

HAPPINESS: Psychology 157

Professor Christenfeld Office Hours: Mon & Tue 5:00-6:00 5318 MCGill

In 1936, Max Eastman, wrote, by way of introduction to his book on laughter, "I must warn you, reader, that it is not the purpose of this book to make you laugh. As you know, nothing kills the laugh quicker than to explain a joke. I intend to explain all jokes, and the proper and logical outcome will be, not only that you will not laugh now, but that you will never laugh again." A similar argument could be made for happiness. One way to kill innocent pleasure is to engage in self-conscious reflection, and a course devoted to the study of happiness may not only fail to produce happiness, but may make it forever after unattainable. We shall see. In case, as Eastman warned, prepare for the descending gloom.

Students are expected to do each day's reading prior to the class. Because students will be called on to discuss the topics, failure to do so should become painfully obvious (obvious to the teacher, painful to the student). The articles are all available in a reader from Soft Reserves. Examinations will consist of a small, essay-format midterm, at the start of the sixth class, and a longer final exam, also essay format. Students will be evaluated based on the exams and some combination of the quantity and quality of their contributions during class.

Class Topic

- 1 Introduction: You are experiencing this right now.
- 2 Philosophy and Measurement of Happiness: What is happiness anyway? How do people measure it, and how do we know they are doing it right?
- 3 Antecedents and Consequences of Happiness: What are the causes of happiness? How are happy people different from the rest of us?
- 4 Sex and Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll: Does this need explanation?
- 5 Acute Happiness: The few sources of immediate pleasure not covered in the previous class.
- 6 **Midterm** & Money: The midterm will not bring happiness. But can wealth? Does our affluent society breed happiness?
- 7 Self-Improvement: How do wise old guys suggest we change ourselves to increase our happiness.
- 8 Creating Chronic Happiness: What practical steps produce happiness?
- 9 Adapting to Happiness: Do we simply get used to whatever we have?
- 10 Beauty and Evolution: Is our happiness determined when we are conceived? Does it help to be born pretty?

Final Exam

Readings

Class 2: Philosophy and Measurement of Happiness

- Tatarkiewicz, Wladyslaw, Analysis of happiness [translated from the Polish by Edward Rothert, Danuta Zielinska]. Warszawa : PWN / Polish Scientific Publishers, 1976. Chapters 20, 26 (pp. 236-257, 316-336)
- Maslow, Abraham Harold; Hoffman, Edward; Ed. Future visions: The unpublished papers of Abraham Maslow. Sage Publications, Inc, Thousand Oaks, CA, US. 1996. Chapter 2 (pp. 21-25)

Class 3: Antecedents and Consequences of Happiness

- Brickman, Philip; Coates, Dan; Janoff-Bulman, Ronnie. Lottery winners and accident victims: Is happiness relative? Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, 1978 Aug, v36 (n8):917-927.
- Myers, David G.; Diener, Ed. Who is happy? Psychological Science, 1995 Jan, v6 (n1):10-19.
- Veenhoven, Ruut. The utility of happiness. Social Indicators Research, 1988 Aug, v20 (n4):333-354.

Class 4: Sex and Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll

- Milkman, Harvey B.; Sunderwirth, Stanley G. Craving for ecstasy: The consciousness and chemistry of escape. Lexington Books/D. C. Heath and Company, Lexington, MA, USA. 1987.
- Abramson, Paul R.; Pinkerton, Steven D. With pleasure: Thoughts on the nature of human sexuality. Oxford University Press, New York, NY, US. 1995.
- Waterman, Caroline K.; Chiauzzi, Emil; Gruenbaum, Mindy. The relationship between sexual enjoyment and actualization of self and sexual partner. Journal of Sex Research, 1979 Nov, v15 (n4):253-263.
- Waite, Linda J.; Joyner, Kara. Emotional satisfaction and physical pleasure in sexual unions: Time horizon, sexual behavior, and sexual exclusivity. Journal of Marriage & the Family, 2001 Feb, v63 (n1):247-264.
- Walsh, Roger N. Psychedelics and psychological well-being. Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 1982 Sum, v22 (n3):22-32.
- Graham, Gordon, Philosophy of the arts : an introduction to aesthetics. London ; New York : Routledge, 1997.
- Sapolsky, Robert M. Open season: when do we lose our taste for the new?(engaging in new experiences less prevalent as people age). New Yorker v74, n6 (March 30, 1998):57 (4 pages).

Class 5: Acute Happiness

- Hawkes, C. H. Endorphins: The basis of pleasure? *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery & Psychiatry*, 1992 Apr, v55 (n4):247-250.
- Olds, James. Pleasure centers in the brain. *Scientific American*, 1956, 95, 105-116.
- Isen, Alice M.; Levin, Paula F. Effect of Feeling Good on Helping: Cookies and Kindness. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 1972 Mar, Vol. 21 (n3):384-388.
- Tatarkiewicz, Wladyslaw, Analysis of happiness [translated from the Polish by Edward Rothert, Danuta Zielinskn]. Warszawa : PWN / Polish Scientific Publishers, 1976. Chapter 9 (pp. 91-104)
- Provine, Robert R. *Laughter : a scientific investigation*. New York: Viking, 2000. Chapters 2, 3 (pp. 13-53).

Class 6: Money

- Diener, Ed; Horwitz, Jeff; Emmons, Robert. Happiness of the very wealthy. *Social Indicators Research*, 1985, 16, 263-274.
- Fromm, Erich, *For the love of life*; translated from the German by Robert and Rita Kimber ; edited by Hans Jurgen Schultz. New York : Free Press, c1986.
- Scitovsky, Tibor. *The joyless economy : an inquiry into human satisfaction and consumer dissatisfaction*. New York : Oxford University Press, 1976. Chapters 5, 9, 11 (pp. 80-105, 182-203, 224-247)

Class 7: Self-Improvement

- Maslow, Abraham H. *Motivation and personality*. [1st ed.]. New York, Harper [1954]. Chapters 2, 11, 12 (pp. 15-31, 125-149, 150-157).
- Rogers, Carl R. *On becoming a person; a therapist's view of psychotherapy*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin [1961]. Chapter 9 (pp. 183-196)
- Fromm, Erich. *To have or to be?.* 1st ed. New York : Harper & Row, c1976. Chapter 1, part of 6 (pp. 3-15, 103-106)
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Beyond boredom and anxiety* 1st ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1975. Chapters 1, 4 (pp. 1-12, 35-54)

Class 8: Creating Chronic Happiness

- Russell, Bertrand. *The conquest of happiness*. New York, H. Liveright, 1930. Chapter 17 (pp. 242-249).
- Fordyce, Michael W. A program to increase happiness: Further studies. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 1983 Oct, v30 (n4):483-498.
- Myers, David G. Close relationships and quality of life. IN: *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology*. Daniel Kahneman, Ed; Ed Diener, Ed; et al. Russell Sage Foundation, New York, NY, US. 1999. p. 374-391.
- Schwartz, Barry. Self-determination: The tyranny of freedom. *American Psychologist*, 2000 Jan, v55 (n1):79-88.

Class 9: Adapting to Happiness

- Veenhoven, Ruut. Is happiness relative? *Social Indicators Research*, 1991 Feb, v24 (n1):1-34.
- Frederick, Shane; Loewenstein, George. Hedonic adaptation. IN: *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology*. Daniel Kahneman, Ed; Ed Diener, Ed; et al. Russell Sage Foundation, New York, NY, US. 1999. p. 302-329.
- Fredrickson, Barbara L.; Kahneman, Daniel. Duration neglect in retrospective evaluations of affective episodes. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 1993 Jul, v65 (n1):45-55.

Class 10: Beauty and Evolution

- Buss, David M. The evolution of happiness. *American Psychologist*, 2000 Jan, v55 (n1):15-23.
- Diener, Ed; Wolsic, Brian; Fujita, Frank. Physical attractiveness and subjective well-being. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 1995 Jul, v69 (n1):120-129.
- Kenrick, Douglas T.; Neuberg, Steven L.; Zierk, Kristin L.; Krones, Jacquelyn M. Evolution and social cognition: Contrast effects as a function of sex, dominance, and physical attractiveness. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 1994 Apr, v20 (n2):210-217.
- Lykken, David; Tellegen, Auke. Happiness is a stochastic phenomenon. *Psychological Science*, 1996 May, v7 (n3):186-189.