COURSE SYLLABUS

Human Development:
Positive Psychological Functioning and Adaptation in Youth, 7.5 credits

MASTER LEVEL COURSE
SPRING 2022

COURSE CONVENOR
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INTRODUCTION

The aim of the course is to provide students with theoretical and empirical overview of positive youth development. The course covers two specific topics: a) theories and research on positive functioning and adaptation from both self-based and community-based perspective and b) introduction to specific youth-targeted interventions aimed at positive development at an individual and community level.

First, we will discuss theoretical conceptualization of positive psychology, optimal development and adaptation with a particular focus on youth. These questions will be discussed from both cognitive and emotional perspective. Can we learn to be optimistic or adopt a positive affective attitude towards our environment? Can we grow from hardship and is adversity necessarily psychologically casting? How can we use psychological research to promote well-being both at the individual and communal level? These are some of the questions that we will learn and discuss in this course. Then, we shall move to learn more about specific interventions aimed at promoting positive functioning and adaptations.

COURSE AIMS

1. Explain and critically analyze theoretical perspectives and the evidence base in positive youth development
2. Explain and critically analyze the design and evaluation of interventions
3. Demonstrate knowledge of ethical aspects of conducting intervention research
4. Demonstrate the skills required to engage in research, specifically academic writing and oral presentation

LANGUAGE

Lectures and the course readings will be in English. Students are encouraged to complete their exam and engage in class discussions in English as well.

ASSESSMENT

The course grade is determined by the grade on a comprehensive final exam. The exam is worth 100% of the final course grade. Questions in the exam will cover all course topics covered in class and will be derived from the required literature including lecture notes. Exam will be letter graded on a 7-point scale from A to F.

A (Excellent); B (Very good); C (Good); D (Satisfactory); E (Sufficient); Fx (Insufficient); F (Fail)

One week before the course ends, you will be given 5 exam questions and you will answer 3 out of the 5 exam questions. For more information, please refer to the document “Instructions for the Exam”.

REQUIRED LITERATURE

Throughout this course we will refer to two key textbooks (selected chapters) and several theoretical and empirical articles from various journals in the field of positive psychology.


We will read selected chapters out of these books which are available for free as an e-book from the Stockholm University Library. For specific chapters, refer to the section on teaching schedule and reading materials.

TEACHING SCHEDULE AND READING MATERIALS

The class will meet fifteen times during eight weeks. In addition to the introductory and review sessions, we will have ten lectures and three seminars in total. Required reading materials for each lecture and seminar is provided below. Students are expected to attend all lectures and seminars. For seminars, students are expected to read the materials (articles) beforehand and prepare 1-2 questions per reading. Seminars will be conducted in an interactive format and students’ participation is expected. During seminars, students can also bring in any outstanding questions from previous weeks and/or lecture materials.

**Week 1**

**January 18th (Tuesday 10-12):** Introduction to the course content and structure

**January 20th (Thursday 13-15):** General theoretical overview on positive psychology and youth development (LECTURE 1)


**Week 2**

**January 25th (Tuesday 10-12):** Positive psychology: what is it and why do we need it? (LECTURE 2)


**January 27th (Thursday 13-15):** Promoting positive youth development through emotion regulation (SEMINAR 1)


**Week 3**

**February 1st (Tuesday 10-12):** Positive emotions and well-being (LECTURE 3)


**February 3rd (Thursday 13-15):** Positive emotions and well-being (SEMINAR 2)


**Week 4**

**February 8th (Tuesday 10-12):** Self-control and positive youth development (LECTURE 4)

**February 10**

(Thursdays 13-15): Self-control and positive youth development (SEMINAR 3)


**Week 5**

**February 15** (Tuesday 10-12): Character strengths and positive youth development (LECTURE 5)


**February 17** (Thursday 13-15): Building resilience (LECTURE 6)


**Week 6**

**February 22** (Tuesday 10-12): Development of interventions: process and challenges (LECTURE 7 by Åsa Norman)


- Chapter 1: What is intervention research?
- Chapter 2: Steps in intervention research

**February 24** (Thursday 13-15): Examples of positive youth development interventions (LECTURE 8 by Laura Ferrer-Wreder)


**Week 7**

**March 1st (Tuesday 10-12):** Creating positive social communities: moral exemplar intervention (LECTURE 9)


**Week 8**

**March 8th (Tuesday 10-12):** Creating positive social communities: intergroup dialogue and contact interventions (LECTURE 10)


**March 11th (Friday 10-12):** Review

**March 20th (Sunday by 20:00):** Submission of the final exam