

## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Human Development:  
Positive Psychological Functioning and Adaptation in Youth, 7,5 credits**

**MASTER LEVEL COURSE  
SPRING 2022**

### **COURSE CONVENOR**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The aim of the course is to provide students with theoretical and empirical overview of positive youth development. The course covers two specific topics: a) theories and research on positive functioning and adaptation from both self-based and community-based perspective and b) introduction to specific youth-targeted interventions aimed at positive development at an individual and community level.

First, we will discuss theoretical conceptualization of positive psychology, optimal development and adaptation with a particular focus on youth. These questions will be discussed from both cognitive and emotional perspective. Can we learn to be optimistic or adopt a positive affective attitude towards our environment? Can we grow from hardship and is adversity necessarily psychologically casting? How can we use psychological research to promote well-being both at the individual and communal level? These are some of the questions that we will learn and discuss in this course. Then, we shall move to learn more about specific interventions aimed at promoting positive functioning and adaptations.

## **COURSE AIMS**

1. Explain and critically analyze theoretical perspectives and the evidence base in positive youth development
2. Explain and critically analyze the design and evaluation of interventions
3. Demonstrate knowledge of ethical aspects of conducting intervention research
4. Demonstrate the skills required to engage in research, specifically academic writing and oral presentation

## **LANGUAGE**

Lectures and the course readings will be in English. Students are encouraged to complete their exam and engage in class discussions in English as well.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The course grade is determined by the grade on a comprehensive final exam. The exam is worth 100% of the final course grade. Questions in the exam will cover all course topics covered in class and will be derived from the required literature including lecture notes. Exam will be letter graded on a 7-point scale from A to F.

A (Excellent); B (Very good); C (Good); D (Satisfactory); E (Sufficient); Fx (Insufficient); F (Fail)

One week before the course ends, you will be given 5 exam questions and you will answer 3 out of the 5 exam questions. For more information, please refer to the document “Instructions for the Exam”.

## REQUIRED LITERATURE

Throughout this course we will refer to two key textbooks (selected chapters) and several theoretical and empirical articles from various journals in the field of positive psychology.

Snyder, C. R., Lopez, S. J., Edwards, L. M., & Marques, S. C. (2021). *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (3rd Edition). New York City: Oxford University Press.

Fraser, M. W., et al. (2009). *Intervention Research: Developing Social Programs*. Oxford University Press.

We will read selected chapters out of these book which are available for free as an e-book from the Stockholm University Library. For specific chapters, refer to the section on teaching schedule and reading materials.

## TEACHING SCHEDULE AND READING MATERIALS

The class will meet fifteen times during eight weeks. In addition to the introductory and review sessions, we will have ten lectures and three seminars in total. Required reading materials for each lecture and seminar is provided below. Students are expected to attend all lectures and seminars. For seminars, students are expected to read the materials (articles) beforehand and prepare 1-2 questions per reading. Seminars will be conducted in an interactive format and students' participation is expected. During seminar, students can also bring in any outstanding questions from previous weeks and/or lecture materials.

### Week 1

**January 18<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday 10-12):** Introduction to the course content and structure

**January 20<sup>th</sup> (Thursday 13-15):** General theoretical overview on positive psychology and youth development (LECTURE 1)

Tolan, P., Ross, K., Arkin, N., Godine, N., & Clark, E. (2016). Toward an integrated approach to positive development: Implications for intervention. *Applied Developmental Science, 20*, 214-236.

### Week 2

**January 25<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday 10-12):** Positive psychology: what is it and why do we need it? (LECTURE 2)

Downey, C. A., & Henderson, R. E. (2021). Speculation, Conceptualization, or Evidence? A History of Positive Psychology. In *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Edited by C. R. Snyder, Shane J. Lopes, Lisa M. Edwards and Susana C. Marques

Pedrotti, J., T., Edwards, L. S., & Lopez, S. J. (2021). Positive Psychology within a Cultural Context. In, *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Edited by C. R. Snyder, Shane J. Lopes, Lisa M. Edwards and Susana C. Marques

Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Lucas, R. (2003). Personality, culture and subjective well-being: Emotional and cognitive evaluations of life. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54, 403-425.

**January 27<sup>th</sup> (Thursday 13-15):** Promoting positive youth development through emotion regulation (SEMINAR 1)

John, O. P., & Gross, J. (2004). Healthy and Unhealthy Emotion Regulation: Personality Processes, Individual Differences and Life Span Development. *Journal of Personality*, 72(6), 1301-1334.

### Week 3

**February 1<sup>st</sup> (Tuesday 10-12):** Positive emotions and well-being (LECTURE 3)

Naragon-Gainey, K., & Watson, D. (2021). Positive Affectivity: The Disposition to Experience Pleasurable Emotional States. In, *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Edited by C. R. Snyder, Shane J. Lopes, Lisa M. Edwards and Susana C. Marques

Fredrickson, B. L. (2000). Cultivating Positive Emotions to Optimize Health and Well-Being. *Prevention and Treatment*, 3, 1-25.

**February 3<sup>rd</sup> (Thursday 13-15):** Positive emotions and well-being (SEMINAR 2)

Tugade, M., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2007). Regulation of positive emotions: emotion regulation strategies that promote resilience. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 8, 311-333.

Cohn, M. A. et al. (2009). Happiness Unpacked: Positive Emotions Increase Life Satisfaction by Building Resilience. *Emotion*, 9(3), 361-368.

### Week 4

**February 8<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday 10-12):** Self-control and positive youth development (LECTURE 4)

Thompson, S. C. (2021). The role of personal control in adaptive functioning: In, *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Edited by C. R. Snyder, Shane J. Lopes, Lisa M. Edwards and Susana C. Marques

**February 10<sup>th</sup> (Thursday 13-15):** Self-control and positive youth development (SEMINAR 3)

Galla, B. M. & Duckworth, A. L. (2015). More than resisting temptation: beneficial habits mediate the relationship between self-control and positive life outcomes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 109(3), 508-525.

Romer, D. et al. (2010). Can adolescents learn self-control? Delay of gratification in the development of control over risk-taking. *Prevention Science*, 11, 319-330.

#### Week 5

**February 15<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday 10-12):** Character strengths and positive youth development (LECTURE 5)

Park, N. (2004). Character strengths and positive youth development. *Annals, AAPSS*, 591.

Gillham, J. et al. (2011). Character strengths predict subjective well-being during adolescence. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 6(1), 31-44.

**February 17<sup>th</sup> (Thursday 13-15):** Building resilience (LECTURE 6)

Masten, A. S. (2018): Resilience theory and research on children and families: past, present and promise. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 10, 12-31.

Tedeschi, R. G. & Lawrence G. C. (2004). Posttraumatic Growth: Conceptual Foundations and Empirical Evidence, *Psychological Inquiry*, 15(1), 1-18.

#### Week 6

**February 22<sup>nd</sup> (Tuesday 10-12):** Development of interventions: process and challenges (LECTURE 7 by Åsa Norman)

Fraser, M. W., et al. (2009). *Intervention Research: Developing Social Programs*. Oxford University Press.

Chapter 1: What is intervention research?

Chapter 2: Steps in intervention research

**February 24<sup>th</sup> (Thursday 13-15):** Examples of positive youth development interventions (LECTURE 8 by Laura Ferrer-Wreder)

Eninger, L., Ferrer-Wreder, L., Eichas, K., Olsson, T. M., Ginner Hau, H., Westling Allodi, M., Smedler, A-C., Sedem, M., Clausen Gull, I., & Herkner, B. (2021). A cluster randomized trial of Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS©) with Swedish preschool children. *Frontiers in Psychology, Developmental Psychology*, 12, article: 695288. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.695288

Taylor, R. D., Oberle, E., Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2017). Promoting positive youth development through school-based social and emotional learning interventions: A meta-analysis of follow-up effects. *Child Development, 88*(4), 1156-1171.  
doi: <http://dx.doi.org.ezp.sub.su.se/10.1111/cdev.12864>

### Week 7

**March 1<sup>st</sup> (Tuesday 10-12):** Creating positive social communities: moral exemplar intervention (LECTURE 9)

Reed, A. II, & Aquino, K. F. (2003). Moral identity and the expanding circle of moral regard toward out-groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*(6), 1270–1286.

Čehajić-Clancy, S., & Bilewicz, M. (2020). Appealing to Moral Exemplars: Shared perceptions of morality as a key dimension of intergroup reconciliation. *Social Issues and Policy Review, 14*(1), 217-243.

### Week 8

**March 8<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday 10-12):** Creating positive social communities: intergroup dialogue and contact interventions (LECTURE 10)

DeTurk, S. (2006) The Power of Dialogue: Consequences of Intergroup Dialogue and their Implications for Agency and Alliance Building, *Communication Quarterly, 54*(1), 33-51.

Crisp, R. J., & Turner, R. N. (2009). Can imagined interactions produce positive perceptions? Reducing prejudice through simulated social contact. *American Psychologist, 64*(4), 231–240.

**March 11<sup>th</sup> (Friday 10-12):** Review

**March 20<sup>th</sup>** (Sunday by 20:00): Submission of the final exam