

## PHIL 220—Philosophy of Happiness (Online)

### Description of Course

Happiness matters to us like few things do. It is something that people think of as integral to a life worth living. In this and the last century, large numbers of self-help books that purport to teach us how to be happy have come out, and there is a huge new field of ‘happiness studies,’ encompassing positive psychology, politics, and law. Unfortunately, discussions of happiness are often confusing if not confused, since it is often not clear what the authors think happiness is. Is it feeling good? Is it having a certain kind of a positive attitude towards your present state or your life as a whole? Is it having a life that meets certain objective conditions? In this course, we will ask what happiness is and critically evaluate major answers to this question. We will also discuss what the significance of happiness is (that is, what role happiness should play in our lives). In doing so, we will look at different philosophical traditions of thinking about happiness as well as some contemporary psychological research. Along the way, we will have the opportunity to look at how the work of scholars from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups nuances and complicates our understanding of happiness by exploring the oppressive aspects of this concept.

### Instructor and Contact Information

**Instructor name:** Santiago Sanchez Borboa (he/his/him)

**Email:** [ssanchezborboa@email.arizona.edu](mailto:ssanchezborboa@email.arizona.edu)

**Office Hours:** by appointment. Do feel free to set up an appointment with me to discuss any specific philosophical issues in the course you may be struggling with. Philosophy is inherently a conversation, and real-time discussion is always helpful.

**Course Home Page:** <https://d2l.arizona.edu/d2l/home/1172538>

### Course Format and Teaching Methods

Online readings, lectures, and quizzes.

### Course Objectives

Students will:

1. Read philosophical texts and interpret, explain, and assess arguments about the nature of happiness and well-being.
2. Study and evaluate theories of the nature of happiness.
3. Engage critically psychological research and data pertaining to the scientific study of happiness.

4. Work out their own view on discussed topics through an extended writing process including one revised paper in response to comments on a previous draft.
5. Explore what the role happiness ought to play in one's life

### Expected Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Formulate the strongest version of their own argument and respond charitably to objections
2. Think and write critically about philosophical issues pertaining to happiness and well-being
3. Understand and critically assess theories concerning the nature of happiness and well-being
4. Describe the most prominent philosophical theories of the nature of happiness
5. Provide knowledge of some issues in the scientific study of happiness

### Absence and Class Participation Policy

The UA's policy concerning Class Attendance, Participation, and Administrative Drops is available at: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/class-attendance-participation-and-administrative-drop>

The UA policy regarding absences for any sincerely held religious belief, observance or practice will be accommodated where reasonable, <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy>.

Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean Designee) will be honored. See: <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/absences>

Watching the course lectures, turning in quizzes, and generally turning in assignments are vital to the learning process. I understand some of the hardships students can face (especially during a global pandemic). For this reason, I am generally understanding of late work.

That said, grading takes time. The due dates here reflect the way I can provide feedback in a timely manner.

Turning in work late causes delays not only for your own grade and feedback but for others' as well. If you have to turn in an assignment late, please let me know no later than 1 day after the due date to work out an extension. Please note that the later the

term goes, the less wiggle room there will be for extensions. Standards will be stricter for papers than for other assignments.

If you anticipate being unable to participate in class online activities, please contact me as soon as possible.

To request a disability-related accommodation to this attendance policy, please contact the Disability Resource Center at (520) 621-3268 or [drc-info@email.arizona.edu](mailto:drc-info@email.arizona.edu). If you are experiencing unexpected barriers to your success in your courses, the Dean of Students Office is a central support resource for all students and may be helpful. The Dean of Students Office is located in the Robert L. Nugent Building, room 100, or call 520-621-7057.

### Makeup Policy for Students Who Register Late

Students who register after the first class meeting should contact the instructor to make up missed assignments/quizzes. The deadline for making up missed material is by the end of the second week (6/19).

### Course Communications

We will be communicating by means of the D2L course page and by UA email-address: [ssanchezborboa@email.arizona.edu](mailto:ssanchezborboa@email.arizona.edu)

### Required Texts or Readings

All readings will be posted on D2L by the instructor.

### Assignments and Examinations: Schedule/Due Dates

- There will be two assigned papers total. One paper due at the end of the second week of the course (on 6/19 at 11:59 pm), and a rewrite of that paper based on feedback you receive due at the end of the fourth week (7/13 at 11:59 pm).
- There will be 14 quizzes based on the readings and lectures due every Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday at 11:59 pm.
- There will be two exams total. One midterm due at the end of the third week (6/26 at 11:59 pm), and the final due at the end of the fifth week (7/7 at 11:59 pm). These will consist of multiple-choice questions from the quizzes and a short take-home essay.

### Writing Requirement

All Tier One and Tier Two General Education Courses are writing intensive (<http://gened.arizona.edu/proposal-guidelines/writing-requirement>).

This course is a **writing intensive, Tier 2 General Education course**. As such, it places a premium on thinking critically and reading texts closely as well as on writing. You will write a minimum of **2500 words total**: You will be required to write one 1000-word paper and then to rewrite it based on feedback. Additionally, you will write two 750-word essay exams.

## Final Exam

The final exam will be due on **7/7** at 11:59 pm. Here is a link to the Final Exam Regulations and Final Exam Schedule, <https://registrar.arizona.edu/faculty-staff-resources/room-class-scheduling/schedule-classes/final-exams>

## Grading Scale and Policies

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

**Online D2L Quizzes (Multiple Choice + Short Answer):** 30% of the final course grade – your lowest four quizzes will be dropped.

**Paper:** 30% of course grade, with the initial submission worth 15% and the rewrite worth 15%.

**Mid-term Exam:** 20% of course grade, with the multiple-choice portion being worth 15% and the short essay portion being worth 5%.

**Final Exam:** 20% of course grade, with the multiple-choice portion being worth 15% and the short essay portion being worth 5%.

There is a quiz corresponding to every lecture/reading assignment. These quizzes serve as a check on your comprehension of the material.

The paper topic will be assigned the second week of the course. Papers that do not address the assigned topic will not be accepted. I will return the paper you initially submit with comments, and you will be required to rewrite it in light of the feedback you receive and resubmit it.

The exams will consist of a multiple-choice section and a short essay section. Essays that do not address the set questions will not be accepted.

If you know that you will be unable to turn in an assignment for a legitimate reason, notify me in advance, preferably by email ([ssanchezborboa@email.arizona.edu](mailto:ssanchezborboa@email.arizona.edu)). Excuses, documented by a third party (e.g., the Campus Health Service) are to be provided in a timely manner (usually, within 24 hours of the missed class).

## Grading Scale:

>90% = A  
80% - 89% = B  
70% - 79% = C  
60% - 69% = D  
<60% = E

- Grades will be rounded up from .5 (e.g., a 79.5 will earn a B while a 79.4 will earn a C).
- There is a possibility that final grades will be assigned on a curve that creates slightly higher grades overall, but there is no guarantee of that.
- No extra credit will be offered.

As mentioned above, I understand some of the hardships students can face (especially during a global pandemic). For this reason, I am generally understanding of late work. If you have to turn in an assignment late, please let me know no later than 1 day after the due date to work out an extension. After 1 day of the due date has passed without arranging for an extension, you will lose a full-letter grade (e.g., a B- goes to a C-). You will lose a subsequent full-letter grade for every day that passes after that until you turn the assignment in or arrange for an extension.

#### Incomplete (I) or Withdrawal (W):

Requests for incomplete (I) or withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with University policies, which are available at <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/grades-and-grading-system#incomplete> and <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/grades-and-grading-system#Withdrawal> respectively.

#### Dispute of Grade Policy

Grade appeals must be written, submitted no earlier than 48 hours and no later than two weeks after the graded work is returned, and should specify concrete reasons why you think the grade should be changed. That you don't like the grade or feel that you deserve a better one is not a reason.

#### A Note on the Reading:

If you have never taken a philosophy course before, then the reading material for this course may be far more challenging than any academic material you've encountered before. Be prepared to *work* on the reading. You should expect to have to read the material more than once.

#### A Note on Your Class Grade:

If you ask me what your current grade in the class is, I will not respond. You can figure that out yourself by:

1. adding up all the points you've earned on the assignments so far,
2. adding the total possible points on the assignments so far,
3. dividing what you get in step 1 over what you get in step 2.

This will give you a decimal value, which multiplied by 100 gives you your grade in percentage points.

### Word to the Wise

Measured in opportunity costs, this is some of the most expensive time in your whole life. Treat it as the valuable resource it actually is. You've decided to take a class, so take it. Put something into it. Get something out of it. If you take the time and make the effort, you can take home a whole new way of approaching the problems life throws your way.

### Scheduled Topics/Activities

#### Part 1: The Philosophy of Happiness

##### Week 1

#### **Unit 1. What Is Happiness? Hedonism: Happiness as Pleasure**

**6/6: Introductory Lecture;** J. Bentham, "Of the Principle of Utility", "Value of a Lot of Pleasure or Pain, How to be Measured", "Push-Pin vs. Poetry"

**Quiz 1 on D2L due by Wednesday 6/8 at 11:59 pm**

**6/8:** F. Feldman, "What Is this Thing Called Happiness" Ch. 6 of *What Is this Thing Called Happiness*;

**Quiz 2 on D2L due by Friday 6/10 at 11:59 pm**

#### **Unit 2. What Is Happiness? Desire Satisfaction Theories: Happiness as Getting What You Want**

**6/10:** J. Griffin "Well-Being" selections; F. Feldman, "Whole Life Satisfaction Concepts of Happiness" Ch. 5 of *What Is this Thing Called Happiness*

**Quiz 3 on D2L due by Sunday 6/12 at 11:59 pm**

##### Week 2:

#### **Unit 3. What Is Happiness? Objective List Theories: Happiness as The Valuable Things in Life**

**6/13:** I. Robeyns, selections from "The Capability Approach: a theoretical survey" (93 – 105).

**Quiz 4 on D2L due by Wednesday 6/15 ay 11:59 pm**

**Unit 4. What Is Happiness? Eudaimonism: Happiness as Living the Good Life**

6/15: J. Annas, "Happiness as Achievement"; Plato, *Euthydemus*, selections

**Quiz 5 on D2L due by Friday 6/17 at 11:59 pm**

**Unit 5. What Does Happiness Do? How Happiness Is Used to Justify Oppression**

6/17: S. Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, selections

**Quiz 6 on D2L due by Sunday 6/19 at 11:59 pm**

**Paper due by Sunday 6/19 at 11:59 pm**

**Part 2: The Psychology of Happiness**

Week 3:

**Unit 1. Psychological Measures of Well-Being**

6/20: E. Diener, "Subjective Well-Being: the Science of Happiness and A Proposal for a National Index"

**Quiz 7 on D2L due by Wednesday 6/22 at 11:59 pm**

6/22: D. Kahneman, "35. Two Selves" and "36. Life as a Story" from *Thinking Fast & Slow*

**Quiz 8 on D2L due by Friday 6/24 at 11:59 pm**

**Unit 2. The Psychology of Flow and Happiness**

6/24: J. Nakamura, Csikszentmihalyi, "Flow Theory and Research" Ch. 18 in *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*

**Quiz 9 on D2L due by Sunday 6/26 at 11:59 pm**

**Midterm due by Sunday 6/26 at 11:59 pm**

**Papers Returned by Sunday 6/26 at 11:59 pm**

Week 4:

**Unit 3. Positive Psychology**

6/27: M. Seligman, Steen, Park, Peterson "Positive Psychology Progress: Empirical Validation of Interventions"

**Quiz 10 on D2L due by Wednesday 6/29 at 11:59 pm**

#### **Unit 4. Feminist Critique of Positive Psychology**

6/29: A. Gore "Grumpy Nuns Die Young: Women and the Science of Joy" Ch. 2 of *F\*ck Happiness: How Women Are Ditching the Cult of Positivity and Choosing Radical Joy*

**Quiz 11 on D2L due by Friday 7/1 at 11:59 pm**

### **Part 3: The Significance of Happiness**

#### **Unit 1. Eudaimonism as an Ethical Theory**

7/1 J. Annas, selections from "1. Making Sense of My Life as a Whole" "15. Happiness, Success, and What Matters" from *Morality of Happiness*

**Quiz 12 on D2L due by Sunday 7/3 at 11:59 pm**

**Paper Rewrite due by Sunday 7/3 at 11:59 pm**

Week 5:

#### **Unit 2. Feminist Critiques of Happiness**

7/4: S. Ahmed, "Killing Joy: Feminism and the History of Happiness"

**Quiz 13 on D2L due by Wednesday 7/6 at 11:59 pm**

#### **Unit 3. Cruel Optimism & Complexities in Flourishing and Desire**

7/6: L. Berlant, "Introduction" from *Cruel Optimism*

**Quiz 14 on D2L due by Wednesday 7/6 at 11:59 pm**

**7/7: FINAL DUE by 11:59 pm**

#### **Classroom Behavior Policy**

This is a wholly online course, so there will not be a classroom setting where we congregate as a class. Nevertheless, you are expected to be an active participant in the



course by regularly doing the assigned work. This will include readings, taking quizzes, and writing reflections on that material. The course is self-paced, but you are expected to complete graded assignments by their due dates.

You are expected to be respectful towards the instructor and towards your fellow students in all online interactions. Here are some **Common Practices and Standards for Online Interactions**:

- **Communication.** Maintain the same standard of behavior and ethics that you would follow in a face-to-face context.
- **Tone.** Treat others with respect. Be mindful of your tone and how that is conveyed in your writing style. Do NOT use ALL CAPS. It is considered shouting and not appropriate in a classroom. Avoid sarcasm and irony as it is easily misinterpreted in an online environment.
- **Clarity and Content.** Be succinct: write, reread, and then post. Carefully consider what you have written. Does it make sense? Is it free from errors? Is it substantive? Is it unnecessarily confrontational or offensive?
- **Contribute.** Share your knowledge, insight, and questions. Be an active contributor to the learning community. These issues are fascinating but difficult. Your own take and questions on the material are bound to be appreciated by others.
- **Be forgiving.** If someone makes a mistake or does something inappropriate, address it privately and politely. You can always let the instructor know and ask them to address it as well.

### Threatening Behavior Policy

The UA Threatening Behavior by Students Policy prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to oneself. See <http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students>.

### Accessibility and Accommodations

At the University of Arizona, we strive to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please contact the Disability Resource Center (520-621-3268, <https://drc.arizona.edu/>) to establish reasonable accommodations.

### Code of Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See: <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academic-integrity/students/academic-integrity>.

The University Libraries have some excellent tips for avoiding plagiarism, available at <http://new.library.arizona.edu/research/citing/plagiarism>.

Selling class notes and/or other course materials to other students or to a third party for resale is not permitted without the instructor's express written consent. Violations to this and other course rules are subject to the Code of Academic Integrity and may result in course sanctions. Additionally, students who use D2L or UA e-mail to sell or buy these copyrighted materials are subject to Code of Conduct Violations for misuse of student e-mail addresses. This conduct may also constitute copyright infringement.

### **Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment Policy**

The University of Arizona is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination. In support of this commitment, the University prohibits discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, based on a protected classification, including race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or genetic information. For more information, including how to report a concern, please see <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>

Our classroom is a place where everyone is encouraged to express well-formed opinions and their reasons for those opinions. We also want to create a tolerant and open environment where such opinions can be expressed without resorting to bullying or discrimination of others.

### **Additional Resources for Students**

UA Academic policies and procedures are available at <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policies>

#### **Campus Health**

<http://www.health.arizona.edu/>

Campus Health provides quality medical and mental health care services through virtual and in-person care.

Phone: 520-621-9202

#### **Counseling and Psych Services (CAPS)**

<https://health.arizona.edu/counseling-psych-services>

CAPS provides mental health care, including short-term counseling services.

Phone: 520-621-3334

#### **The Dean of Students Office's Student Assistance Program**

<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/student-assistance/students/student-assistance>

Student Assistance helps students manage crises, life traumas, and other barriers that impede success. The staff addresses the needs of students who experience issues related to social adjustment, academic challenges, psychological health, physical health,

victimization, and relationship issues, through a variety of interventions, referrals, and follow up services.

Email: [DOS-deanofstudents@email.arizona.edu](mailto:DOS-deanofstudents@email.arizona.edu)

Phone: 520-621-7057

### **Survivor Advocacy Program**

<https://survivoradvocacy.arizona.edu/>

The Survivor Advocacy Program provides confidential support and advocacy services to student survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. The Program can also advise students about relevant non-UA resources available within the local community for support.

Email: [survivoradvocacy@email.arizona.edu](mailto:survivoradvocacy@email.arizona.edu)

Phone: 520-621-5767

### Campus Pantry

*Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. In addition, the University of Arizona Campus Pantry is open for students to receive supplemental groceries at no cost. Please see their website at: [campuspantry.arizona.edu](http://campuspantry.arizona.edu) for open times.*

### Preferred Gender Pronouns

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct instructors on your preferred gender pronouns. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly via email ([ssanchezborboa@email.arizona.edu](mailto:ssanchezborboa@email.arizona.edu)). If you wish to change your preferred name or pronoun in the UAccess system, please use the following guidelines:

**Preferred name:** University of Arizona students may choose to identify themselves within the University community using a preferred first name that differs from their official/legal name. A student's preferred name will appear instead of the person's official/legal first name in select University-related systems and documents, provided that the name is not being used for the purpose of misrepresentation. Students are able to update their preferred names in UAccess.

**Pronouns:** Students may designate pronouns they use to identify themselves. Instructors and staff are encouraged to use pronouns for people that they use for themselves as a sign of respect and inclusion. Students are able to update and edit their pronouns in UAccess.

More information on updating your preferred name and pronouns is available on the Office of the Registrar site at <https://www.registrar.arizona.edu/>.

## Confidentiality of Student Records

<http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/personal-information/family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act-1974-ferpa?topic=ferpa>

## Subject to Change Statement

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.