

Positive Psychology

PSY 3015-1(3 units)

Fall Semester 2025

Mon: 3:00-5:30 PM

Final Exam- Th: 3:00-5:30 PM (take home)

Location: Liberty Station 205A

Instructor: Kim W. Schaeffer, Ph.D.

Office Location: Culbertson 212 (between The Greek and Colt)

Office Hours: M: 2:30–3:00; TU: 3:00–3:30; W: 7-10:30; TH: 9:30-10:30

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PLNU Mission

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Course Description

A study of the expanding field of Positive Psychology. Emphasis is placed on ways to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives. Small group activities are included.

Course Learning Outcomes in PSY 3015: Upon completion of this course you will be able to:

- Identify your personal character strengths and flow activities in areas of vocation, avocation, and service to others.
- Identify your top 5 maladaptive thoughts (which lead to negative affect).
- After identifying your top 5 maladaptive thoughts, create more realistically positive thoughts (which will lead to positive affect).
- Identify strategies that can be directly applied to a flourishing life (based on Rubin's *Happiness Project*)
- Practice the privilege of daily gratitude.
- Expresses gratitude to an important person in your life (according to Seligman's method).
- Plan a "beautiful day" within a school (or "work") day and carry it out. You will also be able to identify character strengths and flow activities within the beautiful day.
- Espouse a philosophy of life based on positivity psychology principles.

Required Textbooks

Rubin, G. (2015). *The happiness project*. New York: Harper.

Rubin, G. (2011). *The happiness project one-sentence journal: A five-year record*. New York: Harper.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York: Free Press.

Course Credit Hour Information

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3 unit class delivered over 15 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 112.5 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes. The time estimations are provided in the Canvas modules.

Assessment and Grading

The following grades will be given based on the proportions below.

A = 93-100; A- = 90-92.99; B+ = 88-89.99; B = 84-87.99; B- = 80-83.99; C+ = 77-79.99; C = 70-76.99; C- = 65-69.99; D+ = 62-64.99; D = 55-61.99; D- = 50-54.99; F \leq 49.99%

- Proceduralizations 20%
- Application Exercises 20%
- Team Presentations 20%
- Gratitude Letter/Reaction 10%
- Peer Helpfulness Survey 10%
- Quizzes 10%
- Positive Philosophy of Life 10%

Oral Presentations

Students will be assigned to a team at the start of the semester. Each team will make 8 presentations; each team will make 4 Happiness Project Application presentations and 4 Flourishing presentations based on the requirements in the table below. For each presentation, disagreement is required on at least one of the application exercises to receive full credit for that rubric.

Incompletes and Late Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Same day lateness 10% deduction. Additional 10% for each day late.

	<i>Happiness Project</i>	<i>Flourishing</i>
<i>Class Presentation Day</i>	Tuesday (start of class)	Tuesday (after <i>Happiness Project</i>)
<i>Multiple Choice Quiz?</i> <i>(constructed by team)</i>	No	Yes
<i>Number of Quiz items</i>	na	5 (plus one bonus question)
<i>Presentation</i>	No	Yes
<i>Length of Presentation</i> <i>(after quiz)</i>	na	< 5 minutes
<i>4S Application Exercises?</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Number of 4S Application Exercises</i>	2	2
<i>Content of 4S Application Exercises</i>	1- Reading; 1 – A student’s life	1- Reading; 1- A student’s life

4S Application Exercises

4S application exercises are significant problems that teams solve. Each team is given specific choices (4 total) for the purpose of advancing to higher levels of analysis. All teams work on the same problem. Finally, teams report their choice to the problem simultaneously. Please note: teams are not allowed to give more than one specific choice. Also, “none of the above” and “all of the above” are not allowable choices.

Each group will present one 4S Application Exercise from the reading and one 4S Application Exercise from the life of a student. The second 4S Application Exercise is unrelated to the reading, but related to an issue that a college student or one of your friends might be dealing with. The inter-team discussion will lead to an optimal solution for the purpose of a Flourishing life.

4S Discussion Leaders

Let us make maximum use of our class time by observing the following

- Do not ask each team that gave the same answer for their explanation. “Is there anything that your team would like to add?” (“No” is a better answer than “We basically agree with what the other teams said.” This is especially true if then the Team Presenter goes on to repeat what the other teams said.

- Other helpful hints:
 - “Why didn’t your team choose option B?” or “Why didn’t your team choose the other options?”
 - “What do you have to say about Team Positivity People's remarks?”
- If multiple hands are up, go with it and be thankful that your team created a helpful Application Exercise.

State Authorization

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

PLNU Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one’s own when in reality they are the results of another person’s creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student’s eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student’s request.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student’s responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go

through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an “F” grade.

Use of Technology

In order to be successful in the online or hybrid environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [*Technology and System Requirements*](#) information. Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers, microphone, or webcams compatible with their computer available to use. Please note that any course with online proctored exams requires a computer with a camera (tablets are not compatible nor allowed) to complete exams online.

Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

Final Examination Policy®

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

PLNU Recording Notification®

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

POSITIVITY OATH

“I PLEDGE TO TRY AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO BE REALISTICALLY POSITIVE AND GRATEFUL THIS SEMESTER. FURTHER, I WILL BE GRATEFUL NOT ONLY FOR THE BIG THINGS BUT FOR THE SIMPLE THINGS AS WELL. WHEN CRITICIZING OR TEMPTING TO CRITICIZE SOMEONE ELSE OR A SITUATION, I WILL TRY MY BEST TO LOOK AT THE SITUATION OR PERSON IN A REALISTICALLY POSITIVE WAY. IF I FAIL TO DO THIS AND ONE OF MY CLASSMATES OR PROFESSOR POINTS IT OUT, I WILL BE GRATEFUL AS THIS FEEDBACK WILL

HELP ME GROW AND BECOME A MORE POSITIVE AND EFFECTIVE WORLD CITIZEN.”

Second Half of Syllabus Posted on Canvas

I am required to include additional material to the syllabus. This is posted in Canvas under Syllabus (Part II).

Quote

“The pessimist looks down and hits his head. The optimist looks up and loses his footing. The realist looks forward and adjusts his path accordingly.”

— Robert Kirkman

