

# Positive Education

PSYC 3400, Wednesdays Fall 2022

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Office hours: TBA

## DRAFT SYLLABUS

### Course Description

This seminar will synthesize research about preserving and promoting well-being amongst students, while they simultaneously pursue traditional educational outcomes. The activities of this course engage you with the material via our major projects. All assessment is meaningfully connected to our course goals. This assessment is also valuable in its own right. Drafting a petition concerning something you are concerned about, sharing ideas with young students that can benefit them, and proposing an evidence-based intervention are all worthwhile activities, even without your associated grade.

To do well in this seminar, you must intellectually engage with your reading assignments, class discussions, and projects. Academic ability develops over time and takes effort. Persist. There will be much student collaboration, so intellectual engagement with your peers will be crucial to your success.

You are expected to read a lot of material outside of class. The majority of your out-of-class time will be spent reading. In a college environment, this isn't surprising. This seminar only meets once weekly, so the assignment load per class is roughly double what it would be for a twice-weekly course.

Class time will largely be used for discussion and group projects. Since two of the four major assignments for this course involve engagement with your peers, we will utilize our synchronous class time efficiently.

### SNF Paideia Program

This course is part of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) Paideia Program, which serves as a hub for civic dialogue in undergraduate education at Penn. SNF Paideia courses offer a robust, interdisciplinary civic education that is accessible to all Penn undergraduates and highlights the role that civil discourse, dialogue across difference, and wellness play in cultivating integrated citizenship within the Penn Community. See how you can get more involved at <https://snfpaideia.upenn.edu>.

## Course Assessment

Assessment	Project type	Deadline	Percentage
Literature review	individual	TBA	20%
Petition project	individual	TBA	10%
Infographic project	group	TBA	20%
School intervention proposal	group	TBA	20%
Engaging with the literature (e.g., Perusal)	individual	<i>continuous</i>	20%
Participation / activities	both	<i>continuous</i>	10%
<b>Total:</b>			100%

### Literature review (individual project)

20%

A literature review summarizes and synthesizes the scholarly research in a specific area. In this case, your specific area will be a meaningful psychology-based issue that affects student education/wellbeing (e.g., social belonging). You are expected to cite at least eight peer-reviewed sources in your literature review. You are welcome to include assigned reading assignments among these. Please supply these references at the end of your review in APA style. Your literature review should be less than 2,000 words (excluding references).

The content of your literature review will dovetail with your petition. However, your literature review will have a different purpose, as well as scope, compared to your petition. The literature review will be broad, exhaustive, and academic. Your literature review will present the relevant research in this area, with the intention of informing the audience about the psychological research about this issue. This will be an academic paper. This contrasts with your petition where the intention is to implore relevant groups to move forward with a solution to a related problem. The petition will be specific, solution-focused, and brief. For example, you could write a literature review summarizing the psychological research on the benefits of mindfulness in education, and you could write a petition calling for a mandatory mindfulness curriculum in schools.

### Petition (individual project)

10%

You will write a petition about a meaningful psychology-based problem of your choosing that affects student education/wellbeing. For example, you could petition to incorporate mindfulness into the curriculum for high school students in a specific school district, or petition for mandatory teacher-training about inclusive teaching in an entire nation. The problem you choose may impact students locally, nationally, or in another region of the world (you are welcome to focus on West Philly, your hometown, a foreign country, etc.). You must be able to identify a specific problem that requires an evidence-based solution grounded in positive education. Your problem should be relevant to your literature review. If you are struggling to identify a problem, consider circumstances that inhibit some aspect of PERMA in education (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment).

We will generally follow the template used by [change.org](https://change.org) for this project. This is an effective structure, but your project will require considerable depth (e.g., evidence), as well as citations. You are expected to draw from your literature review for this. Your literature review prepares you to write your petition so use it for this purpose. We will discuss and workshop these projects in class, but this will be completed and graded individually. Please see the petition guidelines posted on Canvas.

You are not required to post your petition on [change.org](https://change.org), send it to the intended recipient, or share it with a larger audience. If you would like to do so, that is your choice.

### **Infographic (group project)**

**20%**

As a group of 3-4 students, you will create an infographic about a positive education topic (such as growth mindset, resilience, or gratitude). An infographic conveys data clearly- it is a display that succinctly represents content and visual data. The intention of this infographic is to succinctly convey scientific content to this specific audience that will benefit from it. The intended audience of this infographic is high school students. You must sufficiently describe the concept you have selected, provide supporting evidence about it using at least 6 peer-reviewed sources, and convey the benefits gleaned from this. You are encouraged to develop these ideas for this project early in the semester, and work on this with your group in the allotted class time.

The dimensions of your infographic should be 48" x 36" or something similar. You should use materials already available to you to create this. For example, if you have PowerPoint, search for 'infographic' and you will see materials to organize your content. I do not expect you to have any previous design experience/skill for this project. Do not buy software to complete this project. This is a psychology project, not a design project.

I suggest your group first agree on an overarching topic to provide a framework for your infographic (e.g., growth mindset). From here, you may choose to identify several content areas that contribute to your overarching focus. Provide supporting evidence with visuals of data, where appropriate. Your infographic should not merely reproduce content that was covered by class material. You are expected to include at least six peer-reviewed sources.

Below is an example of an infographic and how it can be structured to convey information. I make no claims about the accuracy of the content of the infographic below, but this can give you ideas about how data can be conveyed clearly:

[https://i0.wp.com/42bis.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/21mei\\_infographic.jpg](https://i0.wp.com/42bis.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/21mei_infographic.jpg)

### **School intervention proposal (group project)**

**20%**

Students will work in groups of 3-4 to create a proposal aimed at fostering well-being at a school. Each group will propose a practical and beneficial application of the field of positive psychology to a school. This can be a service, program, amenity, or resource directed to students and/or staff. Each

student group will create a proposal as a course assignment. We do not intend to implement these proposals as part of the class.

In completing this proposal, your intervention must be an empirically-based approach, grounded in positive education, aiming to improve wellness at A school. Student groups are expected to:

- State your well-being goal: What are you improving and why?
- Identify the target of this application: Who will this impact?
- Outline the steps necessary to implement this application: How will this occur at Revolution?
- Supply empirical evidence from peer-reviewed sources: What evidence is there that this will be effective?
- State why this a worthwhile use of resources: Why should this proposal be supported?
- Identify strengths, weaknesses and limitations of this approach: What are realistic expectations of how this will improve well-being?

You will read appropriate peer-reviewed research articles for this. You are expected to include at least six peer-reviewed research articles in your references (completed in APA style). You are welcome to include assigned reading assignments among these. Students will be given class time to develop their proposals. You are encouraged to use the provided assessment guidelines to structure your presentation.

This project will be submitted as an in-class group presentation (typically using PowerPoint, but you are not restricted to this format). Regardless of the format you choose, your proposal should be eight minutes or less. For proposals over eight minutes long, only the first eight minutes will be graded.

While this project is a live presentation, you must submit your related materials for review. Each group must upload their proposal presentation slides (or relevant visual materials of their choosing) and script to Canvas by 12/8 at 9am. The script is the text component of your presentation in a Word doc. Grades will be deducted until these materials are submitted. Late submission of these materials will count as a late assignment for all group members.

### **Engaging with the literature (e.g., Perusall)**

**20%**

Reading assignments are posted on Canvas. The vast majority of your reading assignments use Perusall software which allows annotation of your reading assignments. You will automatically access Perusall when you open these assignments in Canvas. Perusall gives you the opportunity to offer insight into the material, and discuss ideas with each other online. You are expected to read and comment upon the assigned reading, as well as respond to your classmates' comments. Engaging with the readings counts towards your grade in this course. Your six lowest Perusall assignment grades will be dropped.

*FYI: If you make a comment in Perusall that is 'anonymous', your classmates will not see your identity, but I will. Anonymous comments will be recognized as yours, thus counting toward your total contribution for that assignment.*

**Participation / activities**

**10%**

Students will earn credit for in-class participation, as well as completing assigned activities.

Activities: All activities will earn credit for completion if a solid effort was made. These activities will often be in class, some of them will involve groupwork. The grades for your lowest 3 activities will be dropped.

In-class participation: Grades will be given to each student at four points during the semester. You will earn a participation grade for each quarter, independent of the other quarters. For example, lack of participation in the first quarter will not harm your participation grade in the second quarter.

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Mediocre</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>Minimal effort</b>
<b>Discussion Preparation</b>	Posting questions conveying original insight and synthesis that can be catalysts for discussion	Posting thoughtful and relevant questions that can be catalysts for discussion	Posting questions that are relevant, but lacking sophistication	Tangential or uninspiring questions posted	No questions posted, or poor questions
<b>Class contribution</b>	Offering consistent originality, insight, and critique	Consistent active participation with thoughtful insight	Relevant frequent participation, but without critical insight	Adequate/unoriginal contributions; or dominating discussions with irrelevant points	Infrequent or anecdotal contributions
<b>Engagement</b>	Demonstrating sophisticated engagement, delving into peer contributions, and offering analysis. Respectful peer interaction	Responding critically to others' ideas and active listening. Respectful peer interaction	Adequate engagement, but limited involvement with peers' contributions	Inattentive when not speaking, or reiterating others' contributions	Disengaged, or making superficial points
<b>Synthesis</b>	Integrating current ideas with existing body of knowledge to explore depth of ideas, metacognition	Integrating questions, others' responses, and assigned readings to build thoughtful analysis	Adequate integration of material, but with limited complexity	Restating previous drawn conclusions	No integration across course content or inability to integrate course content with larger issues

<b>Participation quarter</b>	<b>Quarter duration</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Quarter I	TBA	25%
Quarter II	TBA	25%
Quarter III	TBA	25%
Quarter IV	TBA	25%
<b>Total:</b>		<b>100%</b>

## Grading Policy

The grading policy is below. If you would like to dispute a grade, you must do so within one week of receiving this grade.

<b>A+</b>	100-97	<b>C+</b>	79-77
<b>A</b>	96-94	<b>C</b>	76-74
<b>A-</b>	93-90	<b>C-</b>	73-70
<b>B+</b>	89-87	<b>D+</b>	69-67
<b>B</b>	86-84	<b>D</b>	66-64
<b>B-</b>	83-80	<b>F</b>	59-0

Final course grades that are 0.5 or higher are rounded to the next whole number. This applies only to your overall grade for the course, not individual grades (e.g., individual assignments). For example, a 93.5% for this course would be an A, while a 93.4% would remain an A-.

Final course grades are not negotiable. The grade you earned from your assessment is the grade that will appear on your transcript. All requests for higher grades will be denied. Granting these requests is unfair to other students, and it undermines the value of educational assessment. If you are unable to complete coursework during the semester, please contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss how to move forward with your assessment.

### Late days

Late days aim to help you during the semester. Each late day allows you to submit an assignment up to twenty-four hours late. You have two (2) late days to use during the semester. To use your late days, submit your assignment after the deadline. You do not need to ask permission to use your late day(s), nor provide any explanation. Both late days may be used for one assignment. Late days may not be used for group assignments.

### Late major projects

You must upload your assignment to Canvas prior to the specified deadline. The deadline for each assignment is provided at the beginning of the semester so you have plenty of time to prepare. Any assignment submitted after the deadline will be penalized, (except in cases where you use one or two of your allocated 'late days' for individual projects). Aside from a few unique cases, there are no extensions. Grades for late assignments will be reduced as follows:

- Submitted after the deadline on the day the assignment is due: -5%
- Submitted between 12am and 11:59pm one day after the assignment is due: -10%
- Submitted between 12am and 11:59pm two days after the assignment is due: -20%
- Submitted between 12am and 11:59pm three days after the assignment is due: -30%
- Any assignment submitted after this will not be graded. It will receive a zero.

## Course success: how to get an A in this course

- Read the material in advance of class (as posted on Canvas). This is a reading-intensive course, so give yourself plenty of time for each assignment.
- Engage with the reading material. Comment and respond to comments on Perusall.
- Participate in all classes. Use class time to flesh out your ideas and speculate. I applaud students for stretching their thinking in class discussions. Try to become comfortable sharing your 'half-baked' ideas so we can develop them together.
- Do not wait until the last minute to complete your major assignments. Many readings were specifically selected to help with these assignments as we progress through the semester. The coursework of this course is manageable *if* it is dispersed through the semester. Do not unnecessarily make your life stressful by procrastinating.
- For your group projects, challenge each other's ideas and engage with the material. Work within your group and support each other. Ask me questions. I specifically allocate class time to group work, so use this time wisely.
- Relate course material to your education and the world around you. Think about how you can apply what you learn. Reflect upon your past and consider your future here.
- If you feel wary of this course, or you are concerned about your performance, reach out during office hours. I want to hear from you.

I have high, and achievable, expectations of you in this course. I will support you to reach your educational goals. This seminar will be challenging, but your effort will be evident in your performance. If your performance in class is impacted by experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to contact me. I want to be a resource for you.

## Course Culture

A primary goal of this course is to immerse students in the ideas and research of positive education. I do not expect you to have background knowledge of positive education prior to this course. You will develop your knowledge of positive education through exploration and discussion in this seminar. Please reach out to me if you need assistance to fully participate in this course, and please contact me if you have suggestions to improve the quality of the course.

I aim to provide an intellectually engaging and supportive environment for students. Your unique perspective is valuable, it deepens the experience of your peers', and it contributes to the success of this class. Please contribute your insight throughout the semester.

All participants in this seminar deserve to be treated with respect, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, religious beliefs, physical or mental health status, or socioeconomic status. Expect respect from your peers and myself. Similarly, you are expected to demonstrate respect to others through your words and actions, including respectfully engaging with opposing perspectives. I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class by anyone that made you uncomfortable, please talk to me. Preserving positive relationships with each other is part of the success of this course.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Assigned Reading</b>	<b>Reading volume</b>	<b>Course activity</b>
1	The current state of education	~23 pages popular press	
2	Beyond the 'cognitive hypothesis'	~92 pages popular press	
			<i>Add deadline</i>
3	The role of positive education	~60 pages academic chapters	
4	Positive education concepts	~51 pages research articles	
			<b>Due: Literature review</b>
5	Methods & critique	~62 pages research articles	
6	Character strengths	~20 pages research articles	
			<b>Due: Petition</b>
			<i>Drop deadline</i>
7	Grit	~277 page popular press book	
8	Perseverance and self-control	~47 pages research articles, academic chap.	
9	Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation	~40 pages research articles, academic chap.	
			<i>Grade change deadline</i>
10	Mindset	~246 page popular press book	
			<i>Withdrawal deadline</i>
11	Due: Infographic		<b>Due: Infographic</b>
12	Whistling Vivaldi	~219 page popular press book	
13	Social-Belonging	~29 pages research articles, popular press	
14	Final readings	~71 pages popular press	<b>Due: Intervention proposal</b>

## Relevant College policies

### [Mask Policy](#)

Masking is currently required indoors for all, regardless of vaccination status. Please wear a mask in class. According to the [Fall 2021 COVID-19 FAQs for Instructors](#), if a student won't comply after being reminded to wear their mask, instructors should report the incident on the [Masking Violations](#) page. They may also ask the non-compliant student to leave the classroom, and if necessary for the health and safety of the class members, stop the class if the student will not leave. Students who violate Penn's masking policy can also be referred to the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

### [Code of Academic Integrity](#)

You must familiarize yourself with the Code of Academic Integrity in the University of Pennsylvania. It is your responsibility to ensure your behavior does not violate this code. You must observe the policies regarding various forms of academic dishonesty. The following statement about academic dishonesty has been provided by the University of Pennsylvania, "Activities that have the effect or intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student's performance are prohibited." Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and may be handled by the Office of Student Conduct. More information is available here: <http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/>

### [Student Financial Services](#)

Any student may consult with Student Financial Services to find out what support they are eligible to receive to cover course costs or other items that ensure their health, safety, and secure learning environment.

### [HELP Line](#)

This is a 24-hour-a-day phone number for members of the Penn community who are seeking time sensitive help in navigating Penn's resources for health and wellness. Any member of the Penn community can utilize this service by calling **215-898-HELP**. Calls will be answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by Division of Public Safety professionals trained in mental health referrals by staff from Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).

Students who are dealing with the complex emotional challenges of university life can use the HELP Line to receive information and referrals to the many health and wellness resources at Penn, including CAPS, Student Health Service, Student Intervention Services, Public Safety, and others. They may also call on behalf of a friend or acquaintance. If you or someone you know needs help, please call the HELP Line at **215-898-HELP**. <https://www.publicsafety.upenn.edu/announcing-the-898-help-line/>

### [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#)

Your wellbeing is of utmost importance to me. I am happy to chat, or just listen, if you need someone to talk to, even if it's not specifically about this course.

College can be challenging. Penn has a Counseling and Psychological Services program (CAPS). CAPS offers confidential free professional mental health services. The goal is to assist students in their adjustment to

university life and help them take full advantage of the academic and social environment at Penn. Students can learn to manage personal problems and situational crises effectively, learn strategies to cope with academic stress, and develop self awareness, personal responsibility, and skills for life-long learning.

- Online scheduling: <https://uapps.vpul.upenn.edu/capsform/>
- Phone: 215-898-7021,
- Email: [caps@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:caps@pobox.upenn.edu) (please do not email for an appointment)
- Website: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/caps/>
- Address: 3624 Market Street, First Floor West, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2615

If you or someone you know is experiencing an emergency that cannot wait until the next day office hours, please call the main number (215-898-7021) and press # 1.

If you are uncomfortable reaching out to CAPS directly, I am happy to contact them on your behalf. In addition, there are various a range of other support resources on campus such as resident advisers, faculty members living on campus, academic advisers, and undergraduate advisers in each program of study. The Office of the Chaplain is also helpful.

### [CaseNet](#)

CaseNet is an academic support team in the College Office charged with providing a centralized response to all College students in academic difficulty ([www.college.upenn.edu/casenet](http://www.college.upenn.edu/casenet)). CaseNet can be reached at [col-casenet@groups.sas.upenn.edu](mailto:col-casenet@groups.sas.upenn.edu) or by calling 215-898-6341.

Cases referred to CaseNet include:

- Students who are ill or otherwise prevented from attending class for more than five days.
- Students in serious academic difficulty.
- Students who are hospitalized or who have other kinds of acute problems (victim of crime, etc.) that interrupt their normal schedule.
- Students who are experiencing personal or family concerns significant enough to interfere with their academic work or to impinge on those around them, including a death in the family.

### [Reach-A-Peer Helpline](#)

The Reach-A-Peer Helpline is a peer help line established in 1996 to provide peer support, information, and referrals to any and all students of the University of Pennsylvania. The service is open to all students who wish to share a problem, are in need of information, or just want to talk to someone about anything on their mind. RAPLine offers two services:

- Helpline: Our phone line is available every night while classes are in session (except holidays) from 9 pm to 1 am. Reach us at 215-573-2727. Don't be shy!
- Texting: Our text service is available 24/7. Text us anytime at 215-515-7332 and one of our supporters will response as soon as possible.