Course Title: Happiness: Gratitude, Gumption and Grace
Course Code: WSP 20
Instructor: Carole Pertofsky, M.Ed.

Course Summary:
Why are happiness and psychological well-being so highly valued? Research indicates that positive life strategies result in wide-ranging physical and mental health lifelong benefits. Acquiring this knowledge can help open up new possibilities of greater well-being, calm and joy. Also, when life presents us with challenges, resilience strategies help us discover creative solutions to approaching life’s inevitable adversities. Greater fulfillment is within reach.

Students will:

1. List several attributes of positive psychology and its current limitations.
2. Discuss basic neuroscience theories regarding how the brain influences our sense of strength, calm and happiness.
3. Identify several pathways to strengthen happiness, positive emotions, reduce stress, and increase life fulfillment in a complex world.
4. Describe how psychological resilience practices help people constructively cope with life’s adversities, challenges, and difficulties.
5. Describe at least three “take-home” strategies to help you thrive personally, and to tackle real world problems.

Tentative Agenda:

**DAY 1: Saturday, March 7, 2020**

**MORNING SESSION: HAPPINESS AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY**
What is Positive Psychology?
Understand the attributes and limitations of Positive Psychology and Happiness studies
Ride the Waves of Emotion: Neuroscience, happiness and benefits of Mindfulness
Definition: “What is happiness?”
Practice Session: What makes you happy?
AFTERNOON SESSION: GRATITUDE
Explore gratitude; optimism; noticing and savoring the good
Tricky Brain: Benefits and challenges in noticing and savoring the good
Physical and mental health outcomes
Practice Session: Gratitude as Medicine

DAY 2: Saturday, March 14; 2020

MORNING SESSION: GUMPTION (Fierce Courage)
When life gets rough: How resilience strategies can positively impact sadness, grief, anger and stress.
Examine dynamics of post-traumatic stress and post-traumatic growth
The power of social support and connection
Practice Session: Bounding Back: Increasing psychological resilience

AFTERNOON SESSION: GRACE (Wisdom, kindness, confidence)

COMPASSION
Language matters: Comparing compassion to empathy, sympathy and pity
Research findings: Compassion versus judgement and criticism
A stepped approach to taming the inner critic
Practice Session: Cultivating compassion for self and others-

FORGIVENESS
Power of Forgiveness: What forgiveness is - and is not
Practice Session: Forgiving

INTO THE FUTURE: A FULFILLING LIFE
Review: Pleasure, flow and meaning
Addressing Real Life Problems
Practice Session: Your future goals for happiness, resilience and well-being.
Grade Options and Requirements:

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit will be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - Students must attend all class sessions.

*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose the Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

Required Books/Materials:

HARDWIRING HAPPINESS: Rick Hanson, Ph.D. Crown Book Publishing; 2013

VIDEOS: To enrich your learning experience, these videos are 3 - 20 minutes. If you are interested in any particular topic, try [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com), type in the topic and discover many first-rate TED talks.

**MARCH 7:**

Morning Session;
[http://www.ted.com/talks/andy_puddicombe_all_it_takes_is_10_mindful_minutes](http://www.ted.com/talks/andy_puddicombe_all_it_takes_is_10_mindful_minutes)
(Andy is the creator and voice of “Headspace” meditation app.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/martin_seligman_the_new-era_of-positive-psychology?referrer=playlist-give-thanks#t-1405686](https://www.ted.com/talks/martin_seligman_the_new-era_of-positive-psychology?referrer=playlist-give-thanks#t-1405686)

Afternoon Session;
[https://www.ted.com/talks/laura_trice_remember_to_say_thank_you?referrer=playlist-give-thanks](https://www.ted.com/talks/laura_trice_remember_to_say_thank_you?referrer=playlist-give-thanks)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/david_steindl_rast_want_to_be_happy_be_grateful?referrer=playlist-give-thanks&language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/david_steindl_rast_want_to_be_happy_be_grateful?referrer=playlist-give-thanks&language=en)

**MARCH 14:**

Morning Session
[https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the-power_of-vulnerability](https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the-power_of-vulnerability)

Afternoon session
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6npsVNj_nyc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6npsVNj_nyc)