COURSE DESCRIPTION/INSTRUCTORS STATEMENT

The positive psychology movement has helped restore balance to mainstream psychological science that has often focused on pathology and undesirable facets of human nature (e.g., mental illness, cognitive errors, traumatic experience, prejudice, aggression). Most people are happy most of the time; human cognition usually produces correct or adaptive responses; resilience is common, not exceptional. To better understand typical experience and functioning, we must understand strengths, pleasurable states, accomplishment, pro-social behaviour, and mental health. This course will survey research and theory on these topics, cutting across traditional sub-disciplines such as personality, social, developmental, cognitive, and health psychology. Although the focus of this class will be psychological research, there will be some opportunity for personal reflection and application.

Class time will be used to clarify and further discuss assigned readings, lecture on content that goes beyond required readings, answer student questions, and describe assignments. The class size and format implies lecturing, but we will also incorporate some aspects of a seminar (e.g., at times a more interactive approach to reviewing content that might include brief discussions). By the end of the course, students should develop 1) an understanding of the methods positive psychologists use to create knowledge, 2) a familiarity with the
major theories and findings in positive psychology, 3) greater skill in finding, understanding, and synthesizing primary source material in psychology, and 4) a better understanding of their personal well-being.

**EVALUATION**

Evaluation will include exams with a variety of question formats (e.g., multiple choice, short essay questions), a series of small writing assignments, and one major writing assignment that will require some independent searching, reading, planning, and synthesis.

**TEXT:**

TBD; to include some primary source material (i.e., journal articles) and ‘textbook’ chapters authored by the instructor. There is no textbook to purchase.