

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism**  
**PHED 181 001– Introduction to Meditation (1)**  
**Spring 2014**

**Days: Tuesdays and Thursdays**

**Location: RAC 2201**

**Time: 3:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.**

**Professor: Cheryl Harlan**

**Email address: [charlan@gmu.edu](mailto:charlan@gmu.edu)**

**Office hours: By Appointment**

**Location: RAC**

**Office phone:**

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**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 OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Define meditation and 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 benefits of systematic relaxation and meditation.
8. Build their own practice.

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

Through the philosophical foundations of mindfulness this class will introduce students to the basics for creating an on-going meditation practice. Effective tools to establish this discipline will include: breathing techniques, muscular tension release and improved posture for seated, standing and walking meditation. Strategies for deep relaxation such as mindful inquiry and progressive muscular release will be used to provide relief from anxiousness, lethargy, sleep deprivation or other stressors. Guidance to maintain focus, to enhance concentration and to decrease distractions are included to provide the knowledge for attaining the ability to lead a healthier and happier life.

**REQUIRED TEXT/READINGS**

Assigned Handouts

On-Line Readings

Practice Audio Tracks Available Online

**NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY: Face To Face**

**COURSE INFORMATION**

1. Students with injuries or pre-existing conditions that may affect performance must inform the instructor.

2. Students with specific medication conditions, limited flexibility or injuries will learn appropriate modifications of poses for their own practices.
3. All communication will be through GMU e-mail – the Patriot Web Site.
4. Students are requested to bring a yoga mat to class.
5. Loose comfortable clothing, warm-up suits, gym shorts and shirt, or yoga pants and shirt are appropriate. No tight fitting street clothes may be worn.

## **EVALUATION**

**This course will be graded on a point system with 100 points possible**

Lab Exercises - 70 points	Daily attendance and participation are required. Absences and late arrivals make it difficult to complete the information presented in this class due to the detailed amount of practice required to develop and cultivate a meditation and mindfulness practice.
Journaling - 10 points	Students will maintain a computer created journal describing their mindfulness practice including experiences with their formal meditations, writings about mindfulness of mundane tasks and expressions of gratitudes and joys.
Essay Exam - 10 points	Students will write, at home, a two part essay. The first essay will be their choosing one of the attitudinal foundations of mindfulness and how they will practice it in everyday life, The other part of the essay will be their experiences with their practice and class exercises.
Final Exam - 10 points	Final exam will be questions and answers related to meditation practices, plus theories and studies presented in class.
Bonus Journal (5 points)	Students who wish to further describe the development of their meditative journey may turn in a bonus journal (between 150-250 words) focused on an area of choice, such as a mindfulness, tools of meditation, or a philosophical topic of interest.

## **GRADING SCALE**

A+ = 97 -100	B+ = 88 - 89	C+ = 78 - 79	D = 60 - 69
A = 94 - 96	B = 84 - 87	C = 74 - 77	F = 0 - 59
A- = 90 - 93	B- = 80 - 83	C- = 70 - 73	

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK	TOPICS	READINGS/ASSIGNMENT DUE
January 21	Intro to Mindfulness Meditation	Mindfulness Practice
January 23	Mechanics of Meditation	Seated Meditation Practice
January 28	Practicing Mindfulness in Everyday Life	On-Line Breathing Meditation
January 30	Science of Meditation, Stress & Studies	Stress Feedback Sheets
February 4	Cultivating Awareness - Pleasant, Neutral and Unpleasant Events	Journaling/Pleasant Events
February 6	Mindful Movement & Deep Relaxation	Yoga & Relaxation Practice
February 11	Working with Insights & Obstacles	Journaling/Unpleasant Events RAIN
February 13	Mindful Walking & Seated Body Scan	Journaling/All Events
February 18	Awakening Joy	Begin Exam Essay
February 20	Compassion and Generosity Practices	Work on Exam Essay
February 25	Exam Prep and Course Review	Final Exam Study - Essay Due
February 27	Final Exam	Off-site practice
March 4	Exam Return & Feedback	Optional Practice - off site
March 6	Exam Week - Optional Practice	Optional Practice - off site

**Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary.**

### *Student Expectations*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>]
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
  - Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
  - Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University 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.
  - Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

### *Campus Resources*

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism, please visit our website [See <http://rht.gmu.edu/>].

**PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR:** Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

**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.

