

MHS 3930 Mindful Living: A Course on Spirituality for Everyday Life
Department of Counselor Education: Special Topics
Fall 2013, Wednesdays Periods 6-8 (12:50 PM-3:50 PM)

This course is made possible through a funding grant from the Center for Spirituality and Health, University of Florida:
<http://www.spiritualityandhealth.ufl.edu>

Instructor: Kristen Shader, Graduate Student; M.Ed., Ed.S. M.H.S.
Office: 1313C Norman Hall (Graduate Assistant Office)
E-mail: kristenshader@gmail.com
Office Hours: By Appointment (Preferred method of contact: Email)

Co-Facilitator/TA: James Powell
E-mail: dancer62@ufl.edu
Classroom: 250 Norman Hall

CSH Contact: Dr. Ana Puig, Associate Scholar and Research Director

Dr. Ana Puig is the Supervisor for this class. Throughout the semester, she may visit us a few times. If you feel unable to discuss a matter with either the Instructor or TA, please feel free to contact Dr. Puig via email. She has taught Mindful Living in the past and is very informed and helpful.

Office: 125A Norman Hall
Email: anapuig@coe.ufl.edu

Topic Overview

Spirituality - Spirituality involves one's capacity for **creativity, growth, and a sense of purpose** in life. It can be demonstrated by personal traits such as wisdom, love, transcendence, hope, connectedness, and compassion. Spirituality is inclusive of, but not limited to, institutional religion. Since the World Health Organization deemed spirituality as a component of health equal to mental and physical wellbeing, spirituality has received increasing attention in the academic realm (e.g., wellness paradigms, alternative medicine, prayer and healing, outdoor/wilderness adventure, and counseling).

Spiritual themes have been present in the field of counseling for many decades. Viktor Frankl addressed issues of meaning, the humanists (e.g., Rogers and Maslow) addressed themes of transcendence and connectedness, and transpersonal theorists (e.g., Grof and Wilber) proposed a combination of Eastern and Western perspectives on spirituality. Recently, spirituality has appeared as a component of diversity and holistic approaches to wellbeing. Counseling theorists and other mental health professionals recommend attention to the spiritual dimension in order to address the health of the whole person. According to leaders in the area of holistic health, addressing a client's spirituality yields a more enduring outcome than just managing symptoms.

The term 'spirituality' carries with it a variety of connotations, some positive and some negative. Consequently, spirituality may bring up concerns of authoritarian approaches to convince people of certain ideas. *Nothing in this course, including readings, assignments, and/or discussions of particular topics, is designed to persuade you that one particular religious or spiritual belief system is the 'right' one, or that you should adopt certain values or beliefs.* We appreciate your assistance in creating a learning environment that respects differences and values the unique contributions of each person.

Mindfulness- Mindfulness has been defined as the capacity to attend to the present moment without evaluation or judgment to cloud perception. Mindfulness can be found in western literature on psychology, health, and communication, and is described as an ability to approach life and new concepts with flexibility and without preconceptions. Mindfulness can also be found in eastern and Buddhist texts. In traditional Buddhist texts, mindfulness is referred to as attending continuously to a familiar object without forgetfulness or distraction. Contemporary literature describes mindfulness as a moment-to-moment non-judgmental awareness of life that frees one of suffering and attachments, allowing for the development of spiritual traits.

In this course, we will explore mindfulness, spirituality and creativity in everyday life. Rather than seeking extraordinary, or peak, experiences, we will consider what it means to be mindful of the sacredness in “ordinary” life events. This class has been designed to allow you to reflect upon your journey in life and the role that spirituality and mindfulness play in your optimal wellbeing.

Objectives

1. Expand consciousness in daily living by learning about principles and practices of mindfulness.
2. Understand contemporary and traditional mindfulness practices.
3. Develop an awareness of how mindfulness can allow one to navigate life’s transitions.
4. Open the mind to creative and introspective learning techniques to communicate effectively with others.
5. Stretch yourself: your mental awareness and your sense of self. Try new things. Explore your creative side and become more open to new experiences.
6. Gain a sense of spirituality as it fits into holistic wellbeing, including:
 - a. Personal spirituality by examining synchronicity, creativity, intuition, and mortality (includes experiential creativity exercises that may help enhance spiritual and emotional awareness and expression).
 - b. Social levels of spirituality by examining human relationships, expectations, social roles/norms, and fearlessness, as well as ways to share and explore these processes with others.
 - c. Global spirituality by considering one’s purpose and meaning (in an historical context) and exploring one’s unique contribution to the advancement of humanity.

Course Texts

1. Brach, T. (2003). *Radical Acceptance: Embracing your life with the heart of a Buddha*. Bantam Books.
2. Eckhart Tolle. (1999). *The Power of NOW: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment*. Namaste Publishing Inc.
3. Text of your choice (See Group Presentation Assignment).

Other Materials

1. You will be required to purchase a blank-paged **sketchbook or journal of your choice**. You may choose any size from 4” x 7” to 8”x 11” that fits with your personal style. Bring this notebook to class each week. Personalize it. Cherish it. We will be doing a variety of artistic, expressionistic, and general writing activities within this notebook. You will share this journal at the end of the semester to show the understanding, creativity, and processing you have done throughout the class. As this is your personal journal, you can choose to paperclip certain pages together, if you do not feel comfortable sharing during our final class time.

Course Policies

1. **Confidentiality** – Please respect the privacy and confidentiality of other students in the class. You may choose to discuss your own experiences in this course with anyone. However, you should not discuss what other people say or do during class-related activities with people outside of our class. If you choose to share, please do not mention other students' names in the sharing process.
2. **University Honor Code** – Plagiarism, cheating, and/or misrepresentation will not be tolerated in any form in this class. On all student work throughout this course, students are expected to uphold the University of Florida Honor Code, as defined in particular by the following pledge: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”
3. **Office hours** – Office hours are available by appointment. Please make me aware if you would like to meet outside of class time, and I will absolutely make time to meet with you.
4. **Course schedule** – What is provided in the syllabus is a tentative outline of course topics to be covered. Due to such situations as guest speaker availability, varying time for class activities, or other circumstances, certain changes may be made throughout the course. It is the responsibility of the instructor to give appropriate notice of such changes, and it is the student’s responsibility to take note of these changes.

5. Attendance –This is a discussion-based course. Your presence in class is necessary for not only you, but the entire class, to gain knowledge and insight. Your viewpoint is valued and important. That being said, your continued absence will not be permitted. You *must* attend class and be active in class discussion. If you do not feel as though you are dedicated enough to attend regularly and keep up with the readings, please, do *not* take this class. If you put energy into this class, you will reap great benefits in personal awareness and understanding.

Attendance will be taken during each weekly class. Students are permitted **TWO (2)** absences during the semester. These 2 absences cover anything from mental health days to doctor's visits. Each absence, above the allotted 2, will result in a **1 letter grade reduction** off the **final grade** of the student. (*Ex. 3 absences: an A is now a B. 4 absences= an A is now a C*).

Arriving to class more than 30 minutes late will count as an absence. Please contact the instructor if you know you are going to miss class.

6. Make-up work – All work is due on the dates listed in the syllabus. If you are absent to class, you need to email the instructor your assignment by **11:59PM the same day**. Please include your **name in the document's title** for easy grading. No make-up work will be accepted without official documented evidence of extenuating circumstances (i.e. serious illness or accident).

7. Cell phones – Class time is sacred time. Please turn off your cell phone before class starts. You may check your phones during breaks and before/after class.

8. PRINTED COPY of class assignments – Student assignments are *strongly preferred* as **physical copies**. (I want to sit down and seriously read all of your papers, as well as have the opportunity to give you feedback and respond to what you have written. This is easiest for me when I can physically write or underline particularly salient points. It is also beneficial for you, because you can save past reflections into your journal for future reading. Feel free to print double-sided and reduce your margins to conserve paper, if that is a concern for you). Also, if your printer is not working, you have the option to *legibly* hand-write your assignments. Therefore, printer malfunction is not an excuse for late work.

9. Students with disabilities – Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. All documentation and paperwork must be completed and shown to the instructor by the **3rd week of class**. It is the student's responsibility to follow through on this process.

Course Assignments

Course Grading Scale

A = 90-100+ Points

B = 80-90 Points

C = 70-80 Points

D = < 70 Points

There are **100 total points available**.

Assignment Descriptions

Weekly Reflection and Integration Papers – 4 total

Grading: 5 points per paper; 20 points possible (4 weekly reflections)

Throughout the class we will read and discuss many concepts related to spirituality and mindfulness. Weekly Reflection and Integration papers are an opportunity to integrate the week's readings with *your own life experiences*. You may also include your thoughts on class material, activities and anything in your own life that seems relevant to your unfolding process of spirituality and mindfulness.

Final Reflection Paper

Grading: 5 points possible

The final reflection paper is due the last day of class and incorporates any additional information you would like to share with the instructor on the class or what you learned. Questions you might like to include are:

How did you like this class?

What was your favorite activity/discussion?

What was your least favorite?

Suggestions for next semester

What did I learn from this class that I will use 10 years from now?

Any additional ideas or thoughts

Co-leading a Class Discussion –

Grading: 15 points possible

For this assignment, you will be working with three other students in the course. This is your time to lead the class. Each group will be assigned at the beginning of the semester and it is up to YOUR GROUP to choose a book incorporating mindfulness and any other idea you are passionate about. Book topics can include, but are not limited to *Mindfulness and: eating, music, religious beliefs, yoga, ecology, counseling, traveling, body awareness, journaling, methods of self expression, etc.*

Each group will share what they have learned from their selected book for **45-60 minutes** of class time. How and what you choose to do during your presentation time is up to you. Show short movie clips, lead group activities, discuss specific quotes, plan art projects, take the class outside, involve music or motion, and help the class have fun while discussing the book. This is your chance to be the facilitator and learn what it is like to lead the class. It is also a chance to immerse yourself in the arena of mindfulness *outside* of this class room. Your self-driven exploration of mindfulness will show you how to access and explore resources on your own, as well as provide new and exciting ideas for other students.

Express Yourself Journal Times

Grading: 15 points possible for the entire journal

Throughout the semester, there are designated times in which your assignment will be to express and explore within your journal. On these weeks, you will not have a hard copy of an assignment to turn in during class time. Instead, we will sometimes take space during class to share and process a little about what your journaling experience was like. You will be assigned a specific journaling topic during these weeks. You can choose to journal related to the topic described or about anything pertinent in your life. Paint, draw, collage, write poetry, blog, scrapbook, record videos, and/or do any other form of creative expression within your journal! You will share your journal on the last day of class. Feel free to paperclip personal pages you do not wish to share. We will have an opportunity to go around the circle and show each other pages and images that are most meaningful. This assignment is designed to help you get in touch with your creative Soul and allow you a medium to continue self-expression and awareness outside of class time.

Your Spiritual Autobiography, 4-6 pages

Grading: 10 points possible

In this assignment you are asked to write your spiritual life story. Consider the traditions, values, and messages you encountered as a child about religion, spirituality, and/or ultimate meaning in life. You can choose to answer some of the following questions that feel most pertinent to you: What did your parental/family figures teach you? How did your extended family/community view spirituality? Did other authority figures (ministers, relatives, mentors, etc.) have an important influence on your concept of spirituality/religion? As you've grown, how have your ideas changed, developed, synthesized, resolved, stabilized etc.? What have you held onto, what have you left behind or let go of, and what do you find yourself believing (or disbelieving) today? What is still in flux? How has your spirituality impacted other areas of your identity, such as your sense of confidence, motivation, meaning, and the depth of experience in your adult life? How do your spiritual views impact your relationships with others? What does "spiritual" mean to you? Have you experienced transcendent events, marked changes in the way you live, ineffable or indescribable feelings that altered your life permanently? How do you integrate spirituality or spiritual principles into your daily life? How would you like to deepen your spirituality? Feel free to answer other questions that you can think of, such as challenging experiences that transformed your life; periods of more gradual change; grief and/or losses; experiences of awe and wonderment, etc.

Do 5 Things Outside of Your Comfort Zone

Grading: 15 points possible (2-4pages)

Many times, we hold ourselves back out from living more fully due to irrational fears. This is your chance to step outside of your comfort zone and live more authentically. Throughout the semester, you will bring mindfulness to your worries of being vulnerably and authentically YOU. Examples of activities that may push you in this way include: *playing*

your guitar in front of others, telling someone you love them, eating dinner alone in a restaurant, visiting a new religious or spiritual experience, calling your mother and sharing with her why you have been feeling distant, giving a stranger a compliment, blogging about something you are passionate about, going to see a counselor at the wellness center, going on a meditation retreat, doing karaoke, going to an eating disorders anonymous meeting, or attending a new club on campus, etc. Your choices of activities are up to you. Please do NOT place yourself in actual danger. If this is a concern for you, choose a different activity.

In your paper, you will share each of your activities, what the experience was like when it happened, and how you are feeling NOW about the experience and about your fears.

Mindfulness and Music Activity

Grading: 10 points (2-3 pages)

Ponder and take note of your relationship with music. Give a one-page reflection on your connection with music. *When do you usually listen to music? Is it in your car, on the radio, when you go out? Do you passively listen to music or is it an active engaged experience? Is it usually song to song or do you listen to an album fully? Do you tend to listen to the lyrics or the music within? Do you get frustrated when music doesn't lyrically align with your beliefs or do you avoid that for how the beat makes you feel?* After reflecting on that, choose an album and listen to the body of work all the way through. Create a space where you can engage fully with the album, whether on a road trip or in your room at night. Be intentionally mindful throughout the experience, bringing awareness to the flow of emotion and thoughts, how your body feels in the moment, the way you interpret the sound, whether the lyrics puncture your body more than the beat or visa versa. Enjoy the experience, allow yourself to become a part of the music, dancing or moving your body, relaxing, closing your eyes, whatever feels right for you. Afterward write about what the experience was like for you. If you'd like, make space for the music and then put it on your ipod or phone and listen to it whenever your chilling or need some music. Watch how it transforms as you become more acquainted with the music. Write about any realizations or pressing themes that stand out and how your body feels afterward and during.

Album options (Feel free to use one of these or pick your own):

1. Van Morrison- Astral Weeks
2. RadioHead- Ok Computer
3. Kid Cudi- Man on the Moon
4. John Mayer- Live LA
5. Ben Howard- Every Kingdom
6. Mumford and Sons- Sigh No More
7. Chance the Rapper- Acid Rap
8. Sigur Ros- Valtari
9. Kendrick Lamar- MADD City
10. Pink Floyd- Dark Side of The Moon
11. Beethoven

Fire Circle Transformation

Grading: 10 points

Bring any objects in your life that you feel the need to burn/transform. Write a 2-3 page reflection paper discussing what this process of letting go and transformation has been like. Discuss the challenges that come up with the letting go of physical objects. Contemplate the power of renewal/release that can come from the transformation of physical objects when they are ceremonially placed in fire.

Schedule of Topics **(** Indicates work DUE**)** *(Schedule of Topics Subject to Change)*

Jan 6: **Introductions and Intentions**

Jan 13 : **If I Am Not My Mind, Who Am I?**
****Bring journal to class****

Tolle: Preface, Intro, Ch. 1 (xiii-32)

- Jan 20:** **Martin Luther King Jr. Day (NO SCHOOL)**
Mind, Body, and Emotions
Tolle: Ch. 2 & 3 (33-67)
Note: You still have readings due
- Jan 27:** **LIVING NOW: Vulnerability and Acceptance**
****Reflection Paper due (1)****
****Bring your SACRED OBJECT to class! ****
Tolle: Ch. 4 & 5 (71-104)
Sacred Circle
- Feb 3 :** **Being Present in the NOW/Connecting with your Being**
****Spiritual Autobiography Paper due****
Tolle: Ch. 6 & 7 (107-142)
Sign up for Group Projects (Begin to explore group text topic & book)
- Feb 10:** **Relationships**
****Express Yourself Journal Time 1 Due (at least 1 hour)****
Tolle: Ch. 8 (145-172)
Dress for Comfort: Guided Meditation/Yoga
- Feb 17:** **Peace, Surrender, Understanding**
**** Reflection Paper Due (2)****
Tolle: Ch. 9 & 10 (177-226)
Your Group Text Ch. 1-2
- Feb 24:** **The Trance of Unworthiness**
****Mindfulness & Music Activity Due****
Your Group Text Ch. 3-4
Brach: Intro, Ch. 1 & Ch. 2 (Prologue - 48)
- March 3:** **SPRING BREAK!**
****Express Yourself Journal Time 2 Due (at least 1 hour)****
Your Group Text Ch. 5-6
- March 10:** **Being Your Own Best Friend**
****Reflection Paper Due (3)****
Brach: Ch. 3& 4 (49- 92)
Your Text Ch. 7-8
Group Presentation 1
- March 17:** **Accepting Our Whole**
****Express Yourself Journal Time 3 Due (at least 1 hour)****
Brach: Ch. 5 & 6 (93-160)
Your Text Ch. 9-10
Group Presentation 2
- March 24:** **Fear & Compassion**
****5 Activities Outside of Your Comfort Zone Due****
Brach: Ch. 7 & 8 (161-220)
Group Presentation 3
- March 31:** **Awakening Together**

****Reflection Paper Due (4)****

Brach: Ch. 9 (221-245)

Group Presentation 4

April 7:

****FIRE CIRCLE and POT LUCK****

NOTE: CLASS SCHEDULED FROM 6:00-9:00PM instead of usual class time

****Fire Circle Paper Due****

Brach: Ch. 10 & 11 (246-306)

Ceremonial Burning of Items

April 14:

Realizing Our True Nature/ Self-Liberation

****Express Yourself Journal Time 4 Due (at least 1 hour)****

Brach: Ch. 12 (307-328)

Group Presentation 5

April 21:

Culminating Experience

****Sharing of Class Journal****- *Instructors will **not** collect journals*

****Final Reflection Paper Due (5)**- *see syllabus/assignments for details***

****ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS****

If you find yourself struggling with something beyond the scope of this class, please contact any of these University services:

Counseling and Wellness Center (24 Hours):

(352)392-1575

Alachua County Crisis Center (24 Hours):

(352) 264-6789

Meridian Behavioral Healthcare (24 Hours):

(352) 374-5600

Dean of Students Office (8:00 AM to 4:30 PM), P202 Peabody Hall:

(352) 392-1261

Career Resource Center (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM), Student Union:

(352) 392-1601

Further readings are suggested below.

Supplemental Readings:

Albom, Mitch	Tuesdays with Morrie
Arntz, Arnold	What the Bleep do we Know? (Documentary), Down the Rabbit Hole
Badiner, Allen Hunt	Mindfulness in the Marketplace
Beck, Charlotte Joko	Everyday Zen Nothing Special
Bennett-Goleman, Tara	Emotional Alchemy: How the Mind can Heal the Heart
Bien, Beverly & Thomas	Finding the Center Within
Boorstein, Sylvia	It's Easier Than You Think That's Funny, You Don't Look Buddhist Don't Just Do Something, Sit There Pay Attention, For Goodness' Sake
Borysenko, Joan	Minding the Body, Mending the Mind A Woman's Journey to God
Brach, Tara	Radical Acceptance
Buscaglia, Leo	Living, Loving, Learning; Love
Byrne, Rhonda	The Secret
Chodron, Pema	When Things Fall Apart The Places That Scare You Comfortable With Uncertainty Start Where You Are The Wisdom of No Escape No Time to Lose

Coelho, Paulo	The Alchemist
Dossey, Larry	Healing Words, Prayer is Good Medicine Reinventing Medicine: Beyond Mind Body to a New Era of Healing
Dyer, Wayne	The Power of Intention (movie/book)
Epstein, Mark	Going to Pieces Without Falling Apart Thoughts without a Thinker
Frankl, Victor	Man's Search for Meaning
Gawain, Shakti	Creative Visualization The Path of Transformation Developing Intuition
Glaser, Aura	A Call to Compassion
Goldstein, Joseph	The Experience of Insight, Insight Meditation: The Experience of Freedom
Goldstein, Joseph with Kornfield, Jack	Seeking the Heart of Wisdom
Goleman, Daniel	The Meditative Mind
Grey, Alex	The Mission of Art
Hanh, Thich Nhat	Peace is Every Step The Miracle of Mindfulness Calming the Fearful Mind Living Buddha, Living Christ
Hartzema, Robert	You Are the Weaver of Your World
His Holiness The Dalai Lama	The Universe in a Single Atom and every other book he has written`
Hay, Louise	You Can Heal Your Life
Johnson, Brian	A Philosopher's Notes: On Optimal Living, Creating an Authentically Awesome Life, and Other Such Goodness
Kabat-Zinn, Jon	Coming to Our Senses Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Mindfulness Meditation Wherever You Go There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation In Everyday Life
Khalsa, Dharma Singh and Stauth, Cameron	Meditation As Medicine
Khema, Ayya	Being Nobody, Going Nowhere Who is My Self? A Guide to Buddhist Meditation
Kongtrül, Dzigar	It's Up to You
Ladner, Lorne	The Lost Art of Compassion
Levine, Stephen	A Gradual Awakening Who Dies? An Investigation of Conscious Living and Conscious Dying
Liu, Eric	Guiding Lights
Manné, Joy	Conscious Breathing
Melchizedek, Drunvalo	Living in the Heart: How to Enter the Sacred Space Within
Merton, Thomas	Thomas Merton: Essential Writings
Millman, Dan	Way of the Peaceful Warrior (book/movie)
Mipham Rinpoche, Sakyong	Turning the Mind Into An Ally Ruling Your World
McDonald, Kathleen	How to Meditate
Prabhupada, Srila	Science of Self Realization Bhagarad Gita As it Is
Redfield, James	The Celestine Prophecy (book/movie)
Remen, Rachel Naomi	Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories that Heal
Reynolds, David K.	Playing Ball on Running Water: Living Morita Psychotherapy— the Japanese Way to Building a Better Life
Rohr, Richard	Falling Upwards

Rosenberg, Larry	Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation
Rosenberg, Marshal	Nonviolent Communication
Salzburg, Sharon	Voices of Insight, Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness
Schaef, Anne Wilson	Living in Process: Basic Truths for Living the Path of the Soul
Singer, Michael	The Untethered Soul
Singh, Rajinder	Empowering Your Soul Through Meditation
Thurman, Robert	Infinite Life
Tolle, Eckhart	The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment
Upton, Bruce	Biology of Belief
Wallace, Alan	Mind in the Balance
Weiss, Andrew	Beginning Mindfulness
Weiss, Brian	Many Lives, Many Masters
Wilber, Ken	Integral Psychology No Boundary The Simple Feeling of Being Grace and Grit
Young, William T.	The Shack

Suggested Documentaries:

The Buddha
Down the Rabbit Hole
What the Bleep do we Know?
Life in a Day

Suggested Music:

The Remedy – Jason Mraz
Let Go – Frou Frou
Awake My Soul- Mumford and Sons
Kiss the Sky- Shawn Lee’s Ping Pong Orchestra
Keep Breathing- Ingrid Michaelson
Sleep – Eric Whitacre
The Swan- Saint Suens
Trevor Hall’s Music!
Arjun Baba’s Music