

Draft 1.2 (11-27-18)
Syllabus
INTS 475-004: Personal Transformation: Theory and Practice
Spring 2019

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HYBRID COURSE

Classroom Details: January 16-19, 10:30 am to 5:00 pm daily in **Peterson Hall room 2413**
Fridays: February 1, 10:30 am to 1:10 pm in Peterson 2413
February 22, 10:30 am to 1:10 pm in Peterson 2413
March 22, 10:30 am to 1:10 pm in Peterson 2413
April 12, 10:30 am to 1:10 pm in Peterson 2413

Online modules: from January 23 to May 3.

OVERVIEW

This hybrid course is structured as a required four-day classroom intensive in January, followed by online learning throughout the semester. We will also meet in the classroom for four Friday sessions (10:30 am to 1:10 pm) to check-in on progress with the online learning, and to introduce additional theories and practices.

This is a highly experiential course in which we will use prominent findings from positive psychology, depth psychology, health sciences, and ancient spiritual wisdom traditions to explore self-awareness and the developmental process of change and transformation.

The course will explore theories and models for how people experience deep personal change – sometimes triggered by trauma or crisis, but potentially initiated by personal choice and intention. We will explore the research literature about ways to cultivate well-being and resilience in the midst of a transformation process. In addition to theoretical considerations, students will be asked to examine their own personal growth process and experiment with mindfulness and positive-intention exercises to cultivate enhanced self-awareness and agency in their own unfolding life experience.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the central issues and challenges of transformative personal change, especially as described by positive psychology and depth psychology.
- Describe theories and models from the science of well-being, depth psychology, and ancient spiritual wisdom that build capacity for personal resilience, especially for dealing with adversities in life.

- Articulate a statement of personal values and ideals which can help the student navigate transformative change in his or her life in the years to come.
- Engage in a variety of well-being, mindfulness, and self-awareness practices that support healthy personal changes that align with core strengths and ideals.

INSTRUCTOR BIO:

Mark Thurston, Ph.D. just completed nine years as director of educational programs at George Mason University's Center for the Advancement of Well-Being (formerly the Center for Consciousness and Transformation). Dr. Thurston was a part of the Center staff since its founding in January, 2009, and also served in those years as an affiliate faculty member of the School of Integrative Studies (and its previously named New Century College). He is now a term associate professor in Mason's School of Integrative Studies. He continues to serve as director for Mason's undergraduate minor in Well-Being, and he teaches required and elective courses for that minor. Dr. Thurston served as an affiliate faculty member of Mason's School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR) where he has taught the course "Conflict Transformation from the Inside Out." With an academic background in psychology, he worked for 35 years before coming to Mason in adult education related to mindfulness, holistic health, and personal transformation. He is author of numerous books related to personal spirituality, dream psychology, meditation, and the transformation of consciousness.

Mary Elizabeth Lynch, M.A., J.D. is an attorney/mediator, educator and senior fellow at Mason's Center for the Advancement of Well-Being. She is a graduate of the University of Virginia Law School and practiced employment and family law for many years before transforming her professional work into mediation. In 2000 she co-founded the Personal Transformation and Courage Institute, a non-profit educational organization conducting small group course intensives related to deeper self-awareness for personal growth and transformation. She now serves as president of the Institute and is one of its principal course leaders. More about Mary Elizabeth's work outside of Mason can be found at www.transformationANDcourage.org Mary Elizabeth's previous course offerings at Mason have included "Personal Transformation: Identity & Conflict," "Cultivating the Spirit: Self-Care Practices to Support Student Well-Being," and "Explorations in Mindful Living" (the academic component of the Mindful Living LLC on the Fairfax campus).

READING:

There are no books that are required for purchase.

We will be using a variety of book chapters, peer review journal articles, and web site resources. All of them will be available via our Blackboard web site and the Mason e-library.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Details on assignments will be provided via the lesson plans on Blackboard, including explicit rubrics for writing assignments. There are 1,000 possible points. Points can be earned as follows. For each item, the maximum possible points is listed.

Classroom participation January 16-19, plus 4 Friday sessions	300 points
Blog posts related to online modules	150 points
Journaling about personal practices as described in online modules	200 points
One-on-one meeting with course instructor to review progress	50 points
Mid-semester paper	150 points
Final paper	150 points

All written assignments should be submitted electronically via Blackboard in a timely manner. This includes Blog posts, essays, and journaling.

There will be a penalty for late submission unless, due to illness, prior arrangements have been made with the instructor for late submission.

We will be using the following grade distribution rubric in calculating grades:

A+	(980 – 1,000 points)
A	(920 - 979)
A-	(900 - 919)
B+	(880 - 899)
B	(820 - 879)
B-	(800- 819)
C+	(780 - 799)
C	(720 - 779)
C-	(700 - 719)
D	(600 - 699)
F	less than 600 points
IN	see below

IMPORTANT NOTE IN REGARD TO “INCOMPLETE” GRADE. In most cases a grade of “IN” or “incomplete” is not available. Work that does not get submitted will earn no points, and that will be reflected in the point tabulation by the instructor after the last module of the course. **Please do not move through this course with an expectation that you can simply “take an incomplete” if you cannot get everything done by the end of the end of the semester.** A grade of incomplete is possible in cases of illness or other severe circumstances, but only if you have stayed in communication with the instructor and have negotiated an extension on specific assignments.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

George Mason University is an *intentionally* inclusive community that celebrates diversity and strives to have faculty, staff, and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, class, linguistic background, religion, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, or physical ability.

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 him 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 your instructor or the GTA.

POLICY FOR LATE AND MISSING ASSIGNMENTS

You are responsible for completing assignments on time. This includes assigned postings on the course web site. Written assignments are due on the dates listed on Blackboard and must be submitted electronically. **Late assignments may be marked down DAILY as much as 10% of the possible points for that assignment.** Unless arrangements are made otherwise with the instructor, no assignments will be accepted more than one week after the original due date.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND COLLABORATION

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. According to the University catalog, plagiarism includes the following:

- Presenting as one's own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment.
- Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment.

Be particularly careful to credit work through citations or appropriate means of attribution. In addition to direct quotations, you must also provide an in-text citation and an entry in your list of works cited for paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information not formerly known to the writer. If you decide to use another person's ideas you must either quote the idea verbatim or completely rephrase the ideas in your own words and voice. Even when you paraphrase information, you still must cite the original source of the information. Please give credit where credit is due, even in our class discussions. For example, if you have had an interesting conversation about a text or your learning with a friend, family, or group member, then acknowledge their contribution to your learning.

Each writing assignment will have a specific rubric that includes directions regarding the audience you are writing for, as well as the way you will handle references to sources.

Assignments for this particular course are designed to be undertaken independently. **You may discuss your ideas with others and confer with peers or the Writing Center staff on drafts of the work** (e.g., getting feedback and critique on clarity, spelling and grammar); however, it is not appropriate to give your paper to someone else to revise. You are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. If your name appears on an assignment, the instructor expects that you have done the work yourself. **Remember to carefully read the University's Honor Policy. It is your responsibility to understand it and abide by its provisions.**

STUDENT LEARNING RESOURCES

WRITING RESOURCES

Writing is an important component of this learning community and represents one facet of effective communication. You may wish to use the Writing Center to assist you with an assignment. Tutors at the Writing Center can help you brainstorm, structure, and revise your written work. The Writing Center has multiple locations on campus. See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu> or call 703-993-1200.

DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

The staff members of the DRC assist students with learning differences or any other conditions that may impact academic performance. DRC is located in SUB I, Room 2500; 703-993-2474; <http://ds.gmu.edu/>

COUNSELING SERVICES

Professional counselors provide individual and group sessions for personal development and assistance with a range of emotional and relational issues. Counseling Services are located in SUB I, Room 3129; 703-993-2380; <https://caps.gmu.edu/> Also, the Learning Services Program (703-993-2999) offers academic skill-building workshops as well as a tutor referral service.