

USC Marshall

School of Business

MOR-598: Special Topics

Compassion-Based Organizational Practices

Syllabus – Spring 2024 – Tuesday – 6:30 – 7:50 pm – 1.5 Units

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This 1.5-unit course explores compassion-based leadership, and its relationship to the design and development of organizational culture. With a starting point inspired by the timeless maxim, "Know Thy Self", this course goes further to consider two lesser-known inscriptions that were found at Delphi; "All in Moderation", and "Surety Is Ruin." Each of the aforementioned maxims open doors of inquiry to self-compassion, the dualistic framework of consciousness, and mindfulness as emotive knowledge.

By making clear distinctions between self-compassion, self-pity, and self-esteem, the course will prepare participants to cultivate and understand the importance of their insight-oriented personal narrative, and coinciding work, thereby preparing leaders to infuse the fingerprint of their essence (self-referential, archetypal, and auto poietic) into the organization's symbols, language, rituals, and mission.

The course will also explore the prospects of weaving compassion into the hygiene of the organization. Ways in which a leader's self-compassion by way of example, and formalized policy would help to facilitate an ongoing cultivation of a compassion-driven culture.

A practical component of the course includes participation in guided mindful meditations, as well as the opportunity to lead a small-group mindful meditation. While there are well known physical and mental benefits that meditation can offer, this course draws from the latest findings in behavioral neuroscience (Polyvagal Theory) to soundly inform and prepare participants in a way that will help them to identify common barriers to mindfulness, that leave many new and even experienced practitioners without some of the features of meditation that are known to promote mental and physical health. Through an understanding of how our physiology and psychology maintains those barriers, participants will employ polyvagal informed techniques that set the table for increased equanimity and emotive awareness.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the link between self-compassion and self-knowledge, thereby revealing how a deeper connection between the leader, the symbols, language, and archetypally based rituals of organizational culture, act to inspire and sustain culture over time.
2. Describe the difference between emotions and feelings, depicting how that understanding serves to bridge the chasm between self and other.
3. Apply Polyvagal-informed concepts and techniques to help develop a workplace environment that is more conducive to social engagement and interdepartmental communication.
4. Describe the 3 Modes of Neuroception and differentiate modes that can serve as portals from modes that can inhibit states of mindfulness and self-compassion.
5. Describe the connections between self-compassion and compassion, and identify the ways in which self-compassion serves as a foundation for the generalization of compassion to others.
6. Lead a 3-stage mindful meditation method and describe how the physiological and psychological effects of meditation can bring about a sense of safety among team members and colleagues.
7. Demonstrate an ability to engage in a more flexible and creative decision-making process by broadening the range of choices rather than being bound to a binary “this or that” framework.

COURSE MATERIALS

All readings for this course are contained in the course reader. Here are the assignments for each week.

Week 1

Introduction To Compassion-Based Organizational Practices

Week 2

I. Grimes MG, Vogus TJ. Inconceivable! Possibilistic thinking and the sociocognitive underpinnings of entrepreneurial responses to grand challenges. *Organization Theory*. 2021

Week 3

II. Newman KM. How Much of Your Happiness Is Under Your Control? <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article>. 2020

Week 4

III. Porges, S. W. (2017). Vagal Pathways: Portals to Compassion. In *The Oxford Handbook of Compassion Science* (1st Ed.). Oxford University Press.

Week 5

IV. Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. (2013). *Organizational behavior* (15th ed.) Boston. Pearson. Pages: 480 – 509

Week 6

V. C.G. Jung. (2014). The Development of Personality. In *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 17* (p. 167-186). Princeton University Press.

Week 7

VI. Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. (2013). *Organizational behavior* (15th ed.) Boston. Pearson. Pages: 510 – 541

Week 8

VII. Quinn, R. E. (1996). *Deep change: discovering the leader within* (1st Ed.) Jossey-Bass Publishers. Chapter 14

Week 9

VIII. Lewis, T., Amini, F., & Lannon, R. (2000). A general theory of love (1st Ed.). Random House. Between Stone and Sky.

Week 10

Spring Break

Week 11

IX. Capra, F., & Luisi, P. L. (2014). The systems view of life: a unifying vision. Cambridge University Press. From The Parts To The Whole

Week 12

X. Fredrickson, B. L., & Joiner, T. (2018). Reflections on Positive Emotions and Upward Spirals. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 13(2), 194-199.

Week 13

XI. Porges, S. W. (2011). The polyvagal theory: neurophysiological foundations of emotions, attachment, communication, and self-regulation (1st Ed.). W. W. Norton. Ch. 1, 11-19

Week 14

XII. Young, John. (2007). Entrepreneurial Learning and Deepak Chopra's Seven Spiritual Laws of Success. Journal of Human Values. 13. 13-22.

Week 15

XIII. Miller T, Grimes M, McMullen J, Vogus T. Venturing For Others With Heart And Head: How Compassion Encourages Social Entrepreneurship. The Academy of Management review. 2012

Week 16

XIV. Malhotra, A. (2021). The Postpandemic Future of Work. Journal of Management, 47(5)

GRADING

Grading for this class is based on three activities. These include:

CLASS PARTICIPATION

This course is an opportunity to delve into the theory and practice of compassion-based organizational practices. For the course to be useful and impactful, participants must prepare before each session and spend time with the readings, exercises, and experiential investigations.

Your contributions to class meetings include both active contributions (e.g. comments, questions, sharing your perspective) and supportive contributions (e.g. listening, full attention, and presence). The evaluation criteria for these contributions are listed in Appendix A. The use of laptops, cell phones, and tablets (except for online class sessions), which detract from the quality of attention will not be used in the classroom and should be kept away during the session. If you have a learning need that makes this problematic for you, please email the instructor and arrange a time to discuss an alternative plan within the first week of the class.

Class begins and ends on time. The only excused absences will be those in accord with official Marshall guidelines, and as such should include communication of the absence in writing to the instructor. Missing a portion of the session, longer than 15 minutes, other than in the case of an excused absence, will be recorded as an absence. Attendance for the entire session is emphasized because in-class discussion and exercises are important not only to your learning but also to the process of the other participants.

More than 2 unexcused absences will result in a grade of No Credit.

Grading for in-class participation is based on the evaluation criteria found in Appendix A.

HOMEWORK

Given that compassion is best learned experientially with consistent practice, participants will engage in daily home exercises throughout the course. Each class session will be partly devoted to providing instructions on this daily practice and answering the various questions that arise from this practice.

Every week you will be turning in a log of self-quotes from your home practice. For each day you will indicate when (time) and how long you did the daily practice. This includes what specific type of practice you did (mindful meditation, writing, etc.) and what you observed during the practice. An example of a daily log follows:

Date	Time Span	Type	Brief Note
March 10	4:00 – 4:15 pm	4/6 Ratio Breathing	Felt at peace in my present surroundings
March 11	4:00 - 4:15 pm	Writing	03/11/24 “Self-Quote Content” – Class Member
Etc.			

Grading for home practice weekly logs is based on the evaluation criteria found in Appendix A. Weekly readings are also part of your homework

Reflection Papers: Your reflection papers are intended to serve as an opportunity to reflect on the previous four weeks of readings and exercises and reflects how thoughtfully you participated in the group discussions. You will be expected to submit two reflection papers on the dates that will be provided. Each paper should be 850 -1000 words long, double-spaced, with 12-point font, and should report something specific and concrete that you tried during your home practice during the prior weeks. Discuss these experiences in relationship to the readings and classroom activities.

Papers will be evaluated on the accuracy of your references to the readings, and daily exercises, as well as your ability to succinctly summarize, critically evaluate, or comprehensively distill key points from those readings and experiences. Please be certain that you engage with the readings as well as the experiential work in your assignments; failure to include one or the other will impact your grade. You may also use part of your reflection paper to draw connections with the previous week's reading, discussion, or exercises. I sincerely hope that writing these papers will contribute significantly to your course experience by helping you explore the aspects of compassion, and organizational practices you find most relevant to you in the context of your own unfolding development as a leader.

Each reflection paper should integrate key findings and examples of what you are noticing in your home exercises and specifically how these learnings inform your thinking on the subject at hand. Instructions for the assignment should be followed for full credit.

Final grades for participants will be on a Credit/No Credit basis. The determination of whether credit is assigned will be based on the evaluation criteria found in Appendix A.

Assignments and Grading Activities

Assignment	Total Points	Percent of Final Score
In--Class Participation	15	15%
Home Practice & Practice Logs	40	40%
Reflection Papers	45	45%

Penalties for Late/Missing Assignments

Assignment	Points Lost
Late Practice Log	5
Missing Practice Log	10
Late Reflection Paper	10
Missing Reflection Paper	20

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 [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

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

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086

eeotix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776

osas.usc.edu

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-3340 or otfp@med.usc.edu

chan.usc.edu/otfp

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

COURSE CALENDAR/CLASS SESSIONS

	Topics-Daily Activities	Deliverables and Due Dates
Week 1 1/9/24	Compassion-Based Organizational Practices: An Overview	
Week 2 1/16/24	Compassion-Based Organizational Practices: Continued	Practice Log 1/16/24
Week 3 1/23/24	Compassion: An intrapersonal, and interpersonal work	Practice Log 1/23/24
Week 4 1/30/24	Compassion: An intrapersonal, and interpersonal work continued	Practice Log 1/30/24
Week 5 2/6/24	Inviting our physiology to help maintain and expand our findings	Reflection Paper 2/6/24
Week 6 2/13/24	Inviting our physiology to help maintain and expand our findings continued	Practice Log 2/13/24
Week 7 2/20/24	Infusing Leadership's essence through the markers of organizational culture	Practice Log 2/20/24
Week 8 2/27/24	Infusing Leadership's essence through the markers of organizational culture continued	Practice Log 2/27/24
Week 9 3/5/24	Mission and Culture	Reflection Paper 3/5/22

Week 10 3/12/24	Spring Break	
Week 11 3/19/24	Mission and Culture continued	
Week 12 3/26/24	From organizational function to structure	Practice Log 3/26/24
Week 13 4/2/24	From organizational function to structure continued	Practice Log 4/2/24
Week 14 4/9/24	Autopoietic Organizational Change	Practice Log 4/9/24
Week 15 4/16/24	Autopoietic Organizational Change continued	Practice Log 4/16/24
Week 16 4/23/24	A Look At Where We Have Been And Where We Are Going	Reflection Paper 4/23/24

APPENDIX A

MOR-598: Compassion-Based Organizational Practices		Evaluation Criteria
	Course Requirements	Points
In-Class Participation	Student actively participates in class discussions and their contributions reflect an understanding of the weekly readings	5
	Student shares personal perspective and experience with classmates in a whole class or small group format each week	5
	Student asked clarifying questions of instructor and classmates frequently	5
Home Practices	Student practices meditation daily for 5 to 20 minutes (evidenced by logging of daily meditation practice. sent weekly.)	30
	Student reports experience of such practice through check-ins at each class meeting	10
1st Reflection Paper	Submitted on time with an 850 - 1000 word length	5
	Clearly and thoughtfully answers to discussion points from the week before this paper is due	10
2nd Reflection Paper	Submitted on time with an 850 - 1000 word length	5
	Clearly and thoughtfully answers to discussion points from the week before this paper is due	10
3rd Reflection Paper	Submitted on time with an 850 - 1000 word length	5
	Clearly and thoughtfully answers to discussion points from the week before this paper is due	10
	Total possible points	100
	Passing points for course credit	75+
	Insufficient contribution - no credit	<75

Appendix I. MARSHALL GRADUATE PROGRAMS LEARNING GOALS

How MOR 598 (Compassion-Based Organizational Practices)

Contributes to Marshall Graduate Program Learning Goals

Marshall Graduate Program Learning Goals	MOR598 Objectives that support this goal	Assessment Method
<p><i>Learning Goal #1: Develop Personal Strengths.</i> Our graduates will develop a global and entrepreneurial mindset, lead with integrity, purpose, and ethical perspective, and draw value from diversity and inclusion.</p>		
1.1 Possess personal integrity and a commitment to an organization's purpose and core values.	1-7	Practice Logs, Reflection Papers
1.2 Expand awareness with a global and entrepreneurial mindset, drawing value from diversity and inclusion.	1-7	Practice Logs, Reflection Papers
1.3 Exhibit awareness of ethical dimensions and professional standards in decision making.	1-7	Practice Logs, Reflection Papers
<p><i>Learning Goal #2: Gain Knowledge and Skills.</i> Our graduates will develop a deep understanding of the key functions of business enterprises and will be able to identify and take advantage of opportunities in a complex, uncertain and dynamic business environment using critical and analytical thinking skills.</p>		
2.1 Gain knowledge of the key functions of business enterprises.	1-7	Practice Logs, Reflection Papers
2.2 Acquire advanced skills to understand and analyze significant business opportunities, which can be complex, uncertain and dynamic.	1-7	Practice Logs, Reflection Papers
2.3 Use critical and analytical thinking to identify viable options that can create short-term and long-term value for organizations and their stakeholders.	1-7	Practice Logs, Reflection Papers
<p><i>Learning Goal #3: Motivate and Build High Performing Teams.</i> Our graduates will achieve results by fostering collaboration, communication and adaptability on individual, team, and organization levels.</p>		
3.1 Motivate and work with colleagues, partners, and other stakeholders to achieve organizational purposes.	1-7	Student-Led Study Group
3.2 Help build and sustain high-performing teams by infusing teams with a variety of perspectives, talents, and skills and aligning individual success with team success and with overall organizational success.	1-7	Student-Led Mindful Meditation
3.3 Foster collaboration, communication and adaptability in helping organizations excel in a changing business landscape.	1-7	Student-Led Mindfulness Exercise