Psychology 331: Psychology of Adjustment
Fall 2000

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Office Hours: Tuesday 3:30-4:30 and by appointment

Class Hours: Tuesday/Thursday, 2 - 3:15

Texts: Burns, D.D. (1999). <u>Feeling good: The new mood therapy</u>. New York: Avon.
      Myers, D.G. (1992). <u>The pursuit of happiness</u>. New York: Avon.
      Seligman, M.E.P. (1998). <u>Learned optimism</u>. New York: Pocket
      Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). <u>Flow: The psychology of optimal experience</u>. New York: Harper.

Lectures: Many lectures will cover material not in the books. You are responsible for this material.
      Therefore, if you miss a lecture for any reason, it is **your responsibility** to get the notes from
      your classmate(s).

Quizzes: There will be a series of 7 quizzes throughout the semester, consisting of multiple-choice and
      short-answer questions about the lectures and readings. At the end of the semester, I will drop
      your lowest quiz score, so your 6 highest quizzes will count toward your grade. If you have an
      unexcused absence and miss a quiz, you may use that as your drop. These quizzes are not
      comprehensive.

      Make-up quizzes will be given <u>only</u> for University-excused absences. The University
      allows the following excused absences: 1) serious illness; 2) illness or death of family member; 3)
      University-related trips; 4) major religious holidays. Documentation (e.g., a letter from a doctor)
      will be required. Otherwise, you will receive a score of zero for a missed exam. If you can
      reasonably anticipate your absence (e.g., for a religious holiday), I will expect you to schedule a
      make-up exam at least 1 week before the scheduled exam date.

Project: You will all be doing a project related to the topics in the course. In October, I will assign you to
      teams. Your team will be meeting throughout the semester to design and carry out a "program"
      to improve your collective adjustment. You will present your program and its results to the class
      during the last 2 weeks of the semester. In addition, each person will write a report, which is **due
      at the beginning of the final exam period (12/12, 8 am)**. There will be no final exam.
      Details about this assignment will be provided for the first team meeting (10/17).

Other University rules: Cheating on any quiz (e.g., the use of "cheat sheets", copying, or working
      together) will minimally result in an E for the course. With regard to plagiarism, "When students
      submit work purported to be their own but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording,
      or anything else from another source without appropriate acknowledgment, the students are guilty
      of plagiarism." These rules apply to all written assignments. Plagiarism will minimally result in an
      E for the course.

Attendance: **You are required to attend class to take the quizzes. You are also required to attend the entire class period for team meetings (10/17, 11/9, and 11/21) and presentations (11/28, 11/30, 12/5, 12/7).** Attendance is not required on regular lecture days, though it is highly recommended, as not all lecture material will be found in the readings. If you miss class on a regular lecture day, it is your responsibility to obtain the information that was provided on that day by getting notes from your classmate(s).

Grades: Points and grades will be assigned as follows. I reserve the right to lower these grade cut-offs; I will not raise them.

6 highest-scoring quizzes	120 points (6 points extra credit possible)
Team presentation	13 points
Project paper	20 points
Attendance	7 points
TOTAL	**160 points**

A	144-160 points
B	128-143 points
C	112-127 points
D	96-111 points
E	0-95 points

Class schedule	Readings
August 24 - September 5	Burns Ch. 2 (pp. 19-27) and Ch. 7 (149-153)
Emotions and emotional problems	
September 7: Quiz 1	
September 7 - September 14	Burns Ch. 3 (pp. 28-49) and Ch. 7 (154-165)
Cognitive theory and therapy	Burns Ch. 1 (pp. 9-18), Ch. 4 (53-80), Ch. 7
September 19: Quiz 2	(165-197), Ch. 10 (261-270)
September 19 - September 26	Burns Ch. 5 (pp. 81-131)
Behavior, stress, and coping	
September 28: Quiz 3	
September 28 - October 5	Myers About This Book and Ch. 1 (pp. 15-30)
The nature of happiness	Myers Ch. 2 (pp. 30-46), Ch. 4 (68-86)
October 10: Quiz 4	Myers Ch. 3 (pp. 47-67), Ch. 6 (105-126)

October 17: FIRST TEAM MEETINGS

October 10 - October 19	Myers Ch. 8 (pp. 142-154), Ch. 9 (155-176
More factors affecting happiness	Myers Ch. 9 (pp. 177-204)
October 24: Quiz 5	Myers Ch. 7 (pp. 125-141)
October 24 - October 31	Seligman Ch. 1-3 (pp. 3-53)

Optimistic attributions   Seligman Ch. 6 (pp. 95-115), Ch. 8 (136-154),
November 2: Quiz 6   Ch. 9 (155-166)
                                                 Seligman Ch. 12 (pp. 207-234), Ch. 15 (281-
                                                            292)

November 2
Adjustment and health video

November 7: HOLIDAY - Election Day
November 9: SECOND TEAM MEETINGS

November 14 - November 16   Csikszentmihalyi Ch. 1 (pp. 1-22), Ch. 2 (23-
Flow   42), Ch. 3 (43-70)
November 21: Quiz 7   Csikszentmihalyi Ch. 4 (pp. 71-93), Ch. 9 (208-
                                                            213), Ch. 10 (214-240)

November 21: THIRD (FINAL) TEAM MEETINGS
November 23: HOLIDAY - Thanksgiving

November 28 - December 7: Project presentations

ADJUSTMENT PROJECT

Your task: Your assignment as a group is to develop a one-week program to improve some aspect of your collective adjustment. This program might take one of the following forms, or it might be something different. The only requirements are that you apply a principle from this course, that it be something you can do every day for a week, and that it be a new program for everyone in the group (e.g., if someone in the group is already practicing relaxation, you should select something else).

Examples:

changing distorted cognitions   increasing pleasure/mastery activities
practicing breathing and relaxation   improving social network/relationships
fostering meaning/faith   changing explanatory style
spending time in flow   regular, aerobic exercise

When you devise your program, be specific. What exactly are you going to do? How often? For how long? Note that some people may do slightly different things within the same program. For example, not everyone would have to do the same type of aerobic exercise, but everyone should decide on how long and how often everyone will exercise.

Step 1: How can you best improve your adjustment? A good rule of thumb is that it's easiest to improve on something that needs improvement! Something that's already going well is harder to improve. As a first step, then, your group might want to assess where you collectively need the most improvement. Here are some suggestions for exercises that could help you do that:

Write a description of your typical weekday and weekend. What's there? What's missing?
Write about a common situation that makes you feel the happiest, and then one that makes you feel the unhappiest. How could you expand the impact of the former and prevent the impact of the latter?
Take the optimism test in <u>Learned Optimism</u> (p. 33 ff.). Are you a pessimist or optimist?
Take the mood questionnaire (attached). Could you use more positive mood, less negative mood, both?
Take the dysfunctional cognitions/moods tests in <u>Feeling Good</u> (depression, p. 20; anger, p. 150; attitudes, p. 272). What cognitions and moods are problems for you?

Talk as a group about the results of these exercises. Do one or two right now to get the conversation started.

Step 2: Assess how you're doing now. The only way you know if you've improved is to measure your adjustment before and after your program. Pick a measure of the thing you want to improve (e.g., activity log, exercise log, mood questionnaire, cognitive test) and take it before you start your program (your "baseline" measure).

Step 3: Implement your program. Keep a log of what you do and when you do it, and measure your improvement during and/or after your program (your "outcome" measure).

Step 4: Present the results of your program to the class. You will have 15 minutes which should be equally shared by all members of your group. You may structure your presentation any way you wish, but your presentation should clearly communicate:

1. A description of your program and why you chose it.
2. What was it like to do your program? Easier or harder than you thought? More or less fun?
3. The effects of the program on your group's adjustment (e.g., mean questionnaire scores before and after). Did it work? Why or why not?
4. Discuss whether you would recommend this program to others. If not, why not?

Step 5: Write your individual paper. Your paper should be 750-1250 words long and contain the following (**please use these subheadings in your paper**):

1. A <u>rationale</u> for the program with referral to scientific knowledge.
2. The <u>design</u> of the program.
3. The <u>effect</u> of the program on the group and on you individually.
4. A <u>discussion</u> of the effects of the program and how it compared with other types of program from the class. Would you choose to repeat your program or select something else? Why?
5. Your <u>intentions</u> for the future. Will you continue in this program? Why or why not?

It will be graded on:
the clarity, correctness, and logic of communication (including spelling and grammar)

(if you have trouble with these things, you may wish to consult the Writing Center for help - their phone number is 7-1356)

thoughtfulness about the program and insight into what constitutes adjustment and the process of improving adjustment

complete content, adequate length, correct structure
(e.g., you have included all the elements listed above)