

AI 107 / CCA 107

Buddhist Mindfulness Meditation

Michael Skelley, Ph.D. – School for New Learning – DePaul University

Winter 2019 Syllabus

General Information

Quarter: Winter 2019

Course Number: AI 107 / CCA 107

Location: Loop Campus

Time: Mondays, 5:45 – 9:00 pm

Dates: January 7th, 14th, 28th, February 4th, 2019. Note there is no class on January 21st in observance of the Martin Luther King holiday. There is, however, an online assignment for that week.

Credit Hours: May only be taken for 2 credit hours

Course Description

This 2 credit course introduces theories and practices of mindfulness meditation from Buddhist traditions. It explores how mindfulness meditation can enhance collaboration learning, address the fundamental ethical challenges of contemporary life, and relate to work experience. Class sessions will involve practice in mindfulness meditation. Students will maintain and reflect on a daily mindfulness meditation practice for the duration of the course. The assessment of learning will be based on class participation and weekly reflection papers.

“Mindfulness” is a way of being fully engaged in our lives with greater levels of emotional and mental balance. It is the opposite of the ordinary state of our minds, in which our minds are buffeted by all sorts of mental afflictions and distortions. When we draw out the deeper, innate potential for mindfulness that we each have, we are freed from this mental/emotional turmoil and discover the grounds of genuine happiness and deep wisdom.

This course will draw primarily from Buddhist meditation practices. These are very simple yet powerful ways of settling, investigating and training our awareness so that we can achieve this profound balance and engagement. They develop our potential to have attentive and nonjudgmental relationships with ourselves and with everyone around us.

They help us gain deep insights into our experiences and cultivate creative and transformative ways of responding to the challenges of living and working in the world.

Instructor

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Michael Skelley has been practicing various forms of meditation for over forty-five years and has many years of experience helping people integrate spirituality and meditation practices into their everyday life and work. He was a Jesuit (a Catholic religious order) for over twenty years, during which time he trained in and taught contemplative practice. He has a B.A. in Philosophy and Letters from St. Louis University, a M.A. in Biblical Languages and Literature from the Catholic University of America, a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Boston College and a M.A. in Organization Development from Loyola University-Chicago. He has been a full-time faculty member at DePaul's School for New Learning (SNL) since 1993 and held DePaul's Wicklander Chair of Business and Professional Ethics in 2001-2002. Michael received DePaul's Excellence in Teaching Award in 2004. He also offers LL 302/ SNC 198 "Mindfulness Meditation Retreat at Starved Rock State Park" which SNL students can take for their Externship requirement and other DePaul students for their Liberal Studies Junior Year Experiential Learning requirement.

Course Outcomes

Students will focus their learning in this course on **one** of the following outcomes. Students select their desired outcome through the course registration process:

Understands and can practice a model of mindfulness meditation. (A3X, CCA)

(Note: this is the section recommended for DePaul students who are not enrolled in the School for New Learning.)

Understands and can apply principles and practices of mindfulness in a work or professional setting. (FX)

Can analyze a problem using two different ethical systems. (A4)

Can learn collaboratively and examine the skills, knowledge, and values that contribute to such learning. (L7)

Learning Experiences

Daily mindfulness meditation: The most important learning experience in this course will be your daily practice of mindfulness meditation (approximately 15 minutes a day, six times a week). Instructions for this practice will be provided throughout the course. You can only really learn about mindfulness meditation by practicing it. You will learn about a variety of approaches and practices that you can experiment with to find what seems most effective for you.

Class sessions will involve a variety of different activities, including:

- Gentle yoga/mindful movement practices
- Mindfulness meditation practices
- Large and small group dialogues
- Presentations from the teacher
- Reflective writing
- Audio/video presentations

There will be a course **Desire2Learn (D2L)** site (d2l.depaul.edu) that will be used to facilitate communication between the class sessions, to submit your reflection papers, monitor your grades and to access supplementary materials and resources.

Reading Materials

The required textbook for this class is: Chödrön, Pema. (2013). ***How to meditate: A practical guide to making friends with your mind***. Sounds True. ISBN-10: 1-60407-933-9. ISBN-13: 978-1-60407-933-3. List price: \$19.95.

There are regular and enhanced ebook versions available. The enhanced ebook version includes embedded audio files. Please note that enhanced ebooks are available for iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch and Nook Color users only.

The hardcover version of the book will be available through the DePaul bookstore. See <http://depaul-loop.bncollege.com/> for more information.

Publisher's description: Pema Chödrön is treasured around the world for her unique ability to transmit teachings and practices that bring peace, understanding, and compassion into our lives. With *How to Meditate*, the American-born Tibetan Buddhist nun presents her first book exploring in-depth what she considers the essentials for a lifelong practice.

More and more people are beginning to recognize a profound inner longing for authenticity, connection, and aliveness. Meditation, Pema explains, gives us a golden key to address this yearning. This step-by-step guide shows readers how to honestly meet and openly relate with the mind, embrace the fullness of our experience, and live in a wholehearted way.

Required Work

Class participation: Given the experiential nature of what and how we will be learning in this class, engaged, mindful participation in all of the classroom activities will be an essential part of your demonstration of your learning.

Reflection Papers: You will be expected to submit a reflection paper before each of classes #2 – 5. So, you will write 4 reflection papers. Here are the directions for the papers:

- Each reflection paper should be about 750-1000 words long.
- In each paper, you should: 1) report something specific and concrete that you tried in your meditation practice this week; 2) report what happened when you did that, including what may have happened sometime afterwards; and 3) discuss these experiences in relationship to the course material, the classroom activities, and the outcome/competence that you are focused on in this course.
- Since these papers are very short, do not waste space with quotations out of the assigned book. You should refer to ideas from the book, but discuss those ideas in your own words. Additional research beyond the materials we are already using in this course is neither necessary nor particularly recommended for these papers.
- Write out the outcome (competence) statement that you are registered for at the beginning of every reflection paper.
- Be sure to put your name and the date at the beginning of your paper. The papers should be double-spaced and in 11 or 12 point font. They should be Microsoft Word files (.doc or .docx).

Assessment & Grading

Your final grade in this course will be based on the number of points you earn from your class participation and reflection papers. Extra credit work will not be accepted. You can track your grades on the D2L website throughout the course.

Class attendance and participation are worth up to 8 points per class session for a total of up to **40 points**. The four **reflection papers** are each worth up to 20 points per paper for a total of up to **80 points**. I will provide a complete assessment rubric for these papers at the first class. Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Total Points	Final Grade
104-120	A
100-103	A-
92-99	B+
84-91	B
80-83	B-
72-79	C+
64-71	C
60-63	C-
48-59	D
0-47	F

If you wish to take the course on a **Pass/Fail** basis, you must inform the instructor in by email before the second class. See the University Student Handbook for Pass/Fail option policies.

See the policy statement at the end of this syllabus about Incomplete grades.

Class Schedule & Assignments

Class #1 (January 7th, 2019): Buddhist Mindfulness Meditation

- Mindful Movement Practice
- Meditation Instruction and Practice
- Syllabus Review
- Introduction to Buddhist Meditation

Reading assignment for class #2: Pema Chödrön, *How to Meditate*, Introduction: Choosing to Live Wholeheartedly *How to Meditate*, Part One: The Technique of Meditation

Class #2 (January 14th, 2019): The Technique of Meditation

- Mindful Movement Practice
- Meditation Instruction and Practice
- Buddhism: Origins and Traditions
- The Teaching of the Buddha

Reading assignment for class #3: Pema Chödrön, *How to Meditate*, Part Two: Working with Thoughts

Class #3 (January 21st, 2019): There is no class session this week because of the MLK holiday. There will, however, be a required online assignment.

Reading assignment for class #4: Pema Chödrön, *How to Meditate*, Part Three: Working with Emotions

Class #4 (January 28th, 2019): Working with Thoughts and Emotions

- Mindful Movement Practice
- Meditation Instruction and Practice
- Mindfulness as Awareness of Experience
- Working with Thoughts and Emotions

Reading assignments for class #5: Pema Chödrön, *How to Meditate*, Part Four: Working with Sense Perceptions

Class #5 (February 4th, 2019): Working with Sense Perceptions

- Mindful Movement Practice
- Meditation Instruction and Practice
- Buddha's Teaching Revisited
- Neuroscience of Meditation

Important Policies & Resources

This course includes and adheres to the college and university policies described in the links below:

[Academic Integrity Policy](#) (UGRAD)

[Academic Integrity Policy](#) (GRAD)

[Incomplete Policy](#)

[Course Withdrawal Timelines and Grade/Fee Consequences](#)

[Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability](#)

[Protection of Human Research Participants](#)

[APA citation format](#) (GRAD)

Here are some valuable resources:

[University Center for Writing-based Learning](#)

[SNL Writing Guide](#)

[Dean of Students Office](#)