

## Fall 2016 Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar

### EXPLORING HAPPINESS

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Index #13347

Professor Sarah Rosenfield

W 2:15-5:15P

Hickman Hall Rm 209

Douglass Campus

This course explores happiness, the most sought after goal across time and cultures. What is happiness? What kind of life makes people happy: a life of pleasure, a meaningful life, an engaged life? What people and groups are happiest in the U.S. and around the world? Does marriage, children, work, or money make people happy? More generally, what do we need to live the best life possible? We investigate techniques that improve well-being such as meditation, flow, gratitude, and certain cognitive styles. We focus on happiness in the important areas of life, such as the best kinds of relationships, the best work conditions, and the importance of money. Students explore these ideas and research on happiness and apply it to their own lives with their own happiness projects.

#### **Biography:**

Sarah Rosenfield is an associate professor in the department of sociology at Rutgers. She is also part of the Rutgers' Institute of Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging. Her work focuses on how individuals' gender, race and class affect their mental health. She examines these effects on negative mental health problems like depression and on positive mental health such as happiness. She finds that gender, race, and class interact in paradoxical ways: certain disadvantaged groups have better mental health and happiness than those in more advantaged positions. Dr. Rosenfield proposes and investigates the explanations for these paradoxes.

#### **Readings:**

Among other books and articles, students will read selections from *The Happiness Project* by Gretchen Rubin and *Positive Psychology: Harnessing the Power of Happiness, Mindfulness, and Inner Strength* (2014 version), a Harvard Medical School Special Health Report by Ronald D. Siegel. These books can be downloaded by getting the Kindle app from Amazon.