

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
College of Human Development

RECR 181–001 Introduction to Meditation (1)
Fall 2016 T/R 3:00-4:25pm 8/29-10/16
Location: RAC 2201

Faculty:

Cheryl Harlan Ed.S

Office Hours: By appointment

Office Location: RAC 2201

Email: charlan@gmu.edu

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 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: breathing methods, centering, focusing skills, concentration, muscular tension release and postural alignment for seated, standing, yoga and walking meditation. Learning the attitudes and elements of mindfulness will be used to help relieve various stressors including, anxiousness, lethargy, sleep deprivation, distractibility and more. Meditation techniques useful to develop a greater sense of joy, curiosity, creativity, gratitude, compassion, and kindness will be provided, aimed at helping students to lead a healthier and happier life.

Course Delivery Method: Face To Face

Learning 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.

REQUIRED TEXT/READINGS

Assigned Handouts

On-Line Readings

Practice Audio Tracks Available Online

Evaluation:

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

Lab Exercises - 80 points	Daily attendance and participation are required. Absences and late arrivals are highly discouraged because they make it difficult to experience and understand information presented in class, are distracting to other pupils and are not conducive to cultivating a solid meditation practice. Attitudes and elements of transfer of information to written assignments also reflect student's presence beyond their being physically present.
Journaling - 10 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 and listening are some areas which can embody mindfulness practices.
Final Exam - 10 points	Students will be given an in-class written final exam which will reflect the student's understanding of major information presented in class. A prior exam review and Q & A session will insure clarity of ideas
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	

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. All props are provided, but students may bring a yoga mat to class.
5. Loose comfortable clothing, warm-up suits, gym shorts and shirt, yoga outfits, along with good clean socks are requested. Tight street clothes are not good.

Professional Dispositions 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: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

3. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the University Honor Code (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
4. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
5. 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.
6. 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 <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
7. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced 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/api/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://courseessupport.gmu.edu/>.
2. 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/>).
3. 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/>). *Template Revision Date:*
August 2016 3
4. The George Mason University Office of Student Support staff helps students negotiate life situations by connecting them with appropriate campus and off-campus resources. Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone (703-993-5376). Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to <http://studentsupport.gmu.edu/>, and the OSS staff will follow up with the student.

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

Tentative Course Schedule

WEEK	SESSION AND TOPICS	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS DUE
August 30	1 Intro to Mindfulness and Meditation	Mindfulness Practices
September 1	2 Mechanics of Formal Meditation	Seated Meditation Practices
September 6	3 Breathing Techniques	Breathing Practices
September 8	4 Mindful Yoga and Deep Relaxation	Journals - Practices

September 13	5 Science of Meditation and Stress	Journaling/ Practices
September 15	6 Mindful Walking and Body Scan	Journaling/ Practices
September 13	7 Pleasant, Neutral Unpleasant Events	Journaling/ Practices
September 15	8 Working With Positive Emotions-HEAL	Journaling/ Practices
September 20	9 Practice Day - Integrating Techniques	Journaling/ Practices
September 22	10 Linking Joy to Gratitude	Journals Due - 12 entries
September 27	11 Kindness and Compassion/Generosity	Optional Bonus Journal
September 29	12 Course Review	Study/Review
October 4	13 Final Exam Day	Optional Self-Practice
October 6	14 Optional Practice Day	Optional Self-Practice

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

