

CREATIVITY AND LEADERSHIP

UG

Spring 2024

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Class Venue, and Times:	UTC 1.130, Tue/Thr 12:30 am – 1:45 pm
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Introduction

We all want to be successful in our careers, enjoy a healthy social life, and live long and healthy lives. However, perhaps what we want most out of life is *happiness and fulfillment*.¹ Indeed, most people agree that the reason they want a great career, healthy relationships, and good physical health is because they believe these things lead to happiness & fulfillment. In other words, happiness & fulfillment appears to be our most important—or at least one of the most important—goal(s) in life.

How do we go about achieving this goal? Most of us—particularly those in business-settings—seek happiness through career success and its accouterments (wealth, power, fame). That is, we assume that we will be happy if we are professionally successful. However, although career success can improve happiness levels, it isn't as reliable a determinant of happiness & fulfillment as we believe it to be. In fact, as I discuss in my research-based book [*If You're So Smart, Why Aren't You Happy?*](#), success can often come in the way of happiness.

¹ By “happiness & fulfillment” I mean a positive emotional state. Thus, it includes both “experienced happiness”—e.g., pleasure from eating something tasty—as well as “reflective happiness” (e.g., satisfaction from getting a job done). Sometimes, in order to experience “reflective happiness,” one may have to sacrifice “experienced happiness”. (Think of pulling an all-nighter to do well in a case competition.) In such cases, the happiness-enhancing course of action may be to pull the all-nighter even though it is emotionally aversive in the short-run.

Thus, the success leads to happiness (success → happiness) direction of causality is questionable. By contrast, there is very strong evidence for the reverse direction of causality: happiness → success. Why might happiness lead to success? Because happier people are (in general) healthier, better team-players and make better decisions.

As such, there is a business case to be made for prioritizing happiness & fulfillment. That, it doesn't just feel good to want happiness and fulfillment, it is actually useful to lead a life of sustained happiness and fulfillment.

Course focus and objectives

Although being happy outside of work is obviously important, given that we are part of a business school, we will focus on organizational happiness or happiness in the workplace. And within this context, we will attempt to achieve three main objectives:

- Gain a solid understanding of what happiness is, and why happiness & fulfillment matter even in—or especially in—the workplace
- Recognize the main determinants of happiness & fulfillment in the workplace, and
- Become fluent in coming up with a list of things you (i.e., employees and managers/leaders) can do to enhance your own happiness & fulfillment levels and that of your coworkers

Tools to achieve objectives

We will use a variety of tools and techniques to achieve the three objectives listed above, including:

1. Lectures: I will likely lecture for about 30 minutes in each session. In each lecture, I will summarize one or more important conclusions to which science has arrived. However, I'd like the sessions to be interactive, so please do feel free to raise your hand and ask questions as and when they occur to you.
2. In-class Discussions: Perhaps the most important way of achieving objectives will be through peer-to-peer learning. For example, I will regularly assign you to breakout rooms to discuss topics with your peers.
3. Readings, articles, and videos: You will be assigned, on average, one article/video/audio per session.
4. Assignments: The assignments are the heart of the course. Whereas conceptual knowledge is important, without taking action on this knowledge, you won't see the desired effects. For instance, learning about the various ways in which expressing

gratitude can help enhance happiness is useful and interesting, but it's not until you actually take steps to express gratitude that you will reap the benefits. This is why, from the grading perspective, the assignments are weighted more heavily (85%) than conceptual knowledge in this course (15%).

Grades

I am generally not fond of grading since it kills intrinsic motivation.² The concept of grading appears particularly anathematic to a course such as this, since an important focus of the course is to help you identify intrinsically motivating goals. However, we have to live with the reality that grades are an indispensable part of our university's system. Further, in a way, the grading system mimics life after school: whether you like it or not, you are going to be graded in your work-life, dating-life, and in other domains as well. So, why not use the context of this class to transcend the constraints of being graded to enhance your happiness & fulfillment? Indeed, a lot of the concepts and exercises in the class will be directly applicable to overcoming the pressure that being graded places on you.

The grading will follow the following point-allocation scheme:

1. Class participation (individual):	3 points
2. Quizzes (best 12 out of 15)	12 points
3. Assignments (individual and group):	85 points
I. Expressing Gratitude (individual)	15 points
II. Creative altruism plan (group)	15 points
III. Healthy lifestyle (individual)	15 points
IV. Autosketch (individual)	15 points
V. Final project presentation (group)	25 points

The **class participation** grade will be based on the quality of your participation during class. Here are the salient points with regard to this aspect of your grade:

1. There are **28** sessions in this class and, excluding the very first session—that is, for **27 sessions**—you will get a grade between **-2** and **3** points for each session. Your final class participation grade will be calculated based on the overall score you get in the **BEST 24 of these 27** sessions. Note that for **eight** sessions—the ones in bold on the last page of this syllabus—you will earn a penalty of -2 points for absence.
2. So, you are allowed to miss up to 3 (out of the 19 non-bold sessions) sessions without any penalty for class participation grade. (This is why your final class participation grade

² See Dan Pink's book, "Drive".

will be based on **24** of the **27** sessions.) For the sessions for which you are not fully present (that is, present from beginning to end), you will get 0 points. For repeated tardiness, you will be penalized 1 point. (You will get one warning for being tardy.) Please inform me or the TA ahead of time if you expect to be tardy for a session.

3. For the sessions for which you are present, you will be graded (on class participation) as follows:

“Regular” (20) sessions:

i. Absence for regular (20) sessions	0 points
ii. Mere presence in class/moderate contribution	1 point
iii. Good comments (shows good critical thinking)	3 points
iv. Repeated tardiness	-1 point
v. Missing bold session	-2 points

There are 13 **quizzes**, out of which 12 (of the best quizzes) will count toward your final grade. Each quiz will have 5 multiple choice questions. The quizzes will be based on the material covered that day and will take place in the last 5-10 minutes of class.

With regard to the five **assignments**, three are “individual” assignments and two (creative altruism plan & final project presentations) are “team” assignments. Please form teams of 3-4 students (no less than 3 and no more than 4). Teams will be formed on September 1st (4th session of class). Needless to say, every student will be expected to contribute his/her fair share for the team assignment. If you believe that one or more members of your team did not do so, please contact me and I will investigate the issue.

All assignments count towards your final grade. Hard copies of instructions for the assignments will be handed out on the starting date for the assignment (see the last page of the syllabus), and assignment reports will be due on the specified due dates (see the last page of the syllabus).

Important note: You will be penalized 5% of your assignment grade for turning the assignment in 1 day (with 24 hours) late and 10% for turning it in 2 days late. You will be penalized 25% for turning the assignment in more than 2 days late. (You have up until the end of the semester to turn in an assignment.) **In the interest of fairness to other students, please do not request an extension of the deadline for any assignment for any reason.** If you need an extra day or two to turn in an assignment, please do so, but please also accept the associated penalty.

REQUIRED MATERIALS FOR CLASS:

Required reading:

There will be, on average, one article per session. The links to readings/videos will be distributed via email to you on the day of the previous session (or earlier). You can also access the links on Canvas.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY or visit the website <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/>

CLASS WEBSITES AND STUDENT PRIVACY:

Password-protected class sites will be available for all accredited courses taught at The University of Texas at Austin. Syllabi, handouts, assignments, and other resources are types of information that may be available within these sites. Site activities could include exchanging email, engaging in class discussions and chats, and exchanging files. In addition, class email rosters will be a component of the sites. Students who do not want their names included in these electronic class rosters must restrict their directory information in the Office of the Registrar, Main Building, Room 1. For information on restricting directory information see: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi02-03/app/appc09.html>.

S. No	Day	Date	Topic	Quizzes/Assignments
1	Tue	Aug 23 rd	Genesis of the course; syllabus overview	<i>Sample quiz</i>
2	Thr	Aug 25 th	Functionality, Measurement & Definition of happiness	<i>Quiz 1;</i>
3	Tue	Aug 30 th	1 st happiness sin: Chasing superiority	<i>Quiz 2;</i>
4	Thr	Sep 1 st	1 st happiness habit: Pursuing flow	<i>Quiz 3; Team formation</i>
5	Tue	Sep 6 th	1 st happiness exercise: Expressing gratitude	<i>Begin Expressing gratitude;</i>
6	Thr	Sep 8 th	2 nd happiness sin: Desperation for love	<i>Quiz 4;</i>
7	Tue	Sep 13 th	2 nd happiness habit: The need to love & give	<i>Quiz 5;</i>
8	Thr	Sep 15 th	2 nd happiness exercise: Creative altruism	<i>Begin Creative Altruism Plan</i>
9	Tue	Sep 20 th	Creative Altruism Brainstorming	Expressing gratitude due;
10	Thr	Sep 22 nd	3 rd happiness sin: Being overly control seeking	<i>Quiz 6;</i>
11	Tue	Sep 27 th	3 rd happiness habit: Gaining internal control	<i>Quiz 7;</i>
12	Thr	Sep 29 th	3 rd happiness exercise: Leading a healthy lifestyle	<i>Begin healthy lifestyle</i>
13	Tue	Oct 4 th	4 th happiness sin: Default distrust	<i>Quiz 8; Begin Autosketch</i>
14	Thr	Oct 6 th	Manish Vora guest lecture	
15	Tue	Oct 11 th	Creative altruism presentations I	Creative Altruism Plan due
16	Thr	Oct 13 th	Creative altruism presentations II	Creative Altruism Plan due
17	Tue	Oct 18 th	4 th happiness habit: Smart trust; 4 th happiness exercise: Forgiveness	<i>Quiz 9; Healthy lifestyle due;</i> <i>Begin Final Project</i>
18	Thr	Oct 20 th	Final project presentations Brainstorming	
19	Tue	Oct 25 th	5 th happiness sin: Indifferent/obsessive pursuit of passion	<i>Quiz 10;</i>
20	Thr	Oct 27 th	5 th happiness habit: The dispassionate pursuit of passion	<i>Quiz 11;</i>
21	Tue	Nov 1 st	5 th happiness exercise: 3 good things with a twist	Autosketch due
22	Thr	Nov 3 rd	6 th happiness sin: Mind-wandering	<i>Quiz 12;</i>
23	Tue	Nov 8 th	6 th happiness habit: Mindfulness	<i>Quiz 13;</i>
24	Thr	Nov 10 th	6 th happiness exercise: Presence practice	
25	Tue	Nov 15 th	Final project presentations I	Final project due
26	Thr	Nov 17 th	Final project presentations II	Final project due
27	Tue	Nov 29 th	Autosketch Quiz & 360 Feedback	
28	Thr	Dec 1 st	Wrap Up	

