

**PHED 119: Introduction to Mindfulness**  
**Course Syllabus**

**Fall 2021**

**Units: 2.0**

**Instructor:** Linda Yaron Weston

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**Office Hours:** Mondays 3-4:00pm. Please reach out if you are not available at this time and would like to schedule an alternate appointment. Email for location.

**Sections:** MW 1-1:50 50030; MW 2-2:50 50032; MW 3-4:50 50035

**Room:** MW 1-1:50 GFS 228; MW 2-2:50 GFS 201; W 3-4:50 GFS 105

**Course Description:** Situated in the mind-body branch of the USC Physical Education Program, this experiential course is an introduction to mindfulness. Through it, students will learn the principles of practice, develop their own meditation practice, and apply principles to daily life. They will learn strategies to skillfully work with thoughts, emotions, and sensations, while developing their capacity to enhance mind-body awareness of present-moment experience. They will study theory and research in the field of mindfulness and the emerging science that shows promising, beneficial effects for physical and mental health and well-being. This course is designed for beginners and is also suitable for those with experience who want to refine their practice. Classes consist of a combination of lecture, practice, and discussion.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Synthesize theory, practice, and research in mindfulness and apply understanding to individual practice.
2. Develop and sustain personal meditation practice.
3. Investigate mind-body awareness and connection and apply principles to enhance capacity for presence, connection, openness, and curiosity in experiences.
4. Describe and apply mindfulness principles to skillfully cultivate focus and concentration, including as they relate to working with emotions, thoughts, and sensations.
5. Describe and apply mindfulness principles as they relate to self-regulation in navigating difficult emotions and thoughts, including stress and anxiety.
6. Identify and apply techniques to skillfully cultivate emotions of well-being, such as kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity.
7. Apply mindful awareness in daily life, including as it relates to:
  - a. clarity in decision making and problem solving to skillfully respond, rather than react, to complex situations.
  - b. interpersonal relationships and relational mindfulness practices of active listening and mindful communication.
  - c. navigating change, time management, and exploring what it means to have a conscious and purposeful relationship with technology.

**Relevant Physical Education Department Objectives:**

1. Students will understand the importance of sound health and fitness principles as they relate to better health and will be able to recognize the physical and mental benefits of increased activity.
2. Student will be exposed to a variety of activities providing them the opportunity to participate in a motivating and nurturing environment resulting in a greater sense of well-being.
3. Students will demonstrate proficiency through knowledge and acquired skills enabling them to develop an appreciation of physical activity as a lifetime pursuit and a means to better health.

**Acknowledgement:**

Though our program here is secular, it is with an acknowledgement for the roots mindfulness has in Buddhist philosophy, which emerged in the context of an ancient India where Hinduism, Jainism, yoga, asceticism, and other traditions were practiced. Certain practices and ideas have evolved and been carried across time and geography and have been adapted here for a foundational, interdisciplinary study. USC PE Mindfulness would also like to acknowledge and honor the ancestral and unceded land of the Tongva people that our university sits on. For at least 9,000 years, they stewarded the land we call Southern California along with their neighbors the Chumash, Tataviam, Kitanemuk, Serrano, Cahuilla, Payomkawichum, Acjachemen, Ipai-Tipai, Kumeyaay, and Quechan peoples. To learn more about the history of these indigenous lands:

<https://dornsife.usc.edu/hist/land-acknowledgement/>

**Required Course Book:**

*Mindfulness for Young Adults: Tools to Thrive in School and Life*, by Linda Yaron Weston

Available in print and e-book

20% off for USC students if purchased through [Routledge](#) using code from instructor.

On reserve with [USC Library](#) (login to USC Course Reserves ARES with USC Net ID).

Also available at USC Bookstore and on Amazon.

**Communication:** I encourage students to reach out by email and will try to respond as soon as possible, and within 48 hours.

**Reflection and Evaluation:** Reflection is an integral part of the learning and teaching process. As such, you will complete a series of reflections on your practice through the course. We will also complete mid- and end-of-course evaluations for the course so that it can best serve the needs of students. Please feel free to also communicate feedback to me through the semester in person or by email.

**Online Etiquette (if online):** Your presence and engagement are as important online as in a physical classroom. Please plan to have screens on when possible and be on time to class. Once class has begun, it may take time to be admitted if meditation is in progress. Mute when not speaking to minimize background noise.

**In-Peron Policies:** To protect yourself and others, USC currently requires masking indoors for all individuals in campus facilities, including vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. Please do not eat in class. If you are feeling sick, please do not come to class in person. Compliance with [Trojan Check](#) is required before entering campus. Students are expected to comply with all aspects of USC's COVID-19 policy. Failure to do so may result in removal from the class and referral to Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards. For updates and information: <https://coronavirus.usc.edu>

**Grades:** The impact of your practice will be felt in how much effort, time, and awareness you choose to invest in it. Grades are based on your willingness to show up for your personal and class practice and are based on your approach to the following criteria:

1. Presence: time and awareness to show up for your practice
2. Effort: diligence and precision with which you practice
3. Curiosity: growth through a nonjudgmental approach
4. Kindness: choosing gentleness and patience over harshness towards body, mind, and practice

All work is due on the assigned date and is to be typed and submitted to Blackboard. Format: submit as a Word or PDF document, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1" margins, MLA format. Due dates under course outline.

- **60 Points:** Attend class and participate in sessions. 4 points for each week. It is the responsibility of each student to accurately sign in. Participation is an essential component of this course and serves to deepen student inquiry and reflection of the course material. Students need to be present in class to earn participation points. There will be an absence make-up opportunity in Module 5.
- **20 Points Each (100 points total): 5 Module Reflection Forms (for each of the 5 Modules). (Due Sunday midnight September 5, 19; October 3, 17; November 7).** They include:
  - Daily personal meditation practice log. 5-10 minutes per day recommended time Modules 1, 2 (weeks 1-4); 10-15 minutes per day Modules 3, 4 (weeks 5-8); 15-20+ minutes/day Module 5 (weeks 9-15). Or, you may increase depth by a self-chosen amount of minutes each week. You are welcome to use an app, guided meditations, or break up the time through the day.
  - Rubric Criteria: 8-10 points for meditation practice (presence, effort); 2-2.5 points for each of the written responses (thorough, reflective).
  - Workbook prompts. Choose 2 questions from the module to answer.
  - Class reflection prompts. Submit a reflection from class each module. Can be typed or submitted as a picture included in your document.
  - Outside meditation class. Attend a meditation class outside ours. Include reflection in Module 4 (week 8) form.

- **40 Points. Mindfulness in Daily Life Group Strategy and Presentation. (Due Week of November 8 in class)**
  1. Choose an area/topic in mindfulness you're interested in exploring with a group in Week 4. Areas of daily life can include relationships and communication, mindful eating, self-care and self-compassion, mindful technology use, mindful learning, mindful decision making, mindful movement, or social justice.
  2. Choose a mindfulness strategy to apply to an area of daily life you'd like to try out regularly for 5 weeks (daily or minimum 3x week). While groups will choose a shared topic to explore as a community, they may all employ different strategies within it. You are welcome to explore apps that track progress or enhance your experience.
  3. Organize a group in-class 15-minute per group presentation on your mindfulness topic and strategy. Include relevant research behind it (from credible, evidence-based sources; MLA format), reflections on how your strategy went, recommendations, or next steps. Presentations should be cooperative with each group member speaking, and interactive in nature (the class participates in the particular technique), and be visually displayed (ie. PowerPoint, Prezy, etc.).  
Rubric Criteria: 8 points for each of the following:
    - Content: clearly and concisely convey thoughtful ideas and examples
    - Application: Understanding and application of mindfulness principles
    - Voice: volume, clarity, emotion
    - Stance: body language, eye contact, presence
    - Style: effort, creativity, organization, applicability, interactivity, collaboration
- **75 Points. Online Exam (Due Sunday, November 21 midnight).** Based on content from reading, class content, and discussions. Be sure to stay current on course reading and material, as not all content on exam will be discussed in class.
- **25 Points. Meditation Final Reflection (Due Sunday, December 3 midnight).** Rubric Criteria: 5 points for each: Thorough, reflective, creative, understands and applies principles of practice.

**Grading Scale:** There are 300 total points possible. The overall grading scale is as follows  
A 282 / A- 270 / B+ 265 / B 260 / B- 255 / C+ 250 / C 245 / C- 240 / D 235

### Course Outline: Introduction to Mindfulness

Date	Topic
Week 1 <b>Module 1: Principles</b> <i>Week of 8/23</i>	What is mindfulness?; principles of practice Mindfulness and identity <b>Begin daily meditation practice (5-10 minutes/day)</b>  Workbook: Module 1: 1.0, 1.1
Week 2  <i>Week of 8/30</i>	Effort and concentration; anchor Emerging science of mindfulness Technique: STOP: Stop, Take a breath, Observe, Proceed*  <b>Due Sunday, September 5: Module 1 Reflection Form</b> (includes mindfulness article) Workbook: Module 1: 1.2, 1.3
Week 3 <b>Module 2: Body</b>  <i>Week of 9/6</i> <i>(Holiday: Labor Day Mon 9/6)</i>	Mind-body awareness and connection Conscious breathing Technique: Body scan <b>Share an article about mindfulness or meditation</b>  Workbook: Module 2: 2.0, 2.1
Week 4  <i>Week of 9/13</i>	Standing meditation, walking, and mindful movement* Mindful eating Choose mindfulness in daily life groups  <b>Due Sunday, September 19: Module 2 Reflection Form</b> (includes daily life area selection) Workbook: Module 2: 2.2, 2.3, 2.4
Week 5 <b>Module 3: Heart</b>  <i>Week of 9/20</i>	Working with emotions: noticing and processing Compassion, kindness Technique: RAIN: Recognize, Allow, Investigate, Nonidentify, Nurture  <b>Deepen daily meditation practice (10-15 minutes/day)</b> Workbook: Module 3: 3.0, 3.1
Week 6  <i>Week of 9/27</i>	Working with difficult emotions; mindfulness and mental health Joy, gratitude; equanimity, forgiveness*  <b>Due Sunday, October 3: Module 3 Reflection Form</b> (includes midsemester evaluation) Workbook: Module 3: 3.2, 3.3
Week 7 <b>Module 4: Mind</b>  <i>Week of 10/4</i>	Working with thoughts: observation and visualization* techniques Uncertainty and anxiety  Workbook: Module 4: 4.0, 4.1

Week 8  <i>Week of 10/11</i> <i>(Holiday: Fall Recess</i> <i>Th-Fri 10/14-15)</i>	Resilience and post-traumatic growth Identity and social consciousness  <b>Due Sunday, October 17: Module 4 Reflection Form</b> (includes outside meditation class) Workbook: Module 4: 4.2, 4.3
Week 9 <b>Module 5: Daily Life</b>  <i>Week of 10/18</i>	Mindful communication Relational mindfulness; active listening and speaking <b>Deepen daily meditation practice 15-20+ minutes/day</b>  Workbook: Module 5: 5.0, 5.1
Week 10  <i>Week of 10/25</i>	Mindfulness in decision-making*; consent Balancing time and priorities; technology  Workbook: Module 5: 5.2
Week 11  <i>Week of 11/1</i>	Coping with change, loss, and impermanence Mindfulness and success  <b>Due Sunday, November 7: Module 5 Reflection Form</b> (includes book reflection and make-up) Workbook: Module: 5: 5.3, 5.4
Week 12 <i>Week of 11/8</i>	<b>Due Week of November 8-12: Presentations (in class)</b>
Week 13  <i>Week of 11/15</i>	Debrief presentations and review modules Practice: open awareness*  <b>Due Sunday, November 21: Online Exam</b> (Window Friday, November 19 noon–Sunday, November 21 midnight)
Week 14 <i>Week of 11/22</i> <i>(Holiday: Thanksgiving</i> <i>Wed-Sun 11/24-28)</i>	Practice: open awareness*
Week 15  <i>Week of 11/29</i>	Closing and next steps End-of-Semester Evaluation <b>Due Friday, December 3 midnight: Final Reflection</b>

\* indicates immersive meditation practice

### Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

#### Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are

equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

### **Support Systems:**

*Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. [engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu)

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu)

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

*Office of Student Accessibility Services*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <https://osas.usc.edu>

*Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

*Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. [diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

*USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

*USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community.*