

THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS

Summer Semester (Master Course)

Prof. Dr. Shashi Matta
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Sessions on Fridays, 14:15-18:00 on Zoom*
Frist Session: Friday, April 17, 2026
Final Session: Friday, July 10, 2026
Team Consultations: Friday, July 17, 2026

*All classes sessions will be held on Zoom:

<https://kuei.zoom-x.de/j/68838603776?pwd=9pbR7jppqFgatTrW0IYanhYMBHXs0q0.1>

(Meeting ID: 688 3860 3776 | Passcode: 397339)

Course and Objectives

How can we be happier in our professional and personal lives? The Science of Happiness is a multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural exploration of what makes us happy. This course examines the science behind happiness and is designed for individuals who want to understand and implement changes that enhance one's happiness and well-being. Course participants will learn how to use practical tools and evidence-based insights on what makes us happy, from 10 international happiness experts, representing multiple disciplines (Business, Economics, Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology, Anthropology, Medicine, and Theology) and seven countries (Germany, USA, UK, India, Norway, Singapore, and Sweden). This innovative course is designed to promote happiness, well-being, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence.

My primary learning objectives for this course are for you to -

- Critically investigate theories on happiness and well-being through recent research and scholarship from multiple fields.
- Identify and examine factors that influence happiness and well-being in diverse settings (professional / work life, personal and social life, and the domain of consumption).
- Synthesize theories from multiple disciplines on the "what" and "how" of happiness, and regularly reflect on and apply the practical tools resulting from this knowledge.

Instructor Expectations

- I want your complete buy-in, which means being fully present, being well prepared for class, and actively contributing. I will give my 100% to you and I expect the same.
- Since this is an ambitious course with a record number of international guest professors, I expect you to be on track and proactive with the course learning and course deliverables.
- I encourage you to ask questions during class and meet with me in teams or one-on-one via Zoom by setting up a prior appointment.

Evaluation: Graded Components, Grading Scale, and Requirements

Grade Structure

1. Happiness Team Assignment	50%
2. Final Exam (Written, In-person)	50%
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	Total 100%

Grading Scale (1.0 - 5.0)

1.0	93-100	Exemplary Performance
1.3	90-92.99	Strong Performance
1.7	87-89 .99	Good Performance
2.0	83-86.99	Adequate Performance
2.3	80-82 .99	Adequate Performance, with some deficiencies
2.7	77-79 .99	Adequate Performance, with serious deficiencies
3.0	73-76.99	Weak Performance
3.3	70-72.99	Weak Performance, with serious deficiencies
3.7	67-69.99	Extremely Weak Performance, with serious deficiencies
4.0	63- 66.99	Poor Performance, with pervasive deficiencies
5.0	Below 63	Fail

Happiness Team Assignment

50% of the Final Grade

The Happiness Team Assignment is due by 23:55 on Friday, August 7, 2026

Each team, assigned by the course instructor, will assume the role of a “Happiness Coaching Academy” and design a coaching presentation (a PowerPoint deck with a maximum of 15 slides excluding the title and references) that incorporates any three of the practical happiness tools learned in class. The audience for this coaching is a group of employees of an organization. You can decide on the specific organization, and the size of the audience, and mention this in on the title slide. One student from each team should upload the deck by the deadline (23:55 on Friday, August 7, 2026) on ILIAS. Further details will be discussed during class. **A mid-course Consultation Session is scheduled at 16:15 on Friday, June 05, 2026, during class that day.**

Final Exam

50% of the Final Grade

The In-Person, Final Exam will be conducted on Friday, July 31, 2026, from 14:00-16:00 hrs. in two locations simultaneously – on the Eichstätt Campus as well as on the Ingolstadt Campus

The Final Exam will be a closed book, in-person exam. Students will be required to handwrite their answers to questions in the provided Exam Booklet. They will have 90 minutes to write their answers. The exam will consist of short essay answers and short cases based on the concepts learned in class. Sample exam questions will be discussed during the class sessions. The exam will be conducted on the same day and at the same time in two locations – on the Eichstätt Campus and on the Ingolstadt Campus. **The exam will be offered only during the first exam period, and the room locations will be announced after they are confirmed by the examination office.**

Guidelines for the Team Assignment, including use of Generative AI Tools

1. The main skills for the team assignment include - critical thinking, logical reasoning, analysis followed by synthesis, and articulate communication on the slides. Hence, please pay close attention to the discussion of the team assignment during class discussions, prior to submitting the assignment. These discussions will not be repeated.
2. The team assignment slides should not be a mere rehash of the class slides or class discussions. It is meant to extend the topic / theme into a coherently prepared coaching deck that draws from extant research and other published work on the topic and on related themes that can be effectively used to create a coaching session.
3. All research referenced in the team assignment submission must be cited and referenced correctly using the APA style. All submissions will be checked with a plagiarism detection software, to check for plagiarism and improper citations and references. The references at the end the submission do not count in the slide limit.
4. Generative AI tools can be used for idea generation or for grammar and language enhancement. These Generative AI tools cannot be used directly to draft the presentation. All submissions will be checked with a plagiarism detection software that also checks for Generative AI.
5. Any use of Generative AI tools in developing the team assignment must be fully acknowledged and made transparent in a separate set of slides at the end of the submission, including the specific prompts used, and details including - for what specific purpose was it used, and which specific content is directly copied from a Generative AI source. These slides will not count towards the slide limit of 15 slides.
6. Generative AI outputs that reference published research or books are known to "hallucinate," i.e., provide faulty and non-existent sources as references, or cite research incorrectly. Any such instances found in the team assignment submissions will result in a grade penalty, with points being deducted in the grading of the assignment.

COURSE TIMELINE

Session # 1: Friday, April 17, 2026

April 17 **14:15 - 16:00 on Zoom**

Introduction to The Science of Happiness, Part 1: Professor Shashi Matta

Concepts: Introduction to the Multi-Disciplinary topic of Happiness
Course Objectives and Format
Instructor Expectations

April 17 **16:15 - 18:00 on Zoom**

Happiness from Multiple Perspectives and Disciplines: Professor Shashi Matta

Concepts: Why Multiple Perspectives?
The Richness and Complexity of a Multi-Disciplinary Approach
Discussion of Happiness Team Assignment
How to Succeed in this Class

Session # 2: Friday, April 24, 2026

April 24 **14:15 - 16:00 on Zoom**

Practical Tools for Happiness, Part 1: Professor Shashi Matta

Concepts: Practical Tools for Happiness
Happiness in an Attention-Deficit World
Template for Individual Reflection and Journal Entry (IRJE)

April 24 **16:15 - 18:00 on Zoom**

The Economics of Happiness: Professor Erik Angner (Philosophy & Economics)

Pre-reading: <https://nobaproject.com/modules/happiness-the-science-of-subjective-well-being>

Concepts: Subjective Well-being
Q&A with the International Guest Professor
Active Discussion on the Presented Topic

Session # 3: Friday, May 8, 2026

May 8 14:15 - 16:00 on Zoom

Practical Tools for Happiness, Part 2: Professor Shashi Matta

Concepts: Practical Happiness Tool based on Erik Angner's session
Team Exercise

May 8 16:15 - 18:00 on Zoom

The Happiness Marketplace: Professor Shashi Matta (Business and Psychology)

Pre-reading: Lee, Hall & Wood (2018). Experiential or Material Purchases?
Social Class Determines Happiness. *Psychological Science*.

Concepts: The Consumption of Happiness
Active Discussion and Q&A on the Presented Topic

Session # 4: Friday, May 15, 2026

May 15 14:15 - 16:00 on Zoom

Practical Tools for Happiness, Part 3: Professor Shashi Matta

Concepts: Practical Happiness Tool based on "The Happiness Marketplace"
Team Exercise

May 15 16:15 - 18:00 on Zoom

Happiness, Philosophy and Faith: Professor Chris Kaczor (Philosophy, Theology)

Concepts: Philosophical underpinnings of Happiness
Q&A with the International Guest Professor
Active Discussion on the Presented Topic

Session # 5: Friday, May 22, 2026

May 22 14:15 - 16:00 on Zoom

Practical Tools for Happiness, Part 4: Professor Shashi Matta

Concepts: Practical Happiness Tool based on Chris Kaczor's session
Team Exercise

May 22 16:15 - 18:00 on Zoom

Career Success, Smarts, and Happiness: Professor Raj Raghunathan (Business)

Pre-reading: [https://michaelrucker.com/thought-leader-interviews/raj-
raghunathan-happiness/](https://michaelrucker.com/thought-leader-interviews/raj-raghunathan-happiness/)

Concepts: "If You're So Smart, Why Aren't You Happy?"
Q&A with the International Guest Professor
Active Discussion on the Presented Topic

Session # 6: Friday, May 29, 2026

May 29 14:15 - 16:00 on Zoom

Psychology of Income and Happiness: Professor Jacinth Tan (Psychology)

Concepts: Lessons from a Meta-Analysis of Income and Happiness
Practical Happiness Tool based on Raj Raghunathan's session

May 29 16:15 - 18:00 on Zoom

Happiness and the Field of Medicine: Dr. Andreas Wechsler (Medicine, Pediatrics)

Concepts: Happiness from a Medical Perspective
Q&A with the International Guest Professor
Active Discussion on the Presented Topic

Session # 7: Friday, June 5, 2026

June 5 **14:15 - 16:00 on Zoom**

Practical Tools for Happiness, Part 6: Professor Shashi Matta

Concepts: Practical Happiness Tool based on Professor Tan's session
Team Exercise

June 5 **16:15 - 18:00 on Zoom**

Consultation Session & Meetings: Happiness Team Assignment (Happiness Coaching)

Concepts: Happiness Coaching Academy
Practical Tools and Applications
Specificity and Research-backed Coaching
Use of Gen AI versus Human Design

Session # 8: Friday, June 12, 2026

June 12 **14:15 - 16:00 on Zoom**

Practical Tools for Happiness, Part 7: Professor Shashi Matta

Concepts: Practical Happiness Tool based on Dr. Andreas Wechsler's session
Team Exercise

June 12 **16:15 - 18:00 on Zoom**

Virtue Ethics, Morality, Happiness: Professor Angela Knobel (Philosophy, Ethics)

Concepts: Infused Virtue, Virtue Ethics, Applied Ethics, Morality
Q&A with the International Guest Professor
Active Discussion on the Presented Topic

Session # 9: Friday, June 19, 2026

June 19 **14:15 - 16:00 on Zoom**

Practical Tools for Happiness, Part 8: Professor Shashi Matta

Concepts: Practical Happiness Tool based on Angela Knobel's session
Team Exercise

June 19 **16:15 - 18:00 on Zoom**

Purpose / Ikigai and Happiness: Professor Iza Kavedžija (Medical Anthropology)

Concepts: Purpose / Ikigai and Happiness
Q&A with the International Guest Professor
Active Discussion on the Presented Topic

Session # 10: Friday, June 26, 2026

June 26 **14:15 - 16:00 on Zoom**

Practical Tools for Happiness, Part 9: Professor Shashi Matta

Concepts: Practical Happiness Tool based on Iza Kavedžija's session
Team Exercise

June 26 **16:15 - 18:00 on Zoom**

A Sociological Review of Happiness: Professor Tim Wadsworth (Sociology)

Concepts: Insights from Sociology Research: The Role of Context
Q&A with the International Guest Professor
Active Discussion on the Presented Topic

No Class Session (Gap Week at WFI for Summer School) Friday, July 3, 2026

Session # 11: Friday, July 10, 2026

July 10 **14:15 - 16:00 on Zoom**

Practical Tools for Happiness, Part 10: Professor Shashi Matta

Concepts: Practical Happiness Tool based on Tim Wadsworth's session
Team Exercise

July 10 **16:15 - 18:00 on Zoom**

A Psychological Review of Happiness: Professor Kostadin Kushlev (Psychology)

Pre-reading: Kushlev et al. (2020). Does Happiness Improve Health? Evidence
from a Randomized controlled Trial. *Psychological Science*.

Concepts: Insights from Multiple Psychology Studies on Happiness
Q&A with the International Guest Professor
Active Discussion on the Presented Topic

Session # 12: Friday, July 17, 2026

July 17 **14:15 - 16:00 on Zoom**

Practical Tools for Happiness, Part 11: Professor Shashi Matta

Concepts: Guiding Principles from 11 Weeks of Happiness Learnings
Practical Tool based on Kostadin Kushlev's session

July 17 **16:15 - 18:00 on Zoom**

Practicing a Life of Bliss: A Visiting Monk (Surprise)

Pre-reading: Brown & Ryan (2003). The Benefits of Being Present: Mindfulness
and its Role in Psychological Well-being. *Journal of Personality and
Social Psychology*.

Concepts: A Monk's Perspective on Living a Happy and Blissful Life
Q&A with the Visiting Monk

Assigned Readings

Assigned Readings (available in our online library):

Bhattacharjee, A. & Cassie Mogilner, C. (2014). Happiness from Ordinary and Extraordinary Experiences. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41(1), 1-17.

Boyce, Christopher J., Brown, Gordon D. A., & Moore, Simon C. (2010). Money and Happiness: Rank of Income, Not Income, Affects Life Satisfaction. *Psychological Science*, 21(4), 471-474.

Dunn, E. W., Aknin, L. B., & Norton, M. I. (2008). Spending Money on Others Promotes Happiness. *Science*, 319, 1687-1688.

Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting Blessings versus Burdens: An Experimental Investigation of Gratitude and Subjective Well-being in Daily Life. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 88, 377-389

Helliwell, J. F., & Aknin, L. B. (2018). Expanding the Social Science of Happiness. *Nature Human Behavior*, 2, 248-252.

Huppert, F. (2010). Happiness Breeds Prosperity. *Nature*, 464, 1275-1276.

Kosaka, K. (2007). A Sociology for Happiness: Beyond Western versus Non-Western Perspectives. *Sociological Bulletin*, 56(3), 369-382.

McMahon, D. M. (2008). The pursuit of happiness in history. In M. Eid & R. J. Larsen (Eds.), *The Science of Subjective Well-being* (pp. 80-93). New York: Guilford Press.

Mogilner, C. (2010). The Pursuit of Happiness: Time, Money and Social Connection. *Psychological Science*, 21(9), 1348-1354

Oishi, S., Kesebir, S., & Diener, E. (2011). Income Inequality and Happiness. *Psychological Science*, 22(9), 1095-1100.

Reichhardt, T. (2006). A Measure of Happiness. *Nature*, 444, 418-419.

Rothbard, N. P., & Wilk, S. L. (2011). "Waking up on the Right or Wrong Side of the Bed: Start-of-Workday Mood, Work Events, Employee Affect, and Performance," *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(5), 959-980.

Stone, A. A. (2006). Would you be Happier if you were Richer? A focusing illusion. *Science*, 312, 1908-1910.

Tamir, M., Schwartz, S. H., Oishi, S., & Kim, M. Y. (2017). The Secret of Happiness: Feeling Good or Feeling Right? *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 146 (10), 1448-1459.

Urry, H. L., Nitschke, J. B., Dolski, I., Jackson, D. C., Dalton, K. M., Mueller, C. J. et al. (2004). Making a Life worth Living: Neural Correlates of Well-being. *Psychological Science*, 15, 367-372.

Whillans, A. V., Dunn, E. W., Smeets, P., Bekkers, R., & Norton, M. I. (2017). Buying Time Promotes Happiness. *Proceedings from the National Academy of Sciences*, 114. 8523-8527.

Recommended Books for Reference:

Lyubomirsky, S. (2007). *The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life you Want*. Penguin Press.

Raghunathan, R. (2016). *If You're So Smart, Why Aren't You Happy?* Portfolio Press.

Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C. (2009). *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. New York: Penguin Books.

Course Instructor Biography

Professor Dr. Shashi Matta

Professor and Chairholder, Innovation and Creativity

Master's Courses Taught at WFI:

Consumer Psychology and Decision Making (Winter)

From Idea to Commercialization: Start-up School (Winter)

Innovation and Creativity (Summer)

Responsible Innovation in Firms & Society (Summer School)

The Science of Happiness (Summer)



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Biography

Shashi Matta is Professor and Chairholder of [Innovation and Creativity](#), Vice Dean of Internationalization, and Head of International Accreditation, at WFI – Ingolstadt School of Management at the Catholic University of Eichstätt Ingolstadt (KU). He is a Founding Director of the KU Research Institute for Business and Economics in Service of Humanity (BESH) and also serves as Academic Director of the [MBA program](#). Professor Matta joined KU in June 2018. His prior academic career includes positions as the Faculty Director of MBA Programs, and Professor of Marketing, at The Ohio State University Fisher College of Business, USA. He has been a visiting professor at business schools internationally, including at Toulouse Business School (TBS) in France, Bologna Business School (BBS) at the University of Bologna in Italy, and International University of Monaco.

Professor Matta is an award-winning researcher, teacher and mentor, and is dedicated to building strong bridges between academia, industry, and community. He engages extensively with industry through consulting, coaching, and keynote speaking engagements at several companies internationally in the areas of growth strategies, innovation, marketing strategy, branding & positioning, customer experience, happiness and well-being. He has served as an expert in these subject areas, for media stories nationally in the United States.

Professor Matta's industry experience, prior to academia, includes positions in brand management, advertising, and marketing operations. He has taught at all levels, including in Bachelor's, Master's MBA and Executive Education programs, and has won multiple teaching awards internationally.

Professor Matta's research is in the areas of consumer behavior, innovation, and branding. His research has been published in top ranked academic journals including the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *Journal of Retailing*, *AMS Review*, *Psychology & Marketing*, *Review of Marketing Research*, *Personality and Individual Differences*, and, *Emotion*.

Professor Matta has experience serving on the board of directors of for-profit and non-profit organizations and has been commissioned as an expert witness in legal cases involving brand confusion and consumer behavior.