

Assignments for *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Well-Being*

This course was conducted at Emory University in the spring semester of 2018. It was a “first-year seminar.” These are courses expressly developed to expose students to faculty research, and every first-year student is required to take one. Class size is limited to 19 students.

Because this first-year seminar was offered by the Interdisciplinary Studies Program, it deliberately tried to bring the variety of approaches to the study of well-being into productive conversation.

Class Reading	Instructor notes for guiding discussion
<p>2017 World Happiness Report. Chapter 2, The Social Foundations of World Happiness. http://worldhappiness.report/ed/2017/</p> <p>Read pp. 9-24. BUT don't get bogged down in the technical details. You can skim the material on pp. 15-19. Focus on understanding the figures (not the tables!) 2-1 and 2-2.</p>	<p>Measurement vs what is measured – how do we measure the components and conditions of well-being?</p> <p>What is “Subjective well-being”? Discuss its relationship to hedonistic and desire-satisfaction conceptions.</p> <p>Raise the issue of relativism</p>
<p>Carol Graham. 2010. “Happy peasants and miserable millionaires: Happiness research, economics, and public policy.” <i>VOX: CEPR's Policy Portal</i>. http://voxeu.org/article/happy-peasants-and-miserable-millionaires</p>	<p>Develop some of the puzzles about income and well-being present in the World Happiness Report.</p>
<p>Anna Wierzbicka. 2004 “‘Happiness’ in Cross-Linguistic and Cross-Cultural Perspective” <i>Daedalus</i> 133(2): 34-43. http://www.jstor.org/stable.20027911</p>	<p>Present and discuss different personal histories of people they have known who are happy, lived good lives, had high well-being. Emphasize cultural difference. Story circle?</p> <p>What is relativism?</p>
<p>William Tov and Ed Diener. 2009 [2007] “Culture and Subjective Well-Being.” In <i>Culture and Well-Being: The Collected Works of Ed Diener</i>. Springer.</p>	<p>Focus on arguments, argument structure, argument evaluation</p> <p>Draw out the affective and cognitive dimensions of well being</p>
<p>John Stuart Mill. 2009 [1863]. “What Utilitarianism Is,” in <i>Utilitarianism</i>. The Floating Press; ProQuest Ebook Central, pp. 12-21. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/emory/detail.action?docID=435879.</p>	<p>Focus on the idea that happiness is the <i>summum bonum</i>, hence a theory of well-being, rather than the theory of right action</p> <p>Problem of quality and quantity</p>

	Note that the ambiguity between hedonism and desire-satisfaction is found in Mill
Daniel M. Haybron. 2013. "Beyond Happiness: Well-being." In <i>Happiness: A Very Short Introduction</i> . Oxford University Press. Pp. 77-90.	Discuss the major objections to hedonism. note the four conceptualizations of well-being Discuss his take on evaluative arguments.
Pelin Kesebir and Ed Diener. 2009 [2008]. "In Pursuit of Happiness: Empirical Answers to Philosophical Questions." In <i>The Science of Well-being: The collected Works of Ed Diener</i> . Springer	Do the empirically confirmed consequences of measured happiness meet the philosophers' concerns about hedonism?
Eric Agner. 2010. "Subjective Well-Being," <i>The Journal of Socio-Economics</i> 39 (2010) 361–368.	Pivot from happiness to desire-satisfaction. Agner argues for preference hedonism.
Daniel Hausman and Michael McPerhson. 2009. "Preference Satisfaction and Welfare Economics." <i>Economics and Philosophy</i> , 25:1-25. Read Sections 1-4, pp. 1-10	H&M connect preference satisfaction to welfare economics. Be sure the students understand the construction of utility. Work through the arguments against preference-satisfaction as a conception of well-being
Daniel Hausman and Michael McPerhson. 2009. "Preference Satisfaction And Welfare Economics." <i>Economics and Philosophy</i> , 25:1-25. Read Sections 5-8, pp. 11-25	Work through their argument that preference satisfaction has nothing to do with well-being. Discuss the idea that preferences are <i>evidence</i> for well-being
Robert H. Frank. 2004. "How Not to Buy Happiness," <i>Daedalus</i> , 133(2): 69-79	An illustration of some of the difficulties with preference satisfaction as evidence of well being Use this as an argument to cast suspicion on the idea that people always choose in their best interest. It is a push toward objectivism
Bhri Gupta Singh. 2015. "The Course and the Fine: Contours of a Slow-Moving Crisis." In <i>Poverty and the Quest for Life</i> . University of Chicago Press.	Shows how individual preferences are shaped by cultural values and global forces, and how these can undermine wellbeing
Edward Fischer. 2014. <i>The Good Life: Aspiration, Dignity, and the Anthropology of Wellbeing</i> . Stanford University Press. Selections from Chapter 1: pp. 23-25, 29-41	This case study expands and nuances the idea that expressed preferences do not capture well-being.

	Discuss the egg study and what it shows.
Edward Fischer. 2014. <i>The Good Life: Aspiration, Dignity, and the Anthropology of Wellbeing</i> . Stanford University Press. Selections from Chapter 2: pp. 43-53, 63-65	Discuss the critique of revealed and expressed preferences
Carol Graham and Kendall Swenson. 2015. "SNAP Happy? Welfare, Poverty, and Well-Being, Revisited." <i>Social Mobility Papers Series</i> . The Brookings Institute. https://www.brookings.edu/research/snap-happy-welfare-poverty-and-well-being-revisited/	Pivot to poverty and development issues. The gap between wellbeing and income support develops Fischer's point that symbolic values are relevant to wellbeing. Raise the question: What is the best way to promote the well-being of others?
Amartya Sen. 1999. <i>Development as Freedom</i> . Pp. 13-25	Critique of the idea that poverty is a matter of income; it is a matter of unfreedom.
Amartya Sen. 1984. "Well-Being and Freedom," <i>Journal of Philosophy</i> . 82(4):185-203. Read Sections V-VIII , pp. 195-203 Recommended: Section 2 of Robeyns, Ingrid, "The Capability Approach", <i>The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/capability-approach	Develop Sen's Capacities approach
Murat Kotan. 2010. "Freedom or Happiness? Agency and Subjective Well-Being in The Capability Approach." <i>Journal of Socio-Economics</i> 39: 369-375.	Argues for the place of subjective well-being in a capacities approach. Discuss "agency" and "freedom" Discuss the example of the Whitehall II study and the policy use of well-being
Bart Victor et. al. 2013. "Frustrated Freedom: The Effects of Agency and Wealth on Wellbeing in Rural Mozambique." <i>World Development</i> 47: 30-41.	Frustrated freedom as an account of the relationship between capacities and subjective well-being
Mark Risjord and Peter Little. "Wellbeing at the Margins." Manuscript in preparation	Develop the idea of frustrated freedom and the conception of agency that underlies it
Martha Nussbaum. 2000. <i>Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership</i> . Harvard University Press. Pp. 69-80	Issue: how do we determine the list of capabilities? Revisit the relativism question as a motivation Connect discussion of well-being to issues of justice

<p>Roger Claassen. 2011. "Making Capability Lists: Philosophy Versus Democracy," <i>Political Studies</i> 59(3):491-508</p>	<p>What is the relationship between philosophy and democracy? Between theory and practice?</p>
<p>Morten Byskov. "Democracy, Philosophy, and the Selection of Capabilities," <i>Journal of Human Development and Capabilities</i> 18(1): 1-16</p>	<p>Two dimensions to the epistemological problem of identifying the capacities: Expert deliberation vs democratic process Conceptual vs empirical Draw a cartesian plane with the above pair of dichotomies as the axes. Everybody put their name on a sticky note, come up to the board, and put yourself in one quadrant or another. Now discuss: why are you there?</p>