

PSY 335: Review & Critical Thinking Paper

There is a plethora of information on the internet and in book stores about how to enhance your wellbeing. However, not all of what is advised and promoted is based on scientific evidence. Some of this material may even be written about under the guise of being based on “positive psychology” or be produced by someone claiming to be a “positive psychologist”!

This assignment is designed to help you enhance your critical thinking skills with respect to discerning evidence for activities and “interventions” promoted as being effective for enhancing wellbeing. In completing this assignment, you will also become more familiar with recent scientific literature in the domain of positive psychology—the *science* of wellbeing. Of course this assignment is also an opportunity to hone your academic writing skills.

1. Find a self-help blog page, article, or website pertaining to improving wellbeing. *Note:* The self-help blog page, article, or website you choose must not be from a scientific source or have citations noted within it. Do not choose a news article the basis of which is providing information about results of a study.

You will be investigating the scientific evidence for (or lack thereof) the claims made in this self-help blog, article, or website.

2. Write a summary of this material. What is being claimed? What activities are promoted or suggested? Be clear, specific, and thorough. Also provide a brief summary of who authored the material, include any credentials for the author that are available.

3. Now choose one of the suggested activities from the self-help material.

4. Find a minimum of 5 peer-reviewed academic articles that are relevant to that suggestion. Criteria for these 5 academic articles are:

- peer-reviewed;
- from a legitimate academic journal (non-predatory);
- published from 2017 onwards;
- these articles can include papers reporting on a single study, review paper, or a meta-analysis

[4a. If you cannot find a minimum of 5 peer-reviewed academic articles relevant to the self-help suggestion you chose, discuss what you were able to find according to the criteria in Step 5. Then choose another suggestion. If you cannot find a minimum of 5 peer-reviewed academic articles relevant to that suggestion, again, discuss what you were able to find according to the criteria in Step 5 and then check with me (your prof) at that point.]

5. Discuss the suggestion from the self-help material with respect to the scientific evidence you found. Compare and contrast the self-help material with the scientific literature. How closely aligned is the content in the self-article material with the scientific literature? What did the self-help material miss-the-mark on? What was on-target? How much evidence is there for what is in the self-help material? (Note: For this point, discuss this beyond the minimum 5 peer-reviewed articles you chose; e.g., How difficult was it to find 5 peer-reviewed articles – provide an indication of how many scientific articles that met the criteria there were to choose from.) Is there a consensus in the scientific literature on these practices/suggestions, or it is inconsistent across scientific studies?

6. Now you will critique the scientific literature you found. What are the strengths of these studies? Think in terms of methodology, samples, power, analyses. What are the limitations? Are there gaps in the research that need to be addressed? Discuss future directions for research in these areas.

7. Provide a conclusion to end your paper. Use the “book-end” method by returning back to the beginning of your paper when beginning your brief conclusion.

8. Starting on the page following the conclusion of your paper, provide a Reference List of *all* material—i.e., the self-help material as well as all the peer-reviewed scientific articles.

Formatting of Paper

Cover Sheet:

List on your cover sheet the following information (and only this information) in this order:

- your first and last name;
- your Student ID;
- the class: PSY 335A Fall 2023;
- a title for your paper;
- date handed to me in class.

Body of Paper:

- 1" margins (2.54 cm)
- Times New Roman, 12 pt font
- entire paper, including references, double spaced with no extra space between paragraphs
- left-align paragraphs, indent the first line of each paragraph ½ inch (1.25 cm)
- use section headers
- format headers according to APA 7th formatting
- add a footer to your paper, left aligned, with page number / page count: e.g., 1 / 4

Citations in Paper and Reference Page:

- Use APA 7th guidelines for in-paper citations and the Reference List
- (see Moodle for APA formatting resources)

Overall Writing Style:

This is a formal academic paper to be written in an academic style. Please see *H/A!’s List of Common Writing Mistakes*”. It is to your benefit to carefully check your paper against this list.

Length of Paper

This paper should be between 6 and 10 pages long not including cover page and references.

Grading Criteria

See Moodle for the Grading Criteria for this paper.

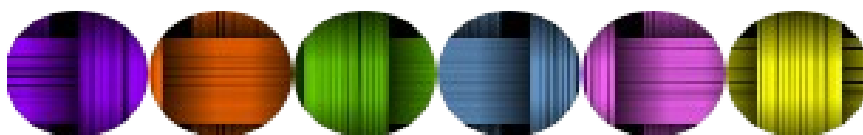
Ask For Help

Consider booking an appointment with CUE’s Writing Centre:

<https://concordia.ab.ca/student-services/student-life-learning/learning-services/the-writing-centre/>

And of course – ASK ME!

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR WEIGHTED GRADING SHEET



PSY 335: Review & Critical Thinking Paper: Grading Criteria

This is the weighing of criteria for your paper. You will receive this sheet back for your grade.

Student name: _____ **Student ID:** _____

ITEM	points deducted
.25% deducted for each formatting error as per criteria for cover sheet and paper	
5% deducted if criteria not met for minimum of 5 academic research papers published in peer-reviewed non-predatory journals published from 2017 onwards	
2% deducted if criteria not met for length of body of paper (6-10 pages not including cover page and reference list)	
.25% deducted for each APA formatting error up to a maximum of 2% (3 'free' errors permitted; repeated penalty will not be given for the the same error if made <i>consistently</i> throughout the paper)	
Total Marks DEDUCTED:	

ITEM	WORTH	letter grade*	points earned
Language, Style, Flow, Organization, Clarity: writing overall—spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, grammar, word choices, coherent flow of ideas, clarity of writing	30%		
For each section, marks are for clarity, comprehensiveness, and accuracy			
Summary of Self-Help Material	5%		
Comparison & Contrast to Scientific Literature	30%		
Critique of Scientific Literature	30%		
Conclusion	5%		
points EARNED			
marks deducted from above			
TOTAL POINTS:			
PAPER GRADE LETTER:			
PAPER GRADE PERCENTAGE**:			

*letter grade points for this paper: A+ = 8 | A = 7 | A- = 6 | B+ = 5 | B = 4 | B- = 3 | C+ = 2 | C = 1

** (as per Psychology Dept grading policy)

