

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

Syllabi

Course Syllabi

---

Fall 9-1-2016

### GBLD 194.06: Social Interaction, Relationships, and Human Well-Being

Stephen M. Yoshimura

*University of Montana - Missoula*, [stephen.yoshimura@umontana.edu](mailto:stephen.yoshimura@umontana.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

Yoshimura, Stephen M., "GBLD 194.06: Social Interaction, Relationships, and Human Well-Being" (2016).  
*Syllabi*. 7190.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/7190>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

GBLD 194.06: Social Interaction, Relationships, and Human Well-Being  
Fall, 2016  
CRN: 75194  
T/TH 2-3:20  
Room: DHC 120

Instructor: Steve Yoshimura, Ph.D.

Office: LA 347

Email: [Stephen.yoshimura@umontana.edu](mailto:Stephen.yoshimura@umontana.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday 1-2, and by appt. anytime.

Social relationships are a universal cornerstone of human life. Friends, family members, intimate partners, neighbors, and co-workers all help people accomplish basic goals in life by providing support in various endeavors. Less obviously, relationships provide opportunities to exchange messages of kindness, affection, gratitude, humor, love, and forgiveness. These messages are the bonds of relationships and culture, and having opportunities to share them is a major source of human flourishing. Ironically, however, the same relationships that people gravitate so strongly toward are the ones that also cause considerable stress in the form of conflict, betrayal, rejection, and loss. Unfortunately, even well-intentioned, seemingly positive acts, such as instrumental support, affection, humor, and kindness can have negative effects on the well-being of selves and others. This paradox gives rise to an important question: In what ways do social connections and interactions affect the well-being of individuals, families, and large societies?

**The course has several goals:**

- To introduce you to the known connections between social, psychological, and physical well-being.
- To enhance your perceived control over your social environments.
- To help you build the ability to communicate their experiences and knowledge to others.
- To help you become a capable academic writer.
- To help build skills related to competent leadership enactment, such as planning actions, budgeting time, communicating, and decision-making.

**Along the way, you will learn about:**

- The major approaches to health and health practices across the world.
- The empirical and theoretical connections between specific social environments and well-being.
- The reasons why your interpersonal relationships are a main factor in your health and well-being.
- The conditions under which you could predict that social interaction would affect your sense of well-being.
- Various ways in which research on health and communication can be conducted.

## Course texts

I have just a few notes about these readings. First, although most of the assigned books are primarily written to a non-academic audience, they are all written by leading scholars in the area of human well-being. I have found each of these readings to be compelling and credible overviews of the original research upon which they are based. Second, even though the term “happiness” appears in many of the titles of these books, happiness is not the only definition of well-being. We will use this as a point of discussion in this class. Third, we will not be reading every chapter of every book, but we will be reading many of them, and I require the entire books so that you might begin to build a kind of scholarly tool-box for your academic and non-academic life. Finally, a weekly schedule of readings is available at the end of this syllabus. In addition to chapters from the books below, you’ll also find links to web-based readings and some .pdf files. All .pdf files are available in the Moodle course shell, organized by the appropriate week of class.

### **(In alphabetical order)**

Fredrickson, B. (2009). *Positivity: Top-Notch Research Reveals the 3-1 Ratio that will Change your Life*. Crown Archetype: New York, NY.

Fredrickson, B. (2013). *Love 2.0: Finding happiness and health in moments of connection*. New York, NY: Plume books.

Helliwell, J. F., Layard, R., and Sachs, J. (Eds). 2015. *World Happiness Report 2015*. New York: UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network. (PDF file available on Moodle).

Lyubomirski, S. (2013). *The myths of happiness: What should make you happy but doesn't, and what shouldn't make you happy but does*. New York, NY: Penguin Press.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Authentic happiness*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Sternberg, E. M. (2010). *Healing spaces: The science of place and well-being*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.

Vaillant, G. E. (2002). *Aging well: Surprising guideposts to a happier life from the landmark Harvard Study of Adult Development*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, & Co.

## Assignments

### **Written – Choose any three - 75 points possible (25 points each)**

Detailed assignment instructions are available online, on the Moodle course supplement.

Please note that each assignment has three components: Planning, doing, and writing. This means that each assignment involves an activity that needs to be planned and accomplished prior to writing the report. The course calendar includes recommendations of when you should start the activities and when the assignment is due, so be sure to leave yourself time between the doing and the writing components of each assignment.

Below is an itemized list of the available assignments. All assignments should be submitted to me in hard-copy. For various reasons, I do not open or evaluate emailed assignments, except in pre-arranged circumstances.

- Your current state of well-being – Reflections on the WHO Quality of Life Survey (submit on 9/6)
- Gratitude letter/gratitude expression reflection (Submit on 9/29)
- The role of space and beauty in enhancing social well-being (Submit on 10/6)
- Social connections journal/reflection (Submit on 11/3)
- Elder interview and aging well report (Submit on 11/15)

All assignments will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Completeness – Directions were followed, ideas were fully described and explained, claims fully supported with academic evidence, and points completely made.
- Mechanics – grammar, spelling, punctuation, and format norms adhered to.

### **Public presentation (30 points possible)**

At the end of the semester, you will choose the results of one assignment you did and present it to the class (the public is invited). As with the other assignments, detailed instructions are available on Moodle. In general, however, please plan on this presentation being informative, while also visually appealing, inspiring, and thoughtfully or emotionally evocative.

### **Exams - 150 points possible (50 each exam)**

Your knowledge about the role of communication in health will be assessed through three exams. Most of the questions will be multiple choice, but you should plan on having some questions that involve short written responses as well. Each exam will be worth 50 points. (150 points total)

## Grade scale

The grades in this course will be based on the following grade system: A = 229.5 to 255; B = 204 to 229; C = 178.5 to 203; D = 153 to 178; F = 152 and below, or due to academic dishonesty.

## Course Policies

### 1. Attendance and Participation

The quality of this seminar is based on the quality of discussion within it, so your attendance is expected and essential. I recognize that there are ways of participating in a course, some of which are linguistic and others that are nonverbal. In any case, however, your participation is only possible if you are in attendance. Thus, I will take attendance *at least* six times in this class. Being absent during two of those times (i.e., one full week's worth of class meetings) will reduce your grade by one full letter. Missing four and six classes will reduce your grade by one and two additional letters respectively (thus, missing six classes would result in the highest possible grade being a "C." It is professional courtesy to let me know ahead of time if you know you will be absent. In such an event, my expectation is that you obtain the discussion notes from one of your classmates. Once you review those notes, I encourage you to come speak with me about any questions you might have about the discussion you missed.

### 2. Exam policy

Each exam covers one unit of the course (three units = three exams). The exams will be taken in class, and can be taken alone or collaboratively with one other person. For each exam, I will distribute an online survey that allows you to declare whether you wish to take the exam alone or collaboratively. If you choose to take the exam collaboratively, you may choose one partner to work with. Your partner must be declared in advance, and both partners must agree to take the exam with each other. You will be allowed to choose a specific partner, or ask me to assign you a partner.

You can choose the same format for each exam, or choose different formats or different partners.

### 3. Late Work

If you know that you will be missing a class, you should make an effort to submit your assignments early. Assignments become late when they are turned in after the class period of their due date. Whereas no quizzes can be submitted after the due date, other late assignment will receive a **10% penalty for each weekday** that it is late. The assistants in the main office *do not* mark times or dates on papers that are turned in to them.

If you are sick when an assignment is due and want to turn it in late, **you must provide a legitimate physician's note** that indicates the days that you were unable to attend class. This must be turned in with your completed assignment. Exams will be administered only on the days scheduled. No exam can be made up without a valid and legitimate excuse. Valid and legitimate will be decided on the basis of evidence provided. Note that valid and legitimate never involves plane tickets, vacations, outdoor recreation, or any other various, unverifiable excuses. Dr.'s notes must be originals (no photocopies, carbons, faxes, or emails). **If an absence is known ahead of time, you must make arrangements before the assignment is due.**

If you will miss class due to a university-sponsored activity, you are required to (a) introduce yourself prior to missing class, (b) provide a copy of your travel schedule that indicates the days you will be missing, and (c) discuss with me your plans for making up the work.

### 4. Written Work

All papers must be typed, double-spaced, and in the appropriate format (APA). It is a good idea to keep a back-up copy of all your assignments. All papers must be stapled in the upper left-hand corner.

### 5. Academic Misconduct

According to the University of Montana Catalog, "Plagiarism is the representing of another's work as one's own. It is a particularly intolerable offense in the academic community and is strictly forbidden. Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion... Students must always be very careful to acknowledge any kind of borrowing that is included in their work. This means not only borrowed wording, but also ideas. Acknowledgement of whatever is not one's own original work is the proper and honest use of sources. Failure to acknowledge whatever is not one's own original work is plagiarism." I want to add to that it also is not appropriate to submit papers written by yourself for previous or other courses.

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the student conduct code. Please see the Student Conduct Code for definitions and consequences of cheating and plagiarism at: [www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321](http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321).

6. **Incompletes**

See the *University of Montana Catalog* for more information. These are very rarely granted, and only under the most unique circumstances.

7. **Auditing and Credit/No Credit options**

According to the University Catalog, the Credit/No Credit grade option exists “to encourage students to venture into courses where they might otherwise hesitate because of uncertainty regarding their aptitude or preparation....” It does not exist as protection from poor performance at the end of the semester. So, if you decide to audit this class or desire the credit/no credit grade option, you must indicate this decision to me within the first 15 days of the semester. I cannot grant any grade-option changes past that time. *If you wish to apply this course to your major, minor, or general education requirements, you must take it for a traditional letter grade.*

8. **Unique Needs**

If you have unique needs that help you manage and succeed in this course, please see Disability Services for Students (DSS) in the Lommasson Center (Room 144; phone: 243-2243). They will help you determine what types of resources are available to help you and will provide you with a letter to me detailing those resources. We will work together to make sure that you begin with a level playing field for your performance.

9. **Sexual assault, harassment, and discrimination resources**

You have a federal right to study in an environment free from harassment, sexual assault, and discrimination. If you or someone you know has been harassed, assaulted, or discriminated against you can find the appropriate resources by contacting the Student Advocacy Resource Center’s 24-hour line at 406-243-6559.

10. **If you participate in University-sponsored activities (e.g., sports, debate, etc.) AND you will be missing assignment due dates or exams for related activities:** I need a letter from your coach documenting your participation, as well as copy of your schedule indicating which days of class you’ll need to miss due to your activity. You are responsible for getting notes and making arrangements to turn in your assignments/take exams.

11. **A note about civility**

This is a professional, academic setting, in which your success requires attention, engagement, and respect. Your success and my success in this class are interdependent, and I can only do my job if I have your attention and cooperation. Civility can be enacted in many ways, but perhaps one of the more recent issues to challenge classroom civility is in the use of electronic communication devices during class time. If you have personal issues to attend to during a specific class, it is acceptable to excuse yourself from class and return when you are ready. However, if I notice a propensity toward engaging in unrelated electronic activity during class, I may stop the class and request that devices be turned off.

## Course Calendar

This schedule is subject to modification. I will notify you of any changes ahead of time.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
(W1)	Course introduction Definitions of “health” and “well-being” across the world Global policy implications	<b>Do:</b> WHO Quality of Life Survey (QoLS) and reflection
(W2)	An overview of the health benefits –and hazards - of social relationships	<b>Submit (9/6):</b> Reflections on the WHO Quality of life survey
(W3)	Social support and comforting No meeting Thursday, 9/15	<b>Plan/schedule:</b> gratitude letter and expression
(W4)	Expressing gratitude, compassion, and kindness Exam 1 (Thursday 9/22)	<b>Do:</b> Write and read gratitude letter  <b>Plan/schedule:</b> Visit to MMAC with a friend. Check gallery hours.
(W5)	The architecture of happiness: How do microenvironments enhance well-being?	<b>Do:</b> Visit MMAC with a friend  <b>Submit (9/29):</b> Gratitude expression reflection
(W6)	Love and attachment: Universal experiences, cultural and social benefits	<b>Submit (10/6):</b> Space and beauty analysis
(W7)	Self-Disclosure: When and why expressing thoughts helps people heal from difficult experiences.	<b>Start/Do:</b> Social connections journal
(W8)	Emotional experience and expressions: Positivity, Engagement, and Flourishing	<b>Plan/schedule:</b> Elder interview
(W9)	Aging well: The importance of meaningful social connections Exam 2 (Thursday, 10/27)	<b>Do:</b> Elder interview
(W10)	Affectionate communication: The benefits of affection exchange on cardiovascular, neuroendocrine, and emotional health  Humor: When is the experience and expression of humor helpful for relationships?	<b>Submit (11/3):</b> Social connections reflection

(W11)	No meetings this week – Election day (11/8) and National Communication Association Convention (11/10)	
(W12)	Ways of communicating conflict: When is conflict healthy?	<b>Submit (11/15):</b> Elder interview and aging well report
(W13)	Forgiveness: Cardiovascular and psychological benefits No meeting Thursday, 11/24 (Thanksgiving)	<u>Do (11/22):</u> schedule presentation.
(W14)	Forgiveness, continued Global Policy Implications revisited	
(W15)	Course presentations	
(W16)	Final exam: Thursday, Dec. 15 <sup>th</sup> 3:20-5:20pm	

## **Readings**

All readings below that are not chapters in the course books can be found on the Moodle online course supplement (login at <https://umonline.umt.edu>).

### **Week 1: Definitions of health and the importance of communication**

*All readings in this week should be done by the second class meeting.*

Gurung, R. (2006). Cultural approaches to health. (Find on Moodle)

Smith, E. E. (2013, January). [There's more to life than being happy](http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/01/theres-more-to-life-than-being-happy/266805/). Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/01/theres-more-to-life-than-being-happy/266805/>. (Find on Moodle)

Smith, E. E. (2013, August). [Meaning is healthier than happiness](http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/08/meaning-is-healthier-than-happiness/278250/). Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/08/meaning-is-healthier-than-happiness/278250/>. (Find on Moodle)

Jauhar, S. (2016, August). [When blood pressure is political](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/07/opinion/sunday/when-blood-pressure-is-political.html). Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/07/opinion/sunday/when-blood-pressure-is-political.html>. (Find on Moodle).

Marks, N., & Shaw, H. (2005). A well-being manifesto for a flourishing society. In F. A. Huppert, N. Baylis, and B. Keverne (Eds.). *The Science of Well-Being*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. (Find on Moodle)

### **Week 2: An overview of the health benefits of social relationships**

(By Tuesday): *World Happiness Report*, Chapters 1 and 2. In chapter 2, note esp. the contributions of social support and generosity to happiness across the world in Figure 2.2. (find on Moodle)

(By Thursday): *The Myths of Happiness*, Chapter 1

(By Thursday): Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T. B., & Layton, J. B. (2010). Social relationships and mortality risk: A meta-analytic review. *PLoS Medicine*, 7(7), 1-20. [www.plosmedicine.org](http://www.plosmedicine.org). (Find on Moodle).

### **Week 3: Social support and comforting**

(By Tuesday) Gurung, R. A. R. (2006). Chapter 5: Coping and social support. (find on Moodle)

(By Thursday): *The Myths of Happiness*, chapter 2

### **Week 4: Expressing Gratitude, compassion, and kindness**

(By Tuesday): *Authentic happiness*, chapter 5

(By Tuesday): Emmons, R. (2010). [Why gratitude is good](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_gratitude_is_good). (find on moodle). Retrieved from: [http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why\\_gratitude\\_is\\_good](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_gratitude_is_good)

(By Tuesday): Buchanan, K. E., & Bardi, A. (2010). Acts of kindness and acts of novelty affect life satisfaction. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 150, 235-237. (Find on Moodle).

## **Week 5: The architecture of happiness**

(By Tuesday) *Healing spaces*, chapter 2

(By Tuesday) [Video of Esther Sternberg Discussing Healing Spaces](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkLoHtwLIA). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkLoHtwLIA> (find on Moodle)

Delistraty, C. (2014). [The beauty-happiness connection](http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/08/the-beautyhappiness-connection/375678/). Retrieved from: <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/08/the-beautyhappiness-connection/375678/> (find on Moodle)

## **Week 6: Love and attachment**

(By Tuesday) *Authentic Happiness*, Chapter 11

(By Thursday) *Love 2.0*. Chapters 1 and 2

## **Week 7: Self Disclosure**

(By Thursday) The myths of happiness, chapter 3, esp. pp. 91-98.

(By Thursday) [James Pennebaker discusses his research on how we disclose without even knowing it](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGsQwAu3PzU). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGsQwAu3PzU> (find on moodle).

## **Week 8: Emotional experience and expressions**

(By Tuesday) *Positivity*, chapter 1; *Authentic Happiness*, Chapters 3 and 4

(By Thursday) *Positivity*, chapter 7

## **Week 9: Aging well**

(By Tuesday): *Adaptation to life*, Preface, Cast of Protagonists, Introduction.

(By Thursday): *Aging Well*, Chapters 1 and 6

## **Week 10: Affectionate Communication and Humor**

### **By Tuesday:**

[NY Times article and video on hugging trends](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/28/style/28hugs.html) Retrieved from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/28/style/28hugs.html> (find on moodle)

[The power of kisses](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the_power_of_kisses). Retrieved from: [http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the\\_power\\_of\\_kisses](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the_power_of_kisses) (find on Moodle)

### **By Thursday**

[Funny or Die: How your sense of humor can improve your health, get you pregnant, and even save your life](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/funny-or-die/361618/) Retrieved from: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/funny-or-die/361618/> (Find on Moodle)

Video: [Why we laugh](http://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/372213/why-we-laugh/): Retrieved from: <http://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/372213/why-we-laugh/> (Find on Moodle).

### **Week 11: No meetings this week**

### **Week 12: Conflict and health**

*World Happiness Report*, Chapter 8 (find on Moodle)

Eaker, E. D., Sullivan, L. M., Kelly-Hayes, M., D'Agostino, R. B., & Benjamin, E. J. (2007). Marital status, marital strain, and risk of coronary heart disease or total mortality: The framingham offspring study. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 69(6), 509-513. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/PSY.0b013e3180f62357> (Find on Moodle, focus on abstract, tables, and discussion)

[Masters of love](http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/06/happily-ever-after/372573/) Retrieved from: <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/06/happily-ever-after/372573/> (on Moodle)

### **Weeks 13 and 14: Forgiveness**

*Authentic happiness*, chapter 5

Worthington, E. (2004). [The science of forgiveness](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the_new_science_of_forgiveness). Retrieved from: [http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the\\_new\\_science\\_of\\_forgiveness](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the_new_science_of_forgiveness) (find on Moodle).