



Chaminade University of Honolulu
3140 Waialae Avenue – Honolulu, HI 96816
Course Syllabus
Psy 455-01-1: Positive Psychology

Course Number: Psy 455-01-1

Course Title: Positive Psychology

Term: Spring Semester 2026; 1/12/2026 – 5/8/2026

Class Meeting Days: M/W/F; Henry Hall, Room 104

Class Meeting Hours: 9:30 -10:20 am

Course Website Address (CANVAS): <https://chaminade,ilnstructure.com/>

Instructor: Dr. Silvia Koch

Email: silvia.koch@chaminade.edu

Phone: (808) 386-1258 cell; (808) 739-4644 office

Office Location: BS 108

Office Hours: Available anytime by appointment or request

Instructor Availability: Questions for this course can be emailed to the instructor at silvia.koch@chaminade.edu. Online, in-person and/or phone conferences can be arranged. Every effort will be made to respond in a timely manner. Response time may take 1 day in some circumstances.

Textbook

Carr, A. (2022). "Positive psychology: The Science of Well-Being and Human Strengths" 3rd ed. New York: Brunner-Routledge.

Catalog Course Description

This course provides an in-depth overview of the rapidly growing field of positive psychology. Human resiliency, coping, strengths, resources, and wellness are all central to the field of positive psychology, an area of scientific study dedicated to maximizing human potential, wellbeing, and happiness. The course focuses on the psychological aspects of a fulfilling and flourishing life. Other topics include optimism, self-esteem, empathy, friendship, love, achievement, creativity, spirituality, and humor.

Program Linking Statement

The course develops and assesses the skills and competencies for the program student learning outcome of Applied Psychology. In addition, this course also addresses the program student learning outcomes of 1) Scientific Method and its Application in the Field of Psychology; and 2) Cross-Cultural Psychology.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students will demonstrate an understanding of:

1. the aim and scope of positive psychology.
2. the scientific method and research and how this applies to positive psychology. The student will also comprehend the research that supports the principles, strategies, and skills of positive psychology.
3. the impact of cultural diversity in the field of positive psychology.
4. ethics relative to the field of positive psychology.
5. students' insight into their own strengths and virtues and learn strategies to increase their happiness and overall quality of life.
6. the dimensions of subjective well-being and the application to their lives.
7. the Five Marianist Educational Values as integrated into the course projecting a zest for living a virtuous, satisfying, and meaningful life.

Course Requirements

Grades for the course will be assigned based on the quality of student work as demonstrated by successful completion of the following requirements:

Chapter Presentation	100 pts.
Midterm Examination	75 pts.
Final Examination	100 pts.
Strengths and Resilience Research Paper	75 pts.
3 Positive Psychology Questionnaires (10 pts. each)	30 pts.
7 Chapter Reflections (10 pts. each)	70 pts.
Attendance	50 pts.
Total:	500 pts.

Grades for the course will be assigned using the following points-percentage equivalency:

450-500 90% - 100% A -Outstanding scholarship and an unusual degree of intellectual initiative.

400-449 80% - 89% B -Superior work done in a consistent and intellectual manner.

350-399 70% - 79% C -Average grade indicating a competent grasp of subject matter.

300-349 60% - 69% D -Inferior work of the lowest passing grade.

349 and below 59% F -Failed to grasp even the minimum subject matter; no credit given.

Class policies

1. All assignments are due on the date specified on this syllabus.
2. No late assignments will be accepted unless a special arrangement is made prior to the due date or test date. You must notify and arrange with me 48 hours prior to the deadline (unless it is an unexpected or unforeseen circumstance). Documentation is required.
3. All assignments must be completed within the time frame of this class. No work will be accepted after the last week of the term.

4. No examinations will be administered after its due date has passed (please refer to the course calendar below).
5. If you have questions regarding your assignments, contact me early in the term. I am here to assist you if you need help. Please be proactive. **YOU MUST DO THE READING TO DO WELL IN THE COURSE.**

Class Attendance (Attendance Policy)

Attendance for this course is graded due to the number of discussions and exercises that happen during each class. If you are unable to attend a class, email the course instructor before the start of the respective class. In order for an absence to be excused, the reason must be medical, a school commitment (not including any form of detention or discipline), or a family emergency/commitment. All other reasons will not be considered excused and the respective points for the day will not be earned. Any student who stops attending the course will receive a failing grade. Federal regulations require continued attendance for continuing payment of financial aid. If attendance is not continuous, financial aid may be terminated. When illness or personal reasons necessitate continued absence, the student should officially withdraw from all affected courses. Anyone who stops attending a course without official withdrawal may receive a failing grade.

Description of the Assessments

1. Chapter Presentation (100 pts):

Each student will present a chapter from the text “Positive Psychology: The Science of Wellbeing and Human Strengths” on a chosen date (sign-up sheet will be available on the first day of class.) An activity will be presented with each chapter presentation to ensure that major points of the chapter have been adequately covered and understood. With each presentation, a typed double-spaced paper should be available to all classmates and instructor that outlines the important points of the chapter. Each chapter presentation is worth 100 points. The breakdown of points is below:

Organization & Clarity – 50 points
 Outline – 25 points
 Activity – 25 points
 Total – 100 points

2. Midterm and Final Exams (75 & 100 pts):

Students will be given a mid-term exam covering chapters 1-4 (75 pts). The final exam will cover chapters 5-9 (100 pts.)

3. Strength & Resilience Research Paper (75 pts.):

Students will choose a topic that interests them related to Happiness, Strengths, and Resilience (submitted for approval by mid-term). You may choose to focus on a practice or behavior, such as gratefulness, prayer or yoga, or a relationship such as couple relationships, or a phenomenon such as forgiveness or altruism, or some aspect of resilience, such as overcoming houselessness or losing a partner. You will summarize the research on this topic using peer reviewed academic

sources. This paper should demonstrate a good understanding and ability to integrate positive psychology concepts and relevant life experiences.

After your research question or hypothesis has been approved by the course instructor you will write your paper according to the following format:

1. Introduction - What is your topic and why did you choose this topic? Clearly define your research question or hypothesis.
2. Literature Review – What does the literature have to say about your topic? Provide a thorough discussion of the history and the current understanding of the topic. The literature review must include citations of multiple sources that provide evidence that support or does not support the hypothesis or provide evidence that may start to answer the research question.
3. Discussion – You will utilize your critical thinking to clearly and thoroughly discuss the results and implications discovered from the literature review as it relates to your hypothesis or research question.
4. Reflection – You will reflect on your findings and your decision-making process that will also include your thoughts on the implications and/or consequences of your finding (why would other people care about what you learned?). You must have a minimum of 10 credible sources. A reference list is required. Size 12 font and APA formatting is required.

4. Positive Psychology Questionnaires (30 pts.):

Throughout the term students will complete 3 questionnaires related to Positive Psychology. You will save the results to be referenced in your chapter reflection papers.

5. 7 Chapter Reflections (70 pts.):

Students may choose 7 chapters to reflect upon from the 9 that are in the book. You are to choose 2 questions from the “personal development” section at the end of each chapter. Your reflection papers are meant to connect your perspectives on Positive Psychology, the results of your questionnaires, and your growth experiences. Reflections should be one page per question.

6. Attendance (50 pts.):

Attendance for this course is graded due to the number of discussions and exercises that happen during each class. If you are unable to attend a class, email the course instructor before the start of the respective class. For an absence to be excused, the reason must be medical, a school commitment (not including any form of detention or discipline), or a family emergency/commitment. All other reasons will not be considered excused and the respective points for the day will not be earned.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is an essential aspect of all learning, scholarship, and research. It is one of the values regarded most highly by academic communities throughout the world. Violations of the principle of academic honesty are extremely serious and will not be tolerated.

Students are responsible for promoting academic honesty at Chaminade by not participating in any act of dishonesty and by reporting any incidence of academic dishonesty to an instructor or to a University official. Academic dishonesty may include theft of records or examinations, alteration of grades, and plagiarism.

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's words or work as your own. Plagiarism applies to material taken from a book, article, or the Internet and to material taken from another student. All work must be cited. To support your work and thoughts, you are required to liberally CITE all references. Any time you use information from a source, cite it. Any time you paraphrase something from a source and put into your own words, please cite it. Ex: (Wallace, 2015); (Santrock, 2016); (King & Stone, 2017). Plagiarism is a violation of the Academic Code of Conduct of the University and carries penalties ranging from failure of the assignment to suspension from the university. In this course, plagiarism on an assignment, paper, project or examination will result in an F for that assignment, paper, project or examination. Questions of academic dishonesty in a particular class are first reviewed by the instructor, who must make a report with recommendations to the Dean of the Academic Division. Punishment for academic dishonesty will be determined by the instructor and the Dean of the Academic Division and may range from an 'F' grade for the work in question to an 'F' for the course to suspension or dismissal from the University.

Students with Disabilities

Chaminade will provide assistance for any student with documented disabilities. Any student who believes he/she may need accommodations in this class must contact Dr. June Yasuhara, 739-4603 at the Counseling Center (office next to Security) in order to determine if the student meets the requirements for documented disability in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is important to contact them as soon as possible so that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Scientific Method Definitions

The **METHODS OF SCIENCE** are only tools, tools that we use to obtain knowledge about phenomena.

The **SCIENTIFIC METHOD** is a set of assumptions and rules about collecting and evaluating data. The explicitly stated assumptions and rules enable a standard, systematic method of investigation that is designed to reduce bias as much as possible. Central to the scientific method is the collection of data, which allows investigators to put their ideas to an empirical test, outside of or apart from their personal biases. In essence, stripped of all its glamour, scientific inquiry is nothing more **THAN A WAY OF LIMITING FALSE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT NATURAL EVENTS.**

Knowledge of which the credibility of a profession is based must be objective and verifiable (testable) rather than subjective and untestable.

SCIENCE is a mode of controlled inquiry to develop an objective, effective, and credible way of knowing.

The assumptions one makes regarding the basic qualities of human nature (that is, cognitive, affective, behavioral, and physiological processes) affect how one conceptualizes human behavior.

The two basic functions of scientific approach are 1) advance knowledge, to make discoveries, and to learn facts in order to improve some aspect of the world, and 2) to establish relations among events, develop theories, and this helps professionals to make predictions of future events.

Research Design and Counseling Heppner,
Kivlighan, and Wampold

A **THEORY** is a large body of interconnected propositions about how some portion of the world operates; a **HYPOTHESIS** is a smaller body of propositions. **HYPOTHESES** are smaller versions of theories. Some are derived or born from theories. Others begin as researchers' hunches and develop into theories.

The **PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE** decrees we can only falsify, not verify (prove), theories because we can never be sure that any given theory provides the best explanation for a set of observations.

Research Method In Social Relations Kidder

THEORIES are not themselves directly proved or disproved by research. Even **HYPOTHESES** cannot be proved or disproved directly. Rather, research may either support or fail to support a particular hypothesis derived from a theory.

Scientific research has four general goals: (1) to describe behavior, (2) to predict behavior, (3) to determine the causes of behavior, and (4) to understand or explain behavior.

Methods In Behavioral Research; Cozby

In order to verify the reliability and validity of scientific research it is important to replicate the results. It is the preponderance of evidence that establishes/supports the theory.

<http://allpsych.com/researchmethods/replication.html>

Marianist Educational Values

Chaminade University is a Catholic, Marianist University. The five characteristics of a Marianist education are:

1. Educate for Formation in Faith

Catholic Universities affirm an intricate relationship between reason and faith. As important as discursive and logical formulations and critical thinking are, they are not able to capture all that can be and ought to be learned. Intellectual rigor coupled with respectful humility provide a more profound preparation for both career and life. Intellectual rigor characterizes the pursuit of all that can be learned. Respectful humility reminds people of faith that they need to learn from those who are of other faiths and cultures, as well as from those who may have no religious faith at all.

2. Provide an Excellent Education

In the Marianist approach to education, "excellence" includes the whole person, not just the technician or rhetorician. Marianist universities educate whole persons, developing their physical, psychological, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social qualities. Faculty and students attend to fundamental moral attitudes, develop their personal talents, and acquire skills that will

help them learn all their lives. The Marianist approach to education links theory and practice, liberal and professional education. Our age has been deeply shaped by science and technology. Most recently, information and educational technologies have changed the way faculty and students research and teach. At Marianist Universities, two goals are pursued simultaneously: an appropriate use of information technology for learning, and the enhancement of interaction between students and teachers. As Catholic, Marianist Universities seek to embrace diverse peoples and understand diverse cultures, convinced that ultimately, when such people come together, one of the highest purposes of education is realized: a human community that respects every individual within it.

3. Educate in Family Spirit

Known for their strong sense of community, Marianists have traditionally spoken of this sense as “family spirit.” Marianist educational experience fosters the development of a community characterized by a sense of family spirit that accepts each person with loving respect and draws everyone in the university into the challenge of community building. Family spirit also enables Marianist universities to challenge their students, faculty and staff to excellence and maturity, because the acceptance and love of a community gives its members the courage to risk failure and the joy of sharing success.

4. Educate for Service, Justice, and Peace

The Marianist approach to higher education is deeply committed to the common good. The intellectual life itself is undertaken as a form of service in the interest of justice and peace, and the university curriculum is designed to connect the classroom with the wider world. In addition, Marianist universities extend a special concern for the poor and marginalized and promote the dignity, rights and responsibilities of all people.

5. Educate for Adaptation to Change

In the midst of rapid social and technological change, Marianist universities readily adapt and change their methods and structures so that the wisdom of their educational philosophy and spirituality may be transmitted even more fully. “New times call for new methods,” Father Chaminade often repeated. The Marianist University faces the future confidently, on the one hand knowing that it draws on a rich educational philosophy, and on the other fully aware for that philosophy to remain vibrant in changing times, adaptations need to be made.

Selected from Characteristics of Marianist Universities: A Resource Paper, published in 1999 by Chaminade University of Honolulu, St. Mary’s University and University of Dayton

Each of these characteristics is integrated, to varying degrees, in this course.

Disability Access

If you need individual accommodations to meet course outcomes because of a documented disability, please speak with me to discuss your needs as soon as possible so that we can ensure your full participation in class and fair assessment of your work. Students with special needs who meet criteria for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provisions must provide written documentation of the need for accommodations from Kōkua ‘Ike: Center for Student Learning by the end of week three of the class, in order for instructors to plan accordingly. If a student

would like to determine if they meet the criteria for accommodations, they should contact the Kōkua 'Ike Coordinator at (808) 739-8305 for further information (ada@chaminade.edu).

Title IX and Nondiscrimination Statement

Chaminade University of Honolulu is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment that promotes the dignity of all people, inclusivity and mutual respect and is free of all forms of sex discrimination and gender-based violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. As a member of the University faculty, I am required to immediately report any incident of sex discrimination or gender-based violence to the campus Title IX Coordinator.

Nondiscrimination Policy & Notice of Nondiscrimination

Chaminade University of Honolulu does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including in admission and employment. Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the University's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both and contact information may be found at the Chaminade University Title IX Office Contact Information and Confidential Resources website. On-campus Confidential Resources may also be found here at CAMPUS CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES.

The University's Nondiscrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures can be located on the University webpage at: <https://chaminade.edu/compliance/title-ix-nondiscrimination-policies-procedures/>.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to the Campus Incident Report form. Chaminade University of Honolulu prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. The NOTICE of NONDISCRIMINATION can be found here: Notice of Nondiscrimination.

Credit Hour Policy

The unit of semester credit is defined as university-level credit that is awarded for the completion of coursework. One credit hour reflects the amount of work represented in the intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement for those learning outcomes. Each credit hour earned at Chaminade University should result in 37.5 hours of engagement. For example, in a one-credit-hour traditional face to face course, students spend 50 minutes in class per week for 15 weeks, resulting in a minimum of 12.5 instructional hours for the semester. Students are expected to engage in reading and other assignments outside of class for at least 2 additional hours per week, which equals an additional 25 hours. These two sums result in a total student engagement time of 37.5 hours for the course, the total engagement time expected for each one credit course at Chaminade. The minimum 37.5 hours of engagement per credit hour can be satisfied in fully online, internship, or other specialized courses through several means, including (a) regular online instruction or interaction with the faculty member and fellow students and (b) academic engagement through extensive reading, research, online discussion, online quizzes or exams; instruction, collaborative group work, internships, laboratory work, practica, studio work, and preparation of papers, presentations, or other forms of assessment. This policy is in accordance with federal regulations and regional accrediting agencies.

This is a three-credit hour course requiring 135 clock hours of student engagement, per the official CUH Credit Hour Policy. Students enrolled in this course are expected to spend about 48 hours in class, 20 hours writing response papers, 5 hours studying for the midterm exam, 20 hours writing and revising the research paper, and 10 hours studying for the final exam. There will be an additional 32 hours of work required beyond what is listed here (course readings, homework assignments, etc.). This additional work will average about 2 hours a week.

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Class Activity	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Week 1 1/12 1/14 1/16	Welcome & Introductions Review Course Syllabus & Assignments Relationship Building Activity		
Week 2 1/19 (MLK Day – No Class) 1/21 1/23	Chapter 1 -Positive Psychology and wellbeing -PERMA profiler -Satisfaction with Life Scale -Scale of positive and negative experiences for assessing your positivity ratio	Chapter 1	3 Positive Psychology Questionnaires Due Chapter 1 Presentation Chapter 1 Reflection
Week 3 1/26 1/28 1/30	Chapter 2 -Goals and Strengths	Chapter 2	Chapter 2 Presentation
Week 4 2/2 2/4 2/6	Chapter 2 -Clarifying Highly Valued Goals -Class Activity – Obituary Letter		Chapter 2 Reflection
Week 5 2/9 2/11 2/13	Chapter 3 -Gratitude, hope, and optimism	Chapter 3	Chapter 3 Presentation
Week 6 2/16 (Presidents' Day – No Class) 2/18 2/20	Chapter 3 -Class Activities – Gratitude Letter, Hope Scale		Chapter 3 Reflection
Week 7 2/23 2/25 2/27	Chapter 4 -Savoring, flow, and mindfulness -Class mindfulness activities	Chapter 4	Chapter 4 Presentation Chapter 4 Reflection

Week 8 3/2 3/4 3/6	Chapter 5 Emotional intelligence -Class Activities - Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale, Strategies for enhancing emotional intelligence	Chapter 5	Chapter 5 Presentation Chapter 5 Reflection
Week 9 3/9 3/11 3/13	Review for Midterm Exam Midterm Exam March 13 Chapters 1-5		
Week 10 3/16 3/18 3/20	Chaminade Spring Break March 16-20		
Week 11 3/23 3/25 3/27	Chapter 6 -Giftedness, Creativity, and Wisdom -Class Activities – Grit-S Scale, Brief Wisdom Screening Scale	Chapter 6	Chapter 6 Presentation Chapter 6 Reflection
Week 12 3/30 4/1 4/3 (Good Friday – No Class)	Chapter 7 -Positive Self -Class Activities – Brief Cope Scale, Revised Posttraumatic Growth Inventory, Progressive Muscle Relaxation exercises	Chapter 7	Chapter 7 Presentation Chapter 7 Reflection
Week 13 4/6 4/8 4/10	Chapter 8 -Positive Relationships -Class Activities – CASES, Prosocial Tendencies Measures	Chapter 8	Chapter 8 Presentation Chapter 8 Reflection
Week 14 4/13 4/15 4/17	Chapter 9 -Positive psychology interventions -Class Activities – final wrap up	Chapter 9	Chapter 9 Presentation Chapter 9 Reflection
Week 15 4/20 4/22 4/24	Extra Presentations Sharing of Strengths and Resilience Research Paper		Additional Presentations not covered in book chapters

			Strengths & Resilience Research Paper Due 4/24
Week 16 4/27 4/29 5/1	Review for Final Exam Final Exam May 1 Chapters 6-9		

Chapter Presentation Sign-ups

Chapter 1 -

Chapter 2 -

Chapter 3 -

Chapter 4 -

Chapter 5 -

Chapter 6 -

Chapter 7 -

Chapter 8 -

Chapter 9 -

Positive Psychology and the Schools -

Positive Psychology in the Workplace -

Positive Psychology in the Home Environment -

Positive Psychology in our Government –

Positive Psychology and Relationships –

Positive Psychology and Religion -