

The Yale Happiness Class, Distilled

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The most popular class in the history of Yale University was inspired by a paradox: Even when people, conventionally speaking, succeed—get into a top college, make lots of money, or accumulate prestige and accolades—they are often left feeling unsatisfied.

It's a problem that may be particularly acute at a place like Yale, but the lessons of the class, called "Psychology and the Good Life," are widely applicable—they address fundamental features of the human mind that make it difficult to appreciate things that seem like they'd be great. "Our minds are filled with a ton of little glitches that make it hard to enjoy the great things that we have," as Laurie Santos, the psychology professor who teaches the course, puts it.