

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE**  
**NUS Business School**  
**Department of Marketing**

MKT4422 / MKT4718 The Business of Happiness

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Sessions Semester II, 2019-2020  
Monday 12-3pm at BIZ1 03-05

Course Objectives

This module first provides an inter-disciplinary perspective on the definition and measurement of happiness and related social constructs such as subjective wellbeing and quality of life. Building on this foundation, various broad themes of inquiry will be discussed such as the economics of happiness, positive psychology and happiness, consuming for happiness, and happiness in the workplace. Using readings from academia and the popular press, we will explore the applications of happiness concepts in business and management contexts, how they enable individuals and communities to thrive, and how this eventually makes good business sense.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- 1) identify and understand the different ways in which happiness has been defined and measured, what contributes to happiness and how happiness is related to other social constructs;
- 2) critically evaluate relevant research on happiness from multi-disciplinary perspectives
- 3) synthesize insights for incorporating happiness concepts in business and management contexts.

In achieving the above outcomes, students are expected to integrate knowledge from different domains, and be able to articulate and support their views through the various continuous assessment tasks. Individual and group assignments are tailored specifically to the learning goals for each semester, and are intended to provide a stimulating learning experience.

Course Structure

The course operates on an **interactive, discussion-based, seminar-style format**. You will benefit most when you come to class having read and critically evaluated the readings, and are prepared to share your views.

Readings are mainly from research journals and the popular press. You can download most of the readings from Library Resources in LumiNUS. **Please note that there is a fairly heavy reading workload for this course.**

List of Topics (to be confirmed)

- (1) Definition and measurement of happiness and related social constructs such as subjective wellbeing and quality of life
- (2) Indices and surveys on happiness
- (3) The economics of happiness
- (4) Positive psychology and happiness
- (5) Consuming for happiness
- (6) Happiness in the workplace
- (7) Applications of happiness concepts in business and management contexts (these may vary according to what is trending for the semester in which the module is offered)
- (8) The marketing of contemporary happiness practices (these may vary according to what is trending for the semester in which the module is offered)

Assessments (to be confirmed)

<b>Class Participation</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Discussion Leadership</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Individual Essays or Test</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Group Project</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **Sample of selected readings for “The Business of Happiness”**

### **Indices and Surveys on Happiness**

#### **Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index**

<http://www.healthways.com/solution/default.aspx?id=1125>

<http://info.healthways.com/wellbeingindex>

#### **Gross National Happiness**

<http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/>

#### **Happy Planet Index**

<http://www.happyplanetindex.org/>

#### **OECD Better Life Index**

<http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/>

#### **Social Progress Index**

<http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/>

### **The Economics of Happiness**

Graham, C. (2009), “The happiness and income debate: substance, methodology, and the Easterlin Paradox,” in *Happiness around the world: The paradox of happy peasants and miserable millionaires*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tay, M., and Low, A. (2011), “GDP not the sole measure of happiness,” *The Straits Times*, 28 May 2011.

Stiglitz, J., Sen, A. and Fitoussi, J-P (2011), “Chapter 1: Classical GDP Issues” in Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, 21-40.

Cahit Guven and Bent E Sorensen (2012), “Subjective wellbeing: Keeping up with the perception of the Joneses,” *Social Indicators Research*, 109, 439-469.

Jing Jian Xiao (2015), *Consumer Economic Wellbeing*, International Series on Consumer Science. Springer, New York, NY

### **Positive Psychology and Happiness**

Warner, Rebecca M. and Kerryellen G. Vroman (2011), “Happiness inducing behaviors in everyday life: An empirical assessment of ‘The How of Happiness’,” *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 12 (December), 1063-1082.

Roy F. Baumeister, Kathleen D. Vohs, Jennifer L. Aaker and Emily N. Garbinsky (2013), “Some key differences between a happy life and a meaningful life,” *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 8 (6), November, 505-516.

## **Consuming for Happiness**

Dunn, E. W., Gilbert D. T. and Wilson T. D. (2011), If money doesn't make you happy, then you probably aren't spending it right, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 21, 115-125.

Jennifer L. Aaker, Melanie Rudd and Cassie Mogilner (2011), "If money does not make you happy, consider time," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 21, 126-130.

## **Happiness in the Workplace**

Amabile, T. M. and Kramer S. J. (2007), "Inner work life: the hidden subtext of business performance," *Harvard Business Review*, May 2007, 72-83.

Amabile, T. M. and Kramer S. J. (2010), "Breakthrough ideas for 2010: 1: what really motivates workers," *Harvard Business Review*, January 2010, 44-45.

Claudia Harzer and Willibald Ruch (2012), "When the Job is a Calling: The Role of Applying One's Signature Strengths at Work, *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 7 (5), 362-371.

Linzbach. L and Suojanen, I. (2020), Behind the Happiness Mask. In Marques, J. (ed.), *Happiness at Work*. Routledge.

## **Applications of happiness concepts in business and management contexts (these may vary according to what is trending for the semester in which the module is offered)**

As an illustrative example, students may read about *kaizen* (a Japanese concept) that has been widely applied in management contexts. Recent applications have broadened its linkages to enhancing happiness in the workplace.

Sarah Harvey (2019), *Kaizen: The Japanese Secret to Lasting Change*, The Experiment.

**<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/nov/22/hygge-conspiracy-denmark-cosiness-trend>**

## **The Marketing of Contemporary Happiness Practices (these may vary according to what is trending for the semester in which the module is offered)**

As an illustrative example, students may read about *hygge* (a Danish concept) that has been widely used in marketing (e.g., tourism, home décor, etc).

**<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/nov/22/hygge-conspiracy-denmark-cosiness-trend>**

## ACADEMIC HONESTY & PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity and honesty is essential for the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. The University and School expect every student to uphold academic integrity & honesty at all times. Academic dishonesty is any misrepresentation with the intent to deceive, or failure to acknowledge the source, or falsification of information, or inaccuracy of statements, or cheating at examinations/tests, or inappropriate use of resources.

Plagiarism is 'the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own' (The New Oxford Dictionary of English). The University and School will not condone plagiarism. Students should adopt this rule - You have the obligation to make clear to the assessor which is your own work, and which is the work of others. Otherwise, your assessor is entitled to assume that everything being presented for assessment is being presented as entirely your own work. This is a minimum standard. **In case of any doubts, you should consult your instructor.** Additional guidance is available at:

<http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/adminpolicy/acceptance.html#NUSCodeofStudentConduct>

Online Module on Plagiarism:

<http://emodule.nus.edu.sg/ac/>