

## Session 4: Well-being and public health Mindfulness Educational benefits

L4 Positive psychology  
Steve Draper

6 Feb 2014

<http://www.psy.gla.ac.uk/~steve/courses/posl4.html> 1

## Part A: Admin / homework

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### New exercise to complete by next time

You each have to critique another group's wiki.

There are 2 handouts now on the main course page for this:

- New list of students and groups, including which target wiki you have been allocated to critique
- Description of the exercise

You can inspect a copy of this during the break if you can't wait.

There is on the Moodle page a new forum just for receiving and holding the critiques as they come in.

### Posting to your own group's private forum

I appreciate that more likely than not you have found another way to communicate within your group.

However things posted to moodle are in the permanent record and help me to run the class.

Therefore please make sure that by the end of the course your group has posted to their private forum, separately or jointly:

- Your conclusions about wiki format from the first critiquing exercise (on wikis from past years)
- A statement (or separate personal statements) about the division of labour within your group.

### Homework for next time

Next time I'll be addressing exam essays for this course, and overviewing the course.

In preparation, try to read all the 12 wikis from the 2009 course, and the 9 from this course: enough to be able to say 2 keen sentences about each topic.

#### Homework:

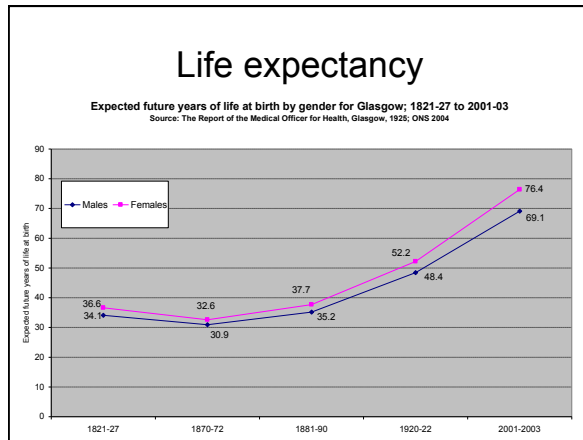
1. Read the wikis so you have an idea about the whole contents of the area this course addresses.
2. Do and submit the wiki critique you have been allocated, as described in the handout.

### Notes to Steve on the wiki critiquing

- See handout(s)
- Not so much being right as interesting and helpful
- Brief critique is OK
- Managing the timing, adjusting it
- Forums (wiki collection one): "subscribe" means get email reminders. You can turn this on and off for yourselves in the forum.
- Getting a single daily digest by email:
  - Go to Profile, Edit profile, Show Advanced, "Email digest type"
- Getting the email address of other students on the course:
  - Go to "Participants", User list "More detailed", click on email OR copy/paste it into your preferred email agent

**Part B:  
Phil Hanlon on public health and well-being / PosPsy**

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### The first wave of public health

1830 – 1900 – classical public health interventions (water and sanitation), emerging civil and social order. Bottom up and top down working together.

### What caused improvement in the second wave?

1890 – 1950 – scientific rationalism provides breakthroughs in many fields including manufacturing, medicine, engineering, transport, communications

### What caused the improvement in the third wave?

1940 – 1980 – the welfare state and the post-war consensus saw the emergence of the National Health Service, social security, social housing and universal education.

### What caused the improvement in the Fourth wave?

1960 – 2010 – Effective health care interventions further prolong life and risk factors and life style become a central concern of public health.

### What could cause a fifth wave?

Can we hope for further increases in health and longevity?

The problems:

Obesity, diabetes, alcohol related deaths, ....

Inequalities that might give clues:

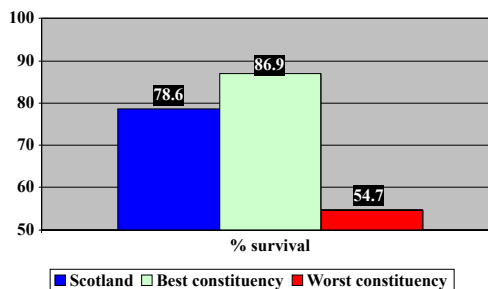
Differences amongst areas in one country (Scotland) [postcodes]

Differences between genders?

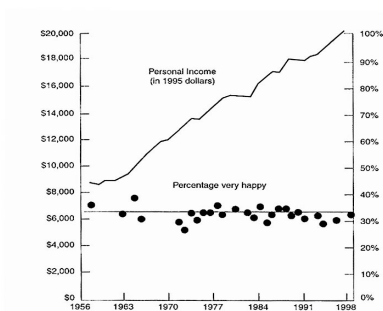
Differences between countries. Culture?

### Percentage of 15 year-old males surviving until 65

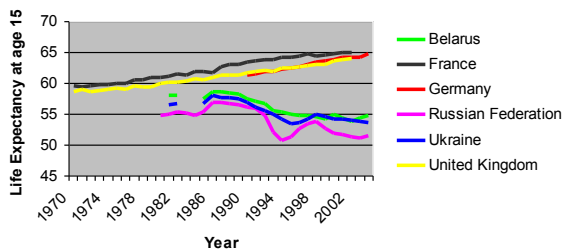
Year: 2001; Source: GRO(S); NHS Health Scotland



### Life satisfaction and personal income



### The Effect of Economic Recession on Life Expectancy



Source: Adapted from WHO health for all database [Available at <http://www.euro.who.int/hfidb/>].

### Cause of poor health in Glasgow?

It's not wealth but it might be the culture.

"The Tears that Made the Clyde: Well-being in Glasgow" (2010)  
- Carol Craig's book on Glasgow

### Part C2: Some slides from a talk by Phil Hanlon

**AFTERNOW**  
What's next for the health of society?

**Website Resources:**

- Videos
- Podcasts
- Papers

www.afternow.co.uk

University of Glasgow

**It's the culture – stupid!  
With apologies to Bill Clinton**

University of Glasgow

Andrew

Jean

Jade and

University of Glasgow

**The Iron Cage of Consumerism**

“People live in their own bubble, getting in their own car to drive to work, staying in their own home. Community spirit has gone and this compounds the issue. We're all in debt. You're stressed, you go to work, you go home. You sit in front of the TV. There's no family dinner, no time to talk problems through, sort things out. You're just working to afford that TV. There's no time for your children when you come home at night. No time to talk.”

(Prisoner group)

University of Glasgow

**Education as a consumer product**

“People everywhere live busy, consumer-driven lives. Their energies are devoted to money, mortgages and there's no time for emotional energy. Parents round here want to be something, they're conscious of material wealth and income and have worked hard to get here. They have more stuff, cars, washing machines – but they're still dreadfully poor, because it's relative. They know that educational qualifications are what allow you to make that step up so they push for results. They can't afford to pay the fees but they want to treat us as a private school! Their children are the same. It's very much 'I want to be a lawyer, doctor or dentist'. They're very materially focused.”

(Headteacher)

University of Glasgow

**Spiritual value or exploitation through fear**

“Our focus needs to go down to the spiritual, to the value and worth of a human being. Virtually nothing in society promotes that. We are exploitable because we are fearful. If you live in a society that's been founded on exploitation of the masses, how are you going to de-condition them? How do you make people feel more confident in themselves?”

“We're **all** trapped in the cycle of consumerism. And powerful groups can't be expected to support anything that will counter techniques for maintaining social dominance.”

University of Glasgow

### Modernity is in crisis

Materialism Individualism  
Consumerism

Economism  
Belief in progress??  
?  
Belief in growth???

Dis-eases of modernity

University of Glasgow

### Modernity is coming to an end – a change of age

Materialism Individualism  
Consumerism

Sustainability

Dis-eases of modernity

University of Glasgow

### Plato's idea

The "True" Science

The "Beautiful" Art

The "Good" Morals

University of Glasgow

### Integral Living

True Scientific

Life integrates the true, the good, the beautiful

Beautiful Aesthetic

Good Ethical

University of Glasgow

### Integral Public Health

True Scientific

Integral Public Health

Beautiful Aesthetic

Good Ethical

University of Glasgow

### Integral Public Health

Conventional Science

Ecological Science

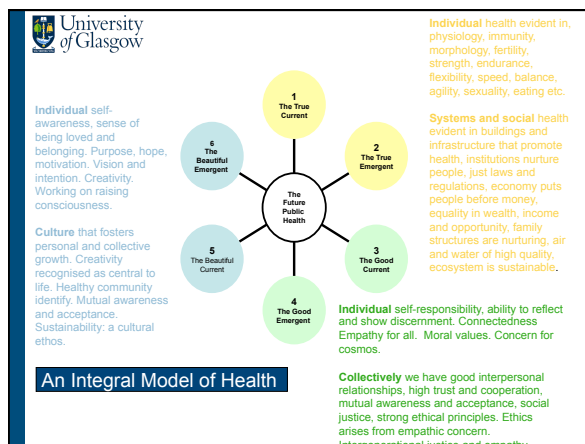
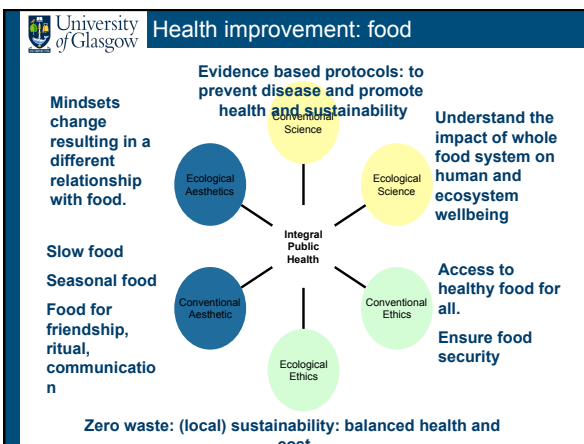
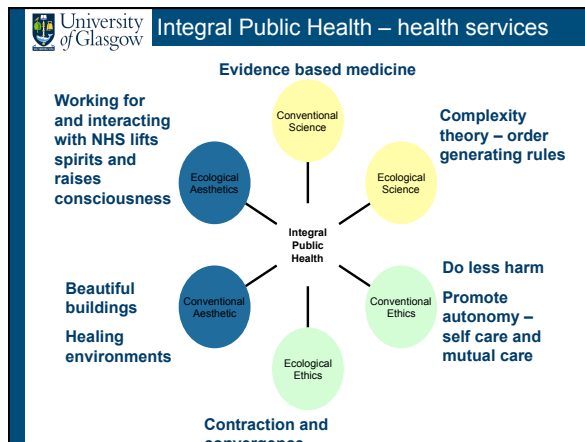
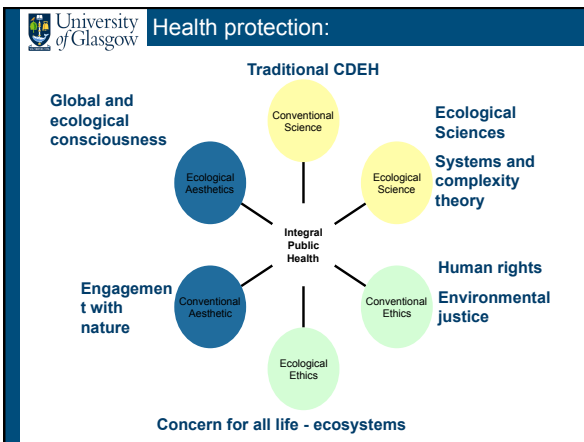
Ecological Aesthetics

Conventional Aesthetic

Ecological Ethics

Conventional Ethics

Integral Public Health



**AFTERNOW**

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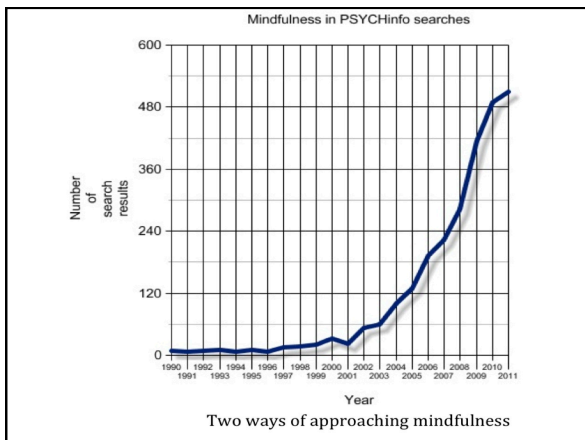
www.afternow.co.uk

**Part B:**

**Mindfulness training**

(Audience talks and discussion)

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### Mindfulness

Two ways of approaching mindfulness

The scientific	The poetic
Western academic	The way people usually learn mindfulness
objective	subjective
modern empirical methods	experiential
the aim is to understand how mindfulness works at various levels.	the aim is to practise mindfulness.

### Experimental

MBSR - Mindfulness-based stress reduction  
MBCT - Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy

Baer (2003)	Grossman et al. (2004)	Piet & Houtgaard (2011)
21 mindfulness studies	20 studies of MBSR	6 Randomized controlled trials of MBCT
Over 1,200 participants	Over 1,600 participants	593 participants
post-treatment: (Cohen's d = .74) up to three years follow-up: (Cohen's d = .59)	MBSR displayed a "consistent and relatively strong level of effect sizes" (p.39)	Reduced the rate of relapse of major depression by 34% from 50% to 38%.
wide range of outcomes including physical pain, depression, and stress	wide range of outcomes including depression, anxiety and quality of life.	major depression

How does mindfulness work?

1. reduction in negative thoughts and emotions
2. enhancement of positive emotions
3. improvements in self-control

## Part C: Mindfulness: other meanings

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### Various meanings of "mindful"

*[derived from a talk / paper? by Yvonne Rogers]*

Listening to what students said about mindfulness as well, there really seem to be two aspects to its benefits.

A) To do with achieving better control of one's Attention (and monitoring).  
N.B. flow is the sweet spot where your attention is filled, but not over-filled. Where you are mindful but only for the present moment.

B) Reflection: processing events and issues:  
(adequate rational attention and processing; the C in CBT?)  
N.B. Personal sensors can allow you to be mindful of things you otherwise can't really see [e.g. of electricity consumption]

### Mindfulness as processing, or prayer

What is mindfulness meditation really? Underneath, is the issue one of coming to process all outstanding issues in your life, so that you have some settled view of them (rather than them causing anxiety by remaining important but unattended to?)

Meditation  
Contemplation  
The examined life  
"An unexamined life is not worth living" Plato's *Apology*, attributed to Socrates)  
Prayer (Sister Wendy Beckett)  
Reflection  
Thinking  
Seligman's ABCDE Learned Optimism exercise

## Part D: Educational benefits of Mindfulness

Siobhan Lynch (@KCL)

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## Education and mindfulness

As mentioned earlier, mindfulness training (MT) has become strongly established in the academic literature in the last 20 years.

Many studies show benefits in clinical populations; others show benefits in subclinical populations.

A review paper (Regehr et al. 2013) shows that mindfulness training reduces anxiety levels in student populations in numerous studies.

No surprise if this were then to raise their learning performance.

## Direct learning benefits of mindfulness

However recently evidence is emerging of more direct benefits than simply reducing clinical problems in HE students.

Mrazek et al. 2013 showed that it increased GRE (graduate record exam) scores of reading comprehension by  $\approx 20\%$ ; And that it did so through improving concentration = reducing "mind wandering". I.e. a kind of anti-ADHD measure.

This suggests that control of attention is the key thing (a key mediating variable in stats/ psych theory parlance).

## Roll out?

So should we be rolling out mindfulness training for all students? (Or if you're a private enterprise type, holding students to ransom and making them take out extra loans for this essential competitive skill)

I hear that the UK school sector is seeing this rolled out. (Michael Bready, who gave a talk on MT to this class two years ago, is now too busy doing this ....)

Siobhan Lynch has done a PhD on this; and is interested in pushing this in HE. I heard her talk last summer (if you can remember that), and I'm keen now.

## Roll out (2)

Can it be done online; or must it be done expensively in dedicated small face to face classes?

Reid. (2013) reports success at this.

Sarah and I hope to collaborate with Siobhan in developing some mixture ....

## Homework reminder

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### Wiki coursework reminder

*Session 3, 30 Jan.*

Get a full draft of your wiki up.

*Session 4, 6 Feb. Today!*

Critique other groups' wikis, give them the feedback receive feedback from others on your own wiki. I'll organise this. But you must have your own wiki complete for this to work.

*Session 5, 13 Feb. Exchange peer critiques.*

Final editing, using the critiques you receive.

*<Freeze wikis>, Thur 20 Feb.*

### Homework for next time

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### A place to stop

<http://www.psy.gla.ac.uk/~steve/courses/posl4.html>

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**xxx**

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