George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Physical Activity for Lifetime Wellness

RECR 181 – Meditation Introduction
1 Credit - Summer, 2020
M/W 9:00-10:15am Blackboard Collaborate Ultra
T/R Distance Learning Asynchronous
June 1-June 24, 2020

Faculty

Name: Peggy DiVincenzo, LPC
Office Hours: After Class, By Appointment
Office Location: Online
Office Phone: 571-215-5573
Email Address: mdivinc@gmu.edu

Prerequisites/Corequisites

None.

University Catalog Course Description

Introduces students to philosophical foundations of meditation. Guides in the practice of meditation and its application to daily mental focus and concentration.

Course Overview

    Through philosophical foundations of mindfulness this class will introduce students to the basics for creating an on-going meditation practice. Techniques used to establish this discipline will include: intention setting, focusing skills, breathing methods, and keeping with concentration point. Students will also learn postural alignment and tension release for seated, standing, walking, deep relaxation and yoga meditation.
    Learning the attitudes and elements of mindfulness will be used to help relieve various stressors including, anxiousness, lethargy, sleep deprivation, distractibility and more. Mindfulness techniques useful to develop a greater sense of joy, gratitude, kindness and compassion will be provided, aimed at helping students to lead a healthier and happier life.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using both a synchronous (MW) and an asynchronous (T/R) format via Zoom and Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on 29 May, 9:00 a.m.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see:
  https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers
  To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see:
  https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems

- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students will need a headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool. [Delete this sentence if not applicable.]
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download: [Add or delete options, as desire.] o Adobe Acrobat Reader:
  https://get.adobe.com/reader / o Windows Media Player:
  https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player
  Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download   /

Expectations

- Course Week:

Our course week will begin on the day that our synchronous meetings take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes. M/W we will meet online using Zoom T/R students will practice on their own and complete assignments.

- Log-in Frequency:

  Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week. In addition, students must log-in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings.

- Participation:

  Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.

- Technical Competence:

  Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.

- Technical Issues:

  Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.

- Workload:

  Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.

- Instructor Support:

  Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

- Netiquette:

  The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

- Accommodations:

  Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Define meditation and list its benefits.
2. State the need for and importance of centering and breathing practices.
3. Develop proficiency in the practice of four types of pranayama.
4. Demonstrate techniques of progressive relaxation.
5. Demonstrate a sitting pose, including proper alignment.
6. Identify the 5-stage meditation process and demonstrate a working knowledge of refining focus and awareness.
7. Describe the benefits of systematic relaxation and meditation.
8. Build their own practice.

Required Texts

None

Recommended:

Mindfulness in Plain English by Bhante Gunaratana

Radical Acceptance by Tara Brach

The Miracle of Mindfulness by Thich Nhat Hanh

The Wise Heart by Jack Kornfield

Other readings as assigned and posted on Blackboard

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard).

- **Assignments and/or Examinations**
  Journaling - 20 points

Students will maintain a computer-created journal describing their formal meditation practice as well as their informal mindfulness practices in daily life. Exercising, eating, sleeping, speaking, listening and practicing gratitude are some areas which can embody informal mindfulness practices. This is a Performance-Based Assessment.

Final Exam - 20 points
A written final exam will reflect the student's understanding of major information presented in class. A thorough exam review and Q & A session will insure clarity of ideas prior to the exam day.

- Other Requirements:
Attendance – 60 points
Because this is largely an experiential course, regular attendance is very important. Attendance and participation is mandatory for this class. Students will be excused from class with a note from a health care provider. The note must be emailed to the instructor upon return to class. Student emails and texts do not excuse an absence but are helpful in planning the class session.

- **Grading**
The course will be graded on a 100 point scale comprising 70 points for attendance and participation, 10 points for journaling assignments and 20 points for the final exam.

  Grading Scale:
  A+ 97-100   A 94-96   A- 90-93
  B+ 88-89   B 84-87   B- 80-83
  C+ 78-79   C 75-77
  F 0-64

Professional Dispositions

See https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/

Class Schedule

Week One: Introduction to Meditation: history, basics, anchoring; types of meditation; accessing body sense, feeling tone and thoughts; overview of research on benefits of mindfulness meditation; guided practice.

Week Two: Working with pain, boredom, agitation; formal and informal mindfulness practice; overview of the brain's biochemical reaction to stress; cultivation positive states of heart and mind;

the roles of wisdom, compassion, generosity, etc.; understanding sympathy vs empathy vs compassion. Guided practice.

Week Three: Walking meditation; bringing mindfulness into everyday life; understanding skillful means; working with difficult emotions and self-compassion; understanding the effects of these emotions and how to mindfully respond to them. Guided practice.

Week Four: mindfulness meditation and stress reduction; working with habitual mind states, stressful events, grief and sadness; the role of centering, settling and grounding; review of course content; Q & A. Guided practice on cultivating positive mind states. Final Exam.

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: http://cehd.gmu.edu/values /.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

1. GMU Policies and Resources for students
    Policies
    a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code
        (see https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/).
    b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing
        (see https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/).
    c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
    d. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor
        (see https://ds.gmu.edu).
    e. Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
    Campus Resources

    1. Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed
        to tk20help@gmu.edu or https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/.

2. **Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking**: As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

3. For information on student support resources on campus, see https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus

4. For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website http://cehd.gmu.edu/.

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