

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. Additionally, students will learn about the history of MI's development and its accumulated evidence base, particularly in the areas of health-related applications. The intersection with positive psychology frameworks (PERMA and Self-Determination Theory) will also be explored.

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, pain perception, longevity, disease management, cardiac health, physical activity, and nutrition.

3 credits

OnLine

APP 516 — Research Methods and Evaluation in Positive Psychology

This course will introduce students to a wide range of research methodology, including qualitative and quantitative approaches in the study of positive psychology. Concepts will be presented through the lens of specific studies conducted in positive psychology, which serve as models of sound psychometric and methodological design. Students will also learn the necessary skills for both formative and summative program evaluation, which will serve as the foundation for their Capstone project. This will include needs assessment, logic modeling, and measurement, as well as process and outcome evaluation analyses.

3 credits

OnLine

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

This course will take a highly experiential approach to introducing the contemplative practice of cultivating mindfulness and compassion, supplemented by exploration of empirical support, theoretical underpinnings, practical applications and brief initial opportunities to develop the skills of leading these practices. Each course session will include some contemplative practice (led by the instructor) and "homework" will include short practices to be done on a regular basis between course sessions.

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.

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 can 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 core elements of CBT that can take a positive psychology-based approach, including thought records, homework, and schema work. While students are not expected to become CBT clinicians after this course, they will be able to more accurately identify core cognitive mechanisms of adaptive, maladaptive, and optimal functioning that can help in designing effective positive psychology interventions. Emphasis will be placed on the effect of positive psychology and CBT integrations on health and well-being, including case examples. Special topics related to culture, spirituality, chronic pain, athletes, and anxiety will be addressed.

3 credits

OnLine

APP 541 — Practicum I in Happier You/Health Support

In Practicum I, students will be introduced to group-based applied positive psychology and motivational interviewing virtual interventions in educational and healthcare settings. One experience will consist of participating in and reflecting on the personal impacts of A Happier You session, a 7-week multi-component positive psychology group program, as part of a session for the MS in Mental Health Counseling Program students. As part of A Happier You, students will be asked to apply the positive psychology strategies in their own lives each week and reflect on the impact. Students will also observe and participate in the Health Support Program, a community-based motivational interviewing intervention focused on healthy lifestyles and stress management for patients in PCOM's Healthcare Centers. Articles, reflection exercises, and discussions will focus on exploring the evidence base of multi-component positive psychology interventions, while recognizing core practical components of effective group facilitation, motivational interviewing, and positive psychology interventions. Students will further explore cross-cultural research in applied positive psychology related to some of the weekly themes of A Happier You.

1 credits

OnLine

APP 546 — Practicum II in Happier You/Health Support

In Practicum II, students will complete A Happier You Facilitator training, focusing on the virtual group format, where they will begin to apply their knowledge of the program to implementing sessions in a simulated session environment. The class will become the group and students will take turns demonstrating their facilitation skills for each of the 7 sessions. This includes demonstrating the ability to effectively deliver the psychoeducational content of the slides, modeling positive redirection, using affirmation and reflection, working together smoothly with co-facilitators, and responding to two streams of participant contributions at once. Students will also co-facilitate 2 Health Support Groups under supervision, demonstrating their use of motivational interviewing skills. For A Happier You, students will be rated separately on their content grasp and group facilitation, and be given feedback on their practice. For the Health Support Groups, students will be observed and given feedback for improvement.

1 credits

APP 551 — Practicum III in Happier You/Health Support

In Practicum III, students will apply their knowledge and skills from Practicum II, Happier You Facilitator Training and MI work, to co-facilitating a live Happier You group session. Students will be evaluated on their grasp and delivery of the program content, their group facilitation skills, professionalism, redirection ability, proactivity in engagement, collaboration with other team members, use of motivational interviewing in the Happier You context, and positive psychology spirit. Students will receive individual feedback from the instructor, with additional meetings scheduled on an as-needed basis. Students will be expected to demonstrate competent guiding of the group through any of the program's experiential exercises, including the mindfulness of breath and streaming/deep dive practices. Students will apply their MI skills in 2 Health Support Groups during their term. At the end of the practicum course, students will take the Happier You certification test.

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. In particular, students will build on the needs assessment and logic model developed in APP 516, by developing curricula and program activities, as well as an implementation plan for their positive psychology intervention. This will include a plan to implement the intervention in some form (e.g., virtual or in-person) with a population of interest, which must be justified within the research and needs assessment. Students will also develop and carry out an evaluation plan to assess both process and outcome measures. Note that some aspects of the Capstone project must address the biopsychosocial basis of well-being.

3 credits

OnLine