GOVT 490
CREATING WELL-BEING
Spring 2020

Draft Syllabus, version 12/25/2019

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

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Class Meetings:
Wednesdays 4:30pm-7:10pm, Room TBA

OVERVIEW
This course aims to equip participants with perspectives, tools, approaches and practices they can immediately begin applying in their own lives and work in order to create greater well-being for themselves. These tools and approaches engage participants in self-reflection not just as an abstract endeavor but as an active practice in and through the lived contexts of their day to day lives.

This course honors the Gandhian invitation to “Be the Change You Want To See in the World”. In other words, creating well-being for and within ourselves not only enhances our capacity to experience joy, peace, and personal wellness in all dimensions of our own lives, but also nourishes the soil from which we become more capable of creating well-being in our professional and personal relationships, in our organizations, and in the wider systems we inhabit at all levels of scale. As Otto Scharmer writes (quoting former CEO Bill O’Brien), “the success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervenor.” Accordingly, the primary focus of the course is on supporting each participant to develop their capacity to access well-being and resilience as an inner well-spring that is independent of the nature or intensity of the circumstances in which they may find themselves. Participants will read the classic work of Victor Frankl, who discovered and lived from inalienable human freedom while imprisoned in a concentration camp. The course encourages participants to connect with their own core and to put theory into practice by engaging in experiential learning focused on implementing well-being in their lived environments, synergistically for themselves and others.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

I. Knowledge and Understanding
   • Theories of and approaches to well-being
   • Systems thinking
   • Theories of and approaches to change in complex adaptive systems
   • Self-awareness

II. Professional Development
   • Emotional intelligence
   • Discernment and wisdom
   • Self-awareness and self-transformation
   • Conflict resolution
   • Wisdom, awareness and transformation in and of complex systems

III. Skills
   • Presentation, listening and conversational skills
READINGS

Books: (NOTE: Feel free to get any edition, or a digital format, of the books below to save money)

Arbinger Institute, The Anatomy of Peace
Eisenstein, Sacred Economics
Langshur & Klemp. Start Here: A Groundbreaking, Science-Based Program for Emotional Fitness
Scharmer, Otto (2018), The Essentials of Theory U

Additional book or practices of your choice (that you haven’t yet read/initiated) to support your well-being

Additional articles, book chapters, and other materials:
Articles, book chapters and other materials to be assigned. Please see below for a draft list by class date and topic.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

The course requirements include the following (fuller descriptions of assignments will be handed out in class at appropriate times):

1) Engagement in class, preparation, mutual support of classmates, and preparation/delivery of in-class activities: 15%
   a. Well-being teams
   b. Rotating presentations to include:
      • Main takeaways from the readings for that week
      • How you have applied your insights from the week’s readings in your work, school and life
   c. Find, share and lead a well-being practice/activity for the class
   d. 4-column exercise for Kegan & Lahey readings
2) Blackboard discussions: 10%
   a. By 10pm on the day before class (Tuesdays at 10pm), please upload to the BBD discussion thread an entry with the following elements:
      • For EACH assigned reading, or EACH chapter of an assigned book, please share one insight you had. Total number of insights shared should equal total number of readings plus total book chapters.
      • Please share a concrete way in which you might apply one or more of these insights in your life.
      • Please examine your insights and application intention from the previous week, and share what you learned from applying this insight in your life over the previous week
   b. Please keep a note of your insights and application plan so that you can pair share in class
3) Three short mid-term papers (15% each):
   a. “Triggers” paper (1.5 - 2 single spaced pages)
   b. From Drama to Compassion (1.5-2 single spaced pages)
   c. For the third paper, you may choose one of the following options:

Dr. Jessica Srikantia, GOVT 490: Creating Well-being, Spring 2020, p. 2
• Ethnographic Self-Reflection Paper (2 single spaced pages)
• Concepts check: Articulating and applying key concepts from the course and each reading, making explicit use of these readings. NOTE: For full credit, you must make substantive use of at least 3 books. 2 single spaced pages.
• Connect readings and materials to real world issues that intrigue you (can be related to your major, doesn’t have to be). Note: for full credit, you must make substantive use of at least 3 books. 2-3 single spaced pages

4) Final Synthesis Paper: Creating well-being, 3-4 single spaced pages (20%). Note: For full credit you must make substantive use of at least 4 books and at least 1 article from the course.

5) Final presentations – well-being topic of your choice, or connecting class materials, concepts etc to your own life and/or contexts/issues you are passionate about: 10%

6) Recommended – Journaling. This will not be handed in or checked – it is just for your personal use, and is not a requirement for the course. You might develop a journaling practice, for example, taking 3 minutes to reflect on the day and write down 3 things you are grateful for, and any insights from your reflection.

Please note that full attendance and participation in class meetings is essential. **Missing more than two class periods lowers your final overall course grade** by 1/3 for EACH missed class after the first two (e.g., for three missed classes an A- becomes a B+, a B+ becomes a B, etc; for four missed classes, an A- becomes a B, etc.). Two instances of coming substantively late or leaving early count as a missed class. In special cases as appropriate, mutually agreed, additional assignments may be able to function as make-up work for some of the point deductions.

*Cell phones, text messaging devices, email, web-browsing, computers and so on are NOT permitted to be used in class,* unless being used publicly to support the collective class work or for officially approved special needs. If you must use your text messaging device, etc. for an emergency, please take it outside of the classroom. Violations of this policy will result in point deductions.

**CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN OUR CLASSROOM**

As part of creating a valuable learning experience for everyone in the classroom and also living the essence and spirit of the course through our everyday interactions in and through it together, let’s attend to the quality of how we talk with each other, support our own and each other’s learning, and help each other (including helping me!) when we forget. This includes: An emphasis on inquiry rather than advocacy in class conversations, support for multiple different forms of interaction and participation guided by a foundation of mutual valuing and respect, and practicing ways of being in class that are less well developed for you. For example, let’s go beyond the content of what we want to contribute, by attending actively to how we are listening to and conversing with each other in class. Let’s focus on the quality of listening, efforts to build on the contributions of others and on the substance of the readings, asking questions, reflection, thoughtfulness of comments, and other contributions made to the creation of a mutual learning space. Let’s all try to work on whatever is hardest for us: For those who speak up often, try focusing on receptive listening; for those who rarely speak, try to add your voice even when it’s not comfortable. Most of all, let’s each of us take responsibility for creating a caring and respectful space where everyone is truly heard and valued. From this foundation, class discussions will promote your ability to understand, contextualize and interpret class materials and the world around you.

**AN INVITATION:**
I will provide up to 3 individual or group coaching sessions for anyone who would like this.

**WEEKLY READINGS AND CLASS SESSIONS:**

**Class 1: Wednesday, January 22, 2020**
Topics: Introduction to the course. Discuss course syllabus; Creating community together, finding your STAND.
Readings:
- Langshur & Klemp. Start Here -- please use this as a reference

Class 2: Wednesday, January 29, 2020
Topics: Understanding and taking responsibility for our feelings; distinguishing languages of domination from languages that support life; hearing and listening to ourselves and others with wisdom and compassion

Readings:
- Rosenberg, M. Nonviolent Communication, Chs 1-6

Assignment:
- Find your STRENGTHS – www.strengths.gmu.edu and print out the report of your top 5 strengths and bring to class
- Complete the exercises in Nonviolent Communication, Chs 1-6

Class 3: Wednesday, February 5, 2020
Topics: Understanding, experiencing, and taking responsibility for our feelings; bringing self-compassion to our anger; being present, expressing appreciation, etc.

Readings:
- Rosenberg, M. Nonviolent Communication, Chs 7-14

Assignment:
- Complete the exercises in Nonviolent Communication, Ex 5 in Ch 7 and “Translating Have to to Choose to” in Ch 9.

Class 4: Wednesday, February 12, 2020
Topics: Accessing and spreading well-being in the face of violence and suffering

Readings:
- Frankl, V. Man’s Search for Meaning, pp. 54 to end including all appendices
- Dr. King, “Eulogy for the Martyred Children” and “The Power of Nonviolence” (blackboard)

Assignment:
- Come to class with your 5 favorite quotations from Frankl readily accessible to share
- Come to class prepared to articulate: What is the philosophy of nonviolence? What is agape love? Where and how might you apply these concepts in your own life and contexts?

Class 5: Wednesday, February 19, 2020
Topics: Polarities, teams, languages of transformation (Kegan & Lahey), and other resources for creating change in complex adaptive systems.

Readings:
- Kegan & Lahey – Chapters 9, 10 & 4 uploaded to BBd, from Immunity to Change
- Wheatley, M. (2007). “Bringing Life to Organizational Change”; and “The New Story is Ours to Tell” from Finding Our Way: Leadership for an uncertain time (e-book in GMU catalog; These sections also uploaded to BBD)

Assignment: Complete your own immunity to change 4 column exercise and bring a hard copy to class to turn in
Class 6: Wednesday, February 26, 2020
Topics: Distinguishing and hearkening your inner truth. Alignment and dis-alignment. Recognizing your patterns and finding your center.


Assignment: Midterm Paper #1 – submit today by 10am or next Wednesday by 10am on BBD. Please bring single spaced hard copy to class.

Class 7: Wednesday, March 4, 2020
Topics: From Drama Triangles to Compassion Cycles


Assignment: What is the drama triangle? What is the compassion cycle? How can you recognize when you are in one or the other? What is your easiest first step to access the compassion cycle? Try out the compassion cycle this week. Come prepared to discuss your experiences with it.

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 9 – 15, 2020 – ENJOY!!

Class 8: Wednesday, March 18, 2020
Topics: Creating well-being through listening, conversing, and opening mind, heart and will; generativity; Creating well-being through attention to the source dimension; creating well-being from the inside out.

Readings: Scharmer, *The Essentials of Theory U*, Part I
Assignment: Midterm Paper #2 due today by 10am on BBD. Please bring single spaced hard copy to class.

Class 9: Wednesday, March 25, 2020
Topics: Rebuilding well-being by restoring culture

Readings:
- Ozenc&Hagan, *Rituals for Work*

Assignment: Try out what resonates for you from Rituals for Work! Come to class prepared to share, especially by bringing it alive for your classmates.

Class 10: Wednesday, April 1, 2020
Topics: Self-directed readings and exploration

Readings: Select a book or other well-being resource of your choice to read, apply, and present in class

Assignment: Midterm Paper #3 due today by 10am on BBD. Please bring a single spaced hard copy to class.

Class 11: Wednesday, April 8, 2020
Topics: Putting it all together – systems thinking and sensing for transformation

Readings:
- Scharmer, *The Essentials of Theory U*, Parts II&III
- Begin reading *Sacred Economics* (complete this the following week)
Reflect: Consider where you might want to create well-being within larger systems in the world. Explore where you might start with this. What is the world needing from you here now? To step into this invitation, who are you being? Who are you connecting with? How? Start exploring how Scharmer can help you to discern and clarify for greater leverage.

Class 12: Wednesday, April 15, 2020
Topics: Re-designing Systems for Well-being, measurements and paradigms to support well-being

Readings:
- Eisenstein, Sacred Economics

Recommended:
- Halstead & Cobb, “The Need for New Measurements of Progress”

Class 13: Wednesday, April 22, 2020
Final presentations: Creating well-being: Your journey, discoveries and paths forward

Class 14: Wednesday, April 29, 2020
Final presentations: Creating well-being: Your journey, discoveries and paths forward
Course Wrap-up
Course Evaluations
Assignment: Final papers due by 10am on BBD. Please bring single spaced hard copy to class.

INFORMATION ON ASSIGNMENTS

ASSIGMENTS: GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS
The quality of your work will be evaluated on the following:
- Engagement with the materials and the course, including scope and depth of use of materials and sources
- Depth of reflection, especially self-reflection
- Depth of insight, analysis and understanding
- Clarity and richness of expression
- Demonstration of your personal learning and your effort to stretch yourself beyond previous experiences and underlying assumptions

Please single space all papers, submit by email at least 3 hrs before class begins if due on class days, and please bring hard copies to class (please don't make special trips to drop off hard copies on days we do not have class – emailing by the deadline and bringing hardcopies to the next class period will be fine)

Hygiene factors that are assumed and that will detract from your grade if not fulfilled:
- Writing quality: Your writing should be at a quality appropriate to higher education, so please leave enough time for multiple rounds of editing and crafting, as well as final proof-reading. I recommend the Writing Center for help in taking your writing to the next level. Please proof-read all of your submissions and make liberal use of the Writing Center. I reserve the right to return papers unread if they do not meet appropriate standards of writing and editing quality.
- Citing sources: Be sure to cite all of your sources appropriately. Include a bibliography in your papers. Please read the sections on plagiarism (below and on the GMU website), and if you are at all unclear or uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism please talk with me.
- If you anticipate needing more time for assignments please discuss with me in advance.

Dr. Jessica Srikantia, GOVT 490: Creating Well-being, Spring 2020, p. 6
- Thoughtfulness and engagement: Accurate and thoughtful use of course readings and concepts; conceptual coherence, grounding and clarity of posited relationships; accuracy and relevance of evidence.

ASSIGNMENTS:

“Triggers” paper. Please note: Starting well in advance of the deadline will enable you to spend less direct time for a deeper result, since some of the interim processing can happen subconsciously.

- Using *Conflict without Casualties* (plus any additional resources you wish to use from the course, the program, and/or life), examine your own inner dialogue, emotions, and mood states as you go through your workday, school projects, and/or family encounters. Identify one or two of your “buttons” or “triggers”, note each time they get triggered in a span of a few days.
- In the moment when you get triggered, try to catch yourself as quickly as you can. If the emotion is anger, instead of running on the bridge of anger to the other person, catch yourself and turn around and run towards yourself and you will usually find you have run straight into a wound that you can now begin to heal in yourself (Osho). If the emotion is fear, instead of running away somewhere or freezing, try coming back to yourself and find what your emotions are trying to encourage you to avoid. Spend some time with yourself in those places.
- Look for patterns. Try to identify the narratives in your head about yourself and others that result in the triggers having their emotional charge. Examine the structure of the narrative (eg – is the narrative enacting the drama triangle? Is the narrative structured by Big assumptions?). Once you are aware of the structure and how it operates, just watch yourself reacting without judging yourself or trying to stop the reaction. Just observe. As you observe without judgment, you may find that the part of you that learned that reaction begins to open up to you. As you respond with compassion to this opening, you can learn about your pattern and as you learn about it you have the opportunity to discover when it is no longer necessary in your life to protect you in the way you had needed it when it was first created. If you find yourself judging yourself for what you observe, bring a new level observing to the judgment/emotions and see if you can bring compassion or neutral awareness to the judgments of your judgments.
- Observe over a period of at least 3-4 days. What have you noticed? What did you learn? How do *Conflict without Casualties*, and K&L and NVC, help you to access new possibilities for reclaiming your inner power from outer circumstances and people? What are your special strengths and gifts? How can these provide you with special resilience? What do these strengths make possible during challenging contexts and ‘trigger’ moments? What happens when you adopt an internal locus of control for your feelings and reactions vs putting those outside? “Happiness doesn’t come to you, it comes from you.”
- Write your reflections in 1-2 single spaced pages.

**From Drama to Compassion** – using Regier’s *Conflict without Casualties*, first identify an area where you find yourself participating in a drama triangle. Observe those dynamics for a couple of days without trying to change anything or do anything differently other than becoming aware of your thoughts, feelings, actions, etc and what you are perceiving about others (remember to separate observations and evaluations!). Then, for a day or two, add to the pure observations an awareness of the distinctions in the Regier book. Finally, review the Compassion Cycle and experiment with embodying and enacting it when and as possible. Write up your insights/discoveries and the data/observations these are based on. If your interests lie in particular areas of scholarship or professions, feel free to apply this wherever you participate in those systems.

**OPTIONS FOR PAPER #3:**

*Dr. Jessica Srikantia, GOVT 490: Creating Well-being, Spring 2020, p. 7*
**Option A: Concepts check:** Articulating and applying key concepts from the course and each reading, making explicit use of these readings. NOTE: For full credit, you must make substantive use of at least 3 books... 2 single spaced pages.

**Option B: Connect readings and materials to real world issues that intrigue you** (can be related to your major, doesn’t have to be). Note: for full credit, you must make substantive use of at least 3 books. 2-3 single spaced pages

**Option C: ETHNOGRAPHIC SELF-REFLECTION: Turning the lens on ourselves**

Please take 1-2 single spaced page(s) to write up your reflections on the following reflective and experiential exercise:

When anthropologists research cultures, they often study people and socio-cultural systems that they experience as ‘other’ or ‘foreign’. The anthropologist stands outside of and reports on many of the foundational assumptions and norms that insiders take for granted, and that often underlie the relatively smooth functioning of a group’s relationships and systems. To an insider, these norms, ways of being, and ways of doing may be so taken-for-granted that they are not even seen or, when seen, are believed to be ‘obviously’ just the way things are or should be. The anthropologist interrogates and interprets the group’s norms and ways of being and doing. For the anthropologist, these ways of life are not self-evident truths but rather one among many possible ways of being in the world. When we apply the anthropological stance to others, it’s easy to see their taken-for-granted assumptions that conflict with our own taken-for-granted assumptions, but we risk merely projecting our own unexamined values and assumptions onto them, and entirely failing to see or understand their realities (though we may think we do). When we anthropologize ourselves, we are so embedded within our own perspective that we risk missing our own assumptions. However, when we anthropologize ourselves and do it well, this is akin to the fish seeing the water, or the birds feeling the air, to use a few hackneyed metaphors. As Raza Mir has pointed out, we usually ‘theorize’ ourselves and ‘anthropologize’ others, whereas it’s often much more important and insightful to do the reverse. In this assignment, we will practice anthropologizing ourselves.

The purpose of this assignment is to awaken the anthropologist’s stance within you and to direct it towards your own ‘being’ and how you ‘show up’ both within yourself and in relationship. Rather than being the unobserved observer, for this part of the assignment try noticing and witnessing yourself at various times as you go through your week. Start witnessing your own thoughts, feelings and reactions as if you were an observer looking at them (without judgment). You might trigger the act of witnessing throughout the week in response to repeated events. For example, you might decide to start witnessing yourself every time you get angry, or every time you feel insecure, or every time you initiate a particular kind of interaction with someone. Or, you might witness yourself every time you go into a store. Or you might set an alarm for random points in the day and witness yourself at those moments. Be sure that your periods of witnessing last long enough – at least 5 minutes each time.

*When you witness, examine what is going on inside yourself -- what thoughts and feelings? – as well as how your ‘being’ is configured at that moment.*

For example, what is the inner dialogue going on at that moment? What is the hidden iceberg of meanings and interpretations and paradigms to which it is connected? What do the inner dialogue or emotions or experiences reveal to you about the stories you are telling yourself about yourself and others and your relationships?

*Can you identify patterns such as different ‘ego states’ active at different times – the ‘inner critic’, the ‘responsible team member’, the ‘good/obedient child’, etc.....? What are the unspoken assumptions held by each ego state about you, about others, about what is good/bad, right/wrong, acceptable/unacceptable, etc? What does each one drive you to do and not to do, in what ways does it seem advantageous and in what ways does it limit or create difficulties for you? Are there any abiding assumptions you carry about yourself that shape how you show up regardless of which ego state is dominant at any given moment? What are these assumptions or stories you tell about yourself? About others? How do they shape your*

Dr. Jessica Srikantia, GOVT 490: Creating Well-being, Spring 2020, p. 8
experiences, what you notice or do not notice, what you take in more easily vs less easily from others, yourself, the world, etc.

If you are with others (or dialoging in your head about others), where are you standing (metaphorically) in relation to the people you’re interacting with? Are you standing on the same side as the person you’re talking to or on the opposite side or are you absent/disconnected? Are you standing in ‘being right and making others wrong’? Are you standing in competition, alienation, love, resentment, insecurity, superiority, reverence or interconnectedness? Notice where you’re standing each time you pull yourself out of the state of the well-oiled machine to view your life, culture and context from somewhere else. What are you standing in and who are you ‘being’ and what are your thoughts and feelings as you observe yourself, and as you observe yourself reacting to your environment?

When you notice where you are standing with regard to others and yourself, are you able to observe it without judging yourself either positively or negatively, but as an unattached witness observing yourself from a distance? If you find you are judging yourself, can you witness the judgment and the judge from the vantage point of an unattached observer? What if any effects do you notice as a result of neutrally observing your thoughts and feelings (and neutrally observing your judgments if you experience these too)?

Examine wherever you seem to be standing, and any judgments you have about it, from a place beyond the judgment. What are the assumptions underneath the stance, and/or underneath any judgments about it? What are the stories you are telling yourself about the interaction, yourself, the other? What ego states are present? What childhood or other foundational experiences do these stories connect to? Once you have explored your own ‘being’ and the ‘lenses’ you are wearing from that place, try to see if you can ‘shift’ to a different place, if you would like to do so. For example, what happens if you are on the opposite side or are disconnected, and you choose to switch and stand on their side? Sometimes this happens when we feel and listen to our own heart.

If you feel you would like to shift your narratives about self and/or others, try this on and again observe.

Witness your own feelings and thoughts in response to the act of witnessing and the exercise itself.

A. Experiential component. Go through several such anthropologizing periods. Feel free to engage the experience in whatever ways work best for you (and to experiment).

B. Notes on experience. As soon as possible after each experience, take notes so you have the richness of the experience available when you write it up. Each time, you might jot down notes at two levels:

1. The concrete level of description:
   - What were your thoughts and feelings through the period you were witnessing them? What was the experience of witnessing itself like for you? What was happening outside you when you began to witness your thoughts/feelings? How was your ‘being’ oriented towards yourself and/or towards others (on the same side, opposite side, not on sides, standing in alienation, anger, caring, fragmented and standing in contradictory orientations, etc.)?

2. The meta-level of description
   - Where are you’re standing when you are anthropologizing? What patterns do you see? Are you able to identify particular recurrent ego states and characterize them in ways that help you to identify, befriend, and be with them in new ways (again, without judgment – the judgment can be its own ego state to be examined without judgment, and befriended)? Do your feelings towards others and yourself undergo any changes as you start to witness? What is your orientation to the act of witnessing itself (skepticism, adventure, apprehension, etc.) and how might that impact your experience of the exercise? What is your orientation towards the act and object(s) of your inquiry (wonder, analysis, superiority, etc – note that these are not mutually exclusive). If you feel judgment, are you able to step back to a place of observing the judgment without judging it or you or anyone else? When
you do so, how does that change your experience of the judgment and of what was being judged?

C. Reflections on experience. In preparing to write your paper, review your notes and reflect on your experiences. Did any moments or experiences stand out for you? When you look across your experiential periods, what patterns and/or changes do you notice? For example, do you notice any relationships between where you’re standing and what you see or experience from there? Any changes in yourself or your awareness? Etc. What was it like to anthropologize yourself and your interactions? Did you start seeing or experiencing or valuing in any new ways? Did this create new capacities and/or open up new options or opportunities for you?

- How can NVC provide added perspective and insight to your reflections? For example, in your reflections on your experience, remember to:
  a. Separate observation from evaluation
  b. Identify your feelings (vs your beliefs and judgments), as well as your needs
  c. Listen to others not for what they believe about you or the particular tone/emotion through which they express, but listen instead for their deeper needs and feelings. Listen from your heart – not the part of the heart that is connected to the head/beliefs (pseudo-feelings words), but the heart that truly feels (genuine feeling words) and is connected to the whole. Remember that no one can make you feel anything….that part is your choice based on your own connection of needs-feelings-beliefs.
  d. If you notice judgments of yourself or others, can you identify an unmet need and feeling-belief system combination for you that may be underneath that judgment? Remember K&L complaint to commitment language – this can also be applied to shift judgments to connection. If you'd like (not required), you might look at the NVC chapters on listening compassionately to yourself and to others.

D. Write-up. Please write up your experiences and reflections in 1-2 single spaced pages. Think through the following questions, and then design the pages in accordance with your own voice and creativity and sense-making (please do not mechanically paint by the numbers).

1. What were some key aspects and moments of your experiences, observations and reflections from the anthropological ‘field work’?
2. Reflect on these experiences and any patterns you excavated
3. Consider how if at all your experience or awareness has changed as a result of this experience and exercise.
4. If you notice yourself judging yourself for any aspect of what you are observing, can you bring awareness to the judgment that is not itself just another judgment? What does that look like, feel like, sound like, smell like, etc.? What does this make possible?
5. Consider how you felt about doing the exercise, both while you were doing it and after the fact. What if any considerations did the experience raise for you about doing this kind of research in contexts in which the culture/group is assumed and experienced from the start to be ‘other’ or ‘foreign’?

Final Synthesis Paper: Creating well-being, Details to be discussed in class. 3-4 single spaced pages (20%). Note: For full credit you must make substantive use of at least 4 books and at least 1 article from the course.

Final presentations – May cover the same ground as your final synthesis paper, or may describe your wellbeing journey or a well-being practice, resource or topic of your choice: 10%
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

GMU Writing Center. I would encourage you to make use of the GMU Writing Center while you're here (regardless of how well you write), since getting feedback on writing is often a great learning opportunity and one that's harder to come by once you leave school. The writing center info can be found online at http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/. For updated information please check for their hours on their website.

New Voices in Public Policy is a journal designed to disseminate student work in SPGIA to a broader audience. It is reviewed by a combined panel of students and faculty. You may self-submit online at: http://journals.gmu.edu/index.php/newvoices. If you would like me to consider nominating your course paper for publication in New Voices in Public Policy you may let me know.

SPECIAL NEEDS: If you are a student with special needs that require academic accommodations, please see me and contact Disability Services at 993-2474 or www.ds.gmu.edu as early as possible. All academic accommodations must be arranged through Disability Services and must be prospective rather than retrospective.

Class Meetings and Missed Classes. If you find you have to miss class, please communicate with me immediately. Please see the missed class policy above. Missing more than two classes during the semester will lower your grade by 1/3 for each missed class after the first two, except under exceptional circumstances, in which case you will need to complete additional assignments designed to help you assimilate the information and classroom experiences you have missed. Missing substantial portions of two classes counts as one missed class (arriving very late or leaving substantively early). I am willing to work with you through difficult situations, especially when you can alert me in advance or as soon as possible, to make it possible to complete the course successfully.

Honor Code: GMU has an honor code and all students are required to know and abide by it. The information is located at: http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/

PLAGIARISM: All submitted work must be your own, and it is imperative that you accurately cite all sources in your work.

- GMU has an official university policy on plagiarism that can be found at: http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/
- Please note that violations of plagiarism policies can result in expulsion from the university.
- Note that ignorance of the policies is not a defense, so please familiarize yourself with what plagiarism is and how to ensure that you don’t commit it. If you have any questions about what constitutes the appropriate use and citation of sources, please talk with me.
- To quote from GMU’s policy as emailed to me on 3/20/08 by the SPP office:

  “The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the School of Public Policy. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable.

  “Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

  Dr. Jessica Srikantia, GOVT 490: Creating Well-being, Spring 2020, p. 11
“Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

“The faculty of the School of Public Policy takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F.” This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (e.g. F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

“To help enforce the SPP policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The SPP policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.”

Note that most cases of plagiarism are unintentional, but are plagiarism nonetheless and carry all the consequences. Here are a few tips to help you avoid making such a serious mistake:

- As a rough guide, if you use three or more consecutive words from a source, use direct quotation marks around the text and cite it (see a style manual for citation guidelines). Direct quotations must be enclosed in quotation marks, with references to the corresponding source and page number(s). Images, data and charts must also be cited and referenced.
- If you use ideas, data, or other material from a source but put it in your own words (paraphrasing), then you must reference the source materials with in-text citations.
- All direct quotations and all paraphrased ideas and data need to be cited in the text where they appear (can be with footnotes, endnotes, or in-text parentheses depending on your manual of style), with a bibliographic entry at the end.
- These requirements apply to all forms of submission or presentations (including oral presentations), and all kinds of sources, including material drawn from the internet.
- IN YOUR NOTES AND ALL WRITING/PRESENTATIONS, to protect yourself from unintentional plagiarism, ALWAYS 1) take the time when copying notes to put quotation marks around direct quotations (and then copy the quoted material accurately – you can use ellipses (…) to skip parts of the quotation and brackets ([ ])) to change specific words such as replacing “He” with “[The informant]” to clarify references, etc.; 2) clearly distinguish direct quotations from paraphrases in your notes so that it’s clear what is your language and what isn’t; 3) clearly distinguish paraphrases of others’ ideas and data from your own original ideas and data so it’s clear in your notes what are your original ideas and what is drawn from others – this is easy to forget over time.
- In sum, always make clear which language and ideas come from which sources, vs. which are your own original ideas, & cite all direct quotations & all paraphrases clearly, fully & appropriately.