

## SYLLABUS for PSYC 405 Advanced Developmental Psychology [2008dec26]

DATE: Spring 2008

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE: PSYC 405 Advanced Developmental Psychology

CREDIT HOURS: 3

TIME AND PLACE: M & W 10:30 – 11:45 pm in FA 202

INSTRUCTOR: Rhett Diessner, Ed.D. diessner@lsc.edu

OFFICE: Spalding Hall, Room 212, ph.# 792-2338

OFFICE HOURS: M, Tu, W, & Th 9:00-10:00

### Course Description/Purpose

The purpose of this course is to give greater depth to several of the themes addressed in PSYC 205 Developmental Psychology. In particular will be examined the development of character strengths and virtues, giving attention to the cognitive, affective and conative aspects of development. The development of the abilities to love, express ethical strengths, and to serve others through the development of our strengths will be constant themes.

### A Service-Learning Course

One of the best ways of learning is to “learn by doing.” Also, as the Positive Psychology movement states, the highest form of the “good life,” is the meaningful life, and such a life is defined as serving something greater than ourselves. This course has been designated as a Service Learning course, which means that students will directly serve the needs of human beings during the course, and that such service will meet the goals of the course itself. This course will team with the Area Agency on Aging to help serve the psychological needs of elders, while collecting data from the elders that will help the students achieve the course objectives of understanding human development.

A note to persons with disabilities. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. My office location and office hours are printed above.

### Required Textbooks

Peterson, C. & Seligman M. E. P. (Eds.) (2004). *Character Strengths and Virtues. A Handbook of Classification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, & Washington DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN 0-19-516701-5

Haidt, J. (2006). *The happiness hypothesis. Finding modern truth in ancient wisdom*. New York: Basic Books. ISBN-10: 0465028020; ISBN-13: 978-0465028023

### General Course Goals/Objectives of PS 405

Goal: Develop a more adequate understanding of human development.

A. Serve the psychological development needs of a senior citizen (students will be assigned senior citizens by the Area Agency on Aging). Write a paper in APA style documenting your experience.

B. Understand the “good life” in three forms: the pleasant life, the engaged life, and the meaningful life.

C. Understand the development of virtues and characters strengths in adults (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

D. Become knowledgeable about Jon Haidt's (2006) "ten great ideas" of psychology and those ideas' implications for human development.

Evaluation: Percentages and Points of Products toward overall grade

30% I. Major Paper

300 pts. This is the basic college term paper, as applied to studying the development of an adult in their late stage of development. It should be similar to what you were taught in EN 102, and written in APA style. Advice for completing the paper is below in the syllabus.

30% II. Quizzes over Jon Haidt's (2006) text

300 pts. Eleven quizzes. You can drop one quiz.  $10 \times 30 = 300$ . Takes notes while you read the chapter; and/or outline. Think about the main ideas of the chapter.

10% III. Comment on Haidt (2006) chapters

100 pts. Preparation to think, comment, reflect, ponder about Haidt's 10 Great Ideas  
Bring one sentence, or a paragraph, about something that *engaged* you in the Haidt text (2006), and that would stimulate worthwhile discussion in class. There are 11 chapters, and you may skip one chapter without loss of points. 10 chapters  $\times 10\text{pts} = 100$ . Typed = 10 pts.; handwritten = 5pts

10% IV. Questionnaires and Course Details

100pts. A. Completing the VIA questionnaire 50pts  
B. Completing the Approaches to Happiness questionnaire 10pts  
C. Complete the Service Learning forms  $10 \times 4 = 40\text{pts}$   
C1. Provide weekly note to Diessner of date & time of visit – *required*  
(failure to do so can cause loss of points)

20% V. Final Exam

200pts. This will be an exam of major concepts from the course, primarily from Haidt's (2006) and Peterson & Seligman's (2004) work, but also from class lecture. Feel free to ask the Professor, a few weeks before the final, as to its contents.

\* \* \*

Distinguished, A, or Excellent	950* points & an A paper; A- = 920-949
Superior, B, or Very Good	850-899 points; B+ = 900-919; B- 800-849
Adequate, C, or OK	720-780 points; C+ = 781-799; C- = 700-719
Unsatisfactory D	600-699

\*Regardless of your point total, an A on the term paper is required for an A in the course.

## Description of Course Products

### I. Major Paper

Advice for completing the paper is below in the syllabus.

II. Quizzes over Jon Haidt's (2006) text. These will be multiple choice with 5 questions per chapter. We will grade them in class, so write your name on the back of the quiz, and bring an indelible colored pen to class to grade them.

### III. Comment on Haidt (2006) chapters

Preparation to think, comment, reflect, ponder about Haidt's 10 Great Ideas  
Bring one sentence, or a paragraph, about something that *engaged* you in the Haidt text (2006), and that would stimulate worthwhile discussion in class. There are 11 chapters, and you may skip one chapter without loss of points. 10 chapters x 10pts = 100. Typing indicates preparation and reflection, thus it's worth full credit; handwritten = half credit. Turn this in at the end of each relevant class.

### IV. Questionnaires and Course Details

#### A. Completing the VIA questionnaire

Print out the ranking of all 24 of your character strengths. Turn in the page with your top 5 on it. If you have completed this questionnaire since August 2008, and can print out a complete copy, you may use that (you can access your old test at Authentic Happiness site, if you remember your username (you can always ask for your password at the site, if you forgot it). If you took it before August 2008, you need to retake it.

Go to this site <http://www.authentichappiness.org/>, register, or log-in, and then complete the 240 question Values in Action questionnaire (VIA) for adults (give yourself 60-90 minutes to complete it). **This is due 1/21/09.** Ask the professor to provide you with a name card, and write your top five strengths on it, and keep it on your desk through-out the semester. Remind the professor to do so too.

B. Completing the Approaches to Happiness Questionnaire; results print out due 2/26  
This measure is also at the site <http://www.authentichappiness.org/>; find it at the bottom of the home page.

C. Complete the Service Learning forms 10 x 4 = 40pts

C1. Provide weekly note to Diessner of date & time of visit - *required*

### V. Final Exam

This will be an exam of major concepts from the course, primarily from Haidt's (2006) and Peterson & Seligman's (2004) work. Feel free to ask the Professor, a few weeks before the final, as to its contents. You may have your chapter quizzes back to study, if you sign a form saying you promise not to copy them or share them, and then give them all back to me at the final.

## Accessing Research Articles through the LCSC Library and the Web

1. Find <http://www.lcsc.edu/library/>
  - A. On the left of the page is "[Journals, Newspapers, Indexes](#)," 2<sup>nd</sup> one down from the top; click on it.
  - B. Scroll down a couple pages til you find PsycINFO; click on it.
  - C. Then follow the instructions to log in.
  
2. Now you are in the databases that are relevant to Psychology. Type in your search term. Linguistic intelligence helps here, as you many need to think of various synonyms for your search term, and try each one of them.
 

Using "and." If you put in the search box "bravery courage" – it will tell you there is only 1 article, because it searches for those two terms next to each other. But bravery by itself gives 102 hits; and courage by itself pops up 1737 hits. If you type "bravery **and** courage" then it will look for articles that have both words anywhere in the abstract, and, in this case, you'll get 29 hits (at least on 30 December 2008 you will).
  
3. If you are planning ahead, and search for articles, and find that they are not in our library, you can order them on inter-library loan from the front desk at the library. I do this all the time. But for convenience, you can check the box of "linked full text" that is on the upper right hand of the search page. Then it will only give you articles that you can click on, and get the whole text of the article in html or pdf.
  
4. Feel free to remind me sometime, about mid-term, to show you how to do this in our classroom (the computer is connected to the internet, so I can do it on the screen).
  
5. You can always go to the Reference desk at the library for help searching; they will guide you through it.

\* \* \*

When you are citing a research article, to explain or relate to your own data or ideas, you should include a brief descriptions of the subjects, and the main conclusion from the study that is relevant to your paper (e.g.: "...143 subjects, from a city on the East Coast of America, average age 22, showed that one can only have courage when one is fearful (Brown and Willowa, 2004). If one is fearless, one is either a fool, or very detached, but without fear we cannot call an act courageous.). Sometimes it may be worthwhile to also briefly summarize the research procedure and measures (e.g., "Those 143 subjects were randomly assigned to two groups, the experimental group that faced the charging tiger, and the control group that just watched a PBS show about a zoo.)

When looking for the summary of the results of an APA style paper, rather than try to figure out the complex Results section, you can read the first few paragraphs of the Discussion section, as the results are usually summarized there.

Also, if you read the literature review in the Introductory section of an article that relates to the themes in your planned paper, you might find references to other studies that you could look up and then use.

## Prime Imperative

Remember: The prime imperative is to be of service to the elders – to care for their experiences, to be gentle with them, to be empathic about their thoughts and feelings, to be “in the moment” with them, and to respect and learn from their knowledge, wisdom and lives. This imperative trumps all assignments for the class. (If doing this causes you to not gain some information you needed for your paper, you can write me a little note about it, and attach it separately to your final paper, and I will take that into account when grading.)

## Advice for the Major Paper

1. The paper is a celebration of the Elder's life, so include only the positive in it. (That doesn't mean that the negative is not important, but we will not be addressing it in this paper.)

2. Write it in research format APA style (Intro; Methods; Results; Discussion; References).

*Select two themes from your interviews to write about: One of the 3 good lives, and 1 of the 24 character strengths, or 2 of the character strengths.* If this sentence is not crystal clear to you, as the professor about it.

A. Introductory section. This introduces relevant background to the 2 themes you selected. Use Peterson & Seligman (2004) for sure, and maybe some Haidt (2006), and find other data-based APA style articles that illuminate the themes, and are related to the data you collected (but you do not mention your data in the Introductory section). The Introductory section usually begins with a "problem statement" (or the issues you will be examining in your paper; e.g.: "The challenge is to characterize the engaged life, and the character strength of perspective/wisdom." After the problem statement is a literature review of studies, and sometimes theory, which is relevant to your themes. The Introductory section will end with your hypotheses about the 2 themes. Sometimes instead of hypotheses the "goals" of the paper will be stated, sort of like a "thesis sentence" in an English paper or an essay.

B. Method section. It begins with a subsection about your subject. It also has your procedure, which will describe how you took notes, how you interviewed, how you generated your data.

C. Results section. Usually this is a short section in an APA paper, but in this paper it will be a long section. It will describe, summarize, and also quote some of, the data you collected that are relevant to the themes you selected.

D. Discussion section. At the beginning of this section you summarize your main conclusions – it integrates your hypotheses with your data. Then you explain the results section. You explain using reasons that you creatively develop and it also connects the data from the results section to your literature review from the introductory section (and thus you cite relevant chapters and articles here).

E. Reference section. The bigger the better (within limits, of course). Data-based research articles carry the most weight; without at least 4 relevant ones, you will unlikely achieve an A grade. The Peterson & Seligman (2004) text can be your main reference – use it liberally. Haidt (2006) may have something relevant to say about 1 or both of the themes you select. But also find good APA style research papers to integrate into your paper, and to illustrate and illuminate and interpret your findings from the interviews with the elder.

F. **\*\*YOUR FIELD NOTES FROM ALL YOUR VISITS SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO THE FINAL PAPER THAT YOU GIVE TO THE PROFESSOR.** The field notes will not be given to the elder nor to the Agency.

*\*Being caring and empathic to the elder overrides all data collection considerations.*

Data Collection Procedure:

Take notepads (or perhaps laptops) with you to the interviews. Your number one goal, during all interviews, is to practice being empathic and caring (applied social/interpersonal intelligence; attunement/engrossment and motivational displacement when necessary). Your first 3 interviews will explore three forms of the “good life” – the pleasant life, the engaged life, and the meaningful life. The next 6 interviews will explore the elder’s positive experiences with character strengths from the 6 major virtues of Peterson & Seligman’s (2004) approach to mapping positive mental health.

As your paper will be a celebration of the life of the elder, and the wisdom that you gain from interacting with them, you will be focusing on the positive and what has gone well in the life of the elder. Be “on the lookout” for one of the good lives, and one or two of the character strengths, that the elder becomes happy about, or energetic about, or is highly engaged with – this is because you will select either one of the good lives and one of the character strengths, or 2 of the character strengths, to write about in your paper.

**The paper will be a celebration of two themes that have gone well I the elder’s life.** This does not mean that the failures and negative parts of our lives are not important. We will not, however, in this class, focus upon them. One of the precepts of the positive psychology movement is that we gain more psychological health from employing our strengths, than we do from remediating our weaknesses.

Be sure to think about “closure” with the elder you are assigned. You will spend 75 minutes with them at least for 10 visits, and then two more visits to finish your paper. Professionals need experience with “ending” professional relationships, yet still remaining caring and connected. Do not make any promises to the elder that you cannot keep. Feel free to bring this topic up for class discussion.

APA style, in regard to citations and your Reference page, is important.

!! Do not wait until mid-March to write your paper. As soon as you identify 1 of the themes you will address in your paper, begin using PsycINFO to find relevant papers about that topic. Begin writing your Introductory section, with its literature review, and perhaps begin the Methods section as well.

\*Be sure to have the elder sign a permission form in regard to collecting data from them, and writing a paper about them. Take the signed copy and attach to your paper; leave them a copy with your names and phone numbers. Collect this on your 2<sup>nd</sup> visit with the elder.

\*You will give a copy of your final paper to the elder, the same week you give the professor your paper, and invite the elder to request changes (additions and deletions) – any changes the elder wants will not be in the paper that the professor grades, but will be in the final draft that we will give the Agency on Aging. The following week pick up the copy that the elder has edited and make those changes. You can then give me a hardcopy of that, or email me an e-copy. We will present that as a gift to the Area Agency on Aging. If the elder did want changes, you will need to visit the elder one more time to bring them the revised paper.

\*Regardless of your point total in the overall course, an A on the term paper is required for an A in the course.

The Twenty-Four Character Strengths and Virtues of the Positive Psychology  
Movement  
(Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge

1. Creativity [Originality, Ingenuity]
2. Curiosity [Interest, Novelty-Seeking, Openness to Experience]
3. Open-Mindedness [Making good Judgment, Critical Thinking]
4. Love of Learning
5. Perspective [Wisdom]

Strengths of Courage

6. Bravery [Valor]
7. Persistence [Perseverance, Industriousness]
8. Integrity [Authenticity, Honesty]
9. Vitality [Zest, Enthusiasm, Vigor, Energy]

Strengths of Humanity

10. Love
11. Kindness [Generosity, Nurturance, Care, Compassion, Altruistic Love, “Niceness”]
12. Social Intelligence [Emotional Intelligence, Personal Intelligence]

Strengths of Justice

13. Citizenship [Social Responsibility, Loyalty, Teamwork]
14. Fairness
15. Leadership

Strengths of Temperance

16. Forgiveness and Mercy
17. Humility and Modesty
18. Prudence
19. Self-Regulation [Self-Control]

Strengths of Transcendence

20. Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence [Awe, Wonder, Elevation]
21. Gratitude
22. Hope [Optimism, Future-Mindedness, Future Orientation]
23. Humor [Playfulness]
24. Spirituality [Religiousness, Faith, Purpose]

## Peterson's Approaches to Happiness Questionnaire questions

### Pleasant Life

For me, the good life is the pleasurable life.

I love to do things that excite my senses.

I agree with this statement: "Life is short-eat dessert first."

In choosing what to do, I always take into account whether it will be pleasurable.

I go out of my way to feel euphoric.

Life is too short to postpone the pleasures it can provide.

### Engaged Life

I am rarely distracted by what is going on around me.

In choosing what to do, I always take into account whether I can lose myself in it.

I am always very absorbed in what I do.

Whether at work or play, I am usually "in a zone" and not conscious of myself.

I seek out situations that challenge my skills and abilities.

Regardless of what I am doing, time passes very quickly.

### Meaningful Life

What I do matters to society.

I have spent a lot of time thinking about what life means and how I fit into its big picture.

My life has a lasting meaning.

I have a responsibility to make the world a better place.

In choosing what to do, I always take into account whether it will benefit other people.

My life serves a higher purpose.

[http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/tests/SameAnswers\\_t.aspx?id=266](http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/tests/SameAnswers_t.aspx?id=266)

## The Service Learning Forms

*Note: Please email me the first week: [diessner@lcsc.edu](mailto:diessner@lcsc.edu) (no "r" in front of diessner), Just so I can put your email in my data base for emailing the whole class. It's best if you write to me from your LCSC account, but use whatever account you look at the most. Also, if it is easier for you, ask me in that email to send you these URLs, and then you can just click on them in your email.*

Complete this one the first week of class:

**1. Registration:** <http://www.lcsc.edu/servicelearning/studentinfoform.htm>

Either give me a note (8 1/2 by 11 paper), or print out the page, to give to me.

Due 1/21/09 10 pts.

\* \* \*

**2. Agreement:** <http://www.lcsc.edu/servicelearning/ServiceLearningAgreement.doc>

Remind Diessner to hand out hardcopy of this in class. Due 1/26/09 10 pts.

\* \* \*

Complete this one after your last visit to your elder, approximately 4/29/09:

**3. Timesheet:** <http://www.lcsc.edu/servicelearning/timelog.htm> 10 pts.

You'll need this Agency contact information to complete the form:

Supervisor   
 Name   
 Agency   
 Phone   
 E-mail [c.snyder@cap4action.org](mailto:c.snyder@cap4action.org)

\* \* \*

**4. Evaluation:** <http://www.lcsc.edu/servicelearning/studenteval.htm>

Consider Diessner as you site-supervisor when completing this evaluation. Complete this on or near 4/29/09. 10 pts.

Permission form for Interview and Writing and Sharing Information from your  
Life  
(attach this copy to your paper)

The following students ask your permission to record information that you give them, and to write a paper about their interviews with you:

\_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

The students will each write an academic paper about their interviews with you. This paper will also be given to the Area Agency on Aging as a gift. Before it is giving to the Area Agency on Aging, the students will give you a copy of the paper, and invite you to cross out anything that you would like deleted. You may also ask them to add anything to the paper, but they will make the final decision about what to include. You may think of these interviews as if a journalist was interviewing you, and as if they might publish your interview in the newspaper. When you are talking to the students, you can always say, "This is off the record," and they will not record those comments, nor write about them. If you have any questions, you are welcome to contact the professor of the course, Dr. Rhett Diessner, at 208-792-2338, or [diessner@lcsc.edu](mailto:diessner@lcsc.edu).

I give my permission for the above noted students to write a paper concerning my life, and to give a copy of the paper to their professor, Rhett Diessner, and to give a copy of the paper to the Area Agency on Aging.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Permission form for Interview and Writing and Sharing Information from your  
Life  
(this copy for the interviewee)

The following students ask your permission to record information that you give them, and to write a paper about their interviews with you:

\_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

The students will each write an academic paper about their interviews with you. This paper will also be given to the Area Agency on Aging as a gift. Before it is giving to the Area Agency on Aging, the students will give you a copy of the paper, and invite you to cross out anything that you would like deleted. You may also ask them to add anything to the paper, but they will make the final decision about what to include. You may think of these interviews as if a journalist was interviewing you, and as if they might publish your interview in the newspaper. When you are talking to the students, you can always say, "This is off the record," and they will not record those comments, nor write about them. If you have any questions, you are welcome to contact the professor of the course, Dr. Rhett Diessner, at 208-792-2338, or [diessner@lcsc.edu](mailto:diessner@lcsc.edu).

I give my permission for the above noted students to write a paper concerning my life, and to give a copy of the paper to their professor, Rhett Diessner, and to give a copy of the paper to the Area Agency on Aging.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

### Promise to treat Quizzes Ethically

If I accept my quizzes back after grading, I promise that I will not show them to anyone and will not copy them. I promise to return them on or before the final. This is an honor system, and I will respect that. I realize that if I do not return them I will receive an Incomplete grade until I do.

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Print Name

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Sign Name

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Date

## Interview Teams

We will interview our assigned elders in teams of two, or possibly three. This is the most central and required part of the course. Be sure to always dress professionally and conservatively when meeting with the elder.

I would like to make teams based on who you would like to team with, but that could be difficult, all things considered. Think about Carl Roger's idea of unconditional positive regard for everyone.

Mark all the items below that apply:

// I would like to team with \_\_\_\_\_

// I am also quite willing to team with  
\_\_\_\_\_

// I willing to team with anyone in class, as psychologists, social workers, and anyone from the caring professions need to practice getting along well with everyone.

Transportation is an issue:

// I have easy access to independent transportation (i.e., I could drive to each interview, no problem, and pick up my teammate on the way).

// It's not totally easy, but I could get access to a car for each of the 10 -12 appointments.

// I do not have transportation.

Print your full name: \_\_\_\_\_