

**Course Syllabus**  
**Mindfulness, Compassion, and the Self**  
**Spring 2012**

EDP 362 Unique number: 10156 (Undergraduate)

EDP 386N Unique number: 10460 (Graduate)

Instructor: Kristin Neff

Room: PAR 210

Time: Monday 1:00 - 4:00 (Five minutes leeway at beginning, 10 minutes at the end)

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Office hours: by appt.

**Course Objectives:**

The goal of this course is to give you an understanding of mindfulness, compassion, self-compassion, and the nature of the self according to Western and non-Western perspectives. Recent years have seen an explosion of interest in these topics, as well as a dramatic increase of empirical studies on the benefits of mindfulness and compassion for physical and mental well-being. This course will not only cover research into mindfulness and compassion, it will also try to provide experiential knowledge of these states through meditation and other exercises (meditation will be taught in a non-religious context). Because of the relevance of mindfulness and compassion for our own lives, readings will be drawn from both academic and non-academic sources, so that topics can be understood from each perspective. You will be expected to take responsibility for your own learning process, which means taking an active part in making sense of the readings and participating in class discussions.

**Class Format:** In general, we will have about 1 hour of lecture, 45 minutes of class discussion, a 15 minute break, then 45 minutes of experiential exercises with a brief discussion afterwards.

**Discussion questions:** Students will be responsible for writing two discussion questions about the class topic, to be posted on Blackboard by midnight on the Monday before class. I will collate the questions into several major themes for class.

**Research proposal idea:** This will be a 3-5 page paper outlining a proposed research project, justified with relevant background literature and outlining hypotheses and methodology (ex., examining the role of mindfulness in trapeze-walking). Due 11/2.

**Outline of paper:** This is a 1-2 page outline of your final paper topic, done mainly so that I can give you feedback for your project. Due 11/15

**Final Paper:** The final paper will ask you to focus on either mindfulness, compassion, or the self as applied to a topic of your choosing (ex., self-compassion and body image, mindfulness and parenting, empty self and bereavement, etc.) The paper can be on the same topic that your research proposal was based on, or else a different topic. Due 12/6.

**Required texts:**

Course reader – available at IT Copies on Martin Luther King Blvd.

**Suggested text:**

Neff, K. D. (2011). *Self-Compassion*. New York: William-Morrow.

**Grading System:** 10% for class participation; 10% for turning in discussion questions; 30% for the research proposal idea, 5% for the final paper outline, and 45% for the final paper.

### *Course Topics*

#### **Jan. 23 - Introduction**

#### **Jan. 30 - What is mindfulness?**

Bishop, S. R., Lau, M., Shapiro, S., Carlson, L., Anderson, N. D., et al. (2004). Mindfulness: A Proposed Operational Definition. *Clinical Psychology Science and Practice*, 11, 191-206.

Shapiro, S. L., Carlson, L. E., Astin, J. A. Freedman, B. (2006). Mechanisms of mindfulness. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. 62(3), 373–386 .

Gunaratana, B. (1999). Mindfulness. In S. Salzberg (Ed.) *Voices of Insight* (pp. 133-142). Boston: Shambala Publications.

#### **Feb. 6 – Developing mindfulness**

Siegel, R. D. (2010). *The mindfulness solution*. New York: The Guilford Press.  
Chapter 3 (pp. 52-80).

Williams, M., Teasdale, J. Segal, Z., & Kabat-Zinn, J. (2007). *The mindful way through depression*. New York: The Guildford Press.  
Chapters 2-4 (pp. 31-95)

#### **Feb. 13 – Coming to Our Senses**

No advance questions or readings required.

## **Feb. 20 - The application and benefits of mindfulness**

Lazar, S. (2005). Mindfulness research. In C. K. Germer, R. D. Siegel, P. R. Fulton (Eds.) *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy* (pp. 220 – 238). New York: Guilford Press.

Baer, R. A. (2010) Mindfulness and acceptance-based interventions and processes of change. In R. A. Baer (Ed.) *Assessing mindfulness and acceptance processes in clients* (pp. 1-24). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

(Optional for Undergraduates) Brown, K. W., Ryan, R. M., Creswell, J. D. (2007) Mindfulness: Theoretical foundations and evidence for its salutary effects. *Psychological Inquiry*, 18, 211-237.

## **Feb. 27 What is compassion?**

Feldman, C. (2005). *Compassion*. Berkeley, CA: Rodmell Press.  
Chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-82)

(Optional for Undergraduates) Goetz, J. L., Keltner, D., & Simon-Thomas, E. (2010). Compassion: An evolutionary analysis and empirical review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 136(3), 351-374.

## **March 5 – Researching and developing compassion**

Keltner, D. (2004). The compassionate instinct. *The Greater Good*, 1, 6-9.

Begley, S. (2007). *Train your mind, change your brain*. New York: Ballentine Books.  
Chapter 9 (pp. 212-242).

Germer, C. K. (2009). *The mindful path to self-compassion*. New York: The Guilford Press.  
Chapter 7 (pp. 160-190).

## **March 12 – Spring Break**

## **March 19 – What is self-compassion?**

Neff, K. D. (2011). *Self-compassion*. New York: William Morrow. Chapters 1 and 2. (pp. 1-37).

Neff, K. D. (2003). Self-compassion: An alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself. *Self and Identity*, 2, 85-102.

Neff, K. D. (2011). Self-compassion, self-esteem and well-being. *Psychological Inquiry*, 5, 1-12.

### **March 26 – Research on self-compassion**

Self-Compassion. In M. R. Leary & R. H. Hoyle (Eds.), *Handbook of Individual Differences in Social Behavior* (pp. 561-573). New York: Guilford Press.

Neff, K. D. (2003). Development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, 2, 223-250.

### **April 2 – The development and application of self-compassion**

Germer, C. K. (2009). *The mindful path to self-compassion*. New York: The Guilford Press. Chapter 5-6 (pp. 101-159).

Neff, K. D. (2011). *Self-compassion*. New York: William Morrow. Chapter 6. (pp. 109-134).

## **RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE**

### **April 9 – What is the self?**

Leary, M. R. & Tangney, J. P. (2003). The self as an organizing construct in the behavioral and social sciences. In M. R. Leary & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of Self and Identity* (pp. 3 - 14). New York: Guilford Press.

Leary, M. R. (2004). *The curse of the self*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1 (pp. 3-24).

### **April 16 – Film “I Am”**

No advance questions or readings required

## **ROUGH OUTLINE OF FINAL PAPER DUE**

### **April 23 – Consequences of the self**

Leary, M. R. (2004). *The curse of the self*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 4-5 (pp. 78-123)

North, R. J., & Swann, W. R. (2009). Self-verification 360°: Illuminating the light and dark sides. *Self and Identity*, 8(2-3), 131-146.

### **April 30 – Empty Self**

Batchelor, S. (1997). *Buddhism without beliefs*. New York: Riverhead Books. (pp. 75-83).

Kornfield, J. (1993). *A path with heart*. New York: Bantam Books. (pp. 198-214).

Watson, G. (2000). I, mine, and views of the self. In G. Watson, S. Batchelor, & G. Claxton (Eds.) *The psychology of awakening* (pp. 30-39). York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser.

Mosig, Y. (2006). Conceptions of the self in Western and Eastern psychology. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 26, 39-50.

### **May 7 - FINAL PAPER DUE**