Courses in English
Course Description

Department 13 General and Interdisciplinary Studies

Course title Making Work Meaningful: Theory, Research and Application in Positive Psychology and Positive Organizational Scholarship

Hours per week (SWS) 2

Number of ECTS credits 2

Course objective Upon course completion, students will possess knowledge about the scientific field of Psychology and understanding about how human behavior and emotion are measured. Students will be able to identify and distinguish the major scientific findings related to subjective well-being and life satisfaction, especially regarding work and career. They will have developed a deeper awareness of their own beliefs, values, needs, motivations, goals and character strengths. They will have gained the practical experience of thinking critically about the self, culture, and the construct of hope—and the dynamic relationship and implications these yield in the creation or absence of meaningful work. Students will be able to discuss and support their perspectives and anecdotal experiences using evidence from the research literature.

Prerequisites excellent English required

Recommended reading This is a Social Science course (drawing from Psychology and sub-fields in Positive Psychology, Organizational Behavior, Motivation Psychology, and Social Psychology, as well as Philosophical perspectives). Material will be provided by the professor.

Teaching methods The lecture will be held every other week for 4 class contact hours (meaning 4 times for 45 minutes). Each class period will allow time for lecture, in-class reading, short videos, discussion, and individual and group exercises.

Assessment methods Eighty percent attendance is mandatory. Credit will be earned through class participation and in-class exercises (25%) and one final exam (75%) comprised of open-ended/essay questions.

Language of instruction English

Name of lecturer Emily van Sonnenberg

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Link

Course content Work is a part of most human beings’ lives. In Western and Eastern cultures, work is arguably necessary for survival. But can work function as more than merely a means to survive? Can work be meaningful? If so, what factors contribute to work that is meaningful and satisfying versus meaningless and dissatisfying? How can individuals identify and pursue meaningful work?

This applied course will explore the construct of ‘meaningful work’ from theoretical, philosophical and empirical perspectives. Students will be introduced to the field of Psychology, and more in-depth foundations and concepts within Positive Psychology, especially those that impact meaning and purpose, engagement, accomplishment and life satisfaction. Case studies of thriving individuals and organizations will be reviewed and analyzed. Information presented will come from research conducted in the fields of Positive Psychology, Social Psychology, Motivation Psychology and Organizational Behavior. Students will have opportunities to actively engage in discussions and scientific exercises intended to prompt critical thinking and support their discovery of meaningful work and their professional “calling”.

Remarks