

## SYLLABUS

**COURSE TITLE:** BRIGHT LINE MIND: FOUNDATIONS OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

**COURSE:** SPRING/SUMMER 2020

**PROFESSOR:** Susan Peirce Thompson, Ph.D.

**TEXTBOOK:** *A Primer in Positive Psychology*, by Christopher Peterson, 2006.

**WEBSITE:** <https://brightlinershub.northpass.com/>

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Positive Psychology is the scientific study of human happiness, well-being, and strength of character. This course takes an empirical and experiential approach to helping individuals use the science of flourishing to enhance their lives. Topics covered include happiness, pleasure, beliefs, positive thinking, flow, focus, gratitude, healing strategies, luck, the effects of media exposure, self-efficacy and self-esteem, environmental and behavioral influences, and character.

### **INSTRUCTOR CREDENTIALS:**

Dr. Susan Peirce Thompson holds a B.A. degree in Cognitive Science from the University of California, Berkeley, and both a master's and Ph.D. in Brain and Cognitive Sciences from the University of Rochester. Dr. Thompson completed a two-year Post-Doctoral Research and Teaching Fellowship in the Psychology Department at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. Upon returning to the United States, Dr. Thompson was appointed Assistant Professor of Psychology at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. Two years later, she accepted a tenure-track position as a professor in the Psychology Department at Monroe Community College.

Dr. Thompson completed a course in Positive Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania in 2008, after which she designed and taught Positive Psychology at Monroe Community College, first as a Special Topics course in 2009. In 2011, she put the course through the curriculum approval process, and it received its own permanent course number (PSY 109). Dr. Thompson taught three total sections of PSY 109 each semester, both in person and online, through the spring of 2015.

In late 2014, Dr. Thompson founded Bright Line Eating Solutions, LLC. She currently serves as its CEO and is also an Adjunct Associate Professor in the department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences at the University of Rochester.

### **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the history of Positive Psychology and its relationship to traditional psychology.
2. Demonstrate comprehension of research and current theories in Positive Psychology.
3. Identify the basic premises of Positive Psychology.
4. Comprehend the science of change, goal setting, habits, rituals, purpose, self-esteem, perfectionism, beliefs, gratitude, and positive emotions.
5. Identify different ways to define and measure happiness, as well as variables that are related/unrelated to happiness and well-being.
6. Distinguish between values and character strengths.
7. Comprehend how beliefs can work as self-fulfilling prophecies.
8. Identify the mind-body connection and utilize this knowledge to improve wellness in daily life.
9. Demonstrate comprehension of the science of happy relationships and the science of love.
10. Identify the characteristics of positive environments, institutions, and groups.
11. Employ Positive Psychology interventions to increase personal well-being.

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

As the course progresses, participants will be asked to complete experiential assignments that have been demonstrated through Positive Psychology research to increase happiness and well-being. There will also be readings assigned from the textbook, *A Primer in Positive Psychology*. Assignments are designed to enhance your knowledge and practice of the fundamentals taught in the course. Assignments will not be graded.

Additional texts are recommended as follows (also listed on the website):

*Flourish*, Martin E.P. Seligman  
*The How of Happiness*, Sonja Lyubomirsky  
*Learned Optimism*, Martin E.P. Seligman  
*Love 2.0*, Barbara L. Frederickson, Ph.D.  
*The Myths of Happiness*, Sonja Lyubomirsky  
*Positivity*, Barbara Frederickson, Ph.D.  
*Promoting Student Happiness*, Shannon M. Suldo, Ph.D.  
*The Pursuit of Perfect*, Tal Ben-Shahar  
*Willpower*, Roy F. Baumeister  
*Full Catastrophe Living*, Jon Kabat-Zinn

*Self-Compassion*, Kristin Neff, Ph.D.  
*Positive Education*, Jacolyn Norrish, Ph.D.  
*The Family Virtues Guide*, Linda Kavelin Popov, Ph.D.  
*The Secrets of Happy Families*, Bruce Feiler  
*Positive Psychology at Work*, Sarah Lewis  
*The Best Place to Work*, Ron Friedman, Ph.D.  
*The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Work*

**ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION:**

Lectures will be presented as recordings according to the schedule on the following page. In addition, participation in the Online Support Community is encouraged and will optimize your learning. All students will be granted access to a private online community called Meliora 2020 in Bright Liners’ Land, where information about the course will be posted, support will be offered, and takeaways from assignments can be shared.

**CALLS:**

Five calls with Dr. Thompson will be held throughout the course. See the schedule below for dates and times.

Kick-Off Call	Tuesday, June 2 1:00 p.m. Eastern
Question and Answer Call #1	Thursday, June 18 12:00 p.m. Eastern
Question and Answer Call #2	Thursday, July 16 2:00 p.m. Eastern
Question and Answer Call #3	Thursday, August 20 4:00 p.m. Eastern
Final Celebration and Closure Call	Tuesday, September 15 4:00 p.m. Eastern

**LECTURES:**

Lectures recordings by Dr. Thompson will be released at 4:00 a.m. ET each Tuesday. The lectures are outlined in the following schedule. All recordings will be available on the Bright Line Mind website (<https://hub.brightlineeating.com/>).

<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Week 1	Tuesday, June 2	Intro to Positive Psychology	5 Happiness Tests
Week 2	Tuesday, June 9	Why Positive Psychology	Have a Good Day
Week 3	Tuesday, June 16	Basic Premises	Have a Good Day, cont. <i>A Primer in Positive Psychology</i> , pages 1-46
Week 4	Tuesday, June 23	Life Crafting – Part 1	Domains Exercises
Week 5	Tuesday, June 30	Life Crafting – Part 2	Domains + Habits
Week 6	Tuesday, July 7	Happiness – Part 1	Finish Life Crating and Have a Good Day <i>A Primer in Positive Psychology</i> , Ch. 3 & 4
Week 7	Tuesday, July 14	Happiness – Part 2	No assignment
Week 8	Tuesday, July 21	A Question of Focus	Three Good Things
Week 9	Tuesday, July 28	Beliefs as Self-Fulfilling Prophecies	Three Good Things, cont. WOOP (Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan)
Week 10	Tuesday, August 4	Character Strengths and Values	VIA Strengths Survey
Week 11	Tuesday, August 11	Wellness – The Mind-Body Connection	Habits: Exercise, Mindfulness, Sleep, Touch, Food
Week 12	Tuesday, August 18	The Science of Happy Relationships	The Gratitude Visit
Week 13	Tuesday, August 25	Perfectionism and Self-Esteem	Fun vs. Philanthropy
Week 14	Tuesday, September 1	Positive Environments, Institutions, and Groups	No assignment
Week 15	Tuesday, September 8	Science of Love/Science of Self-Compassion	No assignment

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The experiential nature of this course requires that we develop and maintain a safe environment. What is said in the Online Support Community, especially any personal information that may be divulged, either by the students or by the professor, must remain confidential. We may discuss amongst ourselves only what goes on in the context of the course.

**COLLEGE SEMESTER CREDITS: 4****ESTIMATED HOURS TO COMPLETE THE COURSE: 90**