

## Work, Wisdom, and Happiness

BSPA-GB 3110.30

Mondays 6-9 pm beginning 2/8/16, KMC 3-70

Final Syllabus as of 3/14/16

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Office hours: Mondays 5-6, Thursdays 4-6 KMC 7-98

**Course Overview:** For centuries, work was regarded as nothing but toil— a requirement for earning one's daily bread. But in recent decades, expectations about work have been transformed, as has its very nature. While it still provides one's daily bread, it is also regarded as a major opportunity for people to find purpose, meaning, and happiness in their lives. In this course we'll study the latest research on what makes people happy at work, on how happiness at work improves the quality of work, on how people and organizations develop wisdom, and on what makes a career not just successful but meaningful. We will also discuss some of the impediments—both individual and organizational—to doing meaningful and satisfying work. Students will develop their own visions of their ideal career, and of the ideal company they'd like to lead or work for.

### Course Requirements:

- 1) 25% of the grade will be based on your class participation, which is not just the quantity of your comments but the nature of your engagement with the class.
- 2) 20% will be based on 4 one-page integration papers that you'll submit by 10 am on the day of each class. See below. [THIS HAS BEEN REDUCED TO 3 PAPERS]
- 3) 20% of your grade will be based on your group's "workplace design" report and book report. See below.
- 4) 35% will be based on your final paper [see below]

**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 a total of four one-page "integration papers" (you can skip two of our 6 class days). Each one has two parts:

Part 1: Summaries. Just write a brief version of the title (e.g., "Happiness Hypoth, ch. 2.") Then 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. Trying to boil down a reading to a single sentence may require more processing than writing several sentences.

Part 2: Integration: Apply the ideas in the readings to your own life, workplace, or career. This should be a full paragraph, or two at most. Don't try to cover every reading in the session, but you should mention or draw on at least two of them. Find connections, ways to use the ideas in the future, or good examples of the ideas from your work experience. This paragraph is the main thing you'll be graded on, so see if you can derive some novel insight or offer a non-obvious connection.

Keep the entire document to a single piece of paper, single-spaced, 12 point font, with no title page, so that I can easily print them all out. Be sure to put your name at the top. Submit your homework on NYU Classes under Assignments. They will be graded on a 1-3 scale where 2="check", which means that you meet our normal high standard for

Stern work, 3 = “check plus,” reserved for the few people (at most 20%) who showed unusual depth, insight, or creativity, and 1 = “check minus.”

**Readings:** We will read 2 recent books together, and you will each read one other book from a long list that we’ll create together (in this [Google doc](#)). In this way we’ll all get access to the very best books that are now flooding the market. Other readings will be book chapters or journal articles that I will make available on our classes page. I’ll try to create a zipped file for each week. Please buy these 2 books right away:

- 1) John Mackey & Raj Sisoda (2014) *Conscious Capitalism*
- 2) Caroline Webb (2016) *How to have a good day*.

**Book reports (due March 21):** Each group will pick one book from our [Google doc](#) and will write a 2-3 page (single spaced) book report. The goal is to extract and convey the maximum value to your classmates for the minimum investment of their time. 60-80% of the report should be a chapter by chapter summary. For each chapter, write the chapter title and then try to summarize what it’s about in 1-4 sentences. Include any quotations that are particularly inspiring or useful for our class. At the end, write a section called “Lessons for Happiness at Work” and have 1-3 paragraphs, or a list of bullet points, where you apply the lessons of the book. Don’t just restate them – do some original thinking about how you or your classmates could combine the book with other things we’ve read in the course to A) design a happier workplace and B) have a happier career/life as an individual. Try to capture what is right or useful about the book, but if you find parts to be wrong or shallow, say so too.

Everyone in your group should read the introduction and first chapter or two, and the last chapter. Beyond that you can divide up the chapters, but if your book is short you might as well all read the whole thing. If your book is unusual (like having 30 short chapters) check with me about how to do the report. Your group will make a 4 minute presentation on the argument/thesis of the book and its lessons for our class, and then we’ll have 3-5 minutes of Q&A. You’ll email me the report by 9 pm the day *after* your presentation. I’ll put all the reports together and email them to the class.

**Workplace Design Presentations and Reports (due March 28):** Each group will write up a report applying the ideas from this course and its readings to a company in your chosen industry. The goal is to take the perspective of a workplace designer, which is an important and often neglected part of leadership. You can do the report in any way you like, but a suggested format is to assume that your group was a group of unhappy employees at a major company in your industry. You have seen the kind of company and workplace you do NOT want, and so you left that company to start your own. You have found investors who believe the research (presented by Pfeffer, Mackey, and also in Dan Lerner’s class) showing that happy employees are more productive, and happy companies are more profitable. These investors encourage you to create a different and better kind of company. What would you do? The suggested format is a 2-3 page single spaced report that you’ll turn in within 24 hours of your presentation. But if you put a lot of work into a powerpoint presentation (far beyond just bullet points), or if you make a video, that would be sufficient. You’ll speak for 4-6 minutes on our last day of class, presenting the major ideas as though you were reporting to your investors. Be sure to consider obstacles and opportunities that are unique to your industry.

**Final paper.** Suggested topic: Write out your plan for a flourishing work life. Drawing on your “personal happiness list” and all of the course readings, write an essay that considers your career from the perspective of positive psychology. What should you do, what can you do, to maximize your chances of loving your work and having a career with no regrets? [or whatever your criteria are]. [You may suggest other topics]. The expected length for the essay is 6-9 pages double spaced. You will hand in your “personal happiness list” as an appendix to your paper. If that list is fairly short and not detailed, then you might need closer to 8 or 9 pages to explain your plan. But if your list is long and/or contains some text to explain ideas, then you could go closer to 6 or 7 pages of more general narrative. The key in any case is to show that you have learned a lot in this class. Tie the elements in your plan to our readings and class discussions. You can talk about happiness in your life more broadly too, but the main focus should be on work and career satisfaction.

Class	Topic, and Readings to be completed before each class.
<p>1 Feb 8</p>	<p><b>Introduction: Overview, happiness, conscious capitalism</b></p> <p>READ:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Cameron &amp; Spreitzer (2012). What is positive about positive organizational scholarship? (from: <i>Oxford Handbook of Positive Organizational Scholarship</i>)</li> <li>2) Haidt (2006). Introduction and Chapter 1, The divided self (from: <i>The Happiness Hypothesis</i>)</li> <li>3) Haidt (2006). Ch. 5: The pursuit of happiness (from: <i>The Happiness Hypothesis</i>)</li> <li>4) Mackey &amp; Sisoda (2014). Conscious Capitalism (read everything from the forward through part 2, i.e., through ch. 12. Chapters 7-12 can be skimmed)</li> </ol> <p>DO BEFORE CLASS: Just do all of the readings carefully, and come ready to talk about them. Mark them up with connections to your own life and work experience. And if you know of any books that might be useful to your peers, please email the title to me, or add them to our <a href="#">google doc</a>.</p>
<p>2 Feb 22</p>	<p><b>Strengths, Engagement, Meaning, and Callings</b></p> <p>READ:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Haidt (2006). Ch. 10: Happiness comes from between (from: <i>The Happiness Hypothesis</i>)</li> <li>2) Shell (2013). Find Meaningful Work. (Ch. 13 from Springboard)</li> <li>3) Wrzniewski, LoBuglio, Dutton &amp; Berg (2013). Job crafting and cultivating positive meaning and identity in work</li> <li>4) Mayerson (2015). Characterizing the workplace: Using character strengths to create sustained success.</li> </ol> <p>DO BEFORE CLASS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Take the “VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire” at <a href="http://www.AuthenticHappiness.org">www.AuthenticHappiness.org</a>. Print out your feedback – your top strengths, and bring those to class. (Click on the link to print out all your strengths too)</li> <li>--Hand in first integration paper</li> <li>--Choose a book to review with your team</li> </ul>

<p>3 Feb 29</p>	<p><b>Group processes, happy organizations</b></p> <p>READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Haidt (2012). <i>The Righteous Mind</i>, Ch. 10 (hive psychology)</li> <li>--D. S. Wilson, et. Al. (2015) <i>Doing well by doing good</i>.</li> <li>--G. Pfeffer (1998). <i>The Human Equation: Building profits by putting people first</i>. Read Ch. 3 very closely.</li> <li>--Mackey &amp; Sisodia, <i>Conscious Capitalism</i>, chapters 13-14</li> </ul> <p>DO BEFORE CLASS: TBA</p> <p>--Hand in 2nd integration paper</p>
<p>4 Mar 7</p>	<p><b>GUEST LECTURE: Daniel Lerner, High Performance,</b></p> <p>We'll explore the integration of positive psychology and performance psychology. We first establish a basic understanding of theories on expert development (Ericsson) and then discuss how positive emotions (Fredrickson &amp; Lyubomirsky) and passion (Vallerand) can be beneficial in the pursuit of high levels of achievement.</p> <p>READ:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ericsson, K. A. (2008) Deliberate Practice and Acquisition of Expert Performance: A General Overview. <i>Academic Emergency Medicine</i>, 15, 988-994.</li> <li>2) Fredrickson, B. L. (1998). What good are positive emotions? <i>Review of General Psychology</i>, 2, 300-319.</li> <li>3) Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., &amp; Diener, E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? <i>Psychological Bulletin</i>, 131, 803-855. (Read ONLY 803- 804, 822-834)</li> <li>4) Vallerand, R. J., Mageau, G. A., Ratelle, C., Leonard, M., Blanchard, C., Koester, R.,...Marsolais, J. (2003). Les passion de l'ame: On obsessive and harmonious passion. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>, 85, 756-767. [You may skip the methods and results sections of all 4 studies]</li> </ol> <p>DO BEFORE CLASS: TBA</p> <p>--Hand in third integration paper</p>
<p>5 Mar 21</p>	<p><b>Positive Culture, and Happiness Hacks</b></p> <p>READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Mackey &amp; Sisodia, <i>Conscious Capitalism</i>, chapters 15 &amp; 16 (conscious cultures and management)</li> <li>--Webb: <i>How to Have a Good Day</i>. Read first half, through ch. 10 (p. 164 of hardcover). (This book has many short chapters. If there are a few chapters that don't seem relevant to you, you may skim or skip a few; be sure to summarize at least 7 chapters.)</li> </ul> <p>DO BEFORE CLASS: TBA</p> <p>--Hand in fourth integration paper [CANCELED]</p> <p>--All teams present their book reports</p>

<p>6 Mar 28</p>	<p><b>Happiness Hacks, and Conclusion</b></p> <p>READ: --Webb, <i>How to Have a Good Day</i>. Finish the book, including the 3 appendices. (This book has many short chapters. If there are a few chapters that don't seem relevant to you, you may skim or skip a few; be sure to summarize at least 7 chapters.)</p> <p>Caroline Webb will join us for the first half of class. We'll do group presentations on workplace design for the second half.</p> <p>DO BEFORE CLASS: --Prepare questions to ask Caroline: come with problems to workshop with her.</p>
<p>April 4</p>	<p><b>Submit final paper</b></p>