & Keltner, D. (2001). Expressions of positive emotion in women's college yearbook pictures and their relationship to personality and life outcomes across adulthood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 80*, 112-124.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist, 56*, 218-226.
- Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Lucas, R. E. (2009). Subjective Well-Being: The Science of Happiness and Life Satisfaction. In *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*.
- Lyubomirsky, S., King, L. A., & Diener, E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological Bulletin*.
- Cohen, S., & Pressman, S. D. (2006). Positive affect and health. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 15*, 122-125.
- Brown, N. J., Sokal, A. D., & Friedman, H. L. (2013). The complex dynamics of wishful thinking: The critical positivity ratio. *American Psychologist, 68*, 801-813.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2013). Updated thinking on positivity ratios. *American Psychologist, 68*, 814-822.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2013). Positive emotions broaden and build. *Advances in experimental social psychology, 47*, 1-53.
- Pages from Zinsser's "On Writing Well"

## Week 3 Positive Relationships

Goals:

- Understand how positive connections and relationships affect positive organizing (e.g., through safety, learning, and helping) and gain exposure to different theoretical lenses for making sense of the power of positive relationships (e.g., social exchange, attachment theory, etc.).
- Understand the various ways that positive relationships and interpersonal ties have been defined and studied.

### Exercise: Write your gratitude letter

- Heaphy & Dutton (2008) Positive Social Interactions and the Human Body at Work: Linking Organizations and Physiology. *Academy of Management Review, 33*, 137-162.
- Stephens, J., Heaphy, E., & Dutton, J. (2011). High Quality Connections. In *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Organizational Scholarship*.
- Gable, S., Reis, H. T., Impett, E. A., & Asher, E. R. (2004). What do you do when things go right? The interpersonal and intrapersonal benefits of sharing positive events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87*(2), 228-245.

- Côté, S., Moskowitz, D. S., & Zuroff, D. C. (2011). Social Relationships and Intraindividual Variability in Interpersonal Behavior: Correlates of Interpersonal Spin. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
- Elfenbein, H. (in press) The many faces of emotional contagion: An affective process theory of emotional linkage. *Organizational Psychology Review*.
- Kok, B. E., Coffey, K. A., Cohn, M. A., Catalino, L. I., Vacharkulksemsuk, T., Algoe, S. B., ... & Fredrickson, B. L. (2013). How positive emotions build physical health perceived positive social connections account for the upward spiral between positive emotions and vagal tone. *Psychological Science, 24(7)*, 1123-1132.
- Little et al. (2011). Integrating attachment style, vigor at work, and extra-role performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 32*, 464-484.

#### **Week 4 Positive Work & Environments**

##### **Goals:**

- Explore the relation between meaningful work and beneficial outcomes at individual, interpersonal, group and organizational levels.
- What are the mechanisms for these effects?
- Theorize how organizational conditions contribute to or detract from capacities for thriving, wisdom, and learning.

##### **Exercise: Job Crafting**

- 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.
- Sheldon, K.M., Elliot, A.J., Kim, Y., & Kasser, T. (2001). What is satisfying about satisfying events? Testing 10 candidate psychological needs. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, 80*, 325-339.
- Ohly, S., & Schmitt, A. (2013). What Makes Us Enthusiastic, Angry, Feeling at Rest or Worried? Development and Validation of an Affective Work Events Taxonomy Using Concept Mapping Methodology. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 1-21*.
- Cameron, K., Mora, C., Leutscher, T., & Calarco, M. (2011). Effects of positive practices on organizational effectiveness. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 47(3)*, 266-308.
- Wrzesniewski, A. and J. Dutton. Crafting a Job: Employees as Active Crafters of Their Work. *Academy of Management Review, 26, 2*, 179-201, 2001.
- Grant, A. M., & Sonnentag, S. 2010. Doing good buffers against feeling bad: Prosocial impact compensates for negative task and self-evaluations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 111*: 13-22.
- Cole, M.S., Bruch, H., & Vogel, B. (2011). Energy at work: A measurement validation and linkage to unit effectiveness. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 33*, 445-467.
- Porath, C.L., Spreitzer, G., Gibson, C., & Garnett, F.S. (2011). Thriving in the workplace: Towards its Measurement, Construct Validation, and Theoretical Refinement. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*.

- Nakamura, J. & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2009). Flow Theory and Research. In *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*.
- Sonnentag, S., Niessen, C., & Neff, A. (2010) Recovery: Non-work experiences that promote positive states. *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Organizational Scholarship*.
- Grant, A. & Berry, J. (2012). The necessity of others in the mother of invention: Intrinsic and Prosocial Motivations, perspective taking and creativity. *AMJ*,
- Kaplan, S. (1995). The restorative benefits of nature: Toward an integrative framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 15, 169-182.
- Berman, M., Jonides, J., Kaplan, S. (2008). The cognitive benefits of interacting with nature. *Psychological Science*, 19, 1207-1212.

### **Week 5 Positive Traits**

#### **Goals:**

- Develop familiarity with traits related to flourishing including strengths, psychological capital, PA, individual differences, etc.

#### **Exercise: Character Strengths Assessment on Authentic Happiness website; Select and use character strength in new ways**

#### **Due: First Draft of Setting the Hook Paper**

- Lucas, R. E. (2008). Personality and subjective well-being. In R. J. Larsen & M. Eid (Eds.), *The science of subjective well-being* (pp. 171-194). New York: Guilford Press.
- Kaplan, S., Bradley, J. C., Luchman, J. N., & Haynes, D. (2009). On the role of positive and negative affectivity in job performance: A meta-analytic investigation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94, 162-176.
- Luthans, F., Avolio, B., Avey, J., & Norman, S. (2007). Positive psychological capital: Measurement and relationship with performance and satisfaction. *Personnel Psychology*, 60, 541–572.
- Petersen, C. & Park. N. (2010) Classifying and measuring strengths of character. *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*.
- McNulty, J.K. & Fincham, F. D. (2012). Beyond positive psychology? Toward a contextual view of psychological processes and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 67, 101-110.
- Baumeister, R. F., Gailliot, M., DeWall, C. N., & Oaten, M. (2006). Self-regulation and personality: How interventions increase regulatory success, and how depletion moderates the effect of traits on behaviors. *Journal of Personality*, 74, 1773-1801.
- And for a little lighter reading: Lehrer, J. (2009) Don't! The Secrets of Self Control. *The New Yorker*.

## Week 6 Positive Practices I

### Goals:

- What are the types of practices that cultivate human flourishing?
- How do these practices work? What are the mechanisms through which they foster flourishing? What are the active ingredients?
- How can contexts—especially work organizations—create cultures to foster such practices? What would be some boundary conditions? Challenges?
- Understand the practices and the empirical literature on the beneficial outcomes to which mindfulness practices have been linked.

### Exercise: Create a Ritual

**Due:** Book Report; be prepared to say a bit about key learning points

- Lyubomirsky, S., & Layous, K. (2013). How do simple positive activities increase well-being?. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(1), 57-62.
- 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: 377–389.
- Bono, J. E.,\* Glomb, T. M.,\* Shen, W., Kim, E., & Koch, A. (2013). Building positive resources: Effects of positive events and positive reflection on work-stress and health. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56, 1601-1627.
- Bolier, L., Haverman, M., Westerhof, G. J., Riper, H., Smit, F., & Bohlmeijer, E. (2013). Positive psychology interventions: a meta-analysis of randomized controlled studies. *BMC Public Health*, 13(1), 119.
- Seligman, M. E. P., Steen, T., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: empirical validation of interventions. *American Psychologist*, 60(5), 410-421.

## Week 7 Positive Practices II: Mindfulness

### Exercise: Mindfulness Practices

- Hülshager, U. R., Alberts, H. J. E. M., Feinholdt, A., & Lang, J. W. B. 2012. Benefits of mindfulness at work: The role of mindfulness in emotion regulation, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98(2): 310–325.
- Dane, E. 2011. Paying attention to mindfulness and its effects on task performance in the workplace. *Journal of Management*, 37(4): 997 –1018.
- Davidson et al. (2003). Alterations in brain and immune function produced by mindfulness meditation. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 65, 564-570.
- Fredrickson, B. L., Cohn, M. A., Coffey, K. A., Pek, J., & Finkel, S. M. 2008. Open hearts build lives: Positive emotions, induced through loving-kindness meditation, build consequential personal resources. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95, 1045–1062.
- Sedlmeier, P., Eberth, J., Schwarz, M., Zimmermann, D., Haarig, F., Jaeger, S., et al. 2012. The psychological effects of meditation: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 138(6): 1139–1171.
- Glomb, T. M., Duffy, M. K., Bono, J. E., & Yang, T. (2011). Mindfulness at work. *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, 30, 115-157.



**Week 8 Student Presentations March 7****Due: Setting the Hook Paper****Due: Student Presentations****Popular Press Books Assigned**

- *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being*  
Seligman, Martin E. P.
- *The How of Happiness: A New Approach to Getting the Life You Want*  
Lyubomirsky, Sonja
- *Positivity: Top-Notch Research Reveals the 3 to 1 Ratio That Will Change Your Life* Barbara Fredrickson
- *The Happiness Project: Or, Why I Spent a Year Trying to Sing in the Morning, Clean My Closets, Fight Right, Read Aristotle, and Generally Have More Fun*  
Gretchen Rubin
- *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*  
Martin E. P. Seligman
- *Stumbling on Happiness*  
Daniel Gilbert
- *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*  
Jonathan Haidt
- *Happier: Learn the Secrets to Daily Joy and Lasting Fulfillment*  
Ben-Shahar, Tal
- *The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work*  
Achor, Shawn
- *Hardwiring Happiness: The New Brain Science of Contentment, Calm, and Confidence*  
Rick Hanson
- *The Myths of Happiness: What Should Make You Happy, but Doesn't, What Shouldn't Make You Happy, but Does*  
Sonja Lyubomirsky