

## Tentative Syllabus for

### RNK-PHIL 546: Happiness in Philosophy, Science and Spirituality

(3 credits (ECTS 8 credits); 90 mins of class time per weekly lecture for a 14-Week semester, 3+0)

<b>Course description</b>	<p>This course covers a personal, philosophical, and scientific journey of searching for happiness through pleasure, meaning, and spirituality. It is based on my recently published book with the same title. In that book, I shared my happiness journey which began as a shepherd at the bottom 1% of the world's population, living in complete poverty and deprivation. I managed to acquire two PhDs and climbed to the top 1% in terms of possessions and position. Nonetheless, I failed to achieve happiness in the pleasure dimension. My happiness journey of seeking happiness through having, doing, and being turned out to be a cycle of deprivation, emulation, accomplishment, and disappointment. My failure to find happiness through them led me to discover other dimensions of happiness. In this course, we will cover three dimensions of happiness based on science, philosophy, and spirituality hoping to enrich your understanding and experience of happiness.</p> <p>The course consists of four parts. The first part will cover happiness journey with having (possession), doing (experience), and being (recognition) through the hedonic happiness model.</p> <p>The second part will cover the eudemonic (earthly meaning) dimension of happiness. It begins with the search for eudemonic happiness by Aristotle. Then, it continues with my journey for eudemonic happiness through meaning and believing. It ends with the scientific research of eudemonic happiness. The third part includes the confession of not finding happiness through either the hedonic or eudemonic model. It covers the failed paradise promised by free-market capitalism. The fourth part covers the G-donic (spiritual meaning) dimension of happiness. It begins with the very definition of the G-donic model I developed along with its underlying principles. Then, it covers my own journey of searching happiness in the G-donic dimension.</p>
<b>Course objectives</b>	<p>The course objectives are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn different definition of happiness from ancient times till today</li> <li>Discuss the importance of phenomenology and science in studying happiness</li> <li>Explore pleasure, meaning, and spiritual dimensions of happiness based on science, personal experience, and ancient wisdom</li> <li>Compare philosophical, scientific, and religious views on happiness</li> <li>Measure three dimensions of happiness through empirical studies</li> <li>Discuss findings of scientific studies on three dimensions of happiness</li> <li>Explore failed promise of consumer culture in bringing happiness</li> <li>Discuss importance of meaning and spirituality for higher happiness</li> <li>Explore happiness journey of some famous philosophers, religious figures, and popular figures for each dimension of happiness</li> </ul>
<b>Prerequisites</b>	None.
<b>Textbook</b>	Aydin, Necati (2019), <i>3D of Happiness: Pleasure, Meaning &amp; Spirituality: Based on Science, Philosophy &amp; Personal Experience</i> , New York: Morgan James Publishing.
<b>Additional recommended readings</b>	<p>Aydin, N &amp; H. Khan (2021): "G-Donic Happiness: An Alternative to Hedonic and Eudemonic Happiness for Sustainable Consumption" <i>Sustainability</i> 13, no. 11: 6096.</p> <p>Aydin, N (2017): Spirituality and Subjective Wellbeing: Living a Fulfilled Life without Falling into the Trap of Consumer Culture, <i>Humanomics, International Journal of Systems and Ethics</i>, 33(3), pp.300-314</p> <p>Aydin, N (2017): "Psycho-Economic Aspiration and Subjective Wellbeing: Evidence from a representative Turkish Sample", <i>International Journal of Social Economics</i>, Vol.44, Iss:6</p> <p>Aydin, N, (2017): "Moral Economic Axioms, Preference Formation, and Welfare in Islamic Economics and Business, <i>Asian Journal of Business Ethics</i>, doi:10.1007/s13520-017-0077-7</p>

	<p>Aydin, N (2012): “A Grand Theory of Human Nature and Happiness”, <i>Humanomics. International Journal of Systems and Ethics</i>, Vol. 28 Issue: 1, pp.42 – 63</p> <p>Aydin, N (2011): “Sustainable Consumption and Subjective Well-being”, the <i>International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic &amp; Social Sustainability</i>, Vol. 6, Iss.5, pp.133-148</p>
<b>Assessment &amp; evaluation</b>	Reading reflections (15%) and discussion forum and learned lessons (15%), Attendance and participation (10%), Quizzes (30%), Assignments (30%)
<b>Attendance</b>	Required through Zoom
<b>Medium of instruction</b>	English
<b>Instructor</b>	Dr.Necati Aydin

### Tentative Course Content (May be modified to suit needs)

(During a 14 week-semester, there will be two classes each week. Each class will be 90 mins in total.  
Classes start at 16:00 Istanbul Time; 14:00 London Time; 9:00 am New York Time; 21:00 Kuala Lumpur Time)

Topics	Learning Objectives & Description of Topics	Reading assignments	Personal Experience
<b>Week 1</b> Introduction and overview	<p>Outline the objectives of the course.</p> <p>Discuss the expected learning outcomes.</p> <p>Provide overview of the course content, teaching strategies, assessment.</p> <p>Present concept of dimensions and its relationship to happiness</p> <p>Define Happiness with Three Dimensions</p> <p>Compare two different research methodologies of studying happiness: empirical vs phenomenological</p>	Introduction: Defining Happiness with Three Dimensions	The course will be based on scientific findings, philosophical discussion, and personal experience.
<b>Week 2</b> Hedonic Dimension of Happiness with having something	<p>Define hedonic happiness</p> <p>Discuss the importance of have and have not for happiness</p> <p>Share a failed story of seeking happiness through having</p> <p>Present a hedonic utility function through having more: <math>H_{hl} = U(\text{Having})</math></p> <p>Introduce “pleasure paradox: less pleasure with more consumption”</p> <p>Discuss deprivation, emulation, accomplishment, and disappointment (DEAD) loop</p>	Chapter 1 & 2	When I was living in extreme deprivation of something I wanted to have, I used to think that I would be happy if I have it. As I became aware of my deprivation, I began emulating those who had what I wanted to have. The intense desire to have led to hard work and accomplishments. I managed to have everything I wanted to have. I even had much more that I had wished to have. Perhaps, the only thing missing wish was the expected satisfaction that was supposed to come with having. After many trials and errors, I ended up greatly disappointed with having.

<p><b>Week 3</b> Hedonic Dimension of Happiness with doing something</p>	<p>Expand the hedonic happiness by adding “doing” as shown below: <math>H_{h2} = U(\text{Having, Doing})</math></p> <p>Define “doing” in terms of fun/pleasant experiences</p> <p>Present DEAD loop of search for happiness through “doing”</p> <p>Discuss diminishing marginal utility of doing vs having</p>	<p>Chapter 3</p>	<p>In my journey of hedonic dimension, I got almost all of my wishes in terms of fun experiences. I have traveled almost everywhere I want to see. I have eaten at any restaurant I chose. I have stayed at the best hotels in the world. My journey of seeking satisfaction through doing something was no different from the previous one. It became clear to me that “doing something you like” leads to the same dead end: disappointment and dissatisfaction.</p>
<p><b>Week 4</b> Hedonic Dimension of Happiness with “being” somebody</p>	<p>Expand the happiness equation by adding being (B): <math>H_{h3} = U(\text{Having, Doing, Being})</math></p> <p>Define “being” in the context of happiness search</p> <p>Cover the DEAD loop of searching happiness through “being” somebody</p> <p>Discuss diminishing marginal utility of being vs having and doing</p>	<p>Chapter 4</p>	<p>I began my journey as a Mr. Nobody. I was thirsty for respect and recognition which became the driving force to follow a long, but very successful career. I managed to gain a certain degree of national and international recognition through my work as a radio and TV host, author of several books, and a full professor with two doctoral degrees. However, I would like to confess that my journey of seeking lasting happiness through being Mr. Somebody also ended with ultimate failure.</p>
<p><b>Week 5</b> Scientific Research of Hedonic Happiness</p>	<p>Share scientific findings on the hedonic happiness on the followings:</p> <p>Hedonism and Consumer Culture Intrinsic and Extrinsic Aspirations Money, Materialism, and Happiness Self-Worth and Luxury Consumption Commodity Fetishism &amp; Narcissism Luxury Consumption and Subjective Well-Being (SWB)</p>	<p>Chapter 5</p>	
<p><b>Week 6</b> Aristotle’s Eudemonic Happiness Model</p>	<p>Define eudemonic happiness according to Aristotle</p> <p>Discuss relationship between means, ends, and final good as happiness</p> <p>Discuss importance of virtue in eudemonic happiness</p> <p>Explore three types of pleasure in Aristotle</p>	<p>Chapter 6</p>	
<p><b>Week 7</b></p>	<p>Define meaning of life</p>	<p>Chapter 7</p>	<p>Throughout my educational and career life, I have found meaning to be the</p>

<p>Searching for Eudemonic Happiness through Meaning</p>	<p>Define Eudemonic happiness (<math>H_e</math>) with utility (U) and meaning (M) maximization in having (H), doing (D), and being (B):  <math>H_{e1} = U(H, D, B) + M(H, D, B)</math>          Discuss DEAD loop of Eudemonic happiness          Compare diminishing marginal utility curve in the hedonic and eudemonic dimensions</p>		<p>boosting element for life satisfaction. Meaning was more enriching than money in bringing happiness. Even when I had to endure something to make money or get promoted, I have tried to insert some meaning to make it a more pleasant experience. It is true, as I bring meaning to my life, I receive higher satisfaction. However, the search for higher meaning leads to a dead end when I begin asking about the ultimate meaning of life.</p>
<p><b>Week 8</b>          Searching for Eudemonic Happiness Through Believing</p>	<p>Define two types of believers: secular and spiritual</p> <p>Expand the eudemonic happiness equation with an added interactive term of secular believers:</p> $H_{e2} = U(H, B, D) + M(H, D, B) + (F_s * M)$ <p>Explore relationship between faith, freedom, and reality</p> <p>Cover the DEAD loop of searching happiness by secular believers</p>	<p>Chapter 8</p>	<p>It is inevitable to ask some existential questions as we seek happiness through meaning after failing to find happiness in the hedonic dimension. As we see people around us claiming to find happiness through spirituality, we will explore a suitable one if we are not completely biased toward faith. We will find life to be more meaningful with a spiritual path as long as we think it has answers to our existential questions. However, we cannot avoid questioning the authenticity of the answers.</p>
<p><b>Week 9</b>          Scientific Research of Eudemonic Happiness</p>	<p>Discuss the importance of Intrinsic Aspirations in Eudemonic Happiness</p> <p>Discuss capitalism, and consumption, and meaning</p> <p>Compare Empty Selves vs. Full Shelves</p> <p>Present findings from two research on eudemonic happiness</p>	<p>Chapter 9</p>	<p>Previous research reveals that low SWB has clearly been linked to extrinsic values and high SWB to intrinsic values. However, most of them were conducted in Western countries. We conducted two studies in a cosmopolitan city (Istanbul) with a mixed culture of materialistic and spiritual values. The findings were consistent with the prediction of self-determination theory and previous studies.</p>
<p><b>Week 10</b>          American Dream or Nightmare?</p>	<p>Introduce Easterlin paradox</p> <p>Discuss happiness crisis in USA</p> <p>Present empirical evidence for American paradox</p> <p>Discuss the decline of faith, family, friendship, trust in the American society</p>	<p>Chapter 10</p>	<p>The data reveal that, through free market capitalism, we, the people of developed countries, have produced and consumed more, but enjoyed less. We have multiplied our material possessions but lost our spiritual dimensions. We have learned how to make a great living but forgotten how to live a great life. We have built bigger houses but destroyed bigger families. We have gained more knowledge but</p>

	Discuss the rise of substance abuse in the USA		are left with less truth. We have discovered the far edges of the outer universe but dismissed the nearest inner universe. We have found our way to the moon but lost our way to our neighbors. We have invented better communication tools but forgotten how to communicate with others. We have written better laws to protect our freedom from intruders but forgotten how to protect our freedom from animalistic and egotistic desires.
<b>Week 11</b> Nietzsche's Last Man and Unhappy Nihilist	Discuss happiness in Nietzsche's writing  Compare Ubermensch vs. consuming man  Discuss metamorphosis of camel, lion, and baby  Explore, will to power, nihilism and infinite nothing	Chapter 11	Nietzsche's nihilism might help us to understand the intrinsic motive behind conspicuous consumption. We can talk about "commodity nihilism" with two different meaning. First, it means to consume for the sake of consumption without considering any higher goals such as aesthetic or humanistic values. Second, "commodity nihilism" means consuming to close the gap of the lost inherent value of being a human being. Thus, it is value seeking by those who think they do not have any inherent value anymore. It is an attempt to substitute extrinsic value with intrinsic one. It is an effort to fill the abyss left by the death of religion in the West.
<b>Week 12</b> Searching for Happiness while Sinking into Depression	Reflect on the F (faith) multiplier and meaning  Discuss death of meaning if F is zero: $H_{e1} = \{U(H, D, B) + M(H, D, B)\} * F = 0$ if $F = 0$  Explain Midlife Crisis through Incomplete Happiness Equation  Discuss Tolstoy's failed happiness journey	Chapter 12	In my personal journey, I did not experience a midlife crisis because my happiness equation has included faith since the very early age of my life. As I advanced in my education, I did not give up my faith. Instead, I learned how to compromise science and faith. I learned how to read the universe as an elegant book written by the pen of Divine Power. I have developed a strong affirmation about the existence of God who is All-Knowing, All-Powerful, All-Wise, Most-Kind, Most-Loving. This faith brings transcendental meaning to my life. It gives me the power to continue my work without fear of being annihilated any moment.

<p><b>Week 13</b> Searching for G-donic Happiness through Believing</p>	<p>Define G-donic (spiritual) Dimension Discuss Faith and Happiness for Transcendental Believers Define the happiness equation for the G-donic model: <math>H_g = \{U(H,B,D)+M(H,D,B)\} * F_t</math> Discuss Tolstoy's Search for Happiness through Faith Explore key elements of human nature and happiness</p>	<p>Chapter 13</p>	<p>I define faith as connecting finite to the Infinite. It is to find the transcendental reality behind the observed phenomena in this world. It is to reach a conviction that life will continue after death. I argue that once we reach such realization, we will change our attitude toward the worldly having, doing, and being. We will no longer seek satisfaction with a shadow-like earthly reality. Instead, we will find satisfaction with transcendental reality. We will find infinite richness in life experience.</p>
<p><b>Week 14</b> Scientific Research of G-donic Happiness</p>	<p>Present the findings from a study we conducted in the Gulf countries on happiness. Share the findings of an empirical study among those who follow G-donic happiness model. Reflect on the 12 learned lessons for higher and lasting happiness</p>	<p>Chapter 14-15</p>	<p>I began my search for happiness in an extremely deprived condition. <b>It took three decades for me to move from the bottom one percent of the world population to the top one percent in terms of wealth and income.</b> The money gave me great opportunities to fulfill my dream of seeking pleasure and possession. I also managed to move from being a part-time shepherd to a full professor with two different doctoral degrees. However, I failed to find lasting satisfaction. I realized that my failure was due to my search for happiness through having, doing, and being in one dimension. Furthermore, I learned that happiness is not a destination; instead, it is a journey itself. Therefore, it is not possible to reach lasting happiness by pursuing pleasure, possession, or position within the hedonic (pleasure-seeking) dimension. I came to the realization that higher happiness lies in higher dimensions of meaning and spirituality.</p>