

APPLIED POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

APP 501 — Introduction to Positive Psychology

This introductory course introduces the basic themes central to the study and application of positive psychology, including the nature of well-being, happiness, peak performance, personality characteristics, positive health, creativity, and spirituality. Students will be introduced to key research in the field, models of flourishing, and specific applications at individual, family, community, and organizational levels.

3 credits

OnLine

APP 506 — Motivational Interviewing and Health Behavior Change

With its person-centered style and humanistic roots, Motivational Interviewing is a natural complement to positive psychology applications. In this introductory course, students will learn the spirit, method, and research around MI that makes it a powerful conversational approach to enhance readiness for positive change. The course will focus in particular on applications to healthy lifestyle motivation, including the areas of diet and exercise. Taught by a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers, this is a skill-centered course that will give students experiential exercises to learn core MI skills and the necessary attitudinal stance.

3 credits

OnLine

APP 511 — Biopsychosocial Basis of Health and Wellness

What are the mind-body connections which contribute to physical, social, and emotional health and happiness? This course answers that question by examining key correlates of holistic well-being. This includes understanding preventive health, the body's stress response, psychoneuroimmunology, neurotransmission, pain and pleasure experiences, wellness during the pandemic, longevity, disease management, cardiac health, physical activity, nutrition, biofeedback processes, and meditation.

3 credits

OnLine

APP 516 — Research Methods and Evaluation in Positive Psychology

This course will introduce students to a wide range of qualitative and quantitative approaches to the study of well-being at the intraindividual and interindividual levels. Students will gain familiarity with basic statistical and assessment concepts. These include reliability, validity, factor analysis, ANOVA, and regression. Concepts will be presented through the lens of specific studies conducted in positive psychology, which serve as models of sound psychometric and methodological design.

3 credits

OnLine

APP 521 — Mindfulness, Positive Emotions, and Well-Being

Mindfulness practice has a growing empirical connection to well-being and has often been incorporated into positive psychology interventions. This course will introduce students to the foundation and practice of mindfulness, as well as its connection to positive physical, social, and emotional states and overall life satisfaction. Students will learn how to guide a variety of core mindfulness practices, including mindfulness of breath, body scans, and compassion practices. Additionally, the neurobiological basis of positive emotional experience, central to positive psychology and well-being models (e.g., Broaden-and-Build), will be explored.

3 credits

OnLine

APP 526 — Positive Psychology Approaches Across the Lifespan

This course explores how people grow and develop over time in healthy ways. It covers stage models of development, positive youth development, thriving in early and middle adulthood, and successful aging. Particular attention is paid to cultural differences in healthy development as well as practices that nurture resilience across the lifespan. Emphasis is placed on existential and values-based applications in positive psychology.

3 credits

OnLine

APP 531 — Building Positive Institutions and Systems

This course focuses on the culturally informed application of positive psychological approaches within organizations and systems, including schools, businesses, and healthcare. Positive leadership models will be examined, along with practical ways of creating optimal workplace cultures, fostering positive engagement and performance, enhancing decision-making and communication, and designing transformative collaborations. The interconnection of advocacy, altruism, and positive psychology will be discussed as well.

3 credits

OnLine

APP 536 — The Intersection of CBT and Positive Psychology

Cognitive-behavioral models of change, although traditionally focused on correcting maladaptive thinking-feeling-doing patterns, can also serve as an effective framework for understanding how positive psychology applications lead to sustainable well-being. The relationship between positive and negative life experiences will be explored, along with the role of acceptance-based approaches. While students are not expected to become CBT clinicians after this course, they will be able to more accurately identify core mechanisms of adaptive, maladaptive, and optimal functioning that can help in designing effective positive psychology interventions.

3 credits

OnLine

APP 541 — Practicum I – Happier You/Health Support

In this first practicum term, students will have two structured programmatic experiences with applied positive psychology virtual interventions in community settings: 1) by observing and participating in A Happier You session, which is a 7-week multi-component positive psychology group program, and 2) observing and participating in the Health Support Program, a community-based motivational interviewing intervention focused on healthy lifestyles and stress management.

1 credits

APP 546 – Practicum II – Happier You/Health Support

During the second practicum term, students continue to develop their group psychoeducation and facilitation skills in A Happier You, transitioning from the role of participant to facilitator—while also demonstrating mastery over the content. They also become more active in applying motivational interviewing skills in the Health Support Program, co-facilitating these sessions.

1 credits

APP 551 – Practicum III – Happier You/Health Support

In this final practicum term, students are expected to demonstrate greater autonomy and mastery in group psychoeducation and facilitation, proficient use of motivational interviewing as indicated through an MI rating scale, and the application of basic stress management approaches that include guided mindfulness exercises. They will also have an opportunity to take the certification exam for A Happier You, which has knowledge-based and skills-based observation components.

1 credits

APP 556 – Capstone: Positive Psychology and Healthcare

Students will use their knowledge and skills gained in the program to design a culturally informed positive psychology intervention with an outcomes assessment, present its research base, and a plan to implement it in some form in the community. Some aspect of the project must address the biopsychosocial basis of well-being.

3 credits

OnLine