

PSYC 3302 A : POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Instructor	John Zelenski
Term	Fall 2026
Course Delivery	In-Person
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Office Hours	TBD

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.

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 (primarily multiple choice), a series of small writing assignments, and one major writing assignment that will require some independent searching, reading, planning, and synthesis.

TEXT:

Zelenski, J. (2024). *Positive Psychology: The Science of Well-Being (2nd Edition)*. Sage Publishing.