



**COURSE SYLLABUS:**  
**The Science of Happiness in Contemporary Society**

**COURSE INFORMATION & KEY CONTACTS**

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Course Code &amp; Section</b>	<b>Credit Value</b>
Contemporary Topics in Social, Developmental, Personality, & Clinical Psychology	PSYC_V 208 992 2025W2	3
<b>Course Instructor</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>Office Hours</b>
Jeffrey Sauvé, PhD	E. <a href="mailto:jeff.sauve@ubc.ca">jeff.sauve@ubc.ca</a>	Office hours will be held from 4:30PM to 6:00PM on most Wednesdays for the duration of the course. Please send an email request to meet and the instructor will send a Zoom link.
<b>Teaching Assistant</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>Office Hours</b>
Yash Joshi	E. <a href="mailto:yashj@student.ubc.ca">yashj@student.ubc.ca</a>	Drop-in office hours will be scheduled via Zoom at strategic times throughout the term.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

PSYC 208 includes contemporary topics in social, developmental, personality, and clinical psychology. More specifically, this course introduces students to the science of happiness and in the context of contemporary society.



## OUTCOMES & OBJECTIVES

---

Adopting a psychosocial approach, this course focuses on the interpretation of recent happiness research applied to contemporary society. In examining the scientific study of happiness, the course content is organized into three main themes (or units):

1. Happiness and you: An intraindiviaul approach;
2. Happiness and us: An interpersonal approach; and
3. Happiness in action: An applied approach.

By the end of the course students are able to achieve the following three primary objectives:

- Critically interpret and assess contemporary research related to happiness;
- Reflect on recent happiness research findings and how they are applicable to themselves and our broader society;
- Understand the factors that support and/or thwart our individual and collective happiness.

## WITHDRAWAL DATES

---

Last day to drop without a W standing through Workday is January 16, 2026. Student self-service in Workday available for course withdrawals with a W standing is Jan 17 – Mar 6, 2026.

## CLASS FORMAT

---

PSYC 208 is a 3-credit course provided over Winter Term 2 with content delivered in an asynchronous format. The online and independent nature of this course requires week-by-week dedication to engage with course content including lectures and “additional materials” (articles, academic studies, podcast episodes, etc.). Lectures will typically be posted on Mondays (see below) in two formats: (1) Video file of PowerPoint with instructor voice-over; (2) PDF file of the PowerPoint. All materials for this course will be posted to the course Canvas website. This includes announcements, additional materials, lectures, rubrics, etc.



**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

Description	Date	Activity
Welcome to PSYC 208	Mon Jan 5th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See two “Announcements” on Canvas and review syllabus</li> </ul>
Course Introduction	Wed Jan 7th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch “Course Introduction” video posted on Canvas</li> </ul>
<b>Lecture 1: Introduction to the study of happiness and well-being</b>	Mon Jan 12th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete weekly course content</li> <li>Review lecture</li> </ul>
<b>Quiz 1</b>	Fri Jan 16th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete between 6am-6pm</li> </ul>
<b>Unit 1 – HAPPINESS &amp; YOU – An intraindividual approach</b>		
<b>Lecture 2: Personality &amp; happiness</b>	Mon Jan 19th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete weekly course content</li> <li>Review lecture</li> </ul>
<b>Quiz 2</b>	Fri Jan 23rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete between 6am-6pm</li> </ul>
<b>Lecture 3: Happiness mind games</b>	Mon Jan 26th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete weekly course content</li> <li>Review lecture</li> </ul>
<b>Quiz 3</b>	Fri Jan 30th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete between 6am-6pm</li> </ul>
<b>Lecture 4: Self-compassion and your happiness</b>	Mon Feb 2nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete weekly course content</li> <li>Review lecture</li> </ul>
<b>Quiz 4</b>	Fri Feb 6th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete between 6am-6pm</li> </ul>
<b>Unit 2 – HAPPINESS &amp; US – An interpersonal approach</b>		
<b>Lecture 5: A global happiness report</b>	Mon Feb 9th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete weekly course content</li> <li>Review lecture</li> </ul>
<b>Quiz 5</b>	Fri Feb 13th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete between 6am-6pm</li> </ul>



<b>Lecture 6: (Anti)social media and a new global health threat</b>	Mon Feb 23rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete weekly course content</li> <li>• Review lecture</li> </ul>
<b>Quiz 6</b>	Fri Feb 27th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete between 6am-6pm</li> </ul>
<b>Lecture 7: Happier together</b>	Mon Mar 2nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete weekly course content</li> <li>• Review lecture</li> </ul>
<b>Quiz 7</b>	Fri Mar 6th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete between 6am-6pm</li> </ul>
<b>Unit 3 – HAPPINESS IN ACTION – An applied approach</b>		
<b>Lecture 8: Putting happiness to the test</b>	Mon Mar 9th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete weekly course content</li> <li>• Review lecture</li> </ul>
<b>Quiz 8</b>	Fri Mar 13th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete between 6am-6pm</li> </ul>
<b>Lecture 9: Schadenfreude versus Freudenfreude</b>	Mon Mar 16th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete weekly course content</li> <li>• Review lecture</li> </ul>
<b>Quiz 9</b>	Fri Mar 20th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete between 6am-6pm</li> </ul>
<b>Lecture 10: Factors supporting happiness</b>	Mon Mar 23rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete weekly course content</li> <li>• Review lecture</li> </ul>
<b>Quiz 10</b>	Fri Mar 27th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete between 6am-6pm</li> </ul>
<b>Exam Preparation and Engagement Portfolio</b>	Week of Mon Mar 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Exam preparation video</li> <li>• Complete Engagement Portfolio</li> </ul>

## COURSE ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Online Quizzes	
Format	Quizzes will be completed through the course Canvas website. All quizzes will be accessible on the left-hand menu under “Quizzes”.
Details and Dates	<p>Students are required to complete ten (10) quizzes. Each quiz consists of 10 multiple choice or true and false questions which will need to be answered in 10 minutes. All quizzes are open book. Students will have between 6:00AM to 6:00PM to complete the quiz on the following days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz 1 = Friday September 16<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiz 2 = Friday January 23<sup>rd</sup></li><li>• Quiz 3 = Friday January 30<sup>th</sup></li><li>• Quiz 4 = Friday February 6<sup>th</sup></li><li>• Quiz 5 = Friday February 13<sup>th</sup></li><li>• Quiz 6 = Friday February 27<sup>th</sup></li><li>• Quiz 7 = Friday March 6<sup>th</sup></li><li>• Quiz 8 = Friday March 13<sup>th</sup></li><li>• Quiz 9 = Friday March 20<sup>th</sup></li><li>• Quiz 10 = Friday March 27<sup>th</sup></li></ul>
Weighting	20% in total (2% for each of the ten[10] quizzes).

### Application Assignment – Unit 1: An Intraindividual Perspective

Format	Submit a PDF document in APA format, uploaded to Canvas.
Details	The purpose of this assignment is to discuss a topic of interest from the respective unit and apply to a contemporary theme, all of which is supported by recent research. The assignment is 750 words maximum.
Due Date	Wednesday, February 11th
Weighting	20% in total

### Application Assignment – Unit 2: An Interpersonal Perspective

Format	Submit a PDF document in APA format, uploaded to Canvas.
Details	The purpose of this assignment is to discuss a topic of interest from the respective unit and apply to a contemporary theme, all of which is supported by recent research. The assignment is 750 words maximum.
Due Date	Wednesday, March 11th
Weighting	20% in total



Engagement Portfolio	
Format	Submit a PDF document, uploaded to the course Canvas website.
Details	Submit a “portfolio” of your two best personal examples of engagement in the course. Submissions not to exceed 200 words.
Due Date	Wednesday, April 1st
Learning Outcomes	Put forward a convincing argument of how you engaged in the course.
Weighting	5% in total

Final Exam	
Format	Completed and submitted electronically via the course Canvas website.
Details	The final exam is cumulative and will consist of both multiple choice and short answer questions. The three course units will be evenly represented on the exam. The exam will be open book and you can refer to your notes and slides. Any recording of questions, consulting with others during the exam time, or sharing exam content is strictly prohibited.
Due Date	TBD, but within exams period of Tuesday, April 14 to Saturday, April 25
Weighting	35% in total

**Note:** The schedule outlined in the syllabus may be subject to change, as needed, to best realize the educational goals of the course. Revisions will be announced in class and posted to Canvas.

## GRADING

---

In the Psychology Department, we aim to offer learning experiences that welcome and challenge all students to engage meaningfully in our discipline. We strive for grades that accurately reflect student learning and achievement of course learning objectives, rather than solely reflecting their performance relative to others.

In Psychology at UBC-V, we employ department-wide grading standards to promote equitable alignment, supporting students and course instructors as they learn and teach across many diverse courses and sections. For each Course Section, instructors should aim for a grade



average in the following Target Ranges (**before any bonus HSP points** are added, but including any mandatory HSP points): **B- (68-71%) in Introductory 100-level and 200-level courses**; B (72-75%) in Intermediate 300-level courses; B+ (76-79%) for Advanced 400-level courses and Selective-Entry lower-level courses (e.g., PSYC 277, 278, 312, 370, 371, 349, 359, 365). Ranges are intended to provide some flexibility to instructors and account for differences that can occur between classes. Ranges increase across year levels to account for improvements in student learning, and students’ ability to self-select into more specialized courses.

During the course, instructors may choose to adjust grades and/or difficulty of the assessments, to align with the Target Range. At the end of the course, if the average falls outside the Target Range (either direction), instructors will typically be expected to use a linear transformation to adjust final grades (i.e., add or subtract the same number of points to all students’ marks, while ensuring no student fails the course due to this transformation). If a course mean falls in within one +/- letter grade band above the Target Range (e.g., in the B+ range for Intermediate courses), and the instructor believes these grades to be justified, the instructor may submit a justification request using the departmental approval final grades submission form, and the grades may stand. This Upper Range is intended to inspire further excellence in learning and teaching, and allow for the possibility that some classes select for higher performing students. Courses with means exceeding the Upper Range will be expected to provide justification as well as use a linear transformation to fall within the Upper Range.

Grades are not official until they appear on students’ academic record. Students will receive both a percent and a letter grade for this course. At UBC, they convert according to the key below:

A+	90-100%	B+	76-79%	C+	64-67%	D	50-54%
A	85-89%	B	72-75%	C	60-63%	F	0-49%
A-	80-84%	B-	68-71%	C-	55-59%		

### HUMAN SUBJECT POOL (HSP) CREDITS

---

As part of this course, you are invited to earn **3% extra credit**.

Most students will choose to earn these credits by spending **three hours participating in psychology studies (worth 1% point for each hour)** through the Department of Psychology’s Human Subject Pool (HSP) system. You can locate, create an account, and sign up for studies by going to <https://hsp.psych.ubc.ca>. **Please register in the system by the end of the first month of classes to have the opportunity to earn your first ½ hour credit with a brief online survey that will increase your eligibility for more studies.**

Once registered in the system, you will be able to browse through and select which studies you wish to participate in, sign up for an available timeslot, and confirm your accumulated



credits afterward. **At the end of the last day of class for the term, the subject pool is closed.** At that point, you will no longer be able to receive credits. I strongly urge you to participate in and confirm your credits long *before* the last week of class since **many studies will not offer timeslots near the end of the term and you may be locked out before allocating your credits to your desired course.** Further instruction on how to use the HSP online system can be found at <https://psych.ubc.ca/undergraduate/opportunities/human-subject-pool/> in the document entitled "Subject Pool Information for Participants."

Alternative assignment:

**The Library Option:** As an alternative to participation in psychology subject pool experiments, you may complete a library-writing project. Such projects consist of reading and summarizing 1) the research question, 2) the methods and 3) the results (in written form) of a research article from the peer reviewed journal *Psychological Science*. You will receive one (1) research participation credit for each article summary that meets the following requirements.

Requirements:

- The article must have been published in the journal titled "*Psychological Science*"
- The article must have a publication date from the year 2000 to present (i.e. papers from 2001 are acceptable; those from 1999 or earlier are not)
- The article must be a research article; it cannot be a review article, a news item, a notice, or a letter to the editor, for example
- The summary should be approximately 500 words in length
- You must include your name, student number, course, section, instructor and email address on each summary
- You must log on to the Human Subject Pool (HSP) system (<http://hsp.psych.ubc.ca/>) and create an account before submitting your article summaries. Your credit is assigned using the online system.

For each course, you may obtain the same number of extra credits via the library option as specified in the course syllabus (i.e. the same number of credits available for students who participate in research).

Summaries must be submitted **no later than 10 days before the end of classes.**

You are to submit your article and your summary to turnitin.com. If you don't have a turnitin account already (from a previous course), you will need to create a user account in Turnitin. **For the library assignment the class ID is 51268460, class name is "HSP 2025 Winter 2" and password is "Research".** See [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com), and click on the "Training" link at the top of the page for detailed instructions on how to submit papers to Turnitin. Any student who is suspected of plagiarism will, at a minimum, not be granted credit, and their course instructor will be notified. Further action may be taken at a departmental or university level.



### **HSP Online Study Credit Limit (NEW PILOT PROGRAM):**

We will no longer have an online credit limit. Instead, students are free to receive their HSP bonus credits from any combination of “in-lab” and “online” studies. However, “in-lab” studies will offer a bonus 0.5 credits on top of the standard 0.5 credits per 30 minutes of participation (e.g., a 1 hour “in-lab” study will award 1.5 credits, while an equivalent “online” study will award 1 credit).

### **ATTENDANCE AND CENTRE FOR ACCESSIBILITY**

---

In this course, material that is taught through online lectures may be different from or supplement the additional materials (e.g., weekly readings). Moreover, lecture slides are designed to provide a framework for the lecture and any discussions--thus, not everything in the lecture is in the slides.

During your time in this course, if you encounter medical, emotional, or other personal problems that affect your attendance or academic performance, please notify us as soon as possible, as well as your Faculty Academic Advising Office. Please refer to the UBC Calendar for a discussion of academic concession.

The University accommodates students with physical and/or cognitive differences who have registered with the Centre for Accessibility (see below). The University also accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance or scheduled exams. Please let us know in advance, preferably in the first few weeks of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Other absences (e.g., varsity athletics, family obligations or similar) are not part of University policy and you should not assume they will be accommodated. Please discuss this with me before the withdrawal dates (see above).

### **CENTRE FOR ACCESSIBILITY**

UBC is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students including those with documented physical or learning differences. If you believe you fall in this category, please visit the website for the Centre for Accessibility (<https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility>) to take the necessary steps to ensure that you have every opportunity that you deserve to excel in your studies.

### **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

---

Similar to the broader UBC community, the Psychology Department—and this course—seeks to build a community where students feel included and are treated equitably. This class aims to be inclusive of gender identity, gender expression, sex, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, political and religious affiliation, ability, health, and age (this is not an exhaustive list!).



Students, instructors, visitors, and readings may sometimes raise controversial and/or sensitive issues. Respectful and productive discussion is encouraged, and students should feel safe to explore ideas without fear of being judged. Our goal is not to always agree, but rather to disagree without being threatening or alienating. However, if a statement or behaviour is likely to offend others or make others feel alienated in any way, it can be shared with me during office hours. If at any point you feel offended, threatened, or alienated by anything that happens during this course, please feel welcome to let me know. I (like many people) am always learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If at any point you feel as though I am failing to live up to an inclusive space in our course, I encourage you to let me know.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

---

We are all—students, professors, TAs—members of the academic community. In this community, there are ethical standards for how we share and produce knowledge. These standards of academic integrity hold that we produce our own contributions (i.e., we don't copy or buy papers, we don't cheat on exams) and we don't take credit for someone else's work (i.e., we include citations and references).

Students are expected to comply with all university regulations regarding academic integrity; including plagiarism, cheating, and submitting your own work more than once. Policy guidelines can be found at: <http://vpacademic.ubc.ca/integrity/ubc-regulation-on-plagiarism/>

## CITING VS. PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is defined as “where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own.” In academic work, it is crucial that you acknowledge where ideas come from through citing those sources. If you are ever unsure of whether to cite, it is best to err with caution and cite a source! It is very unlikely to ever be penalized for over-citing, while under-citing may be a significant error. Unless a statement can be thought of as common knowledge, spend time thinking about the source of that information and how best to cite.

In Psychology, we use APA citation style to indicate sources. For guides to APA visit:

- <https://guides.library.ubc.ca/apacitationstyle>
- [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html)

In writing within Psychology, direct quotations from sources are discouraged. Instead, you should try to paraphrase ideas into your own words, while citing the original source of those ideas. If you have questions on citing or what may constitute plagiarism, please discuss with us before any assessment is begun.



## PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT'S POSITION ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

---

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct are very serious concerns of the University, and the Department of Psychology has taken steps to alleviate them. In the first place, the Department has implemented software that can reliably detect cheating on multiple-choice exams by analyzing the patterns of students' responses. In addition, the Department subscribes to TurnItIn – a service designed to detect and deter plagiarism. All materials (term papers, lab reports, etc.) that students submit for grading may be scanned and compared to over 4.5 billion pages of content located on the Internet or in TurnItIn's own proprietary databases. The results of these comparisons are compiled into customized "Originality Reports" containing several sensitive measures of plagiarism; instructors receive copies of these reports for every student in their class.

In all cases of suspected academic misconduct, the parties involved will be pursued to the fullest extent dictated by the guidelines of the University. Strong evidence of cheating or plagiarism may result in a zero credit for the work in question. According to the University Act (section 61), the President of UBC has the right to impose harsher penalties including (but not limited to) a failing grade for the course, suspension from the University, cancellation of scholarships, or a notation added to the student's transcript.

All graded work in this course, unless otherwise specified, is to be original work done independently by individuals. If you have any questions as to whether or not what you are doing is even a borderline case of academic misconduct, please consult your instructor. For details on pertinent University policies and procedures, please see Chapter 5 in the UBC Calendar (<http://students.ubc.ca/calendar>) and read the University's [Policy 69](#).

## UBC VALUES STATEMENT

---

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with physical and/or cognitive differences and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available [here](#).

We participate in the Early Alert program, which helps us support students facing difficulties that are interfering with their education, their wellness or both. For answers to frequently asked questions regarding the early alert program, visit the link [here](#).



## LEARNING AND WELLNESS RESOURCES

---

Your well-being is more important than anything going on in this course! I fully understand that you may have other priorities—your self-care, your families, your work, etc. If you find that you are struggling to balance these priorities with the demands of this class, please do reach out. If you are dealing with an emergency during this course (medical, emotional, family, etc.), try to take care of yourself first. Contact me when you are able. We will then work with you to figure out the best course of action—along with likely having you discuss with your faculty's advising office. Additionally, you may find the following UBC resources helpful:

### Academic Advising

UBC's Students Services' [Academic Advisors](#) provide guidance on academic progress, degree requirements, program planning, etc. They can help you apply for in-term [academic concessions](#) if you face circumstances that prevent you from completing work for your courses.

### Writing Support

The [UBC Centre for Writing and Scholarly Communication](#) offers tutoring services and resources and has an amazing [collection of information and resources about writing](#).

### UBC Learning Commons

[UBC's Chapman Learning Commons](#) provides info re academic resources, from tutoring and workshops to study groups and online tech tools - on a variety of academic topics.

### AMS Tutoring

Your UBC student society (AMS), offers [free group tutoring](#) covering a variety of courses.

### Health and Wellbeing

It's important to take care of your physical, mental, and emotional health as you navigate university life. Be sure to check out the resources available through the [Wellness Centre](#), [Student Counselling Services](#), and other health resources posted on the [health section of the Student Services website](#).

If you or someone you know is in crisis: <https://students.ubc.ca/health/crisis-support>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

---

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site. I would also like to acknowledge that you are joining us during this course from many places, near and far, and acknowledge the traditional owners and caretakers of those lands.