For centuries happiness has occupied a privileged seat at the table of universal values. Happiness is considered a self-evident truth and a basic human desire. As we study the enduring literature of happiness, we will consider three questions: what are the common and unique themes, how can we evaluate them, and what does the pursuit of happiness tell us about American culture?


Three brief papers and a final paper are required. Drafts of papers will be submitted for review and re-writing. The class is a seminar, and discussion is essential. Students will present group research.