

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

Fall 2022

Units: 2.0

Instructor: Christian Straka

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Office Hours: By Appointment Friday 9:00-10:00am

Sections: 50037 – Friday, 10:00-11:50am

Room: CPA 255

Course Description: Situated in the mind-body branch of the USC Department of Physical Education & Mind Body Health, 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 a 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.

Mind-Body Studies Minor Learning Objectives:

1. Explore the interconnectedness of body and mind across disciplines for a comprehensive approach to mental, physical, social, and collective wellbeing.
2. Build and sustain a personal meditation practice, utilize conscious breathing techniques, and apply healthy living strategies to nutrition, exercise, sleep, and stress resilience.
3. Deepen self-awareness of alignment and body mechanics for increased strength, balance, and flexibility — and self-awareness as a foundation for mental health and emotional literacy.
4. Investigate what it means to practice happiness, resilience, consent, and wellbeing, recognizing diverse bodies, identities, perspectives, and sociocultural experiences.
5. Apply mindful awareness in daily life, including as it relates to:
 - a. decision making and problem solving.
 - b. interpersonal relationships and communication.
 - c. career-readiness, time management, goal setting, and exploring what it means to have a conscious and purposeful relationship with technology.

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 PEMBH 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 FLR40

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, if you are feeling sick, please do not come to class in person. Students are expected to comply with all aspects of USC's COVID-19 policy, including complying with [Trojan Check](#), masking when required, and not eating in class. Failure to comply 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. In the event that a due date falls on a university holiday, students are able to submit the following school day.

- **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 4, September 18, October 2, October 16, November).** 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 7 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, social justice, or the environment.
 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 20 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 last day of class 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
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<p>Week 1 Module 1: Principles <i>Week of 8/22</i></p>	<p>What is mindfulness?; principles of practice Mindfulness and identity Begin daily meditation practice (5-10 minutes/day)</p> <p>Workbook: Module 1: 1.0, 1.1</p>
<p>Week 2 <i>Week of 8/29</i></p>	<p>Effort and concentration; anchor Emerging science of mindfulness Technique: STOP: Stop, Take a breath, Observe, Proceed*</p> <p>Due Monday, September 4: Module 1 Reflection Form (includes mindfulness article) Workbook: Module 1: 1.2, 1.3, 1.4</p>
<p>Week 3 Module 2: Body <i>Week of 9/5</i> <i>(Holiday Monday 9/5</i> <i>Labor Day)</i></p>	<p>Mind-body awareness and connection Conscious breathing Technique: Body scan Share an article about mindfulness or meditation</p> <p>Workbook: Module 2: 2.0, 2.1</p>
<p>Week 4 <i>Week of 9/12</i></p>	<p>Standing meditation, walking, and mindful movement* Mindful eating Choose mindfulness in daily life groups</p> <p>Due Sunday, September 18: Module 2 Reflection Form (includes daily life area selection) Workbook: Module 2: 2.2, 2.3, 2.4</p>
<p>Week 5 Module 3: Heart <i>Week of 9/19</i></p>	<p>Working with emotions: noticing and processing Compassion, kindness Technique: RAIN: Recognize, Allow, Investigate, Nonidentify, Nurture</p> <p>Deepen daily meditation practice (10-15 minutes/day) Workbook: Module 3: 3.0, 3.1</p>
<p>Week 6 <i>Week of 9/26</i></p>	<p>Working with difficult emotions; mindfulness and mental health Forgiveness, equanimity; joy, gratitude*</p> <p>Due Sunday, October 2: Module 3 Reflection Form (includes midsemester evaluation) Workbook: Module 3: 3.2, 3.3</p>
<p>Week 7 Module 4: Mind <i>Week of 10/3)</i></p>	<p>Working with thoughts: observation and visualization techniques Uncertainty and anxiety</p> <p>Workbook: Module 4: 4.0, 4.1</p>
<p>Week 8</p>	<p>Resilience and post-traumatic growth Identity and social consciousness*</p>

<p><i>Week of 10/10</i> <i>(Fall Recess Th-Fri 10/13-14)</i></p>	<p>Due Sunday, October 16: Module 4 Reflection Form (includes outside meditation class) Workbook: Module 4: 4.2, 4.3</p>
<p>Week 9 Module 5: Daily Life <i>Week of 10/17</i></p>	<p>Mindful communication Relational mindfulness; active listening and speaking Deepen daily meditation practice 15-20+ minutes/day Workbook: Module 5: 5.0, 5.1</p>
<p>Week 10 <i>Week of 10/24</i></p>	<p>Mindfulness in decision-making*; consent Balancing time and priorities; technology Workbook: Module 5: 5.2</p>
<p>Week 11 <i>Week of 10/31</i></p>	<p>Coping with change, loss, and impermanence Mindfulness and success Due Sunday, November 6: Module 5 Reflection Form (includes book reflection and make-up) Workbook: Module: 5: 5.3, 5.4</p>
<p>Week 12 <i>Week of 11/7</i></p>	<p>Due Week of November 7-11: Presentations (in class)</p>
<p>Week 13 <i>Week of 11/14</i></p>	<p>Debrief presentations and review modules Practice: open awareness* Due Sunday, November 20: Online Exam (Window Friday, November 18 noon–Sunday, November 20 midnight)</p>
<p>Week 14 <i>Week of 11/21</i> <i>(Thanksgiving Holiday Wed-Sun 11/23-27)</i></p>	<p>Practice: open awareness*</p>
<p>Week 15 <i>Week of 11/28</i></p>	<p>Closing and next steps End-of-Semester Evaluation Due last day of class midnight: Final Reflection</p>

* 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. 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.