

**Course Syllabus**  
**Mindfulness, Compassion, and the Self**  
**Fall 2016**

EDP 382F Unique number: 10830

Instructor: Kristin Neff

Room: SZB 416

Time: Tues. 1:00 - 3:45 (Five minutes leeway at beginning)

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Teaching assistant:

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**Course Objectives:**

The goal of this course is to give you an understanding of mindfulness, self-compassion, compassion for others, 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 health. This course will not only cover research into mindfulness and compassion, it will also provide you with first-hand experiential knowledge of these states through meditation and other exercises (meditation will be taught in a secular 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, engaging in class exercises, and participating in class discussions.

**Class Format:** In general, we will have about 1 hour 15 minutes of lecture, a 15 minute break, then 15-30 minutes of class discussion followed by 30 - 45 minutes of experiential exercises with a brief discussion afterwards.

**Discussion questions:** Students will be responsible for writing two general discussion questions about the next day's class topic, to be posted on Canvas by midnight on the Monday before class. The questions will then be collated into several major themes for small group discussion. Questions should be related to topics discussed in the readings, but take the form of questions that will be interesting topics to discuss in a small group. For example, "Does mindful acceptance of the present moment lead to passivity?", "What is the best age to start teaching kids to be self-compassionate", or "Can self-report measure accurately be used to measure compassion given social desirability bias?", etc. Try to avoid

questions that have a specific answer, such as "Has there been any research on mindfulness in cancer survivors?", etc.

**Class Notes:** Class notes will be posted shortly after each class on Canvas.

**Electronics Policy:** Because I have reduced the pressure to take notes in class by providing access to the notes from the PowerPoint presentations, I ask that you do not use electronic devices during class in order to fully focus on class discussions and exercises.

**Observation Papers:** These will be a series of three short papers (3-5 pages double spaced) that report on the use of a particular assigned home practice (see home practice sheet). There will be one paper on mindfulness, one on self-compassion, and one on compassion for others. Papers will describe personal experiences of the practice, and consider potential impacts on daily life experience. See observation paper assignment sheet and sample paper on Canvas. Please post papers to Canvas by midnight on their due date.

**Outline of paper:** This is a 1-2 page rough outline of your final paper topic, done mainly so that I can give you feedback for your final paper. See sample on Canvas. Please post on Canvas by midnight 11/22.

**Final paper:** This paper will focus on either mindfulness, self-compassion, or compassion for others as applied to a topic of your choosing (ex., self-compassion and body image, mindfulness and athletic performance, compassion and parenting, etc.). The final paper should be 10-12 pages long (double spaced, not including references or title page) and written in APA style with references. See assignment sheet and sample paper on Canvas. Please post on Canvas by midnight 12/06.

**Grading System:** 10 points for class participation, 5 points for posted discussion questions, 45 points for the observation papers (15 points each), and 40 points for the final paper.

**Required texts:**

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

All other assigned readings are available on Canvas in PDF format under the Files tab

## ***Course Topics***

**Aug. 30 - Introduction**

**Sept. 06 – 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.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). *Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life*. New York: Hyperion. (pp 1-55).

### **Sept. 13 – 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* Chapters 2-4. New York: The Guildford Press.

### **Sept. 20 – Mindfulness: Research and Interventions**

Lazar, S. (2012). Neurobiology of mindfulness. In C. K. Germer, R. D. Siegel, P. R. Fulton (Eds.) *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*, 2<sup>ND</sup> Edition (pp. 282 – 294). New York: Guilford.

Shapiro, S. L. & Carlson, L. E. (2009). *The art and science of mindfulness*. Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association. (Chapters 4).

Davis, D. M. & Hayes, J. A. (2012). What Are the Benefits of Mindfulness? A Practice Review of Psychotherapy-Related Research, *Psychotherapy*, 48 (2), 198-208.

**Observation paper #1 on mindfulness exercise due on Canvas (by midnight)**

### **Sept. 27 - What is self-compassion?**

Neff, K. D. (2011). *Self-compassion*. New York: William Morrow. Chapters 1, 3-5.

### **Oct. 04 –Self-compassion: Theoretical Issues**

Neff, K. D. (2011). *Self-compassion*. New York: William Morrow. Chapter 2, 8-9,12-13.

### **Oct. 11 – Developing self-compassion**

Gilbert, P. (2009). Introducing Compassion Focused Therapy. *Advances in psychiatric treatment*,15, 199–208.

Neff, K. D., & Germer, C. K. (2013). A pilot study and randomized controlled trial of the mindful self-compassion program. *Journal Of Clinical Psychology*, 69(1), 28-44.

### **Oct. 18 – Research on self-compassion**

MacBeth, A., & Gumley, A. (2012). Exploring compassion: A meta-analysis of the association between self-compassion and psychopathology. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 32, 545-552.

Germer, C. K. & Neff, K. D. (in preparation). *Mindful Self-Compassion: A training manual*. Guilford Press. Chapter 2.

**Observation paper #2 on self-compassion exercise due on Canvas (by midnight)**

### **Oct. 25- What is compassion?**

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

### **Nov. 01 – Developing compassion**

Salzberg, S. (1997). *Lovingkindness: The revolutionary art of happiness*. Boston: Shambhala. Chapter 2 (pp. 18-32).

Singer, T. & Bolz, M. (2013). *Compassion: Bridging Practice and Science* (pp. 399-478). Munich: Max Plank Institute. (<http://www.compassion-training.org>)

### **Nov. 08 – Compassion Research**

Shapiro, S. L., & Sahgal, M. (2012). Loving-kindness. In T. G. Plante (Ed.), *Religion, spirituality, and positive psychology: Understanding the psychological fruits of faith* (pp. 109-126). Santa Barbara, CA US: Praeger

Stellar, J. E. & Keltner, D. (2014). Compassion. In M. Tugade, L. Shiota, & L. Kirby (Eds). *Handbook of Positive Emotion* (pp. 329-341). New York: Guilford Press.

**Observation paper #3 on compassion exercise due (by midnight)**

### **Nov. 15 – Documentary "I AM"**

### **Nov. 22 – 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).

Siegel, R. (2015). The fiction of the self: The paradox of mindfulness in clinical practice. *Psychotherapy Networker*, 1, 29-36.

**Outline of final paper due on Canvas (by midnight)**

**Nov. 29 - Peer Group Discussion of Home Practices**

***Dec. 06 - FINAL PAPER DUE on Canvas (by midnight)***