GRIT LAB: THE SCIENCE AND PRACTICE OF PASSION AND PERSEVERANCE

PSYC0405 / OIDD2000 Fall 2023

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In-person, interactive classes: Tuesdays 3:30PM to 6:30PM ET, room SHDH350.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

The aims of Grit Lab are three-fold: (1) to equip you with generalizable knowledge about the science of passion and perseverance; (2) to help you apply these insights to your own life; and (3) to inspire you to share these insights with others.

At the heart of this course are cutting-edge scientific discoveries about how to foster passion and perseverance for long-term goals. As in any undergraduate course, you will have an opportunity to learn from current research. But unlike most courses, Grit Lab encourages you to try these ideas out for yourself and share your experiences with others. Yes, this class aims to change you. If you don’t like that idea, keep in mind that this is an elective required by no concentration or major.

This course is part of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) Paideia Program, which serves as a hub for civic dialogue in undergraduate education at Penn. SNF Paideia courses offer a robust, interdisciplinary civic education that is accessible to all Penn undergraduates and highlights the role that civil discourse, dialogue across difference, and wellness play in cultivating integrated citizenship within the Penn Community. See how you can get more involved here.

WHO CAN ATTEND THE COURSE, AND HOW DO I APPLY?

As a Paideia Program course, Grit Lab is open to all Penn undergraduates of any school (Arts and Sciences, Engineering, Nursing, and Wharton), via an application process. A total of 140 students will be admitted. If there are more applicants than spots available, we will give priority to Paideia Student Fellows and admit students by lottery.
The application is [here](#) and it is due by **11:59PM Eastern Time on April 2, 2023**.

Because so much of Grit Lab happens in a team structure, **there is no auditing permitted**.

**HOW WILL I GET TO KNOW, ANGELA, MY FELLOW STUDENTS, AND MY TA?**

At the start of the semester, you will be assigned to a team of 4. You will stay in the same team throughout the course. As a team, you will meet during class to discuss the previous week’s assignment and/or to do team activities. Each week, one student will be designated the moderator of the team discussion—*in alphabetical order by last name (i.e., for our first class, the moderator is the student in the team whose last name comes first in the alphabet, and for the second class, it will be the next student, etc.*)

You will be assigned one of the following TAs, and each TA will mentor up to 4 teams:

- TBD

For concerns that are *not* specific to your TA, including technology or logistics, please email [penngritlab@gmail.com](mailto:penngritlab@gmail.com)

Office hours will work as follows: Each student will meet with Dr. Duckworth once per semester for 5 minutes via Zoom, signing up for a slot here [link to be added](#). And hey, it’s like a real room — when you get there, the prior student may be there, and you can just stay and hang out until it’s your turn! You are also to meet with your assigned TA once within the first month of class (this is required) and afterwards as needed. You will schedule office hours with your TA by emailing them directly.

**TYPICAL WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

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<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>What</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>By Sunday at 11:59PM EST</strong></td>
<td>● As a preview, read your TA’s reflection&lt;br&gt;● Complete the assigned activity&lt;br&gt;● Complete your reflection and post it on Canvas</td>
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<td><strong>By Tuesday at 3:30PM EST</strong></td>
<td>● Read assigned readings</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday, 3:30PM to 6:20PM EST</strong></td>
<td>In-person lecture, discussion, and group activities&lt;br&gt;● 5-minute welcome&lt;br&gt;● 5-minute quiz taking&lt;br&gt;● 20-minute team discussion and activity&lt;br&gt;● 20-minute staircase thoughts and discussion&lt;br&gt;10-MIN BREAK&lt;br&gt;● 50-minute lecture</td>
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WHAT WILL CLASSES BE LIKE?

We will meet in-person for three hours (with two 10-minute breaks) each week. This will enable you to ask questions in real time, to engage in activities designed to complement the lecture, and also to engage with your classmates during pair-and-share activities.

GRADING

<table>
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<th>Grading Details</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly activities &amp; weekly reflections</strong></td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>Weekly reflections need to be submitted before the deadline to be graded. Furthermore, they will be</td>
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<td>graded only if you submit the required activity materials. There is no (full or partial) credit for</td>
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<td>late assignments.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly quizzes</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Quizzes are administered via PollEv, in class, at the start of each lecture, including lecture 1.</td>
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<td>There are no make-up quizzes. In the rare event of excused absences, we will omit the quiz grade</td>
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<td>(i.e., not factor it into your quiz average). At the end of the semester, we will drop your lowest</td>
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<td>quiz grade.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mid-term reflection on Discovery Project (Essay)</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>This written assignment must be turned in by the deadline to receive full credit. Late assignments</td>
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<td>will be penalized 10 percentage points for each day past the deadline.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discovery Project Final (Presentation)</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>This in-class presentation will be graded on both content (75%) and delivery (25%).</td>
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<td><strong>Class participation</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Class participation includes attendance, active engagement in both lecture and team discussions,</td>
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<td>participation in team activities, and participation in office hours. You’re encouraged to ask</td>
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<td>questions, share your perspective, respectfully challenge the perspectives of others (including your</td>
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<td>professor), integrate course</td>
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As for readings, your requirement is to read everything. Graded quizzes at the start of each lecture are largely based on the readings. Reading slowly, and twice, is recommended.

In the next-to-last lecture, you will also present your discovery project to the class, highlighting the key lessons you learned about your interest, about yourself, and about grit as a psychological construct.

**ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is essential and mandatory except in the case of religious / secular holidays or previously contracted appointments (e.g., medical appointment). It is required that you write to penngritlab@gmail.com and to your assigned TA within the first two weeks of class (by September 12) to let us know of any planned absences. Additional exceptions will be made on a case by case basis. We take attendance every class.

To make up for any absence, you’re required to watch the lecture recording posted on Canvas and to submit a written reflection (200 word minimum, 500 word maximum) on the lecture topic to your TA before the following lecture. Failure to do so will result in being marked absent for the class (and remember, class attendance and participation counts for 15% of the final grade).

**WHAT DO WE DO OUTSIDE OF CLASS?**

You will try out activities aimed to help cultivate passion or perseverance. You have assigned readings each week, and you will respond to specific reflection prompts posted on Canvas.

Additionally, you will be engaged throughout the entire semester in a discovery project.

**WHAT IS THE DISCOVERY PROJECT?**

Throughout the semester, you will complete five tasks off the Discovery Project checklist to help you discover and develop an interest or multiple interests. These tasks are: completing a focused internet search, reviewing TED talks/podcasts/online lectures, researching experts, reaching out to experts, conversing with others who share your interest, participating in the interest, creating an educational video, interviewing for a job related to your interest, reading a related book, or signing up for a course.

You can either focus on one interest and complete multiple tasks for that one interest (specialization discovery project) or you can try different interests and complete different tasks for multiple interests (sampling discovery project). During the mid-term, you will submit a reflection on your ongoing discovery project. The reflection will be graded. At the end of the
semester, you will give a 5-minute presentation to your cohort (your TA and 11 other students) highlighting the key lessons you learned about your interest(s), about yourself, and about grit as a psychological construct. The presentation will be graded as well, both for content (75%) and delivery (25%).

WHAT IS THE TECHNOLOGY POLICY?

The quality of this class depends on your participation. To minimize distraction and to avoid distracting others, please have your cell phone on mute and face down—but close by for periodic Poll Everywhere activities.

Laptops are not allowed in class. If you need to use a laptop or an electronic device for accessibility reasons, please write to penngritlab@gmail.com within the first two weeks of class (by September 12) specifying the required accommodation.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students who require accommodations can go here for Penn resources and can contact penngritlab@gmail.com for more information about the support we can provide.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

A note on academic integrity: Intellectual development requires honesty, responsibility, and doing your own work. Penn’s Code of Academic Integrity applies to Grit Lab.

HOW WILL STUDENTS BE KEPT ACCOUNTABLE?

Finally, at the end of the course you will receive a personalized report where all your PollEv inputs are collected and presented in a coherent narrative to help you remember your experience in Grit Lab for years to come. In the report you will also find a verbatim quote from your TA and each of your teammates; 3 of your written reflections, chosen by you as representative of what you learned in this course; and your attendance record, including the % of correct quizzes answers and reflections you completed on time according to time-date stamps.

WHAT SPECIFIC FEEDBACK WILL I GET ON MY OWN INTERESTS, VALUES, STRENGTHS, ETC.?

Throughout the semester, we will be using Poll Everywhere to administer surveys which collectively contribute to a personalized report which you (and only you) will have access to at the end of the course. For this reason, as well as for the in-class quizzes, it is important to register on Poll Everywhere before class starts. Otherwise, you will get no credit for the quizzes and we cannot merge your data into your report. So register in advance by going
to pollev.com/gritlab. Follow the registration prompt to create a Poll Everywhere student account right there. If you encounter problems, please email penngritlab@gmail.com.
SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

1. Welcome to Grit Lab
   a. Pre-class activity (by August 29 at 3:30pm ET): Do a good deed. What, exactly? How? It’s entirely up to you! Lean into your interests and strengths! Be creative!
   b. Pre-class readings (by August 29 at 3:30pm ET):
      i. Grit Preface and Chapter 1: Showing Up
   c. Class (on August 29 at 3:30pm ET):
      i. Graded in-class quiz on the syllabus and readings
      ii. Team activity: Can I ask you a question?
      iii. Lecture and discussion: What is grit? How is grit different from talent? What is success? If grit matters to achievement, what is the importance of context?

CHOOSE EASY

2. Exploring your interests
   a. Pre-class activity (by September 3 at 11:59pm ET): Take the O*NET interest profiler linked in Canvas and then show it to someone who knows you well
   b. Pre-class activity: Design a 2-minute opening ritual for beginning your team meetings, starting next week and continuing through the end of the semester. On a single google slide, include the (1) name for your ritual, (2) description of structure/content/activities, (3) beliefs or values it symbolizes or relates to, and (4) practical function(s) and/or what makes ritual this immediately rewarding. Make sure to submit your slide on Canvas.
c. Written reflection (by September 3 at 11:59pm ET): Tell a story about how one or more of your current interests, as indicated in the O*NET interest profiler, emerged earlier in your life. What will you do for your discovery project?

d. Pre-class readings (by September 5 at 3:30pm ET):
   i. _Grit_ Chapter 6: Interest.
   iii. Video: https://www.ted.com/talks/david_epstein_why_specializing_early_doesn_t_always_mean_career_success

e. Class on September 5 (at 3:30pm ET):
   i. Graded in-class comprehension quiz
   ii. Team activity: Discussion (directions on slide in class)
   iii. Lecture and discussion: What is the emotion of interest? What are your interests? How do you develop your interests?

3. Affirming your values

   a. Pre-class activity and written reflection (by September 10 at 11:59pm ET): Write a “This I Believe” essay (500 words or fewer) and read it aloud to someone you care about. How does this relate to your discovery project?

   b. Pre-class readings (by September 12 at 3:30pm ET):
      i. _Grit_ Chapter 8: Purpose.

   c. Class on September 12 (at 3:30pm ET):
      i. Graded in-class comprehension quiz
      ii. Team activity: Discussion (directions on slide in class)
      iii. What are values? What happens when we write about our values? What is purpose?

4. Racing your strengths
a. **Pre-class activity (by September 17 at 11:59pm ET):** Fill out the The Big Five assessment. You will be asked to invite 3 to 5 people who know you well to complete the same questionnaire—sharing their observations of you. How does your personality inform your discovery project?

b. **Written reflection (by September 17 at 11:59pm ET):** Review your Big Five Q360 feedback. What confirmed your idea of who you are—and what surprised you? How are your personality strengths related, if at all, to your “talents” and your interests and values?

c. At this point, you should have completed at least one activity in the [Discovery Project checklist](#).

d. **Pre-class readings (by September 19 at 3:30pm ET):**

   i. [Grit](https://example.com) Chapter 2: Distracted by Talent.


e. **Post a comment on another student's reflection (by September 19 at 2pm ET)**

f. **Class on September 19 (at 3:30pm ET):**

   i. Graded in-class comprehension quiz

   ii. Team activity: Discussion (directions on slide in class)

   iii. What are your talents? What are personality strengths? Can you change your personality? How do you find a career that fits your interests, values, and strengths?

5. **Goal hierarchies**

   a. **Pre-class activity (by September 24 at 11:59pm ET):** Design your own goal hierarchy.

   b. **Written reflection (by September 24 at 11:59pm ET):** How does your goal hierarchy align with your values, interests, talents, and personality strengths? What can you change or do more of to improve your alignment between what you do and your values, interests, talents, and personality strengths?
c. Pre-class readings *(by September 26 at 3:30pm ET)*:
   i.  *Grit* Chapter 4: How Gritty Are You?

d. Post a comment on a classmate’s reflection *(by September 26 at 2pm ET)*

e. Class on September 26 *(at 3:30pm ET)*:
   i. Graded in-class comprehension quiz
   ii. Team activity: Discussion (directions on slide in class)
   iii. Lecture: When to quit and when to grit? Goal hierarchies and “callings”.

**WORK SMART**

6. Goal setting and planning

a. Pre-class activity *(by October 1 at 11:59pm ET)*: Have a curiosity conversation with someone whose career you admire. My Penn is a terrific resource for contacting alumni. Don’t tell me you couldn’t set one up! Put a little grit into it!

b. Written reflection *(by October 1 at 11:59pm ET)*: What did you learn from your curiosity conversation?

c. Pre-class readings *(by October 3 at 3:30pm ET)*:
   i.  *Grit* Chapter 5: Grit Grows.
   iii. Watch [Gabriele Oettingen at the Educator Summit 2018](#).

d. Post a comment on a classmate’s reflection *(by October 3 at 2pm ET)*

e. Class on October 3 *(at 3:30pm ET)*:
   i. Graded in-class comprehension quiz
   ii. Team activity: Discussion (directions on slide in class)
iii. How do I get from intentions to results? How do I set a goal and make a plan?

7. Deliberate practice

a. Pre-class activity *(by October 8 at 11:59pm ET)*: Carry out the plan you made for the 48-hour WOOP for your Discovery Project (i.e., try to follow through on your plan over the week). Or, if you change your mind, redo the WOOP.

b. Written reflection *(by October 8 at 11:59pm ET)*: What was your Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, and Plan? What did you learn from your WOOP?

c. Pre-class readings *(by October 10 at 2pm ET)*:
   i. *Grit* Chapter 7: Practice.

d. Post a comment on a classmate’s reflection *(by October 10 at 3:30pm ET)*

e. Class on October 10 *(at 3:30pm ET)*:
   i. Graded in-class comprehension quiz
   ii. Team activity: Discussion (directions on slide in class)
   iii. How do you practice like an expert?

8. Feedback

Note: usual Sunday deadline moved to Monday because of fall break

a. Pre-class activity *(by October 16 at 11:59pm ET)*:

b. Written reflection *(by October 16 at 11:59pm ET)*: At this point, how skilled are you in giving and receiving feedback? Where would you like to improve?

c. At this point, you should have completed at least three activities in the *Discovery Project checklist*.

d. Midterm essay (500 to 1,000 words):
   i. What have you learned so far in the Discovery Project?
   ii. Which activity was most impactful to you and why?
iii. What concepts and ideas from the class have you implemented in your Discovery Project?

e. Pre-class readings (by October 17 at 3:30pm ET):
   i. Grit Chapter 3: Effort Counts Twice.

f. Post a comment on a classmate’s reflection (by October 17 at 2pm ET)

g. Class on October 17 (at 3:30pm ET):
   i. Graded in-class comprehension quiz
   ii. Team activity: Discussion (directions on slide in class)
   iii. How can I receive feedback optimally? How can I give feedback optimally? What is advice and why does it often backfire?
   iv. Poll Everywhere: Coachability Scale of the Wharton Character Index
   v. Role play

9. Rethinking failure and stress

   a. Pre-class activity *and* written reflection (by October 22 at 11:59pm ET): Your choice—do one of the following: Either (A) create a “failure resume” (see this example) and submit to http://antiresume.org/ or (B) write about a time you failed—and then succeeded—at something important to you. This story can be from any area of your life (school, extracurricular activities, hobbies, personal relationships, etc.) Include what happened, where and when it happened, who was involved, and what you were thinking and feeling.

   b. Pre-class readings (by October 22 at 2pm ET):
      i. Grit Chapter 9: Hope.

   c. Post a comment on a classmate’s reflection (by October 24 at 3:30pm ET)
d. Class on October 24 (at 3:30pm ET):
   i. Graded in-class comprehension quiz
   ii. Team activity: Discussion (directions on slide in class)
   iii. What is the stress response, and how can you deal with it? Coping with failure and how that relates to perseverance and goal hierarchies.

10. Strategies and habits
a. Pre-class activity (by October 29 at 11:59pm ET):

b. Written reflection (by October 29 at 11:59pm ET): What have you learned about what works—and what doesn’t—for you in terms of healthy rituals and habits?

c. Pre-class readings (by October 31 at 3:30pm ET):

d. Post a comment on a classmate’s reflection (by October 31 at 2pm ET)

e. Class on October 31 (at 3:30pm ET):
   i. Graded in-class comprehension quiz
   ii. Team activity: Discussion (directions on slide in class)
   iii. How do you scaffold grit? The process model of behavior, your brain on autopilot, why immediate temptation beats long-term goals, and how to make healthy habits.

PAY IT FORWARD

11. Learning from and leaning on other people
a. Pre-class activity (by November 5 at 11:59pm ET): Write a gratitude letter to someone you’ve never properly thanked. Record a video of you reading it and send it to them or, take a deep breath and actually read it to them in person.

b. Written experience (by November 5 at 11:59pm ET): Reflect on your gratitude letter experience. How did it land? How did this make you feel?
c. Pre-class readings (by November 7 at 3:30pm ET):
   i. **Grit** Chapter 10: Parenting for Grit.

d. Post a comment on a classmate’s reflection (by November 7 at 2pm ET)

e. Class on November 7 (at 3:30pm ET):
   i. Graded in-class comprehension quiz
   ii. Team activity: Discussion (directions on slide in class)
   iii. How do you grow grit with and for other people? Role models, mentoring styles, and cultures of grit.

12. Paying it forward

   a. Pre-class activity (by November 12 at 11:59pm ET): Team challenge: how many of these good deeds [ADD LINK] can you do in one week? (individually then add up as a team)

   b. Written reflection (by November 12 at 11:59pm ET): What did you do? How did it go? How did it make you feel?

   c. At this point, you should have completed at least five activities in the [Discovery Project checklist](#)

   d. Pre-class readings (by November 14 at 3:30pm ET):
      i. **Grit** Chapter 12: A Culture of Grit.
      iii. Watch [Adam Grant at TED: ‘Are you a giver or a taker?’](#)

   e. Post a comment on a classmate’s reflection (by November 14 at 2pm ET)

   f. Class on November 14 (at 3:30pm ET):
      i. Graded in-class comprehension quiz
      ii. Team activity: Discussion (directions on slide in class)
iii. For what and for whom? The basic human need to contribute, self-actualization, and self-transcendence.

*No class or deadlines the week of November 20, Thanksgiving Break*

13. Discovery project

a. Pre-class activity and written reflection (*by Monday November 27 at 11:59pm ET*): Make sure you’ve completed at least 5 items on the Discovery Project Checklist. Will you pursue this interest in the future? Why or why not? What did you learn?

b. Post a comment on a classmate’s reflection (*by November 28 at 2pm ET*)

c. Class on November 28 (*at 3:30pm ET*): Discovery project presentations to cohorts. Note that you will meet in person as a cohort to do 5-minute, 5-slide (if you want slides, it’s up to you) presentations to the other students in your cohort, and the TA(s) that supervise your cohorts. Each presentation will be followed by 2 minutes of curiosity questions. We will reconvene in our usual classroom at 6pm for a wrap-up and debrief. If permitted, snacks will be served! *Send your Discovery Project slides to your TA by 3:00pm on Monday April 18th.* More details here: *Grit Lab 4.0 Lecture 13: Discovery Project*

i. 3:30: Discovery Project Presentations in individual cohort rooms (see link above)

ii. 4:30: Recommended break (at TA’s discretion)

iii. 4:40: Discovery Project Presentations (continued)

iv. 5:50: Break and walk together to SHDH TBD

v. 6:00: Wrap up and Debrief with Angela

14. Concluding lecture

a. Pre-class activity (*by December 3 at 11:59pm ET*): TBD.

b. Written activity (*by December 3 at 11:59pm ET*): Complete comments for each of your teammates and your TA using the link in Canvas.

c. Pre-class readings (*by December 3 at 3:30pm ET*):

i. *Grit* Chapter 13: Conclusion and Afterword

d. Graded in-class comprehension quiz (*by December 5 at 2pm ET*): See Canvas website.

e. Post a comment on a classmate’s reflection (*by December 5 at 2pm ET*)

f. Class on *December 5 (at 3:30pm ET)*: Highlight reel of Grit Lab.
Optional Readings & Videos for Deeper Learning

a. Lecture 1, Grit
   i. Cody Coleman’s 13-minute TED talk: https://tedx.stanford.edu/lineup/cody-coleman

b. Lecture 2, Interest

c. Lecture 3, Values

d. Lecture 4, Strengths

e. Lecture 5, Goal hierarchies

f. Lecture 6, Goal setting and planning

g. Lecture 7, Deliberate practice

h. Lecture 8, Feedback


i. Lecture 9, Rethink failure and stress


j. Lecture 10, Learning from and leaning on other people


k. Lecture 11, Rituals, rules and habits


l. Lecture 12, Pay it forward