Course Description

According to many surveys such as the World Happiness report 2017, Scandinavians are among the happiest people in the world. They pay almost 50% in tax, yet, despite these comparatively high taxes, free educations and free health and many other benefits are provided by the state. The course is focusing upon sociological methodology, what we can measure, how we can do it and what we can extract from our findings. By doing so, this course looks at the unique circumstances of the Scandinavian nations, their recorded levels of happiness, how happiness is measured, and what are the determining cultural, social, economic, and political factors driving a population's happiness. The course will analyse and contrast Scandinavian countries welfare systems, as they all provide a comparatively very high degree of social security, excellent education systems, and healthy populations. The course will also examine circumstances beyond the social welfare state, and review the relationship between productivity and happiness levels.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Critically analyse Scandinavian happiness as a cultural phenomenon
- Critically analyse Scandinavian happiness as socio-economic and political phenomenon
- Review and question the metrics and methods used to measure happiness
- Examine data from qualitative and quantitative sources to present a holistic view of Scandinavian happiness
- Examine the Scandinavian welfare systems and the correlation of state social security and measurements of happiness

Course Prerequisites

Students should have completed a course in the social sciences or humanities prior to taking this course.

Methods of Instruction

Learning will involve in-class exercises, active reflection, discussion, readings, short lectures, and out-of-class activities that help you engage in the local culture on a deeper level.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Group Reflection Presentation 15%
2. Journal 15%
3. Mid-Term Exam 20%
4. Essay 15%
5. Final Project 15%
6. Class Participation 20%
TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

Group Reflection Presentation

Students will have to make a 15 minute group presentation on happiness, which will be presented to the rest of
This presentation will outline a mini-ethnography of the students’ encounters with Scandinavian Happiness.

**Journal**

The students will have to submit three reflective learning journals, each 500 words and each counting 5%. The hand-in’s must show evidence of reading from the course and experiences from co-curricular activities.

**Mid-Term Exam**

Students will complete an essay based mid-term exam, addressing questions within two hours. These will be focused on analysing or contrasting societal issues in Scandinavian happiness based on lectures, class discussions, co-curricular activities, and guest lectures. Students will answer three essay format questions through the Canvas LMS during this session. The exam will be Open Book format, and students are expected to present clear, concise arguments in addressing the questions (as distinct from reciting information).

**Essay**

Students will submit a 1500 word essay examining the definition of happiness, and the reliability of quantitative approaches to measuring happiness in a society. The essay should include an analysis of public statistics and contrast these to other societies.

**Final Project**

Students will end the course with a presentation of what they have learned during the course and what they will take home and change in their own lives. The presentation should incorporate multimedia, and should answer questions based on the things students have learned during the course. What defines happiness on the personal and societal level, how can happiness change, what are the most important factors for a high level of happiness etc.

**Participation**

Participation is defined as meaningful contribution in the digital classroom, using the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to prepare in advance of each recorded session and regularly engage with the resources, discussions, reflective assignments, and all other online learning activities. Students are required to demonstrate engagement with course materials, for example, through insightful, constructive comments and by using subject-appropriate terminology in: online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after viewing the presentations of others), interaction with guest speakers, where available, and submissions related to other outside-of-class activities. Students should ensure that submitted commentary balances opinions, general impressions, and specific and thoughtful criticisms or contributions. Grades are based on the content, depth, and quality of the aforementioned types of meaningful contributions as measured per the Participation grading rubric in Canvas.

Students are also expected to use the Canvas inbox for communicating any clarifying questions they may want to ask about assessments or other course requirements.

**Technology Requirements**

Participation requires access to a computer with microphone (a headset and microphone are preferred over built-in sound devices) and webcam; a stable and strong internet connection; and a quiet and well-lit environment.

**Attendance**

**Expectations**: In an asynchronous online learning format, attendance takes the form of active student engagement:

- in instructional activities, course content, course tools
- with the course instructor, other students, and
- by timely completion of all assessments.

“Attendance” is more than just logging into the course on Canvas. Students must establish a record of participation in academically related activities in order to comply with this requirement.

Academically related activities include, but are not limited to:
submitting an academic assignment;
• taking an exam or quiz;
• attending a study group that is assigned by the instructor;
• participating in an online discussion about academic matters, designed by the instructor; or
• initiating contact in Canvas with the instructor to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.

Academically related activities do NOT include activities where a student may be present, but not academically engaged, such as:

• logging into an online class without active participation
• contributing to or engaging in the CIEE Orientation or Community Course(s)

First Week of Class: Online courses officially commence on the first day of the term. Students must demonstrate engagement in class by no later than day 5 of the term, or risk being administratively dropped from the course with no opportunity to re-enroll. Students administratively dropped from the course for failure to engage will be considered withdrawn from the program and subject to CIEE financial withdrawal policies and fees.

Duration of Course: Continued, regular class engagement is required throughout the scheduled duration of the course, and disengagement will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for completing courses online, consistent failure to engage in the course on a weekly basis (defined as failing to engage for two or more weeks of online learning) will result in a formal written warning from the CIEE Center Director.

CIEE instructors / staff will monitor student engagement on a weekly basis.

The weekly schedule below outlines due dates for asynchronous learning activities for this course.

N.B. Please note the class schedule is subject to change if opportunities arise to enhance the curriculum.

Weekly Schedule
Week 1
Class: 1.1 Introduction to Happiness

Introducing the students to the Danish way of teaching and the course in general. Talking about expectations for the course and what we are to cover. What was surprising in the readings for today? Meik Wiking will give an introduction to happiness research. Isabella Arendt will teach about the benefits from subjective well-being.

Readings:
De Neve, 2013, Objective benefits from subjective well-being (20) (Canvas)

Class: 1.2 Methods of Measuring Subjective Well-being,

What methods are used to measure subjective well-being and why. This class will provide the student’s with knowledge about survey methods, and critical discussions about their results. We will watch the “Ted Talk: The Dark Side of Happiness” together in class.

Readings:
ourworldindata.org Go to the website and look around under the section of “Life Satisfaction”. What is interesting? What is surprising? Write down thoughts, explanations and questions for class.
Week 2
Class:  2.1 Rethinking Progress and Inequality
       guest teacher Michael Birkjær
Class:  2.2 Health and Happiness,
       guest teacher Michael Birkjær
Reading:
Week 3

Class: 3.1 Social Relations

Social relations are among the most important factors for happiness. The class will also have time to talk about this in groups and wonder why it is important, and reflect on their own life and community. We will learn about the impact of medias and social media on happiness. At the end of class, you will be introduced to Night Light Café, which is a chance to go out a “field-trip”.

Readings:


Wiking et al, 2015, The Facebook Experiment 2015, The Happiness Research Institute (17) (Canvas)

- Group Reflection Presentation

Class: 3.2 Happiness and Human Rights

Human Rights and the life in freedom is important for happiness. We will look at Denmark as a case, learn about the civic society, Danish history and culture and the universal welfare state.

Readings:

Wiking et al, 2014: Happy Danes: exploring the reasons behind the high levels of happiness in Denmark, Happiness Research Institute (64) (Canvas)

OECD Better Life Index: http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org

Look at the index and write down thoughts, explanations, wonderings and questions for class.


Class: 3.3 The Latin American Case

Why are Latin American people happier than the GDP predict? The Latin American countries are a special case, when it comes to understanding the relationship between kognitive and affective happiness.

Readings:


- Mid-Term Exam

Week 4

Class: 4.1 Happiness at Work part 1

Theory about policies in the workplace. What is job satisfaction, which factors contribute to high job satisfaction in Denmark. This week, students will learn about correlations between job satisfaction and firm value.
Class: 4.2 Happiness at Work part 2, Isabella Arendt

Theory about policies in the workplace. What is job satisfaction, which factors contribute to high job satisfaction in Denmark. This week, students will learn about correlations between job satisfaction and firm value.

Readings:

Edmans, Alex, 2012, The Link Between Job Satisfaction and Firm Value, With Implications for Corporate Social Responsibility (20) (Canvas)


Week 5

Class: 5.1 Community and generosity

Communities are an important part of building good foundations for happiness. The students will learn about communities in Denmark and around the world and the importance of trust and generosity.

Readings:


Ford et al, 2015, Culture Shapes Whether the Pursuit of Happiness Predicts Higher or Lower Well-Being, American Psychological Association p. 1053-1062 (9) (Canvas)

• Essay Due

Class: 5.2 Happiness and Migration

Theory about happiness in cities and city designs. This should lead to an observational study of Copenhagen and small presentations in groups about the student’s findings. How does city design affect happiness? How do people use public spaces, and how does this affect their sense of happiness.

Readings:


Hendriks et al, 2018, Do International Migrants Increase Their Happiness and That of Their Families by Migration?, World Happiness Report 2018, p. 45-67 (22) (Canvas)

Class: 5.3 Happiness and Income

Theory about the connection between happiness and income, spending and money. Are rich people more happy? Most Scandinavians pay almost 50% in tax. In return they get free education and
Is this connected to the happiness?

Readings:
De Neve et al, 2012, Estimating the influence of life satisfaction and positive affects on later income using sibling fixed effects, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, p. 19953-19958 (5) (Canvas)

**Week 6**

**Class: 6.1 Happiness and Money**
The students will learn how money and happiness are related and work together.

Readings:
Michael Norton, How to Buy Happiness, Ted Talk.
Matz, Sandra C. m.fl, 2016, Money Buys Happiness When Spending Fits Our Personality, Psychological Science, Vol. 27(5), pp. 715-725 (10) (Canvas)
Aknin, Lara B. m.fl, 2011, It’s the Recipient That Counts: Spending Money on Strong Social Ties Leads to Greater Happiness than Spending on Weak Social Ties, Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, pp. 1-3 (3) (Canvas)
Dunn, Elizabeth S. m.fl, 2011, If Money Doesn’t Make You Happy Then You Probably Aren’t Spending It Right, Journal of Consumer Psychology Vol. 21(2) pp. 115-125 (10) (Canvas)

**Class: 6.2 Final Project Presentations**

**Course Materials**

**Readings**
Aknin, Lara B. m.fl, 2011, It’s the Recipient That Counts: Spending Money on Strong Social Ties Leads to Greater Happiness than Spending on Weak Social Ties, Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, pp. 1-3 (3) (Canvas)
De Neve et al, 2012, Estimating the influence of life satisfaction and positive affects on later income using sibling fixed effects, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, p. 19953-19958 (5) (Canvas)
De Neve, 2013, Objective benefits from subjective well-being (20) (Canvas)
Dunn, Elizabeth S. m.fl, 2011, If Money Doesn’t Make You Happy Then You Probably Aren’t Spending It Right, Journal of Consumer Psychology Vol. 21(2) pp. 115-125 (10) (Canvas)


Edmans, Alex, 2012, The Link Between Job Satisfaction and Firm Value, With Implications for Corporate Social Responsibility (20) (Canvas)

Ford et al, 2015, Culture Shapes Whether the Pursuit of Happiness Predicts Higher or Lower Well-Being, American Psychological Association p. 1053-1062 (9) (Canvas)


Hendriks et al, 2018, Do International Migrants Increase Their Happiness and That of Their Families by Migration?, World Happiness Report 2018, p. 45-67 (22) (Canvas)

Matz, Sandra C. m.fl, 2016, Money Buys Happiness When Spending Fits Our Personality, Psychological Science, Vol. 27(5), pp. 715-725 (10) (Canvas)


Wiking et al, 2014: Happy Danes: exploring the reasons behind the high levels of happiness in Denmark, Happiness Research Institute (64) (Canvas)

Wiking et al, 2015, The Facebook Experiment 2015, The Happiness Research Institute (17) (Canvas)

Wiking et al, 2017, Job Satisfaction Index 2017: Together we push the limits for job satisfaction in Denmark, Krifa (35) (Canvas)


Online Resources

Michael Norton, How to Buy Happiness, Ted Talk.


Look at the index and write down thoughts, explanations, wonderings and questions for class.

ourworldindata.org Go to the website and look around under the section of “Life Satisfaction”. What is interesting? What is surprising? Write down thoughts, explanations and questions for class.

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