

Course Syllabus

Course Information

Well-being: Creating a Toolbox

PSYC 2960

Section 01

Summer 2023

1 cr

Term II

Mon

4:00PM-6:05PM EST

Room: Jonssn 4309

Prerequisites: PSYC 1200 or permission of the instructor.

Blackboard/LMS course site: <https://lms.rpi.edu/> All communications outside of class time and relevant for everyone in the course will be through LMS announcements. Please check these regularly.

Instructor

Full Name / Title: Professor Alicia Walf, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer Cognitive Science Dept.

Office location: <https://rensselaer.webex.com/meet/walf>

Office ("Student") Hours: Thurs 4:30-6:30 pm, or by appointment

RPI email address: walf@rpi.edu

Other ways to contact me: [Alicia.walf@gmail](mailto:Alicia.walf@gmail.com) and WebEx Teams

If you find that you need assistance with the material presented in this course or just want to talk about it, please see me. If you are concerned about your grade, please do not wait until the end of the semester to talk to me. I am always interested and happy to talk to or assist students.

Course Description

Well-being can be defined as feeling sound in body and mind more often than not and generally judging life positively. However, well-being is different for everyone. In this class, students will learn about different approaches to well-being by analyzing scientific findings, incorporating experiential learning, and completing project-based assignments. The goal is for students to create their own well-being toolbox. Topics will include: stress, boredom, emotion, resilience, contemplative practices, creativity, consciousness, identity, and self-awareness.

Course Text(s)/Required materials

Obtain a sketchbook of your choice (bound paper, lined or unlined) for this course and *bring it to every class*. Additional readings/media will be distributed in class or electronically.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. compare and contrast what stress and well-being mean and how these topics are scientifically tested
2. expand upon their existing knowledge base on stress/well-being to develop a skill set to evaluate well-being practice
3. communicate their understanding of what well-being means to them

Grading Criteria Grading is not competitive and students are encouraged to study and discuss materials together. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, any work turned in must be yours and yours alone. Your final course grade will be based on your performance on the requirements of this course. Grades will be posted on the LMS course site. By mid-semester (week 3), students should be able to determine their grade based upon measures completed to that point. If you ever have any questions regarding your standing in this course, please ask me. Any appeals about grades must be brought to my attention before the last day of class.*

Grading Scale: A 93-100% A- 90-92.9% B+ 87-89.9% B 83-86.9% B- 80-82.9% C+ 77-79.9% C 73-76.9% C- 70-72.9% D+ 67-69.9% D 63-65.9% F 62.9% and below

Your grade in this class will be determined as follows:

Attendance: 20% of overall grade

Reflections: 20% of overall grade

Participation: 20% of overall grade

Project: 40% of overall grade

Course Assessment Measures

Participation and attendance (20%): Attendance is mandatory; we only meet 6 times. Students will receive a grade for attendance that is factored into their final grade.

Participation (20%): Active engagement in class is mandatory. Participation includes working on their own or in groups on activities during class time, contributing to class discussions and polls, and/or completing synchronous and asynchronous participation challenges. Students will receive a grade for participation that is factored into their final grade.

Reflections (20%): You will regularly be asked to reflect on media we consume or activities that we do in class. Each meeting day, you will have to turn in one of these paragraph-long reflections (graded complete or incomplete).

Project (40%): Students will complete one project this semester in two graded parts: proposal and 2-3 page paper. We will discuss details together early in the semester.

**** Any assignment that is worked on outside of class needs to be submitted via the LMS link by 11:59 pm EST on its due date to be considered on time. See lateness policy below for more details.****

Other Course Specific Information

Lateness policy Late assignments will be accepted, but for each day an assignment is late, 3 points will be deducted from the grade. Late assignments will only be accepted up to one week late and must be turned in by Wednesday 06/28 11:59pm. Please email me in the case of extenuating circumstances and difficulties completing assignments BEFORE they are due.

Attendance Policy Attendance is mandatory. If you need to obtain an official excuse for an absence please contact the Office of Student Success success@rpi.edu. Make-up exams may be given with documentation of these valid excuses; however, the make-up exam may be different than that given in class and may take a different form. There are no make-up quizzes. If you are late, not fully participating, or leave early (without prior approval), points will be deducted from your attendance/participation grade. **If you are not feeling well enough to come to class, please let me know and I can start a WebEx meeting for you to attend virtually.**

Info for Students with Disabilities RPI strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss your options. To establish reasonable accommodations, please register with The Office of Disability Services for Students. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. DSS contact information: dss@rpi.edu; 518-276-819; 4226 Academy Hall.

Incomplete Grades In the case of an extended excused absence from class, and inability to complete coursework by the end of the semester, an Incomplete may be given. The student needs to contact me to work out the logistics and deadlines for the Incomplete before the last day of class. This is worked out on a case-by-case basis with me.

Policy on Collaboration and Cheating/plagiarism All assignments that are turned in for a grade must be the student's own original work. Turning in work that was submitted in another course is considered self-plagiarism. In cases where help was received (applies to graded assignments only, and not exams), a notation on the assignment should indicate your collaboration (e.g. if someone else helped with editing or provided feedback). Submission of any assignment that is in violation of this policy will result in penalties. Penalties for a single offense of cheating or plagiarism on all other assignments, will result in a zero grade for that material. In instances of such cheating/plagiarism over multiple occasions by the same student, this can result in failure of the course. If you have any questions or require clarification of these policies, please see me.

Extra-credit opportunity I encourage students to learn about the material outside of class. Students can earn extra credit by attending an event or doing an activity (even additional article critiques) related to the class material and submitting a concise one-page summary of what you did and what you learned from this experience. Students can earn one point to be added to their final averages for each assignment completed well. Students can turn in a maximum of 3 assignments. All extra credit assignments are due by Friday August 19, but can be turned in at any point during the semester.

Other resources for support There are many ways students are supported on campus. One example is the Center for Global Communication+Design (Comm+D). If you would like help with writing assignments, visual design projects, or oral presentations, please visit the Center online at <https://info.rpi.edu/comm-d> to find helpful resources or to schedule an appointment. Comm+D is a FREE resource for all members of the Rensselaer community. See “Resources” folder on LMS for additional details about Comm+D and the many other resources for student support.

Professor Walf’s I.D.E.A. Statement In this classroom, we will acknowledge and aim to respect inclusivity, diversity, equity, and awareness. In our classroom, all students are welcome and will be supported regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disabilities, religion, regional background, neurodiversity, citizenship status, nationality and the many other diverse identities that we each bring here. Indeed, the diversity that the students bring to this classroom should be viewed as a strength, resource, and benefit.

We will be focusing on the material a (neuro)science perspective. We must be aware that science is not always objective and unbiased and historically has not included representation of diverse individuals in the experiments or the researchers themselves. For example, individual differences between human subjects in experiments were often minimized or considered confounds because of the added complexity they may have contributed to the analysis of the data. However, in this classroom, we will strive to integrate a diverse set of experiences for a more comprehensive understanding of the material in this course, despite the potential for added complexity. An important part of a college education is learning about the complexity of various issues. We will also expand our understanding by hearing from diverse voices in the field through our readings and discussions of the material. Moreover, students in this class are encouraged to participate during class meetings and all efforts will be made for students have an equitable opportunity to contribute and succeed in a supportive learning environment. Grading will also be equitable. Final course grades are non-negotiable and will be based upon the same metrics described in the syllabus for each and every student.

Our classroom will represent a diversity of individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences. We all must listen and show respect for every other member of this class even if we do not necessarily agree. Please honor the uniqueness of our classroom community and appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from one another. If you have any questions or concerns, please discuss with me.

RPI’s Academic Integrity Policy The Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities and The Rensselaer Graduate Student Supplement define various forms of Academic Dishonesty and procedures for responding to them. All forms are violations of the trust between students and teachers. Student-teacher relationships are built on trust. For example, students must trust that teachers have made appropriate decisions about the structure and content of the courses they teach, and teachers must trust that the assignments that students turn in are their own performance. Acts that violate this trust undermine the educational process. The Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities and The Rensselaer Graduate Student Supplement define various forms of Academic Dishonesty and you should make yourself familiar with these. In this class, all assignments that are turned in for a grade must represent the student’s own work. In cases where help was received, or teamwork was allowed, a notation on the assignment should indicate your collaboration. Submission of any assignment that is in violation of this policy will result in a penalty. If found in violation of the academic honesty policy, students may be subject to two types of penalty. The instructor administers an academic (grade) penalty and the student is reported to the Dean of Students or the Dean of Graduate Education as appropriate. The first violation results in 0 grade for that assignment. The second violation results in failure of the course. If you have any questions concerning this policy before submitting an assignment, please ask for clarification.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week/Day/Date		Topic/Activity	Assignment due
1	Mon 5/22	Course Overview	Reflection 1 (due Tues 5/23)
2	Wed 5/31	Well-being dimensions 1 & 2	Survey, Reflection 2 (due Thurs 6/01)
3	Mon 6/05	Well-being dimensions 3 & 4	Project proposal, Reflection 3 (due Tues 6/06)
4	Mon 6/12	Well-being dimensions 5 & 6	Reflection 4 (due Tues 6/13)
5	Mon 6/19	Well-being dimensions 7 & 8	Reflection 5 (due Tues 6/20)
6	Mon 6/26	Project presentation & discussion, Last class	Reflection 6, Project (due Tues 6/27)
	Wed 6/28		All late and extra-credit assignments

All **assignments** should be turned in on LMS by 11:59pm on due date.

This schedule is subject to minor revisions. Revisions will be noted in class and on LMS.

Although the intention is that we will be meeting in-person in our classroom, modality changes may have to occur based upon unforeseen situations, such as health issues or other emergencies affecting your professor, or weather- or pandemic-related shutdowns of the university. We will work together to minimize any disruptions to our schedule that may arise as quickly as we can and any changes will be communicated via LMS/email.