

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS - CIS 135 Z/CSPL 135 Z (.5 credit class)

Winter 2025 In-person class

Jan 7, 2025, Tuesday, 12 Noon -1:30pm EDT via Zoom

Jan 19, Sunday, 10-12:30 pm, 130-430pm

Jan 20, Monday, 10-12:30 pm, 130-430pm

Jan 21, Tuesday, 10-12:30 pm, 130-430pm

World Music Hall CFA/ ORSL Lounge (169 High St. Second Floor)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students are invited to commit to a set of practices that cultivate compassion, curiosity, equanimity, and self-awareness. During this retreat-informed intensive on contemplative practices, students will be introduced to various individual and relational techniques aimed toward moving attention to the present moment. Together we will create a routine of daily meditation and mindful movement, explore silence, and engage in mindful dialogue. We will look at the potential of these contemplative practices to contribute to societal health as well as individual well-being. Please be prepared to spend each morning in silent sitting and walking meditation. Afternoons will include insight dialogue, gentle yoga, journaling, and group discussion.

You will need to arrive 5-10 minutes early to each class session. If you arrive late, please enter quietly and wait on the carpeted rafters.

The home practices you will need to access can be found by going to this [link](#).

OBJECTIVES

- Students will develop a personal daily practice of sitting/walking meditation, gentle yoga, and awareness of the present moment.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of contemplative practices in their own experiences and in society.
- Students will be able to articulate ethical, cultural, and institutional issues around these practices, and will be able to make decisions about how to utilize the practices in a meaningful and non-harmful way.
- Students will cultivate the skill set to direct the fruits of their practice to benefit all beings.

EXPECTATIONS

Attendance at all classes is mandatory. Students are expected to commit to active participation during meeting times and also the daily home practice and assignments. Please arrive on time for each meeting (**by 9:50 AM and 1:25 PM**) and quietly find a seat in the room. Respect fellow participants by keeping confidence; in other words, what happens in class, remains in class.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

If for some reason you must miss class, it is your responsibility to contact the instructors in advance of your absence to get all the necessary missed information so that when you arrive the following week, you are fully prepared.

Please wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothes, and be prepared to remove shoes for class. Individual journals will be provided for in-class journal writing assignments. Students may also choose to bring their own journals.

COURSEPACK:

Student ordering instructions: You may purchase your own printed copy of the course packs through the Course Pack application in your WesPortal. \$10. Once you have logged in to WesPortal, select "Course Packs" under "Courses." You will see a list of materials available for each course you are officially enrolled in. To order a copy, select Order Print. Course packs will be delivered through Wes Station's package delivery system. Course pack purchases will be charged directly to your student account. If you experience difficulties placing your order, please email printing@wesleyan.edu.

ASSIGNMENTS

1 group project
1 in-class oral presentation

SYLLABUS:

Jan 7, 2025, Tuesday, Noon -1:30pm EDT via Zoom

Introduction and Course Overview

Framing (and naming) mindfulness:

Historical perspective and current cultural milieu

Community Contract

Assignment: 9 dots exercise

Home practice:

- Choose one daily activity to bring full awareness to for each day of the week: brushing teeth, walking across campus, and preparing a meal. Write a journal entry.
- Reading from coursepack TBD

In-person class sessions:

January 19, 2025 Sunday, 10-12:30 pm, 130-430pm

Day 1: Observing the body, breath, and mind

Morning Exercises: Awareness of breath, sound, and posture
Introduction to Yoga Practice, walking meditation, sitting meditation

Afternoon Engagements: Body scan, pleasant/unpleasant/neutral, naming and labeling thoughts, the value of unplugging

Modalities: insight dialogue, journaling, experiential practice

Assignments for tomorrow: Reading from coursepack TBD, unplugging, prayer/poetry exercise

January 20, 2025 Monday, 10-12:30 pm, 130-430pm

Day 2: Awareness of words, emotions, communication, gratitude

Morning exercises: yoga asana practice, sitting /walking meditation

Afternoon engagements: prayer and metta exercises, RAIN, and difficult communication

Modalities: insight dialogue, journaling, discussion, experiential practice

Assignment for tomorrow: reading from coursepack TBD, group-led discussion preparation and personal reflection

January 21, 2025 Tuesday, 10-12:30 pm, 130-430pm

Day 3: Issues, context, and ethics; setting intentions; building community

Morning exercises: yoga asana practice, sitting/walking meditation

Afternoon engagement: group-led discussions, stress response, resources

The syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructors.

RESOURCES AND POLICIES

Well Being Resources:

During the class, you may find yourself grappling with emotional, existential, or psychological issues. Should this happen, you might consider discussing these issues with CAPS. For information, go to their website:

<http://www.wesleyan.edu/caps/services/index.html>

You may also choose to discuss these issues with Rabbi David L. Teva, Director of the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life. He can be reached at the email above or 860-685-2278.

Covid-19 Code of Conduct

To protect your health and safety, the health and safety of instructors and staff, and the health and safety of your peers, all students must understand and adhere to the University's COVID-19 Code of Conduct. Students are encouraged to review the code of conduct regularly to stay up to date on the current code. The course instructors reserve the right to refuse to allow any student into the classroom who does not adhere to this code of conduct.

Time Commitment

While the exact time commitment for the class will vary individually and over the course of the semester, we recommend that you budget approximately **three out-of-class hours** for every class hour to complete the reading, assignments, homework, and project.

Accommodation Statement

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a disability as defined by the ADA. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible. If you have a disability, or think that you might have a disability, please contact Accessibility Services in order to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. Accessibility Services is located in North College, rooms 021/218, or can be reached by email (accessibility@wesleyan.edu) or phone (860-685-2332).

Religious/Spiritual Observance

If you anticipate that your religious/spiritual observance may conflict with academic obligations such as attending class, taking examinations, or submitting assignments, you can work directly with your professor to make reasonable arrangements. Should you require additional support or guidance, please feel free to reach out to Rabbi David Teva, Director of the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at dleipziger@wesleyan.edu or any of the chaplains in the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at <https://www.wesleyan.edu/orsl/index.html>

For a list of religious holidays celebrated by members of the Wesleyan community, go to Wesleyan's Multifaith calendar which can be found at: <https://www.wesleyan.edu/orsl/multifaith-calendar.html>.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, ability, and nationality.

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. We will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise us of this preference early in the semester so that we may make appropriate changes to our records. For more information, see the policies on the student code.

Discrimination and Harassment

Wesleyan University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. Wesleyan will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this Wesleyan policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office for Equity and Inclusion at 860-685-4771. The responsibility of the University Members has more information.

Honor Code

All students of Wesleyan University are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council—Office

of Student Affairs. Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). The Office of Student Affairs has additional information.

Title IX Resources:

If past trauma inhibits your ability to fully participate in class, please contact Debbie Colucci, Deputy Title IX Coordinator, at dcolucci@wesleyan.edu, or your class dean. Additionally, and if you are comfortable, you can work directly with your professor to make reasonable arrangements. The SHAPE office is another resource.
<https://www.wesleyan.edu/shape/>

In Class Presentation Resources:

For your in class final presentation, you may want to explore this wonderful resource. The Wesleyan Presentation Studio offers guidance for design, strategy, and rehearsal of presentations, posters, and speeches. Make a free one-on-one appointment with a Studio Mentor, available to help with any stage in your development process, by visiting <https://www.wesleyan.edu/cpi/presentations/> or through your WesPortal by following the link under Academics. The online scheduler will show you all available appointments. The Studio recommends 30 minute appointments for rehearsals and minor questions and 60 minute appointments for brainstorming sessions or more involved support..

REQUIRED READING

Class coursepack:

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RECOMMENDED / INSPIRATIONAL READINGS

Hanh, Thich Nhat (2009). *You Are Here*. Shambala: Boulder, CO

Shy, Yael (2017). *What Now? Meditation for Your Twenties and Beyond*. Random House: New York.

Williams, Angel Kyodo; Owens, Rod; Syedullah, Jasmine (2016) *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation..* North Atlantic Books: Berkeley, CA.

Kabat-Zinn, Jon (2005). *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation and Everyday Life*. Hachette Books: New York.

Other readings TBA

ASSIGNMENTS

Mid-semester check-in: Students are required to meet in a small group with one of the instructors mid-semester to discuss the evolution of individual practice. This is a time to reflect on what has been working up to that point, patterns and habits that are emerging or just coming to light, problems that need to be addressed, and thoughts on the class moving forward. Individual check-ins with instructors are also an option, instead, or in tandem with this small group meeting. Please see one of the instructors if you would prefer a one-on-one meeting, or would like to talk at any time over the course of the semester.

Group critical examination assignment: Students are required to look outside their individual practice and examine the state of mindfulness in cultural context. Issues that often come up when we interrogate these practices and their utilization in current society are cultural appropriation, commodification, the interplay of power and privilege within groups of practitioners, and the false notion that mindfulness can act as a panacea for all of society's ills. In small groups, students will examine a topic of interest via a scholarly article, a podcast, a documentary, or some other media. Groups will meet outside of class for a discussion, assign individuals a deeper dive into the topic if necessary, and then work together to present the issue to the class. More information on this assignment will be forthcoming.

Final exam: On the last day of class, each student will present a brief and informal telling of their process over the semester and plans for future utilization of these practices. More information on this will be provided as the semester progresses.