

Exam #2

As we have discussed, one of the major goals of this course is not only to learn the material, but to be able to apply what you've learned to the outside world. This exam will assess the degree to which you are able to translate what you've learned to very real-world experiences – experiences you will likely encounter for years to come.

You will be asked to write four essays. The first two essays will be on ONE of the three attached vignettes. The other two essays will be on another stimulus that I will give to you at the beginning of next week's class. **IMPORTANT:** At least two of the topics written about must come from points 9-13 below (i.e., the 2nd half of the course)!

This semester, we have covered the below topics in depth:

- 1) What is an emotion? The parameters used to study emotion, and the component approach.
- 2) What causes emotions? Major theories about how they unfurl.
- 3) How are emotions understood? Discrete versus dimensional accounts. Three major theories about the relationship between PA and NA.
- 4) Why/How are emotions important and/or functional (intrapersonal, dyadic, in a group)?
- 5) Levenson's (1999) Core-Control System
- 6) Emotion elicitation. Pros, cons, and unique nature of each method (movies, slides, music, social psychological, etc.) – both in research and in the real world.
- 7) How do people communicate emotions? Relatedly, how are emotions in others measured (behaviorally, autonomically, neutrally, via self-report)?
- 8) What strategies do people use to regulate/control their emotions? Which strategies are most effective, and why?
- 9) How do emotions influence the way in which people process information and/or form decisions?
- 10) Jonathon Cohen: How does the brain reflect a person's cognitive-emotion decision-making?
- 11) Working memory capacity and emotion regulation: How does WMC influence one's ability to control their emotions?
- 12) Increasing Happiness – Perspective-Taking and Goals. How might someone increase their long-term happiness using *these* strategies?
- 13) Increasing Happiness – Forgiveness and Gratitude. How might someone increase their long-term happiness using *these* strategies?

Your job will be to select two (2) topics from the above list and relate them to one of the three attached vignettes. Your responses should clearly demonstrate that you understand the material well and, more importantly, that your understanding/appreciation of the vignettes has been improved as a result of the course material.

For the "surprise" stimulus presented next week, you will be asked to select two (2) different topics from the above list (i.e., you are not allowed to use the same topic twice). As before, you will be asked to relate these two topics to the "surprise" stimulus and clearly demonstrate that you understand the material well and, more importantly, that your understanding/appreciation of the stimuli has been improved as a result of the course material.

In total, you will be asked to write four essays (2 stimuli * 2 topics each = 4 essays, each valued at 6 points each).

For each essay, please clearly indicate which of the above 14 topics you are writing about. And, for the two vignette essays, please clearly state which vignette you are writing about. How long should each essay be? This is up to you . . . as *efficiently* as possible, *thoroughly* explore the bridge between 4 of the 14 class topics (above) to a vignette (2 essays) and to the "surprise" stimulus (2 essays). **IMPORTANT:** At least two of the topics written about must come from points 9-13 (i.e., the 2nd half of the course)!

Other Exam 2 Information:

- 1) This is a closed-book, no-note exam. At the beginning of the exam, you will be given another copy of the exam for you to use (including the vignettes).
- 2) You will be given 1.5 hours to complete the exam (following the surprise stimulus).
- 3) You may prepare alone, in groups, or as an entire class! Grades will not be normed or curved; stated differently, everyone in the class can get an 'A'! You just have to know the material . . .
- 4) GOOD LUCK and HAVE FUN!!!!!!! It is honestly an exam unlike anything you will probably ever see again, so enjoy!

The New York Times Magazine**Magazine**

A Failure of Happiness

Lives

By CHARLES LYONS SEPT. 9, 2011

We met one cold day on Columbia University's indoor track, weeks before the 1992 New York Marathon. My workout called for 10 miles, or 100 laps, a lonely affair until a lean, chipper young grad student pulled alongside me. With his booming voice, he announced that he was studying philosophy because philosophers were the only people who could change the world.

We became training partners, friends and co-conspirators. I remember him reading the introduction to my dissertation, circling words with a red pen. He diagramed flaws in my reasoning (there were many) and counseled me on a rewrite. At 22, nine years my junior, he seemed destined for a bright academic career.

Following hard runs and study sessions, we often headed to a bar. The goal was to meet women, but once the spirits kicked in, I would challenge fellow drinkers to Shakespeare-quoting contests; he mainly wanted to know how people planned to find happiness.

After school, I saw him only about once a year. But we reconnected more than a decade later when I came back East to teach at a university where he was now an adjunct.

He'd changed: he was on edge and emotionally needy. He'd grown lousy at returning calls, and the fellow who prided himself on punctuality often showed up an hour late. Soon he began asking to borrow money — for car repairs, for his rent, for

groceries just to “bridge” him to the next paycheck. Finally one night he told me he was using cocaine and crack. I told him I was his friend, but he needed to see a professional. Had he talked to his family? Looked into rehab?

Months later, he asked me to help him clear out of his room and check into the Salvation Army’s adult rehab center. His dingy apartment reeked of stale liquor; on the floor were unpaid bills, half-empty jars of pasta sauce and beat-up editions of Kant. But he seemed surprisingly like his old self, the kid who wanted to change the world. He told me that even though this was going to be the toughest thing he ever did, he was ready. He planned to write in his journal every day, to re-examine his faith, to get back to essentials. We packed everything up, and I walked him to rehab. I gave him the thumbs up. He would nail it, I told him; he had more will power than anyone I knew. How many people can run a 5K in 15 minutes?

After he completed the program and moved in with his mother, we e-mailed rarely, talked less. Two years later, he called me. He was in trouble. He’d had a wild night, he said, a crazy night. When a policeman asked him to step out of his car, in which he was sitting naked, he stepped on the gas instead and wound up smashing into a tree. Now he faced jail, and needed a “character” letter: would I write to the judge? He would never do drugs again, he told me.

We hadn’t been close for a long time, but I cared deeply for him. I remembered how hard he worked in school, his angry determination. He could do this, I thought. So I wrote the letter. A year later he left state-sponsored rehab with new passion for life. He published a book, began another on the philosophical roots of happiness, wrote an essay on “flow.”

And then a few months ago, his mother called. She said her son had taught his last class of the semester, cashed his paycheck and padlocked himself in a hotel room with an ample supply of crack, heroin and alcohol. An autopsy confirmed he died of an overdose.

As he explained in a journal his mother later shared, my friend went looking for happiness in a dark place. “Cocaine reconnected my mind to my body, and I felt tremendously alive, hypersexual and hopeful once again,” he wrote. “At least I had a new God to believe in, even if I knew all along this was a false God, a deceitful God,

one who always promised misery and defeat. So, I choose this God of intense extremes over the monotony of everyday life."

But in a message to me last year, he said he had found his calling: he wanted to teach the science and philosophy of happiness to audiences online. "It's been so long," he added. "I was sharing the story about the firefighter who got into a fight with you over Yeats (remember that), and it brought back a flood of fond memories. . . . I miss our conversations and friendship. You were there for me when I really needed it and I'll never forget that!"

But was I? Maybe there was nothing anyone could do.

Charles Lyons is a television producer and writer. He is adapting a biography by Nancy Milford of the poet Edna St. Vincent Millay for the screen.

E-mail submissions for Lives to lives@nytimes.com. Because of the volume of e-mail, the magazine cannot respond to every submission.

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Magazine

Nice Girls

Lives

By JOHN MOE FEB. 25, 2011

My daughter Kate loves horses, her violin and, above all else, her friends. She also happens to have been born with dwarfism, a condition that makes her smaller than other kids. She will always be smaller. Kate's fine with that. She doesn't give it much thought, really. But I've become increasingly full of dread that her generation of mean girls will eventually stop accepting her for who she is, seize upon her obvious difference and just destroy her.

Kate goes to a school in St. Paul that teaches grades 1 through 8 (she's a second grader), and when I was there for a parent-teacher conference a few months ago, I noticed the older girls traveling in packs, whispering, laughing with mockery at whichever poor victim they were savaging at the time. I didn't know these girls, but I didn't like them.

Next afternoon, I was riding the No. 63 bus home from work. At the stop after mine, five pretty, well-dressed teenage girls got on and sat right behind me. I wished I hadn't forgotten my headphones that day because I didn't want to hear the horrible things these girls were inevitably about to say. They talked nonstop.

"Hey, is it O.K. if Rachel comes with us on Friday?"

"O.K. But I don't think I know her. Do I?"

"She's my friend from that summer program. She's really funny, I think you'd like her."

"Great! I'm looking forward to meeting her!"

It seemed to me they actually talked like this. Flattering descriptions and anecdotes about Rachel followed. Miraculously, this conversation was conducted without sarcasm. Was I missing something? Wasn't Rachel going to be ripped for being five pounds overweight or wearing the wrong shoes? I didn't turn around, but I leaned back and listened closer.

"Sometimes I don't think I'm as racially sensitive as I should be."

"Well, we all have to work on that. But it's a huge step to recognize it."

"Thanks!"

Down North Smith we rode, past the hospital, up Grand. The girls talked in overlapping bursts and lots of sentence fragments, a little too loudly, but everything was friendly and positive. These weren't mean girls. These were nice girls. As we passed over the freeway, I capitalized the Nice Girls in my mind to give them a title, to make them a team in the hope they would stay together. I needed them around when Kate got older. Maybe she could join them! Maybe they could get jackets made!

"I was so awkward in eighth grade. I didn't have ANY friends."

"Oh, I felt that way, too. I still do sometimes."

"Me, too, but you have to reach out to people and get to know them. And then they're really great!"

Here I was on the bus, moved almost to tears by the Nice Girls. I wanted to turn around and thank them, tell them how much hope they had given me, tell them how wonderful I thought they were. But I'm 42. I look like Michael Douglas in "Falling Down" but with less hair and a few extra pounds. There is no conceivable scenario in which a guy like me on a bus can talk to girls like that and not have it be creepy, if

not directly prosecutable. Especially with tears in my eyes. It's just not done. So I sat staring straight ahead telling myself: *Don't turn around. Read something on your iPhone. You want to look at them, you want to just smile, but DON'T. IT'S JUST NOT DONE.*

"Ohmygodyouguys! We just missed our stop! We have to get off here and walk back!"

"Oh, no! We were having too much fun!"

There's a door midway back on the bus, and I was sitting right behind it. The Nice Girls exited directly in front of me through that side door. I watched them go, pretending just to be staring into the middle distance. As the last of them departed, she turned and smiled at me.

I did not say what I wanted to say: "I think you're really great because you give me hope that people will be nice to my daughter later on, and so this is a completely platonic thing and it's O.K.!"

And I did not become a stalker of teenage girls around downtown St. Paul. But the Nice Girls are on my mind whenever I ride that bus, which is nightly. I've wanted to hear them talk.

I've never seen them all together again, though I've seen a few of them a handful of times. I might secretly turn down the volume on my headphones, catch a few words and feel ashamed for listening (even though it is a bus). But it's just never the same.

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E-mail submissions for Lives to lives@nytimes.com. Because of the volume of e-mail, the magazine cannot respond to every submission.

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The New York Times Magazine**Magazine**

The Tire Iron and the Tamale

Lives

By JUSTIN HORNER MARCH 4, 2011

During this past year I've had three instances of car trouble: a blowout on a freeway, a bunch of blown fuses and an out-of-gas situation. They all happened while I was driving other people's cars, which for some reason makes it worse on an emotional level. And on a practical level as well, what with the fact that I carry things like a jack and extra fuses in my own car, and know enough not to park on a steep incline with less than a gallon of fuel.

Each time, when these things happened, I was disgusted with the way people didn't bother to help. I was stuck on the side of the freeway hoping my friend's roadside service would show, just watching tow trucks cruise past me. The people at the gas stations where I asked for a gas can told me that they couldn't lend them out "for safety reasons," but that I could buy a really crappy one-gallon can, with no cap, for \$15. It was enough to make me say stuff like "this country is going to hell in a handbasket," which I actually said.

But you know who came to my rescue all three times? Immigrants. Mexican immigrants. None of them spoke any English.

One of those guys stopped to help me with the blowout even though he had his whole family of four in tow. I was on the side of the road for close to three hours with my friend's big Jeep. I put signs in the windows, big signs that said, "NEED A

JACK," and offered money. Nothing. Right as I was about to give up and start hitching, a van pulled over, and the guy bounded out.

He sized up the situation and called for his daughter, who spoke English. He conveyed through her that he had a jack but that it was too small for the Jeep, so we would need to brace it. Then he got a saw from the van and cut a section out of a big log on the side of the road. We rolled it over, put his jack on top and we were in business.

I started taking the wheel off, and then, if you can believe it, I broke his tire iron. It was one of those collapsible ones, and I wasn't careful, and I snapped the head clean off. Damn.

No worries: he ran to the van and handed it to his wife, and she was gone in a flash down the road to buy a new tire iron. She was back in 15 minutes. We finished the job with a little sweat and cussing (the log started to give), and I was a very happy man.

The two of us were filthy and sweaty. His wife produced a large water jug for us to wash our hands in. I tried to put a 20 in the man's hand, but he wouldn't take it, so instead I went up to the van and gave it to his wife as quietly as I could. I thanked them up one side and down the other. I asked the little girl where they lived, thinking maybe I'd send them a gift for being so awesome. She said they lived in Mexico. They were in Oregon so Mommy and Daddy could pick cherries for the next few weeks. Then they were going to pick peaches, then go back home.

After I said my goodbyes and started walking back to the Jeep, the girl called out and asked if I'd had lunch. When I told her no, she ran up and handed me a tamale.

This family, undoubtedly poorer than just about everyone else on that stretch of highway, working on a seasonal basis where time is money, took a couple of hours out of their day to help a strange guy on the side of the road while people in tow trucks were just passing him by.

But we weren't done yet. I thanked them again and walked back to my car and opened the foil on the tamale (I was starving by this point), and what did I find inside? My \$20 bill! I whirled around and ran to the van and the guy rolled down his window. He saw the \$20 in my hand and just started shaking his head no. All I could think to say was, "*Por favor, por favor, por favor,*" with my hands out. The guy just smiled and, with what looked like great concentration, said in English: "Today you, tomorrow me."

Then he rolled up his window and drove away, with his daughter waving to me from the back. I sat in my car eating the best tamale I've ever had, and I just started to cry. It had been a rough year; nothing seemed to break my way. This was so out of left field I just couldn't handle it.

In the several months since then I've changed a couple of tires, given a few rides to gas stations and once drove 50 miles out of my way to get a girl to an airport. I won't accept money. But every time I'm able to help, I feel as if I'm putting something in the bank.

Justin Horner is a graphic designer living in Portland, Ore. This essay was adapted from a message-board posting on reddit.com.

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