

**Mindbodyness:
Contemplative Movement and Reflection
DANC 40220/RELI 30970 Spring 2015**

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Course Description

In this course, we will introduce the study and practice of contemplation through movement, reading, and writing, bringing individual and group critical reflection to each. What is “contemplation” and what are some approaches to it, past and present (goals, techniques, cultural contexts)? What theories and practices of mind and body have been used to cultivate contemplative self-awareness? How do practice and reflection influence one another, and how we engage in society and the natural world?

Course Objectives - leading to Course Outcomes

Through short reaction papers, meditation and precepts exercises, and a Final Project and Reflection Paper, as well as class participation, you will be assessed on your ability:

- To understand theory about and practice of contemplation and related concepts.
- To undertake a variety of contemplative ways of moving.
- To comprehend a variety of ways of mind-body knowing and thereby some of the diversity of human experience found among other cultures and peoples.
- To read critically, think analytically, speak persuasively, and write effectively through the description, analysis and evaluation of contemplative ideas and practices.
- To perform some self-exploration; existential inquiry is an inevitable component of this course.

Our commitment as teacher/facilitators:

- It is our intention to create a safe space - for the expression of curiosity, engagement with the practices and materials of the course, and ability to speak with one another with responsibility and compassion.
- We will endeavor to hear you as individuals.
- We will practice alongside you.

- We will further invest in our own commitments to critical inquiry and being/becoming a beneficial presence in the world.

Our expectations for your investment and participation:

- Read (and think about or engage with) the assignments before class.
- Come prepared with some questions or discussion points.
- Wear comfortable clothing to each class; clothing you can move easily in as we enter contemplative moving practices.
- *Bring a notebook or journal to every class.*
- Attend all classes (come on time, but come even if late).
- Participate in all the in-class exercises. If you have a question about the exercises or assignments – ask one or both of us.
- Bring the relevant readings to class.
- All topics are open and civil, respectful discourse is foundational.
- Be ready to move, listen, think, question, and speak.

Attendance

A large portion of course content will reside in the practice and reflection we will do during, or, as a result of class time. You need to be present to get course content. If you miss a class - and do not provide a documented excuse* - your grade can be lowered.

*A documented excuse includes but is not limited to (1) a note from the TCU Health Center or Doctor's office that states that you have been seen/had an appointment or (2) a communication from the Office of the Dean of Student Life. Bottom line: communicate with one of us. We will work with you.

If you miss four classes with documented excuse(s), we will automatically begin the discussion of how to make up missed work. Depending on the circumstances at hand, this discussion may necessarily include the *Incomplete* grade as a possibility.

We will track attendance in the eCollege gradebook: look under "Comments"

Assignments:

- Weekly short response and reflection papers 2-3 pg. or 500-750 words, due every Thursday in Dropbox by noon – graded excellent [A 100] / satisfactory [B- 80] or no credit [F 0] (30% of grade)
- Meditation and Precept Observation Projects - graded on the 100-point scale in this syllabus page 3
- Final Project – presented in class - with Reflection Paper at course end – both graded on the 100-point scale in this syllabus p. 3 (30% of grade)
- Presence and participation in class, includes mind~body reflection exercises** - see assessment criteria at top of page 3 (30%)

Use a formatting style for written assignments – MLA, Chicago, etc. – whichever is most familiar.

Grades for Weekly Response Papers and Meditation/Precept Projects will be recorded in eCollege in "Comments." You may keep up with them in that way; we will average grades and post them in gradebook at mid-term and end of term.

****Participation grades are assessed using the following criteria:**

A=always present, contributed often thoughtfully and intelligently; consistently assumed responsibility for keeping class participation and discussion moving – full, consistent engagement, includes taking responsibility to complete assigned exercises and bring those into class as a basis of practice and reflective discussion;

B= almost always present, contributed mostly thoughtfully and intelligently; aided in keeping class participation and discussion moving but did not always assume responsibility;

C= usually present, contributed sporadically without taking much responsibility;

D=missed a number of classes, contributed occasionally; did not take ownership of class participation.

Grade Scale: A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, F=below 60.

We use +/-, and use the following grade scale: 0-2.9=grade minus, 3-6.9= grade, 7.9=grade plus, except in the A category: 90-93.9 = A- and 94-100 = A

You may check in with us about your course standing at any time.

Disability Statement

If you have a problem affecting your course participation, or must miss class, let one of us know. Also, if you have a disability, which may affect your class performance, please get in touch with the Coordinator of Student Disabilities Service in the Center for Academic Services so that you invoke the support services of the university and are able to inform us during the first week of class. Here are some policy statements:

Disability Statement approved Fall 2007 by the Undergraduate Council / Revised Summer 2011: Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Student Disabilities Services in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, 1010. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from the Center for Academic Services, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at (817) 257-6567.

Adequate time must be allowed to arrange accommodations and accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the academic term for which they are seeking accommodations. Each eligible student is responsible for presenting relevant, verifiable, professional documentation and/or assessment reports to the Coordinator. Guidelines for documentation may be found at http://www.acs.tcu.edu/disability_documentation.asp.

Students with emergency medical information or needing special arrangements in case a building must be evacuated should discuss this information with their instructor/professor as soon as possible.

Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct (Sec. 3.4 from the Student Handbook) –Any act, such as cheating or plagiarism, that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. The procedures used to resolve suspected acts of academic misconduct are available in the offices of Academic Deans and the Office of Campus Life and are listed in detail in the Undergraduate Catalog (Student Policies>Academic Conduct Policy Details;

http://www.catalog.tcu.edu/current_year/undergraduate/).

Resources for Students

Campus Life (257-7926, Sadler Hall 2006); TCU Library (257-7117); Center for Academic Services (257-7486, Sadler Hall 1022); Writing Center (257-7221, Reed 419); Student Development Services (257-7855, BLUU 2003); Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (257-7830, Jarvis Hall), and Counseling, Testing, and Mental Health Center (257-7863, Brown Lupton Health Center).

Non-discrimination Statement

TCU is committed to providing a diverse and supportive learning community that values the dignity and respect of the individual and has a non-discrimination policy that reflects this philosophy. Disrespectful behaviors or comments addressed towards any group or individual, regardless of race/ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion, ability, or any other difference is deemed unacceptable in this class, and will be addressed immediately by the professor.

SCCDance Statement on Professional Practice

Touch and physical, hands-on feedback are essential teaching and learning strategies used in the TCU School for Classical & Contemporary Dance and are widely accepted methodologies in the field. If you need any modifications to or wish to request alteration of this practice, please speak to the instructor immediately.

Required book: *Mindful America*, Jeff Wilson (purchase via Amazon, or equivalent)
And a number of readings found on eCollege/Learning Studio

There will also be one or more movement practices in every class.
Bring a notebook/critical response journal to each class session for personal reflection.

Finally, feel free to see us before or after class, or by appointment.

CLASS SCHEDULE

When entering, take off your shoes, turn off and stow your cell phone, begin the entering ritual, composing silence. Each class meeting will include contemplative movement practice.

Readings are found in eCollege "Doc Sharing"

- Jan. 12 Introduction to course
Start ongoing exercise of contemplative movement practice: see eCollege – "Class Exercises" Unit in Course Home
- Jan. 14 Andrew O. Fort, "Contemplative Studies and the Liberal Arts "
Buddhist-Christian Studies 2013, 23-32
- Jan. 19 **MLK holiday**
- Jan. 21 Fiona Bannon and Duncan Holt, "Touch: Experience and Knowledge" from *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices* 2011, 215-27
- Jan. 26 Mirabai Bush and Daniel Barbezat—Chapter One from *Contemplative Practices in Higher Education*, "Transforming Higher Education." 2013, 3-20
- Fran Grace, "Learning as a Path, Not a Goal: Contemplative Pedagogy Its Principles and Practices" from *Teaching Theology and Religion* 2011, 99-124
- Jan. 28 Mind and body in neuroscience
Matthieu Ricard, Antoine Lutz and Richard J. Davidson "Mind of the Meditator " from *Scientific American* November, 2014, 38-45
- Feb. 2 Linda Heumann interview with Evan Thompson, "The Embodied Mind," *Tricycle*, Fall 2014, 38ff.
Lineage appreciation exercise assignment
- Feb. 4 AF – Asian ways of knowing: Life as Holy Ritual
Lineage appreciation exercise assignment due
Confucius: The Secular as Sacred
Herbert Fingarette, 1-17, 71-79
- Feb. 9 AF – Asian ways of knowing: No self
David Loy, *Awareness Bound and Unbound*, 61-70
Kathleen McDonald, *How to Meditate*, 58-62
SDR in Florida

- Feb. 11 Guest: Mark Dennis: Mind and Body in Buddhism
Thich Nhat Hanh, from *The Miracle of Mindfulness* to p. 24
SDR in Florida
- Feb. 16 Guest: Judith Simmer-Brown, Mind and Body in Tibetan Buddhism
Reggie Ray, *Touching Enlightenment*, 50-54
Chogyam Trungpa, *Collected Works*, 518-28
- Feb. 18 Guest: Ale Chaoul: Mind and Body in Tibetan Yoga
Houston Chronicle article 12/31/14 on meditation for cancer
Shambala Sun March 07 on Trulkhor
and videos by email
- Feb. 23 class canceled by ice storm
- Feb. 25 Guest: David Cross: Mind and Body in Taichiquan
Karen Caldwell etc. on Taichiquan
Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine 17:10, 2011,
931–938
Tim Cartmell,, “Important Principles for Practice” in
Coursebook on Tajiquan, Chapter 4, 32-37
- March 2 Guest: Li-Chou Cheng: Tai Chi Chuan practice
- March 4 Gather and reflect on guest presentations
Introduce Meditation Project
Go over Final Project and Reflection Paper assignment

SPRING BREAK

- March 16 Contemplative movement practice
(Guest: Alex Masi Mind and Body in Indian Dance
Canceled due to health issue)
- March 18 TED Talk: John Francis
http://www.ted.com/talks/john_francis_walks_the_earth?language=en
Meditation Project due
SDR at ACDA
- March 23 Guest: Dr. Dave Aftandilian
Contemplating Animals: Native American Perspectives
Arthur Amiotte, *Eagles Fly Over*
In Sam Gill, ed. *Native American Traditions*, 90-103

- March 25 Guest: Chuck Dunning, TCU Student Development Services
- March 30 Reading from *The Shallows* by Nicholas Carr, 115-34
Introduce Precepts Project
Digital awareness exercise assignment
- April 1 Guest: Donnalee Dox: Mind and Body in Indian Yoga
Introduction to *Yoga in Practice*, David Gordon White, 1-23.
- April 6 Precepts Project due
Digital awareness assignment due
- April 8 *Mindful America*, Jeff Wilson
Through Chapter 2 (to p. 74)
Silence exercise assignment
- April 13 *Mindful America*
Chapters 4, 6, and Postscript (70 pp.)
- April 15 Silence exercise assignment
Gather and reflect on course
Final Project/Reflection Paper check in
- April 20 Students present Final Projects (3)
- April 22 Students present Final Projects (3)
- April 27 Students present Final Projects (3)
- April 29 Gather and reflect on course/discussion of course outcomes

Extra credit opportunities: Contemplative movement practice in the Japanese Garden
Labyrinth exercise assignment

Final Reflection Paper due 5 pm Monday, May 4th

Mindbodyness : Contemplative movement and reflection Class Exercises

Ongoing Assignment

Personal contemplative movement practice: Choose three days of the week (excluding class days) to practice. Create a daily contemplative movement practice for yourself. Start with 5-10 minutes each day and work to 20-30 minutes. Take a few minutes at the end to write reflections in your journal – thoughts, feelings and/or sensory responses. Do not censor yourself; respond without hesitation and see what comes up for you.

Discrete Assignments (see calendar)

Lineage appreciation exercise: starting with your earliest memories to the present day, reflect on your most influential teachers, mentors, and/or role models. Write a few sentences on how and why each was important. Do you know who their teachers were? Did you ever express gratitude to them? Would you be willing to choose one (or more) and do that now?

Silence exercise: over a 24-hour period, attend to the noises around you.

Can any be turned off or avoided? Check in about this regularly.

Minimize use of digital devices. Be aware when you do use them.

Listen carefully to others. Speak only when necessary, and contemplate what speech really is necessary.

Sit silently for at least five minutes, being aware of your surroundings. Watch your breath.

Walk silently for at least ten minutes. What do you notice?

Reflect on silence in your journal - thoughts, feelings, and/or sensory responses (in abstract or in your immediate experience).

Digital awareness exercise: check all digital devices when you wake up, then turn them off.

Keep them off unless usage is necessary, or

Be conscious when you turn them on, and why. Explain.

At noon, 6 pm, and midnight, reflect on digital devices and their presence or absence in your journal - thoughts, feelings, and/or sensory responses (in abstract or in your immediate experience).

Labyrinth exercise: Walk the labyrinth for 15 minutes.

Be conscious of what you sense - sight; sounds; texture of the ground, air; smells – as well as the body-mind attention you need to navigate the labyrinth.

Reflect on this walk in your journal - thoughts, feelings, and/or sensory responses (in abstract or in your immediate experience).

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION PROJECT

(with thanks to Mackenzie Brown, Trinity University)

In order to gain a greater awareness of mind, body, and their relation, you will do the following week-long noticing exercise which has been influenced by basic Theravada Buddhist *vipassana* meditation. You need not accept any Buddhist doctrines to do this; all you need is the capacity to notice your thoughts. The aim is for you to become more aware of your thoughts, feelings, and movement in the world; you will also better understand a basic contemplative practice in another worldview. Both understanding other perspectives accurately and increased reflective self-awareness are important goals of liberal arts inquiry.

For this project, you will keep a daily journal (with final draft preferably typed). Your report's length will vary, but 5-7 pages are typical. The project is mandatory, and will be graded excellent/good/no credit. It is due **Wednesday March 18**.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MEDITATION PROJECT

1. Begin by writing down what you expect to get out of this project.
2. In any meditation practice, the object of meditation should match the personality and needs of the meditator. Reflect on the type of person you think you are (greedy, generous, angry, kind, envious, content, intelligent, easily confused, excited, calm, preoccupied, tenacious, etc.) and then pick a meditation subject which you would like to contemplate. It might be a quality (like friendliness, sympathetic joy, compassion, or equanimity) or your body (focusing on one or more particular parts). You will meditate on this subject for a week.
3. During this week, you will spend ten to fifteen minutes each morning and each evening practicing noticing meditation. Each morning, sit and follow your breaths for ten or fifteen minutes as shown in the reading and class. If you fall asleep, start again. Just follow your breaths, and notice what you notice.
4. For the first four evenings, meditate on your subject in a simple form, i. e. concentrate on your body, or on friendliness--just be aware of your subject, and your thoughts and feelings about it. For the last three evenings, focus on a particular aspect of your subject, i. e. where am "I" in my body? How does my body change daily? Or, to whom am I truly friendly? Why? To whom am I mean or angry? Why?

Remember, the morning meditation stays the same all week. Have your journal handy after each meditation. Write down what you noticed in your body, feelings, and thoughts. Should any questions arise, feel free to talk to one of us (preferably as soon as possible).

5. Do not expect too much from this project. It is common for students to become frustrated when they do not make the "progress" they think they should be making. And

you may become discouraged if the last days are "less comfortable" than the first day. Just observe your thoughts and feelings.

Also, expect distractions. This is a university, not a meditation center (though you can practice noticing anywhere). While meditating, do not worry about what you will write in your journal. Mental rehearsal is a great distraction. Meditate when you meditate and write when you write.

6. At week's end, write up your experience of meditation practice. Start with your expectations, what type of person you decided you were (and why), and the meditation subject you chose (and why). Then include a daily journal of your thoughts, feelings, and any problems (excitement, fear, strange images/sensations, sleepiness, etc.) Compare and contrast your morning and evening meditations, and possible development or regression during the week. Conclude by comparing your expectations to your actual experiences, and describe what you learned from meditation.

GUIDELINES FOR PRECEPTS PROJECT (with thanks to Randall Nadeau, Trinity University)

This project is an opportunity to reflect on mind-body practice in everyday life. It is based on the first five precepts of the Buddhist tradition, but you need not accept (or even know) any Buddhist doctrines to do this; all you need is the capacity to be aware of your thoughts and actions. That is, the aim is for you to become more aware of your thoughts, feelings, and actions, and their effects on other beings; you will also better understand another worldview. Both understanding other perspectives accurately and increased reflective self-awareness are important goals of liberal arts inquiry.

You are to keep a daily journal for five days. First, write a short statement of what you expect from this exercise in your journal. You will choose a different precept for each day (you may take the precepts in any order) and each evening write a journal entry (with reflection and analysis on specific actions) on the series of questions under the precept. You may follow instructions (to refrain) or engage in the proscribed activities; your goal is to be mindful in any event.

In writing up the assignment, you will refer back to your journal. Start with the statement about what you expected from the project. Follow this with a half page summation of your insights and analyses each day (7 total). At this point, to conclude the paper, write at least one more page (but no more than two) on your overarching reflections and insights: find a way to synthesize and/or analyze. You may find you will draw on other experiences or readings from the course (but this is not necessary). The project will be graded on the Koehler Center 100-point scale found in the course syllabus. The exercise is due Monday, April 6 at class time.

1. Avoid harming sentient beings. In the past twenty-four hours have you:
Eaten anything? What? How did it get on your plate--who planted or nurtured it, harvested or butchered it, cleaned and cooked it?
Harmed anyone (or thing)? By striking? By aggressive behavior or avoidance? By speech or facial expression, intentional or unintentional? By laughter?
2. Avoid taking what is not offered. In the past twenty-four hours have you:

Bought anything? How? Was it “freely given?” Where did you get the money? Did you really need the item? Why? What would you do if you didn’t have it?

Borrowed anything? Why? Was it really given freely? Will your use diminish its value, or cause hardship to the loaner?

3. Avoid false speech. In the past twenty-four hours have you:

Lied? Said something not strictly true? Equivocated? Exaggerated? Hidden the truth from another? Why? Have you thought about the effect of your words before you spoke?

Have you actively sought the truth in your studies? Out of class? Do you honor your teachers and the knowledge they share?

4. Avoid lust. In the past twenty-four hours have you:

Had or acted on a sexual fantasy? Why did you desire your partner? Was your partner a willing participant? What are the implications of your actions? Were you mindful of the consequences, psychological or physical/medical?

Wanted something you can or should not have? Why? Why can’t or shouldn’t you have it? Would it harm others to have it? Would it harm you?

5. Avoid intoxicants. In the past twenty-four hours, have you:

Taken alcohol or other consciousness altering substances? What was the impact on your senses and awareness? Were there later physical or mental consequences?

Have you intoxicated your consciousness by going on the Internet (checking email, Facebook, gaming), listening to music, or watching TV or a movie?

Did your use of such intoxicants cause you to violate any other precept (harming, taking, lusting, false speaking). Did it take time away from your studies and the pursuit of wisdom?

Mindbodyness: Contemplative Movement and Reflection Final Project Guidelines

Design a contemplative movement practice that you will direct in our class. You may draw on any of the practices that are outlined on the “Tree of Contemplative Practices” as long as you can set the practice in motion, *somehow*. You may want to create a practice from scratch, or you might take a practice we have already experienced and tweak it so that it goes in a different direction. You are the designer.

You will have a 20-minute time frame to guide all of us through your practice *and* reflect on it. We have days set aside for each of you to facilitate practice – check the calendar – and we will set up the schedule on Wednesday, March 4th.

Post- presentation, you will craft a reflective paper in response to the experience of facilitating the practice. **The paper is due 5 pm Monday, May 4th.**

You should include:

- research, reflection, and processes by which you came to craft the practice – both internal and external
- your assessment of the experience, weaving in feedback you got from classmates and teachers
- an overarching look at your experience this semester: what worked for you and why/how? What did not and how did you adapt or shift? Offer specific concepts from class or reading that you have incorporated into your understanding of being, and how? Or when? What will you carry forward from this course?

Use MLA style formatting. It is difficult to predict the length of the reflection papers, especially since we have not taught this course before. We are going to set the parameters to 6-8 double spaced pages. If you would prefer to use another formatting style, and/or if you find you are coming in over or under the 6-8 page length, speak with one of us before the end of the day, May 1st.

Your paper will be graded on:

- 1) form (presentation, grammar, spelling, punctuation)
- 2) clarity of focus, organization, and expression
- 3) comprehension and utilization of course material
- 4) critical reflection and personal insight