

**INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS - Winter 2024**  
**CIS 135Z and CSPL 135Z**  
**ONLINE**

**10 AM - 12 Noon EDT**

**First Class: January 9, 2024 Tuesday**

**Last Class: January 23, 2024 Monday**

Instructor:

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**Rabbi David's Drop in Hours**

169 High St. (corner Church St.) Second floor., Room 205

Mondays 2-3pm or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this retreat-style, experiential course, students delve into a set of practices meant to cultivate self-awareness, alleviate the impact of the stress response, and move attention to the present moment. During this 10-day class on contemplative practices, students will be introduced to various individual and relational techniques developed to cultivate non-judgemental attention and self-awareness in the present moment. These include:

meditation

relational work

journaling

spiritual contemplative practice

meta cognitive activities

yoga

movement practices.

Together we will dig into the issues that come up around contemplative life for practitioners and consumers of these modalities. We will parse critiques of mindfulness and examine the drive to lift the secular practices from their religious roots and integrate them into various societal systems. We will look at the potential of contemplative practices to contribute to societal health as well as individual wellbeing.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Students will develop a personal daily practice of sitting / walking meditation, gentle yoga, and awareness of the present moment.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of contemplative practices in their own experiences and in society.

- Students will be able to articulate ethical, cultural, and institutional issues around these practices, and will be able to make decisions about how to utilize the practices in a meaningful and non-harmful way.
- Students will cultivate the skill set to direct the fruits of their practice to benefit all beings.

### **EXPECTATIONS**

**Attendance at all classes is mandatory.** Students are expected to commit to active participation in the practices during meeting times and also the daily home practice and assignments. Please arrive on time for each meeting (**by 9:50AM**) and quietly find a seat in the classroom. Respect fellow participants by keeping confidences; in other words, what happens in class, remains in class.

### **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

If for some reason you must miss class, it is your responsibility to contact the instructors in advance of your absence as well as contact a peer and get all the necessary missed information so that when you arrive the following day, you are fully prepared.

**Only one unexcused absence will be granted, not including Religious/Spiritual holidays. If you miss more than THREE excused or unexcused classes you will have missed too much content to get credit for this course.**

Please wear loose fitting, comfortable clothes, and be prepared to remove shoes for class. Students may consider purchasing a yoga mat and/or meditation cushion (Please speak with one of the instructors if your finances will not allow this purchase and you would like to have one.) or bring a pillow or blanket to each class. Individual journals will be provided for in class journal writing assignments. Students may also choose to bring their own journal.

### **SYLLABUS:**

**Prior to our first class, please have read parts of Coursepack #1 and complete the 9 dots exercise.**

#### **1/9 Day One: Introduction and Course Overview**

**Exercises:** Awareness of breath, sound and posture, yoga

#### **Home practice:**

- Choose one daily activity to bring full awareness to for the week: brushing teeth, walking across campus, preparing a meal. Write a journal entry.
- Read pages 46-58 of the coursepack, Thich Nhat Hanh Chapter 2

#### **1/10 Day Two: Framing (and naming) Mindfulness:**

Historical perspective and current cultural milieu

Community Contract

**Exercises:** Body Scan, Awareness of breath, sound, and posture

Introduction to yoga practice

Journal writing

**Home practice:**

- Eat one meal mindfully
- Read coursepack pages 69 - 80. Excerpt from TKV Desikachar, *The Heart of Yoga*
- Pleasant events journaling assignment

### **1/11 Day Three: Somatic Awareness**

**Exercises:** Mindful walking, Body scan,

**Assignment:** Noticing pleasant events journaling

**Home practice:**

- Movement of your choice - you might choose to work with the gentle yoga we do in class, or stretch, move, ground in your own way.
- Read coursepack pages 23-32, and 41-45 (feel free to read what's in between as well, but also feel free to skip)
- Noticing unpleasant events journaling / practice mindful walking during any transition

### **1/12 Day Four: Awareness of Thoughts /Gratitude**

**Exercise:** Past, Present and Future thoughts, Gratitude, Naming/labeling thoughts

**Assignment:** Unplugging pledge exercise

**Home practice:**

- Unplugging pledge exercise

### **1/15 Day Five: Minding Technology**

**Exercise:** Unplugging discussion

**Assignment:** poetry/prayer reading

**Home practice:**

- Poetry/prayer packet
- Read coursepack pages 11 - 18, JKZ on Loving-Kindness
- Gratitude list: in your journal, begin a list of things you are grateful for in three categories: material, emotional, interpersonal.

### **1/16 Day Six: Awareness of Words: Prayer, Metta and Gratitude**

**Exercise:** Loving kindness (META) practice, formal group check in on practice, introduction to critical examination group exercise

**Assignment:** Noticing unpleasant events journaling

**Home practice:**

- Read the list of emotions handout. Journal about an emotion that you relate to.

### **1/17 Day Seven: Awareness of Emotions - RAIN**

**Exercise:** Guided meditation RAIN practice

**Assignment:** Difficult communication journaling

**Home practice:**

- Difficult communication journaling

### **1/18 Day Eight: Mindful Communication**

**Exercise:** Listening / group difficult communication exercise

**Assignment:** Prepare for group presentation; meet with your group at least once outside of class

**Home practice:** Reading from coursepack: pg. 84 - 97, Radical Dharma, journal on what comes up for you after reading. also read: "Mischief in the Marketplace"

### **1/19 Day Nine: Issues, Context, and Ethics**

**Exercise:**

**Assignment:** paying attention to your stress response, Prepare individual presentations

**Home practice:**

- Paying attention to your stress response
- Prepare individual presentations

### **1/22 Day Ten: I'm Mindful, Now What? Setting Intentions, Building Community, Student Presentations**

**Exercise:**, Resources for Continued Mindful growth

Campus communities that promote mindfulness

Developing an implementation strategy

**Home practice:**

- Implement Mindfulness practice

*Syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructors.*

## **RESOURCES AND POLICIES**

### **Well Being Resources:**

During the class, you may find yourself grappling with emotional, existential, or psychological issues. Should this happen, you might consider discussing these issues with CAPS. For information, go to their website: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/caps/services/index.html>

You may also choose to discuss these issues with Rabbi David L. Teva, Director of the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life. He can be reached at the email above or 860-685-2278.

### **Covid-19 Code of Conduct**

To protect your health and safety, the health and safety of instructors and staff, and the health and safety of your peers, all students must understand and adhere to the University's Covid-19 Code of Conduct. Students are encouraged to review the code of conduct regularly to stay up to date on the current code. The course instructors reserve the right to refuse to allow any student into the classroom who does not adhere to this code of conduct.

## **Time Commitment**

While the exact time commitment for the class will vary individually and over the course of the session, we recommend that you budget approximately one out-of-class **hour** each evening to complete the reading, assignments, homework, and project.

## **Accommodation Statement**

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a disability as defined by the ADA. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible. If you have a disability, or think that you might have a disability, please contact Accessibility Services in order to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. Accessibility Services is located in North College, rooms 021/218, or can be reached by email ([accessibility@wesleyan.edu](mailto:accessibility@wesleyan.edu)) or phone (860-685-2332).

## **Religious/Spiritual Observance**

If you anticipate that your religious/spiritual observance may conflict with academic obligations such as attending class, taking examinations, or submitting assignments, you can work directly with your professor to make reasonable arrangements. Should you require additional support or guidance, please feel free to reach out to Rabbi David Teva, Director of the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at [dleipziger@wesleyan.edu](mailto:dleipziger@wesleyan.edu) or any of the chaplains in the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at <https://www.wesleyan.edu/orsl/index.html>

For a list of religious holidays celebrated by members of the Wesleyan community, go to Wesleyan's Multifaith calendar which can be found at: <https://www.wesleyan.edu/orsl/multifaith-calendar.html>.

## **Classroom Behavior**

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, ability, and nationality.

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. We will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise us of this

preference early in the semester so that we may make appropriate changes to our records. For more information, see the policies on the student code.

### **Discrimination and Harassment**

Wesleyan University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. Wesleyan will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this Wesleyan policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office for Equity and Inclusion at 860-685-4771. The responsibility of the University Members has more information.

### **Honor Code**

All students of Wesleyan University are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council—Office of Student Affairs. Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). The Office of Student Affairs has additional information.

### **Title IX Resources:**

If past trauma inhibits your ability to fully participate in class, please contact Debbie Colucci, Deputy Title IX Coordinator, at [dcolucci@wesleyan.edu](mailto:dcolucci@wesleyan.edu), or your class dean. Additionally, and if you are comfortable, you can work directly with your professor to make reasonable arrangements. The SHAPE office is another resource. <https://www.wesleyan.edu/shape/>

### **In Class Presentation Resources:**

For your in class final presentation, you may want to explore this wonderful resource. The Wesleyan Presentation Studio offers guidance for design, strategy, and rehearsal of presentations, posters, and speeches. Make a free one-on-one appointment with a Studio Mentor, available to help with any stage in your development process, by visiting <https://www.wesleyan.edu/cpi/presentations/> or through your WesPortal by following the link under Academics. The online scheduler will show you all available appointments. The Studio recommends 30 minute appointments for rehearsals and minor questions and 60 minute appointments for brainstorming sessions or more involved support..

## **REQUIRED READING**

Coursepack #1 and other supplemental readings.

**Student ordering instructions:** You may purchase your own printed copy of the course packs through the Course Pack application in your WesPortal. Once you have logged in to WesPortal, select “Course Packs” under “Courses.” You will see a list of materials available for each course you are officially enrolled in. To order a copy, select Order Print. Course packs will be delivered through Wes Station's package delivery system. Course pack purchases will be charged directly to your student account. If you experience difficulties placing your order, please email [printing@wesleyan.edu](mailto:printing@wesleyan.edu).

## **RECOMMENDED / INSPIRATIONAL READINGS**

Hanh, Thich Nhat (2009). *You Are Here*. Shambala: Boulder, CO

Shy, Yael (2017). *What Now? Meditation for Your Twenties and Beyond*. Random House: New York.

Williams, angel Kyodo; Owens, Rod; Syedullah, Jasmine (2016) *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation..* North Atlantic Books: Berkeley, CA.

Kabat-Zinn, Jon (2005). *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation and Everyday Life*. Hachette Books: New York.

Other readings TBA

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

**Final exam:** On the last day of class, each student will present a brief and informal telling of their process over the sessions and plans for future utilization of these practices. More information on this as the semester progresses.

This syllabus can be changed at the discretion of the instructor.