

INTS 395 010 MEDITATION, MINDFULNESS, AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

COURSE SYLLABUS – Spring 2017

INSTRUCTOR

Stacey Guenther – sguenthe@gmu.edu - 703-501-5518 (texting is okay)

Meetings by appointment. I do not have an office on campus.

CLASS MEETINGS

- **Tuesday, January 17 through Saturday, January 21, 10am to 5:30pm**, in 215G Innovation Hall.
- **Friday, February 10, 1:30-4pm**, in Robinson Hall B106.
- **Friday, March 3, 1:30-4pm**, in Robinson Hall B106.

LEARNING COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

A growing body of research literature points to the benefits of mindfulness and meditation for mental and physical health. Although these terms are closely related, they are not identical. Mindfulness practice is one of many approaches to meditation; and mindfulness is applicable not just to meditation techniques but to a wide variety of daily life activities as well. These techniques assist us in combating what Rick Hanson calls the Negativity Bias: human beings' wiring for the fight or flight stress response. By using meditation, mindfulness, and other techniques, and by learning more about how to manage our stress responses, we increase our well-being and life satisfaction.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Demonstrate an understanding of modern research findings about mindfulness, meditation and mind-training, as well as some of the cross-cultural traditions related to these practices. (SIS Competency: Well-Being)
2. Describe and practice an approach to mindfulness and meditation that you design for yourself out of the various methods introduced in the course. Practice these techniques in community with other students. (SIS Competency: Well-Being)
3. Write clearly about your own experiences with meditation, mindfulness, and stress. (SIS Competency: Communication)
4. Describe the ways in which mindfulness practice and mental imagery can have transformational impact on human health and well-being. (SIS Competency: Well-Being)

REQUIRED TEXT

Salzberg, Sharon (2011). *Real Happiness: the Power of Meditation*. New York: Workman Publishing Company. This book will guide us through a 28-day program to begin a meditation practice and will be the basis for the first four weeks of the course. **If you buy a used copy, be sure it has the accompanying CD.**

Additional readings will be on Blackboard or the Web, or given to you as handouts.

BASIS FOR GRADING

About an Intensive Class

As a full 3-credit course covered in just over one week, you can expect for us to move quickly and for you to have assignments both before the course begins and after it ends. We have very long days, so I invite you to turn off other commitments that week, so you may fully focus on your learning. Additionally, you will have reading and writing assignments every night of the course, so be sure to make time for that additional work.

Participation (36% = 360 points)

You and your fellow students benefit from your active participation in this safe learning community. Open discussion depends on the development of trust and safety among participants, as well as risk-taking and effective facilitation. It is, therefore, essential that class members attend all scheduled classes and participate in class discussions and activities. Discussions, questions, and small-group work, and hands-on creative projects will all contribute to the assessment of individual class participation. *Preparation outside of class significantly influences the quality of in-class participation.* For the 5-day intensive week, you have the opportunity to earn 60 points per session by participating and contributing during the **full** class. For our two additional classes, you have the opportunity to earn 30 points per session by participating and contributing during the **full** class. If you come late or leave early for any of our class meetings, points will be deducted.

Study Questions on Stress Material (5% = 50 points)

On the first day of class, you'll receive a worksheet with about 35 study questions to complete on the lecture and materials covered on stress. The worksheet will be due in class or electronically on **Friday, January 20**, and will be worth 50 points.

Retreat Reflection (4% = 40 points)

We will treat most of the 4th class on **Friday, January 20**, as a retreat, when we'll spend most of that time in noble silence. We will prepare for the retreat in class. Following the retreat, you will complete an 800-1,000-word reflection sharing your experience that is due the day after class ends on **Monday, January 23**.

Essay on Stress Material (20% = 200 points)

You will write a paper on the materials we cover on stress, the stress response, and how to manage stress. The information for your paper will come from reading assignments and in-class lectures, videos, and discussion. A handout will be provided detailing requirements of the paper, which will be due **Monday, January 30**.

Essay - Beginning a Meditation Practice (20% = 200 points)

Major elements of the SIS curriculum and pedagogy are writing and reflective practice. You will be asked to write about your own experiences with meditation and mindfulness at the end of a month of your own meditation practice. It is important to learn how to communicate a synthesis of inner, subjective experience alongside objective, critical thinking. Your paper will be due one month after class is over on **Monday, February 20**.

Teach Someone to Meditate Project (15% = 150 points)

You will create and present a 30-minute interactive Mindfulness lesson/class. Basically, you are teaching someone the basics of meditation and how to start a meditation practice. Included in this teaching opportunity will include you explaining what mindfulness is and what its benefits are, teaching meditation practices, and discussion with your student. At the end of the class/lesson, you'll ask your student to complete a questionnaire about what the experience was like for them. You will submit a project packet that will include your lesson plan, your student's questionnaire, and an 800-1,200 word reflection discussing what the experience was like for you and what you learned about meditation and your practice. Submit your packet no later than ***Friday, March 10.***

BASIS FOR GRADING SUMMARY

Participation	36%
Stress Study Questions	5%
Silent Retreat Reflection	4%
Essay on Stress	20%
Essay on Meditation	20%
Teach Meditation Project	15%

COURSE EVALUATION

A+ 995-1000+	B+ 875-899	C+ 775-799	D 600-699
A 925-994	B 825-874	C 725-774	F 0-599
A- 900-924	B- 800-824	C- 700-724	

EXTRA CREDIT

Extra credit opportunities will be presented at the end of the course.

CELEBRATING OUR DIVERSITY

New Century College, an intentionally inclusive community, promotes and maintains an equitable and just work and learning environment. We welcome and value individuals and their differences including race, economic status, gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and disability.

- We value our diverse student body and desire to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff.
- We commit to supporting students, faculty, and staff who have been the victims of bias and discrimination.
- We promote continuous learning and improvement to create an environment that values diverse points of view and life experiences.
- We believe that faculty, staff, and students play a role in creating an environment that engages diverse points of view.
- We believe that by fostering their willingness to hear and learn from a variety of sources and viewpoints, our students will gain competence in communication, critical thinking, and global understanding, aware of their biases and how they affect their interactions with others and the world.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Learning Differences

If you have a learning or physical difference that may affect your academic work, you will need to furnish appropriate documentation to the Disability Resource Center. If you qualify for accommodation, the DRC staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for your instructor.

In addition to providing your professor with the appropriate form, please take the initiative to discuss accommodation with her at the beginning of the semester and as needed during the term. Because of the range of learning differences, faculty members need to learn from you the most effective ways to assist you. If you have contacted the Disability Resource Center and are waiting to hear from a counselor, please tell the instructor.

Policy for Late and Missing Assignments

You are responsible for completing all assignments on time. All assignments are due on the date listed in the syllabus and must be handed in on time. ***Late assignments may be marked down a full letter grade for each day late.***

Format for the Assignments

Unless otherwise noted by the instructor, all final writing assignments should be submitted electronically to sguenthe@gmu.edu. Please use file attachments and do not simply put your writing assignment into the text of the email. File attachments should be in a .doc, .docx or .rtf file format. ***Please include your last name in the file name***, plus any other identifier that will help you find the essay later on your computer. For example: *Thompson-silence.doc* might be the essay from a student with last name Thompson, which is on the topic of silence.

All essays should include on the first page a title, your name, and course number.

Accurate spelling, clarity, and correct use of grammar, and punctuation are expected and their absence can negatively affect your grade. Please note for each writing assignment if you are expected to write in a traditional academic style (i.e., when citing sources, you must correctly and consistently use a recognized citation style, either MLA or APA) or if the instructor has framed the writing assignment in a different way (e.g., "Imagine that you are writing an article for a general audience magazine readership").

You are responsible for keeping an electronic copy of all writing assignments that you submit for the course. Please save your work in multiple places. Backup copies are handy!

Student Support

1. Disability Support Services (<http://ods.gmu.edu>; 703-993-2474; 222 SUB I). Assists students with learning or physical conditions affecting learning. If you qualify for accommodation, the ODS staff will provide a form to give to your instructor.
2. Counseling and Psychological Center (<http://caps.gmu.edu>; 703-993-2380; 364 SUB I). Provides individual and group sessions for personal development and assistance with a range of emotional and relational issues.
3. Student Technology Assistance and Resources (STAR) (<http://itservices.gmu.edu>; 703-993-8990; 229 Johnson Center). Provides support for web and multimedia design. STAR has video cameras and other equipment for student check out.
4. Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>; 703-993-1200; 114 Robinson A). Provides free tutors who can help you develop ideas and revise papers. Also available online.
5. On-line Writing Guide (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/writing-resources/wc-quick-guides>)

MAJOR DUE DATES

January 20	STRESS WORKSHEET – Either send electronically or bring hard copy to class. You'll get it back the next day.
January 23	RETREAT REFLECTION – Due. Send electronically.
January 30	ESSAY – On stress due.
February 20	ESSAY – On meditation due.
March 10	TEACH SOMEONE TO MEDITATION PROJECT – Due. Send electronically.
March 20	EXTRA CREDIT due. Send electronically. No work will be accepted after this day.

Send all electronically submitted assignments by midnight on the due date unless otherwise indicated on the assignment sheet to:

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