



**Chaminade**  
**University**  
OF HONOLULU

**Positive Psychology Syllabus**  
[Chaminade University Honolulu](#)  
3140 Waiialae Avenue - Honolulu, HI 96816

## Course Overview

**Course Number:** PSY 455

**Course Title:** Positive Psychology

**Department Name:** Psychology

**Term:** Spring 2026

**Course Credits:** 3

**Class Meeting Days/Hours:** Asynchronous, at your own pace

**Course Website Address (Canvas):** <https://chaminade.instructure.com/>

**Instructor Name:** Abby Halston, Ed.D, NCC, LMFT

**Email:** [abby.halston@chaminade.edu](mailto:abby.halston@chaminade.edu)

**Office Telephone:** 808-739-4641

**Office Location:** Behavioral Sciences #111A

**Office Hours:** Mondays 10am-12pm and by appointment

### University Course Catalog 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, well-being, 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.

### Course Overview

This course provides an introduction to the science related to happiness, well-being, flourishing and the positive aspects of human experience. Students will gain an understanding of what contributes to well-being and how to build the enabling conditions of a life worth living. Each week will offer students an opportunity to explore the concepts (e.g., biological, psychological, social, emotional), the research behind the concepts, and evidence-based experiential activities that enhance well-being. Students will engage in a detailed analysis and evidence-based positivity change process utilizing validated questionnaires and positive psychology and well-being enhancing interventions.

### Marianist Values

This class represents one component of your education at Chaminade University of Honolulu. An education in the Marianist Tradition is marked by five principles and you should take every opportunity possible to reflect upon the role of these characteristics in your education and development:

1. Education for formation in faith
2. Provide an integral, quality education
3. Educate in family spirit
4. Educate for service, justice and peace

5. Educate for adaptation and change

**Native Hawaiian Values**

Education is an integral value in both Marianist and Native Hawaiian culture. Both recognize the transformative effect of a well-rounded, value-centered education on society, particularly in seeking justice for the marginalized, the forgotten, and the oppressed, always with an eye toward God (Ke Akua). This is reflected in the ‘Olelo No’eau (Hawaiian proverbs) and Marianist core beliefs:

1. Educate for Formation in Faith (Mana) E ola au i ke akua (‘Olelo No’eau 364) May I live by God
2. Provide an Integral, Quality Education (Na’auao) Lawe i ka ma’alea a kū’ono’ono (‘Olelo No’eau 1957) Acquire skill and make it deep
3. Educate in Family Spirit (‘Ohana) ‘Ike aku, ‘ike mai, kōkua aku kōkua mai; pela iho la ka nohana ‘ohana (‘Olelo No’eau 1200) Recognize others, be recognized, help others, be helped; such is a family relationship
4. Educate for Service, Justice and Peace (Aloha) Ka lama kū o ka no’eau (‘Olelo No’eau 1430) Education is the standing torch of wisdom
5. Educate for Adaptation and Change (Aina) ‘A’ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho’okahi (‘Olelo No’eau 203) All knowledge is not taught in the same school

**Psychology Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)**

1. Students will identify key concepts, principles, and overarching themes in psychology.
2. Students will exhibit the value of adaptation and change through the critical thinking process of interpretation, design, and evaluation of psychological research.
3. Students will exhibit effective writing and oral communication skills within the context of the field of psychology.
4. Students will exhibit the value of educating the whole person through the description and explanation of the dynamic nature between one's mind, body, and social influences.

**Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Verbalize insight into their own strengths and virtues using positive psychology concepts aimed at increasing happiness and overall quality of life. (PLO1; PLO2)
2. Explain the scientific method and research as it applies to positive psychology such as research on positive psychology principles, strategies, and skills. (PLO2; PLO3; PLO4)
3. Recognize the impact of cultural diversity and ethical issues related to positive psychology. (PLO2; PLO4)

**Program Linking Statement**

This 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.

**Articulation of Characteristics and Values**

While all five characteristics are present in this course, we will pay particular attention to “educate for the adaption to change.” This course will demonstrate methods for incorporating complex questions of adapting emotions, motivation, wellbeing, mindfulness, health, spirituality to rapid social and technological changes.

**Alignment of Learning Outcomes**

	<b>CLO 1</b>	<b>CLO 2</b>	<b>CLO 3</b>
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<b>Marianist Values</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Program Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1, 2</b>

### Course Prerequisites

In addition to the course pre-requisites (EN 102 and PSY 101), students should have reliable access to the Internet in order to complete the coursework in Canvas. Additionally, students should have strong time-management skills. If you find that you are having difficulty progressing through this course in our Flex course structure, I recommend that you reach out to an advisor by emailing [flex@chaminade.edu](mailto:flex@chaminade.edu).

### Required Learning Materials

Compton, W. & Hoffman E. (2020). Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness and Flourishing. (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing. ISBN: 978-1-5443-2292-6 <https://chaminade.instructure.com/>

### Hardware Requirements

Canvas is accessible from both PC and Mac computers with a reliable internet connection. You will also need to be able to access audio and video files. Subsequently, you should have access to speakers or headphones that allow you to hear the audio.

### Software Requirements

You will need to have some ability to listen to audio in an mp3 format, watch videos in mp4 format, stream online videos, and read .pdf files. There are a number of free software online that can be downloaded for free. If you need assistance with locating software please feel free to contact me or Chaminade Help Desk at [helpdesk@chaminade.edu](mailto:helpdesk@chaminade.edu) or (808) 735-4855.

### Technical Assistance for Canvas Users

Search for help on specific topics or get tips in [Canvas Students](#)

[Live chat with Canvas Support for students](#)

Canvas Support Hotline for students: +1-833-209-6111

Watch this [video to get you started](#)

[Online tutorials](#): click on “Students” role to access tutorials

Contact the Chaminade IT Helpdesk for technical issues: [helpdesk@chaminade.edu](mailto:helpdesk@chaminade.edu) or call (808) 735- 4855

### Tutoring and Writing Services

Chaminade is proud to offer free, one-on-one tutoring and writing assistance to all students. Tutoring and writing help is available on campus at Kōkua ‘Ike: Center for Student Learning in a variety of subjects (including, but are not limited to: biology, chemistry, math, nursing, English, etc.) from trained Peer and Professional Tutors. Please check Kōkua ‘Ike’s website (<https://chaminade.edu/advising/kokua-ike/>) for the latest times, list of drop-in hours, and information on scheduling an appointment. Free online tutoring is also available via Tutor.com. Tutor.com can be accessed 24/7 from your Canvas account. Simply click Account – Notifications – Tutor.com. For more information, please contact Kōkua ‘Ike at [tutoring@chaminade.edu](mailto:tutoring@chaminade.edu) or 808-739-8305.

### Grading Scale

Letter grades are given in all courses except those conducted on a credit/no credit basis. Grades are calculated from the student’s daily work, class participation, quizzes, tests, term papers, reports and the final examination. They are interpreted as follows:

Total possible points = 266 points

Letter Grade	Range
A	100-90%
B	89-80%
C	79-70%
D	69-60%
F	59-0%

- A - Outstanding scholarship and an unusual degree of intellectual initiative
- B - Superior work done in a consistent and intellectual manner
- C - Average grade indicating a competent grasp of subject matter
- D - Inferior work of the lowest passing grade, not satisfactory for fulfillment of prerequisite course work
  
- F - Failed to grasp the minimum subject matter; no credit given

### Grades of “Incomplete”

A student in good standing in a course, may petition to the instructor for an “I” grade. This grade is appropriate only if extraordinary conditions beyond the control of the student have led to an inability to complete course requirements. When submitting a grade, the “I” must be accompanied by the alternative grade that will be automatically assigned after 30 days. These include, IB, IC, ID and IF. If only an “I” is submitted, the default grade is F. The completion of the work, evaluation, and reporting of the final grade is due within 30 days after the end of the term. The time limit may extend under exceptional circumstances with approval. Any student who has incomplete grades into the next semester will be required to review their course schedule with the Office of Student Success before the end of the drop/add period.

### Writing Policy

Assignments in this course will be written using APA formatting.

APA formatting tutorial: <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>

### Course resources

Resource	Service(s) Provided
Sullivan Family Library (Chaminade Library)  Lynette Teruya, Librarian Lynette.teruya@chaminade.edu 808-739-4680	Tools to efficiently identify and access literature about an education research topic of your choosing  Available to assist with literature searches as well as answer questions regarding research
The Purdue Owl <a href="https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html">https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html</a>	Online resource for writing, structuring your paper, and citing research using APA formatting.
Grammar Girl <a href="https://plus.google.com/u/0/+MignonFogartyGrammarGirl?rel=author">https://plus.google.com/u/0/+MignonFogartyGrammarGirl?rel=author</a>	Grammar Girl provides short, friendly tips to improve your writing. Named one of Writer's Digest's 101 best websites for writers multiple times.

### Citations and References

Any assignments that includes cited research should include a Reference page, listing your full source/references. Examples of references in APA format:

- Please cite a source every time you copy a phrase, quote, or paraphrase someone else’s words. If you use someone’s words verbatim, you will have to use quotation marks and in parenthesis note the author’s last name, year of publication, and the page from which you took the quote.

- Example of how to cite a direct quote: “Past research has indicated that “becoming parents heightens couples’ awareness of their identity intersections and they turn towards mutually supporting each other” (Iwamoto, 2020, p. 121).
- If you paraphrase or just report on what you’ve read of someone’s publication, use the parentheses but omit the page number.
- Always use the (Author, Year) format. Please refer to APA formatting requirements in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. The Purdue website can also be helpful: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

## **Instructor and Student Communication**

Please email me directly at [abby.halston@chaminade.edu](mailto:abby.halston@chaminade.edu). Response time is 24-48 hours.

## **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](mailto:ada@chaminade.edu)). **Title IX Compliance**

Chaminade University of Honolulu recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. Sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse will NOT be tolerated at CUH. If you have been the victim of sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse, we encourage you to report this matter promptly. As a faculty member, I am interested in promoting a safe and healthy environment, and should I learn of any sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse, I must report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources by visiting Campus Ministry, the Dean of Students Office, the Counseling Center, or the Office for Compliance and Personnel Services.

## **Attendance Policy**

It is expected that you will be active on Canvas and complete all of the required assignments and exams by the last day of this class.

Students are expected to attend regularly all courses for which they are registered. Student should notify their instructors when illness or other extenuating circumstances prevents them from attending class and make arrangements to complete missed assignments. Notification may be done by emailing the instructor’s Chaminade email address, calling the instructor’s campus extension, or by leaving a message with the instructor’s division office. It is the instructor’s prerogative to modify deadlines of course requirements accordingly. Any student who stops attending a course without officially withdrawing may receive a failing grade.

Students with disabilities who have obtained accommodations from the Chaminade University of Honolulu ADA Coordinator may be considered for an exception when the accommodation does not materially alter the attainment of the learning outcomes.

Federal regulations require continued attendance for continuing payment of financial aid. When illness or personal reasons necessitate continued absence, the student should communicate first with the instructor to review the options. Anyone who stops attending a course without official withdrawal may receive a failing grade or be withdrawn by the instructor at the instructor’s discretion.

## **Academic Conduct Policy**

Any community must have a set of rules and standards of conduct by which it operates. At Chaminade, these standards are outlined so as to reflect both the Catholic, Marianist values of the institution and to honor and respect students as responsible

adults. All alleged violations of the community standards are handled through an established student conduct process, outlined in the Student Handbook, and operated within the guidelines set to honor both students' rights and campus values.

Students should conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the ideals of the University. This includes knowing and respecting the intent of rules, regulations, and/or policies presented in the Student Handbook, and realizing that students are subject to the University's jurisdiction from the time of their admission until their enrollment has been formally terminated. Please refer to the Student Handbook for more details. A copy of the Student Handbook is available on the Chaminade website.

For further information, please refer to the Student Handbook which is linked annually on the following webpage:  
<https://chaminade.edu/current-students/>

### **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 45 hours of engagement. This equates to one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester, 10 week term, or equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time. Direct instructor engagement and out-of-class work result in total student engagement time of 45 hours for one credit.

The minimum 45 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. For this course hourly: chapter reading (30), chapter assessments (40), Journal research articles (20), final research paper (30), Final Exam (15).

### **Assessments/Assignments**

#### **End of Chapter Personal Exploration: (12 activities @ 6 points each)**

Students will complete the end of chapter activity that will allow for further exploration of the chapters core concepts in a 2-3 page summary. Make sure to read the activity at the start of the week, as many activities have you track your behavior/thoughts throughout the week.

#### **Chapter quizzes- (12 quizzes @ 7.5 points each)**

For each chapter students will complete chapter quiz to assess comprehension of the chapter concepts.

#### **Journal Article Reviews (24 points):**

You will review 7 journal articles related to the field of positive psychology in order to learn more about the research theory, sample populations, and research results guiding the field.

#### **Mindfulness Term Paper (60 points):**

This course focuses on positive psychology by exploring the theory, research, and practical applications. The intention of this paper is for you to delve more deeply into the research, theory, and applications of mindfulness for a specific population (Children, Teens, or Adults).

Your paper will involve (1) a theory section, on why mindfulness could be an effective intervention for your selected population (2) a research section, summarizing the body of literature thus far, (3) a case example of how you would actually

apply mindfulness, including specific practices and techniques, and (4) Directions for future research and clinical exploration. Multicultural and diversity issues should be integrated throughout the paper, with a specific focus on how your personal values, cultural identity, and beliefs inform your perspective.

## 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.

*The above quotes were taken directly from:* 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.

*The above quotes were taken directly from:* 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.

*The above quotes were taken directly from:*

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.

*The above quotes were taken directly from:*

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