

# happiness [hap-ee-nis] noun

1. the mental state of well being characterized by positive emotions from contentment to intense joy.
2. good fortune; pleasure.

## 2013-2014 ACADEMIC THEME: HAPPINESS

From the beginning of time, humankind has wrestled with how to define and achieve **happiness**. The world's great narratives inevitably speak to its appeal and importance, whether they are mythological, scriptural, literary, poetic, philosophical or scientific. In one way or another, the idea of **happiness** seems to be at the heart of the world's great religions and philosophies, both past and present. The question of its essence and acquisition informs our various social, political, and economic discourses and practices.

It's the motivation for war and peace, love and hate, justice and injustice, virtue and vice. All inquiry and knowledge aims at it while all science and technology seek to deliver it. Its ubiquity seems obvious, as it's found in hearth and home, church and community, work and play, art and entertainment, and every form of popular culture, whether shallow or deep, sacred or profane.

Yet, from ancient Sufism and Buddhist teachings to Greek philosophers and contemporary **happiness** gurus, **happiness** is as widely purveyed as it is elusive. Although everything we do seems to be geared toward it, it somehow seems transitory and illusory. Everyone seems to have something to say about it, yet when asked what it is they can't quite explain it – although they claim to know it when they see it.

So, we ask, as a community of seekers and finders, thinkers and believers: What is **happiness**? What is its nature, meaning, purpose? How is it created, found, and kept? How is it lost, stolen, or forgotten? How is it expressed, transmitted, and shared? What is its relation to reason and faith, science and technology? What are its sources and how has it changed through time? What about its past, present, and future?

President Thomas Gamble, the Office of Academic Affairs, Campus Ministry and the Institute for Arts & Culture invite the students, faculty, staff and administration of Mercyhurst University to explore the many different aspects of **happiness** and participate in our 2013-2014 academic theme. Certainly, there are as many important insights to share regarding **happiness** as there are departments and programs at the institution.

Begin to plan today! Make the 2013-2014 academic year the **Year of Happiness!**

### HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN:

Academic Enrichment grants • Diversity grants • service learning • guest speakers • *LUMEN* • departmental symposia • essay contests • Literary Festival • film series • blogs • dance • education • documentaries • music • economics • book clubs • art shows • One Book Program • Campus Ministry • IDST • student presentations • Honors Program • recitals • mission & core values • social science • Public Health • RIAP • MSG • retreat • coffeehouse • Facebook • theater • faculty symposia • psychology • food • politics • volunteerism • course syllabi • J-Term • alumni • Evelyn Lincoln Institute for Ethics & Society • religious studies • sustainability • RSCOs • And more...

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