

# APPLIED POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY (APOP)

---

## **APOP 1000 Introduction to Positive Psychology**

Positive psychology is the scientific study of what helps people live full lives. This introductory course focuses on the science of thriving, addressing questions such as what it means to be “happy” and how we can cultivate well-being as individuals, in organizations, and in communities. Explore the foundations of positive psychology, understand the components of well-being, and learn the theory, empirical research, and collective wisdom that supports this conceptual framework. This hands-on course includes experiments and small-group activities designed to help you build your own well-being and participate in an engaged learning community. The instructor recommends that you acquire two texts for this course, either by purchasing them or checking them out of your library: *A Primer in Positive Psychology* by Christopher Peterson and Flourish: *A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being* by Martin E.P. Seligman. For those pursuing a Certificate in Applied Positive Psychology, this course is strongly recommended as a prerequisite for the other three courses.

1 Course Unit

## **APOP 1200 Human Flourishing: Strengths and Resilience**

What does it mean to flourish? What are we like when we are at our best? What helps us bounce back from challenges and adversity? Continuing the exploration of the science of positive psychology, students delve deeply into the study of character strengths as a framework for building positive character and well-being, and explore the concept of resilience, or the ability to overcome challenging situations. In this course, we explore how we can leverage our strengths to more effectively contribute to the greater world and enhance our own well-being. We also study the physical and psychological protective factors that constitute resilience, and how they are cultivated. Students learn about these topics from a scientific and experiential perspective, both as individuals and within our learning community. This course will have required synchronous sessions and the instructor will offer a choice of times. Students will have a more robust learning experience in this course if they first complete Introduction to Positive Psychology.

Also Offered As: LEAD 3500

1 Course Unit

## **APOP 2000 Positive Psychology at Work**

If flourishing is related to our lived daily experience, and approximately 50% of our waking hours are spent working, how do our workplaces contribute to, and diminish, our ability to thrive? Students are exposed to an array of research-informed strategies that have been applied in a variety of disciplines and workplaces, including business, education, health care, and nonprofit organizations. Exploration of case studies and salient research topics such as relationships at work, positive leadership, prosocial behavior, and our sense of meaning and purpose, guide our learning. Students gain an understanding of the variables that contribute to our ability to flourish at work and understand how we both experience and shape our work environments through our individual contributions. This course will have required synchronous sessions and the instructor will offer a choice of times.

Also Offered As: LEAD 3600

1 Course Unit

## **APOP 2200 Flourishing with Others: Building Thriving Relationships**

Interpersonal relationships are key for happiness and well-being. Christopher Peterson, one of the pioneers of positive psychology used to say that the field could be summarized in three words: “Other people matter.” In this course, we will take a deep dive into the research on relationships that work well and foster well-being. We will study positive relationships at different levels, from the closest ones, like families and romantic partnerships, to friendships, relationships between colleagues and in teams at work, to broader communities, and our relationship with nature and our planet. For each of these domains, we will learn practical ways to nurture and improve relationships and to help people flourish through them. This class will combine academic rigor with experiential learning, and it will provide many opportunities for self-reflection, conversation in small teams and applied “experiments” in students’ lives.

1 Course Unit

## **APOP 2900 Understanding the Science of Positive Psychology**

Information about positive psychology research has proliferated in the popular press. How can we become better critical consumers of that information, and ensure we are capable of discerning the nuances of scientific studies? In this course, students will be introduced to some of the methods and approaches used to conduct well-being research and how to interpret the results of that research responsibly. Students will explore how positive psychology concepts are operationalized and measured, learn the strengths and shortcomings of study design, and differentiate between drawing conclusions from a single study vs. a broader body of research within a field. Students will also practice reading and dissecting primary research articles, extracting important information, and distilling this information through accessible scientific communication. This is not a statistics nor a methods course—the goal is to equip students to be critical and informed consumers of research in positive psychology and of the popular articles that describe that research. This course also involves weekly synchronous recitation sessions (scheduling varies). Students will have a more robust learning experience in this course if they first complete Introduction to Positive Psychology.

1 Course Unit

## **APOP 3200 Morality and the Good Life**

Morality pervades everyday life. Far from being confined to the ivory tower, we make moral decisions and engage in moral behavior every day, ranging from the ordinary (e.g., whether to volunteer or return a lost wallet) to the extreme (e.g., whether to donate one’s kidney to a stranger or fight and die for a cause). Morality is central to our evaluations of ourselves and others, and to the wellbeing of ourselves and the societies in which we live. In this course, you will learn about psychological research on morality. We will cover topics such as (1) How people make moral judgments, (2) How and why people have differing judgments of everything from tax rates to dietary preferences, (3) Psychological factors contributing to moral (e.g., altruistic) behavior, and (4) Intersections between moral psychology and our ideals, aspirations and well-being at the individual and societal level. This course aims to introduce you to the psychology of morality, to enable you to be more aware of and effective in navigating moral challenges in daily life.

1 Course Unit

**APOP 3400 Flourishing through Creativity and the Arts**

This course in the Applied Positive Psychology series addresses the question, "How do creative endeavors and engagement with the arts contribute to well-being?" The link between well-being, creativity, and the arts is an emerging field. In this course, you will gain an understanding of the major theories and fundamental findings related to creativity, the arts, and flourishing, including the scientific principles that underlie this research. This course will integrate the latest findings from cutting-edge research (including findings from the new field of the Positive Humanities, launched right here at Penn), and discuss implications for practice and application. Finally, you'll be able to examine interventions and techniques that are emerging from the research, and test them to see how well they may apply in your own life.

1 Course Unit