

# Positive Psychology

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Center for European Studies

## Positive Psychology

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### Full course description

Positive psychology was introduced by Martin Seligman around 2000 and can be viewed as a supplementary approach to clinical psychology. The positive psychological movement formulated three aims: (1) to focus on well-being and happiness instead of abnormal behaviour and psychopathology, (2) to be concerned with building positive qualities and strengths instead of repairing damage and (3) to prevent future problems instead of correcting past and present problems.

The course will start with a general introduction to the field of positive psychology. The main concepts will be introduced and clarified, and an overview of the results of happiness studies will be presented. In subsequent meetings, various more specific topics will be discussed by means of lectures and group discussions. There will be ample room to gain hands on experience with positive psychological techniques ranging from simple journaling exercises to mindfulness meditation. A scientific evidence-based approach will be leading. We will provide participant with the tools to be able to evaluate and design research in the area of positive psychology, but also with the skills to apply some (basic) intervention techniques.

The instructional approach will include lectures, interactive meetings, group discussions, practical workshops and student presentations. Final assessment will be by means of an individual paper on a topic of choice. On the last day of the course a student conference is held where each students presents his paper (review or research proposal) either by poster or through an oral presentation. Halfway through the course an abstract has to be handed in on the basis of which a selection of candidates for oral presentations will be made.

This intensive 3 week, 36 hour course includes cultural excursions to Brussels and Amsterdam over the weekends.

Disclaimer trips: trips and visits related to the course are conditional. E.g. Dutch travel advice should be positive regarding the region that will be visited and institutions should be able to accept visitors. In case a proposed trip or visit cannot continue due to circumstances, alternatives may be organized.

Disclaimer ECTS: the number of ECTS credits earned after successfully concluding this course is the equivalent of 7,5 ECTS credits respectively according to Maastricht University's guidelines. Please consult with your home university if these credits will be accepted as part of your programme and, if

necessary, converted to the credit system acknowledged by your home university.

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## Course objectives

This programme is intended to familiarise students with the concepts and ideas of positive psychology; provide in depth knowledge on selected topics within the field; be able to judge and design a positive psychological research project; and to give students hands on experience with some of the positive psychology intervention techniques.

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## Prerequisites

This Positive Psychology course is a unique international study opportunity for psychology students. Maastricht's psychology faculty is world-renowned, and you will experience not only world-class instruction but get insight into what is internationally a truly 'hot topic'.

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## Recommended reading

Students are strongly encouraged to search for their own literature at the university library where they have a large number of relevant articles and books at their disposal. If you are interested in buying a textbook, we recommend one of the following (please note that it is not mandatory to buy one of these books. The books below are suggested readings):

Positive Psychology: Theory, Research And Applications by Kate Hefferon & Ilona Boniwell (2011) ISBN-10: 0335241956 | ISBN-13: 978-0335241958

Applied Positive Psychology: Improving Everyday Life, Health, Schools, Work, and Society by Stewart I. Donaldson, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Jeanne Nakamura (2011) ISBN-10: 0415877822 | ISBN-13: 978-0415877824

Positive Psychology in Practice by P. Alex Linley, Stephen Joseph (2004) ISBN-10: 0471459062 | ISBN-13: 978-0471459064

# POS2003

Period 3

**6 Jan 2025 - 31 Jan 2025**

ECTS credits:

**7.5**

Instruction language:

**English**

Coordinators:

**Elke Smeets**

**S. van der Laan**

**E. Smeets**

Teaching methods:

**Assignment(s), Lecture(s), Presentation(s), Work in subgroups, PBL, Paper(s)**

Assessment methods:

**Assignment, Final paper, Participation**

Keywords:

**Psychology ▪ Happiness ▪ Mindfulness ▪ Well-being ▪ Intervention techniques ▪ Clinical Psychology ▪ Strength**