

Open Your Class With This Tomorrow- *Pursuing the Good Life*

Directions: Ask students to read the selected chapters below and answer the corresponding questions. These questions can be used as an independent homework assignment, a group discussion, or a whole class discussion. You can also assign students the supplementary articles and questions associated with different chapters. There are many other opportunities to incorporate chapters from *Pursuing the Good Life* into your psychology class. The following selection is intended as a sample.

Chapter 1: What is positive psychology, and what is it not?

1. Define positive psychology. Why do you think positive psychologists choose to examine human behavior from this perspective rather than help individuals with mental illness?
2. How is positive psychology different than self-help books?
3. What does positive psychology add to the field of psychology that was not previously examined? Choose any three topics that seem most interesting to you.

Time: The New Science of Happiness ["The New Science of Happiness"](#)

1. Who is often considered the founder of positive psychology?
2. Identify two factors from the article that make people happy.
3. What does it mean to have a "set point" of happiness?
4. Based on the article's information, identify one specific action you can take in your own life to increase happiness.

Chapter 9: Taking the Criticisms

For each of the following criticisms leveled against positive psychology, explain Peterson's response regarding why these criticisms are not valid critiques of positive psychology.

1. Positive Psychology is nothing new.
2. Who is to say what is positive?
3. Focusing on the positive gets us in trouble.
4. Positive psychology is indifferent to human suffering.
5. It is premature to do interventions based on positive psychology's findings.
6. Positive psychologists exaggerate the implications of results.
7. What is your personal feeling towards the critiques discussed in this chapter, do you believe that positive psychology is a field worth studying? Explain.

Chapters 73/74: Positive Psychology in China and Gauging the Happiness of Nations

1. Why did Christopher Peterson believe that there was such a great interest in positive psychology during his trip to China?
2. China is a collectivist culture that generally makes long-term decisions about events. How would positive psychology's implementation be different in China than it would be in the United States?
3. In your opinion, regardless of culture, what commonalities between China and the United States can benefit from positive psychology? Explain.

Chapter 74: Gauging the happiness of Nations

1. Why do the results of Happiness in North Korea bring into question relying on self-report in research?

Happiest Cities in the United States

<https://www.menshealth.com/health/a34919033/happiest-cities-in-america/>

After reading the article on the happiest cities in America, answer the following questions.

1. Identify the factors that were used to rank these cities in levels of happiness. Do you agree with this assessment? What would you add or remove from the list?
2. After looking through the list of happiest cities, what characteristics came up over and over again?
3. Identify at least three characteristics about the location where you live in that contribute to your happiness.