

## **Course Syllabus**

### **Mindfulness, Compassion, and the Self**

#### **Spring 2016**

EDP 362 Unique number: 10630

Instructor: Pittman McGehee

Room: UTC 4.132

Class time: Monday 4:00 - 6:30 (Five minutes leeway at beginning)

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Office hours: by appointment

**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 from both a Western and Eastern perspective. Recent years have seen an explosion of interest in these topics, as well as a dramatic increase of research studies on the benefits of mindfulness and compassion for 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. Video clips will also be used to illustrate concepts. You will be expected to take responsibility for your own learning process, which means taking an active part in making sense of the readings, practicing the 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 30-45 minutes of experiential exercises and 15 minutes small group discussion afterwards.

**Class Notes:** The notes from all PowerPoint presentations will be posted shortly after each class on Canvas.

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

**Reading Responses:** Each week you will be asked to provide a 1-2 paragraph response to one of the week's assigned readings. There are no prompts; you are free to respond to whatever captures your interest. Response options include, but are not limited to, an idea in the reading that you agree with, disagree with, find interesting, or want to know more about. Reading responses will not be graded on quality of writing or ideas. In other words, you will not be expected to generate brilliant insights but, instead, simply demonstrate that you read the assigned material. Also, these reading responses are not intended to be overly burdensome. If you have done the readings, a response should not take more than 10 minutes.

**Observation Papers:** These will be a series of three short papers that report on the use of a particular assigned home practice (see home exercises sheet). There will be one paper on

mindfulness, one on self-compassion, and one on compassion for others. In the papers, students will discuss and define the class topic related to the practice, describe their personal experience of using the practice, and consider how the practice impacted their daily life experience. (See observation papers assignment sheet). Observation papers will be submitted through Canvas.

**Class Exams:** The exams will contain multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions. The second exam will be mostly focused on material from the second half of the course but will have a few questions that are drawn from material in the first half of the course. Study guides will be provided before the exams.

**Canvas:** All electronic materials used for this course will be available on Canvas. Grades for all examinations and assignments will also be available on Canvas. Please access the training for students (<http://edutech.utexas.edu/students/>) for help with setting up your account and navigating the system. You will also be responsible for checking the Canvas course site regularly for announcements, and copies of the class notes. As with all computer systems, there are occasional scheduled downtimes as well as unanticipated disruptions, so plan accordingly.

### **Grading System:**

10 points for class participation - 1 point for every non-exam class day attended. (Since there are eleven non-exam days you can miss one class without penalty or else get extra credit.)

10 points for reading responses – 1 point for each week you respond to at least one of the week's reading assignments (since there are eleven weeks with reading assignments, you can skip one reading response or else turn it in for extra credit)

10 points for each of the three observation papers (30 points total)

20 points for the first exam

30 points for the second exam

### **Grading Scale (decimals rounded up):**

A = 100-93% A- = 92-90% B+ = 89-87%

B = 86-83% B- = 82-80% C+ = 79-77%

C = 76-73% C- = 72-70% D = 69-67%

F = 67-0%

**Required texts:** Neff, K. D. (2011). *Self-Compassion*. New York: William-Morrow. (Available from Amazon and other booksellers.) All other assigned readings are available on Canvas as PDF files.

### **Course Topics**

**Jan. 23 – Introduction**

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

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

### **Feb. 06 - 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 Guilford Press. Chapters 2-4

### **Feb. 13 – Mindfulness: Research and Interventions**

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

Hassed, C. & Chambers, R. (2014) *Mindful learning*. New South Wales: Exisle Publishing. (Chapter 2).

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

### **Feb. 20 – What is self-compassion?**

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

### **Feb. 27 – Self-compassion: Theoretical Issues**

Neff, K. D. (2011). *Self-compassion*. New York: William Morrow. Chapter 7-8,12-13.

### **Mar. 06 - First Class Exam**

### **Mar. 13 - No Class (Spring Break)**

### **Mar. 20 - Self-compassion Interventions**

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

Germer, C. K., & Neff, K. D. (2013). Self-compassion in clinical practice. *Journal Of Clinical Psychology*, 69(8), 856-867.

### **Mar. 27 – Research on self-compassion**

Neff, K. D. (2012). The science of self-compassion. In C. Germer & R. Siegel (Eds.), *Compassion and Wisdom in Psychotherapy*, 79-92. New York: Guilford Press.

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

### **Apr. 03 - What is compassion for others?**

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

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

### **Apr. 10 – Developing compassion**

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

Lasater, I. & Kinyon, J. (2014). *Choosing Peace*. Amherst, MA: Mediate Your Life. Chapter 2 (pp. 28-42).

Optional - (look at <http://www.compassion-training.org/>)

### **Apr. 17 - Researching compassion**

Davidson, R. (2012). The neurobiology of compassion. In C. Germer & R. Siegel (Eds.), *Compassion and Wisdom in Psychotherapy*, 111-118. New York: Guilford Press.

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: Praetor

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

#### **Apr. 24 – 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).

#### **May 01 - Exam #2**