

FLOURISHING, Fall 2023
 BSPA-UB-52
 New York University, Stern School of Business
 Mondays, 5-7:45pm, Tisch 200

Professor: [Jonathan Haidt](#), jh3390@stern.nyu.edu

Office hours: After class, and **Thursdays 2:30-4:30pm** in KMC 7-98

Teaching Assistant: Yejin Park, yp2326@stern.nyu.edu. Office hour: TBA, in KMC 7-157, or by zoom, or by appointment

Course Overview: People are like plants: if you get the conditions right, they will usually flourish. So what are those conditions, and why are so many members of Gen Z (born 1996 and later) failing to flourish? We will look at research in social and positive psychology on happiness, virtue, self-change, and personal growth. We will also look at ancient wisdom--insights into mind and heart passed down to us from many cultures because they work. The goal of this course is to help you understand the conditions that lead to flourishing, and then to develop specific habits that will help you to thrive at NYU, at work, and in your personal relationships. Each student will choose a specific "happiness habit" and will design a plan to cultivate the habit over the 14 weeks of the course. The final paper will include a self-evaluation of your progress in becoming stronger, smarter, and more sociable, which will make you happier.

Readings: Please obtain these six books:

- 1) Caroline Webb (2016) [How to have a good day.](#)
- 2) Jonathan Haidt (2006) [The Happiness Hypothesis.](#) (I will use the royalties I earn from the class to donate to a Stern-related charity chosen by the class)
- 3) Dale Carnegie (1936 or 1981) [How to win friends and influence people](#) (do not buy the "digital age" version)
- 4) James Clear (2018), [Atomic Habits](#) ([author homepage](#))
- 5) William Irvine (2021), [The Stoic Challenge](#)
- 6) 5 minute journal: [book is recommended](#); (app is free, but less meditative)

A few additional readings will be posted on our Brightspace page. (Please also see this google doc of [Resources for alumni of Work, Wisdom, Happiness](#))

Grade Breakdown:

- 30% of the grade will be based on your verbal contributions to our classroom discussions, your professionalism, and your wholehearted engagement in the various components of the course.
- 30% will be based on 10 one-page integration papers that you'll submit before each class. [you can skip two of the 12 assigned]
- 40% will be based on your final paper

This course is all about helping you. It is likely to be the best chance you'll ever have to learn how to change your habits and adopt better ones. So don't think about your grade, think about how to get the most out of this class so that you reap dividends for the *rest of your time at NYU, and the rest of your life.*

[More instructions below the detailed syllabus]

Course Schedule:

	BEFORE EACH CLASS: [B]=Brightspace, link to integration paper templates
Class 1 Sep 11	<p>Getting started: Habits, sleep, and your evening routine [Link to slides]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Haidt, <i>The Happiness Hypothesis</i>, Intro and Chapter 1 2) Clear, <i>Atomic Habits</i> ch. 1-3 3) Matt Walker, TED talk, Sleep is your superpower 4) Read this page with instructions on a sleep diary 5) 5 minute Journal: read the intro text, fill it out for at least 2 days <p>DO BEFORE CLASS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Do the reading and fill out the first integration paper. --come to class with ideas for a habit or two that you'd like to change or adopt. --Start 5 minute journal, do at least 2 days of it. --Watch the Matt Walker TED talk. --Begin to notice how well and how much you are sleeping. Are you getting at least 7 hours of good sleep every night? Notice your evening routine, but don't change anything until we talk in class.
Class 2 Sep 18	<p>Getting stronger: Antifragility, stoicism, and your morning routine [link to slides]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Lukianoff/Haidt, <i>Coddling of the American Mind</i>, Ch. 1 (antifragility) [B] 2) Happiness Hypothesis, Ch. 2, changing your mind 3) Clear, ch. 4-6 4) Marcus Aurelius, 5 steps to wisdom, handout on Brightspace [B] 5) Irvine, Stoic Challenge: Intro and ch. 1, 2, and 3 <p>DO BEFORE CLASS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Fill out 5 minute journal at least 5 days; come to class ready to discuss. --Fill out the template for the integration paper for Class #2. What's your morning routine? --notice challenges, apply Irvine's stoic challenge
Class 3 Sep 25	<p>Play and Beauty [class taught by Yejin] [link to slides]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Having Fun: Catherine Price TED talk on Why having fun is the secret to a healthier life 2) Haidt & Keltner, Awe/Responsiveness to Beauty and Excellence (chapter from the VIA Classification of Strengths) Read pages 1-8. [B] 3) Dacher Keltner, New science of awe podcast, with Krista Tippett 4) Susan Magsamen and Ivy Ross Hitting the Aesthetic Triad While Gazing at Art <p>DO BEFORE CLASS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Take an awe walk. And find beauty. See template

<p>Class 4 Oct 2</p>	<p>Getting smarter: Deep work, social media, input control [link to slides]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Webb, Intro and Ch. 1 (science essentials) and ch 2-3 (priorities) 2) Clear, ch. 7-10 3) Cal Newport: Summary of Deep Work, 4) Haidt, Anxious Generation ch. 5 (fundamental harms) <p>Optional: --Cal Newport with Lex Fridman (video is 3 hours long; minutes 2-30 are most important. See the show notes. from 1:00 to 1:30 is social media and email) --Cal Newport recommends this 16 minute video overview. and this case study --check out our shared google doc: Notification Reduction</p> <p>DO BEFORE CLASS: --Decide what changes you'll make to your work habits and digital habits, in light of Newport's arguments</p>
<p>Class 5 Oct 10 Tues.</p>	<p>Getting more sociable: Love, attachment, and relationships [link to slides]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Haidt, Happiness Hypothesis, ch. 6 (love) 2) Webb, ch. 8, 9, 10 (relationships) 3) Perspectives, module 1, Click here to register and begin. then access Perspectives; complete the introductory surveys and module 1. <p>Optional/recommended: 3 pages of text from Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet, on love, and on work [B]</p> <p>Do before class: --Do the Perspectives program. Register and complete the introductory surveys and module 1. --Make progress on your self improvement project</p>
<p>Class 6 Oct 16</p>	<p>Getting stronger #2: Cultivating stoicism, reducing distortions [link to slides]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Irvine, <i>The Stoic Challenge</i>, chapters 4, 7-10 2) HH 7 (adversity) 3) Gillihan, <i>Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Made Simple</i>, Ch. 4 [B] 4) Fill out 3 CBT worksheets; try to catch yourself using a cognitive distortion 5) Finish Perspectives module 2 <p>DO BEFORE CLASS: --notice challenges, apply Irvine's stoic challenge --cog therapy handouts</p>

<p>Class 7 Oct 23</p>	<p>Getting more sociable #2: Taking others' perspectives [link to slides]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Carnegie, Parts 1 (Basic techniques) and 2 (making people like you) 2) Perspectives modules 3 & 4 3) Clear, ch. 16-17 <p>[adding for next year: J.S. Mill, All Minus One, selections; and Daryl Davis]</p> <p>DO BEFORE CLASS: --write in template about a "stoic challenge" that you surmounted</p>
<p>Class 8 Oct 30</p>	<p>Getting happier: What causes happiness? [and perspectives, cont.] [link to slides]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Happiness Hypothesis chapter 5 (happiness) 2) Perspectives modules 5&6 3) Carnegie Part 3 (how to win people over) <p>DO BEFORE CLASS: --Try a meditation app for at least 3 days: Insight Timer, or Calm, or 10% happier. Try one for mindfulness, loving-kindness, anxiety, gratitude.... whatever you think you most need.</p>
<p>Class 9 Nov 6</p>	<p>Getting Smarter #2, focus and productivity [slides]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Newport, Ch 6 (Rule 3) [B] 2) Johann Hari: Extracts from Stolen Focus, in The Guardian 3) Video summary of Hari's book, from Productivity Game, which focuses on what we can do to regain our focus. (9 minute video) 4) Webb, chapters 4-7 (productivity) <p>DO BEFORE CLASS: --Assess your improved focus, input control, and productivity since Class 3. Are you able to do more deep work? Do you have many fewer interruptions? What can you do to get back even more of your limited focus, drawing from Newport, Webb, and Hari?</p>

<p>Class 10 Nov 13</p>	<p>Getting more sociable #3: Embeddedness, fit, and happiness at work [link to slides]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Hive Psychology: Haidt TED talk on Religion and Evolution 2) Amy Wrzesniewski, Finding positive meaning in work [B] 3) Take the free “VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire” at www.viacharacter.org. Click “take the free survey” only. Don't take the one that will ask you to pay. print out or write down your top 5 strengths. 4) Carnegie Part 4 (Be a leader) <p>DO BEFORE CLASS: --In the template, offer an appraisal of how your happiness habit is coming along. What can you do to improve your system?</p>
<p>Class 11 Nov 20</p>	<p>Getting wiser #1 -- wisdom and spirituality [slides]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Barry Schwartz and Ken Sharpe: Practical Wisdom: Ch. 1 and 3 [B] 2) Happiness Hypothesis, ch. 9 (divinity with or without God) 3) The Anxious Generation, Ch. 8 [B] <p>Optional: 4) Abe Maslow: 25 aspects of peak experiences [online excerpt from his book Religions Values, and Peak Experiences]</p> <p>DO BEFORE CLASS: --The integration paper is different this week, a meditation on spirituality</p>
<p>Class 12 Nov 27</p>	<p>Getting wiser #2 -- virtues, anger, and stoicism [link to slides]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Happiness Hypothesis ch. 8 (virtues) 2) Watch Daryl Davis TED talk: Why I, as a black man, attend KKK rallies 3) Happiness Hypothesis, ch. 4 (faults of others) 4) The Stoic Challenge (Irvine), chapter 2, on anger [this was already assigned in class 2; just look back at it and relate it to today's other readings] <p>DO BEFORE CLASS: nothing special, just fill in the template</p>
<p>Class 13 Dec 4</p>	<p>The meaning of life [link to slides]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Stoic Challenge, Part 4, chapters 11-15 (they are very short) 2) Becker: Heartwood. Pages 1-26 [B] 3) Haidt, HH ch. 10, Happiness comes from between <p>DO BEFORE CLASS: --You CAN submit an integration paper for this 13th class, although most of you have already done 10 IPs.</p>

Class 14 Dec. 11	Last Class, Conclusion [link to slides] --one reading or video may be assigned --Student reports on happiness habits --No IP due for this last class
Dec. 17	SUBMIT FINAL PAPER BY 9pm

Three-Part Integration Papers: It is easy to skim through many readings, but hard to remember what you've read unless you do some higher-level integrative processing. To help you do so, please submit an "integration paper" before the start of each class, 10 times (No paper due for class 13, and you can skip 2 others, of your choice). Find the [template text](#) for the week and copy it into a Word file, to submit.

Part one: Summaries. You'll see the title of each reading in the Template (e.g., "Happiness Hypoth, ch. 2.") Try to capture the main idea of the reading in a single sentence. It can have a few clauses in it; one semicolon is permitted. Do this for all the readings, chapters, web pages, and videos assigned for that day. Boiling down to a single sentence can require more processing (and therefore be more beneficial) than writing several sentences.

Part two: Integration: Apply the ideas in the readings to your own life. This should be a full paragraph, or two at most. Don't try to cover every reading but mention at least two. Find connections, ways to use the ideas in the future, or good examples of the ideas from your experience. See if you can derive some novel insight or offer a non-obvious connection.

Part three: Happiness Habits. Provide a brief update on what you did differently over the past week, how the change process is going, and any *insight(s) you have learned about yourself* as a result.

You'll fill in a template that I provide for each week. These will be graded on a three point scale where 2 is a "check," perfectly fine. 3 is a check plus, for the few papers that show unusual depth, insight, or creativity; 1 is a check minus, needs improvement.

Final paper:

Part one is a thoughtful presentation of and reflection on your happiness habits. What did you commit to do differently, what did you *do*, and how did it go? What did you learn about yourself? The key here is not that you were successful, it is that you used psychological principles (1) in a good faith effort to create new habits and (2) to thoroughly analyze the process with the goal of developing increased self-awareness. [1-2 pages single spaced]

Part two is your plan for a flourishing life. Drawing on your "personal happiness list" and all of the course readings, write a letter to yourself which you can read each year on January 1st. Design your life and your ideal career from the perspective of positive psychology. What will you do to maximize your chances of becoming stronger, smarter, more sociable, and happier? [2-4 pages single spaced] If you have another idea for Part 2 of your final paper, I am open to hearing it.

The two parts together should be 4-6 pages single spaced. Please attach your “personal happiness list” as an appendix. The key is to show that you have learned a lot in this class by explicitly referencing and applying concepts and vocabulary from the course readings and class discussions. Put such terms **in bold**. Be sure to talk about your future work and career satisfaction, along with your life, relationships, and goals more generally.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES: See [Syllabus addendum for Haidt undergrad courses](#)