

# PSYC 3302 B - POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

wk 1-2 - Introduction

Jan. 7/15

- Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000

American Psychologists - Journal

↳ special issue on positive psychology

→ Positive Psychology encompasses:

- subjective experience - past, present & future [well-being, optimism...etc]
- individual traits [perseverance, forgiveness, originality, spirituality]
- group level [institutions that move toward better citizenship.]

↳ Gable & Haidt, 2006 - Definition

"the study of the conditions & processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, & institutions"

↳ Sheldon & King, 2001 - Definition

"nothing more than the scientific study of ordinary human strengths & virtues" one that revisits the "average person"

↳ Peterson, 2006 - wrote one of the first PP textbooks

"scientific study of what goes right in life, from birth to death; all steps in between" — the good life

PP definition: the parts of psychology that deal with (positive) experiences, dispositions, contexts & processes, in individuals & groups, that facilitate well-being, achievement, and harmony — Zelenki, 2014

• How do we know that something is positive?

Diener & Suh (1997) who addressed it RE 'quality of life' indicators

↳ adapted from philosophers ↴

→ 3 Criteria for Positivity

• CHOICE (regularly)

- people choose what they value more [revealed preference]

• PLEASURE/EXPERIENCE

- if it feels good, it is good [subjective experience]

• VALUES

- based on religion, law, logic, etc. [ex. logic = value longer life]

- 'psychological' lists, but not the purview of science

↳ These do not always agree

→ WHAT might positive refer to?

- good intentions
- ideology: people are good → test this
- appreciation: people are neat → less extreme
- positive topics (note 3 criteria)

→ An expansive view of 'positive topics' may work best, yet relies on complex/competing definitions of 'positive'

→ PP IN CONTEXT

- obvious overlap with other sub-disciplines (ex. pre-reqs)
- humanistic + health psych have particularly similar perspectives + themes
- Positive Psychology as a Science (humanistic approach is not)
  - ↳ method: skepticism vs. cynicism (humanistic = qualitative)
- Tension between research + practice
  - ↳ similar to other areas (e.g., clinical psych)