

## HON 308W/HON 312W/REL370/PSY 497: Meditation Compassion Science

Fall Semester, 2014 TR 9:30	162 Case Annex* 3 Credits
All course documents available on Blackboard	

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<b>Office Hours:</b>	After class. Other times available by appointment 211 Case Annex	By appointment 216 Cammack I'm on Facebook, Twitter (@mpwinslow)

In this course we will critically examine the relationship between meditation and compassion from the perspective of two distinct yet complementary disciplines, psychology and contemplative studies. We will study the theory and practice of Buddhist meditation with special emphasis on methods to cultivate compassion. We will also explore the scientific research in psychology that has emerged in the last twenty years about the effects of contemplative practices. This course will be taught as a seminar, with guided discussions about selected readings. Roughly half of the class periods will focus on the theory of various types of meditation followed by critical first-person examination of those practices, and the other half of the class periods will focus on scientific research about the topics. This course will be secular and require no particular religious or ideological beliefs. We ask that you keep an open but critical mind. Come, find out for yourself.

### Student Learning Outcomes

This course addresses the following Student Learning Outcomes:

#### Religious studies:

1. Students will use critical and creative thinking when applying theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches employed in religious studies. **How assessed:** paper
2. Students will understand the practice of diverse methods of meditation as well as the historical development of major concepts, beliefs, textual canons, and ethical values associated with such methods. **How assessed:** journal
3. Students will develop the ability to communicate effectively about their religious or secular ideas without being insensitive to the self-understanding of other religions or secular traditions. **How assessed:** presentation

#### Psychology:

1. Demonstrate the ability to gather, synthesize, and critically analyze psychological reasoning and science and present it in a well-written format. **How assessed:** paper, discussion board posts, tweets.

2. Verbally articulate complex information in an interesting presentation on a topic related to mindfulness, compassion, meditation, and/or Buddhism. **How assessed:** presentation.
3. Develop their own views on a variety of questions related to mindfulness, compassion, meditation, and/or Buddhism. **How assessed:** discussion board posts, tweets.

Honors:

1. Demonstrate the ability to gather, synthesize, and critically analyze information and present it in a well-written format. **How assessed:** papers.
2. Verbally articulate complex information in an interesting format. **How assessed:** presentation.

**Course structure and requirements:**

***Class meetings:***

Attendance at all class meetings is required. If you attend all class meetings, you will receive a bonus of 5% added on to your **final grade**. If you miss more than one but three or fewer class meetings, you will get 2% added on. If you miss four or five, you get zero bonus points. If you miss more than five, but eight or fewer classes, you lose 2%, and if you miss more than eight, you lose 5%. If you miss more than eight classes, you likely won't pass the class anyway.

<b><u>Number of days missed</u></b>	<b><u>Result</u></b>
0	+4%
1 – 3	+2%
4 – 5	0%
6 – 8	-2%
9 or more	-4%

***Readings:***

Students are expected to read the assigned material for each class *before* coming to class. Seriously. Because lectures and discussions will most often be extensions of the reading for that class, we will assume that you are familiar with the reading assignments.

Here is the book you will need for the class:

*Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction* by Damien Keown  
Oxford University Press, 2013 ISBN 978-0-19-966383-5

*Mindfulness in Plain English* by Henepola Gunaratana  
Wisdom Publications, 2011 ISBN-10: 0861719069, ISBN-13: 978-0861719068  
Available online for free <http://www.urbandharma.org/udharma4/mpe.html>

*A Truthful Heart: Buddhist Practices for Connecting with Others* by Jeffrey Hopkins  
Snow Lion Publications, 2008 ISBN-10: 1559392908, ISBN-13: 978-1559392907

The science readings will be from articles that you can find either on Blackboard or from a particular website (see below), or through EKU's library using PsycINFO (or perhaps using google). We assume you are proficient in finding electronic resources. You are responsible for getting the articles in time to read them before class. We will not accept any excuse about not being able to get the articles. If you have trouble getting any reading, contact one of us **IMMEDIATELY**. There may be additions or substitutions to the reading list during the semester.

Here are the full citations for the science readings (in the order we will get to them), and tips for where to look for each:

### **Mindfulness**

- Bishop, S. R., Lau, M., Shapiro, S., Carlson, L., Anderson, N. D., Carmody, J., & ... Devins, G. (2004). Mindfulness: A proposed operational definition. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 11*(3), 230-241. doi:10.1093/clipsy.bph077 **Google the title.**
- Grossman, P. (2008). On measuring mindfulness in psychosomatic and psychological research. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 64*(4), 405-408. doi:10.1016/j.jpsychores.2008.02.001 **On Blackboard**
- Gackenbach, J., & Bown, J. (2011). Mindfulness and video game play: A preliminary inquiry. *Mindfulness, 2*(2), 114-122. doi:10.1007/s12671-011-0049-2 **On Blackboard**
- Niemiec, C. P., Brown, K., Kashdan, T. B., Cozzolino, P. J., Breen, W. E., Levesque-Bristol, C., & Ryan, R. M. (2010). Being present in the face of existential threat: The role of trait mindfulness in reducing defensive responses to mortality salience. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 99*(2), 344-365. doi:10.1037/a0019388 **Get from PsycINFO**

### **Compassion**

- Ruedy, N. E., & Schweitzer, M. E. (2010). In the moment: The effect of mindfulness on ethical decision making. *Journal of Business Ethics, 95*(Suppl 1), 73-87. doi:10.1007/s10551-011-0796-y **Get from PsycINFO**
- Davidson, R. J. (2012). The neurobiology of compassion. In C. K. Germer, R. D. Siegel (Eds.), *Wisdom and compassion in psychotherapy: Deepening mindfulness in clinical practice* (pp. 111-118). New York, NY US: Guilford Press. **On Blackboard**
- Weng, H. Y., Fox, A. S., Shackman, A. J., Stodola, D. E., Caldwell, J. Z. K., Olson, M. C., Rogers, G. M., & Davidson R. J. (2013). Compassion training alters altruism and neural responses to suffering. *Psychological science*. doi:10.1177/0956797612469537. **Google the doi.**
- Kang, Y., Gray, J. R., & Dovidio, J. F. (2014). The nondiscriminating heart: Lovingkindness meditation training decreases implicit intergroup bias. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 143*(3), 1306-1313. doi:10.1037/a0034150 **Get from PsycINFO**
- Mascaro, J. S., Rilling, J. K., Negi, L., & Raison, C. L. (2013). Compassion meditation enhances empathic accuracy and related neural activity. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, 8*(1), 48-55. doi:10.1093/scan/nss095 **Get from PsycINFO**

**Self-compassion – all of the following readings can be downloaded from <http://self-compassion.org/UTserver/pubs/listofpublications70714.htm>**

- Neff, K. D. (2011). Self-compassion, self-esteem, and well-being. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 5(1), 1-12. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00330.x
- Leary, M. R., Tate, E. B., Adams, C. E., Batts Allen, A., & Hancock, J. (2007). Self-compassion and reactions to unpleasant self-relevant events: The implications of treating oneself kindly. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(5), 887-904. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.92.5.887
- Neff, K. D. & Pommier, E. (2012). The relationship between self-compassion and other-focused concern among college undergraduates, community adults, and practicing meditators. *Self and Identity*, 1-17.

### **Assessment opportunities**

**1. Science day responses/tweets**, 10 points each (120 points total). Prior to each science day, students will respond to one or more questions about the reading on a discussion board in Blackboard. In addition, students will compose at least one tweet about the reading. The tweets should summarize the main point of the reading, or ask an important question about the reading. Please include hashtags (#) before key words. Tweets can also be targeted at people or organizations by using the ampersand (@) before names. Many researchers are on twitter, and could target them in the tweets. Students don't need to post the tweets on twitter, just submit them to the discussion board. Of course you could post them to twitter if you wish. If you do, please use #MedCompSci.

For each reading, students will submit post to the discussion boards on Blackboard by **midnight** the day **before** we are to discuss that reading in class. All science day responses/tweets are required. The FINAL GRADE will be lowered by one letter grade for each science day response/tweets assignment that is not submitted. These assignments can be turned in late, but a 10% deduction will occur for each calendar day it is late (without documented legitimate excuse).

**2. Meditation lab journals**, 10 points each (120 points total). After discussing the reading on Buddhism from a scholarly third-person perspective, and after investigating a method of meditation from a critical first-person perspective, students will have to (1) answer a few study questions, (2) explain what they learned in class that day, and (3) describe what they experienced (thoughts, sensations, emotions) during the meditation practice.

These journals must be completed within 24 hours following each meditation lab day, and submitted on Blackboard. They will be graded as pass/fail. In order to pass you will need to write without spelling or grammatical errors, and demonstrate critical thinking in your responses. Passing will be worth 10 points. If you do not pass a journal, you will receive zero (0) points until you re-submit your journal. If you pass the second time you will receive 5 points.

All meditation lab journals are required. The FINAL GRADE will be lowered by one letter grade for each meditation lab journals assignment that is not submitted. These assignments can be turned in late, but a 10% deduction will occur for each calendar day it is late (without documented legitimate excuse).

**3. Papers,** 120 points each. There will be two papers, and both will require a rough and final draft. One will be focused on philosophy and the other will be focused on science. We will provide three topics for each paper that students will choose from. Each paper will be approximately 5-7 pages in length. Students will be able to choose which paper they do first or second. The rough draft will be worth 40 points and the final drafts will be worth 80 points.

**4. Video Presentation,** 120 points. This could be about your paper, but does not have to be. Students will create a video presentation using a variety of methods. There will be a day of instruction about the technological requirements and opportunities. Video presentations will be uploaded to YouTube. We will have video presentation showcases at the end of the semester, in class. Presentations are expected to be 10 – 12 minutes in length followed by questions and answers.

### Track your progress...

Grading opportunity	Point value	% of total grade	Graded by	Points you received
Science day questions	120 points	20	Winslow	
Meditation lab journals	120 points	20	Velez	
Science paper	120 points	20	Winslow	
Philosophy paper	120 points	20	Velez	
Video presentation	120 points	20	Velez & Winslow	
Total points	600 points			

### Disability Accommodation Statement:

A student with a “disability” may be an individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as learning, seeing or hearing. Additionally, pregnancy or a related medical condition that causes a similar substantial limitation may also be considered a disability under the ADA.

If you are registered with the Office of Services for Individuals with Disabilities, please obtain your accommodation letters from the OSID and present them to the course instructor to discuss any academic accommodations you need. If you believe you need accommodation and are not registered with the OSID, please contact the office in the Whitlock Building Room 361 by email at [disserv@eku.edu](mailto:disserv@eku.edu) or by telephone at (859) 622-2933. Upon individual request, this syllabus can be made available in an alternative format.

### Additional Policies:

**Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is a fundamental value for the Eastern Kentucky University community of students, faculty, and staff. It should be clearly understood that academic dishonesty is not tolerated and incidents of it will have serious consequences. Anyone who knowingly assists in any form of academic dishonesty shall be considered as responsible as the student who accepts such assistance and shall be subject to the same sanctions. Academic dishonesty can occur in different forms, some of which include cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication.

The instructors reserve the right to examine any source used by the student before giving a grade on a paper and to give an "incomplete" in the course if necessary, to allow time to obtain sources. Students should be prepared to show source material to the instructor for the purpose of verifying information. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

Students are advised that ECU's Academic Integrity Policy will strictly be enforced in this course. The Academic Integrity policy is available at [www.academicintegrity.ecu](http://www.academicintegrity.ecu). Questions regarding the policy may be directed to the Office of Academic Integrity. Students have an affirmative obligation to review and comply with the standards articulated on the web site, in addition to the course specific policies outlined in this syllabus.

For the purposes of this course, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following offenses:

- Claiming as your own work a paper written by another person
- Turning in a paper that contains paraphrases of someone else's ideas but does not give proper credit to that person for those ideas
- Turning in a paper that is largely a restatement in your own words of a paper written by someone else, even if you give credit to that person for those ideas. The thesis and organizing principles of a paper must be your own.
- Turning in a paper that uses the exact words of another author without using quotation marks, even if proper credit is given in a citation, or that changes the words only slightly and claims them to be paraphrases
- Turning in the same paper, even in a different version, for two different courses without the permission of both professors involved
- Using any external source (notes, books, other students, etc) for assistance during an exam, unless given permission to do so by the professor

If a student is found to have committed any of the above offenses, s/he will receive a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, depending upon the seriousness of the offense, in accordance with University policy. The offense will be referred to the Academic Integrity Office for investigation and imposition of sanctions.

**Ignorance is no defense.**

### **Student Obligation to Stay Informed**

The primary means of communication, outside of classtime, will be via Blackboard and email. Students should check their email and the Blackboard course page at least every other day.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Day	Topics	Readings assigned	Grading opportunities
1 8/19, 8/21	T	Introduction to course		
	R	Introduction to Buddhism	Keown (2013)	Meditation lab journal #1
2 8/26, 8/28	T	The science of mindfulness	Bishop, et al. (2004)	Science day questions/tweets
	R	Meditation lab: Mindfulness practice	Keown (2013) Gunaratana (2011)	Meditation lab journal #2
3 9/2, 9/4	T	The science of mindfulness	Grossman (2008)	Science day questions/tweets
	R	Meditation lab: Mindfulness practice	Keown (2013) Gunaratana (2011)	Meditation lab journal #3
4 9/9, 9/11	T	The science of mindfulness	Gackenbach & Bown (2011)	Science day questions/tweets
	R	Meditation lab: Mindfulness practice	Keown (2013) Gunaratana (2011)	Meditation lab journal #4
5 9/16, 9/18	T	The science of mindfulness	Niemiec, et al. (2010)	Science day questions/tweets
	R	Meditation lab: Mindfulness practice	Keown (2013) Gunaratana (2011)	Meditation lab journal #5
6 9/23, 9/25	T	The science of compassion	Ruedy & Schweitzer (2010).	Science day questions/tweets
	R	Meditation lab: Loving-kindness practice	Keown (2013) Hopkins (2008)	Meditation lab journal #6
7 9/30, 10/2	T	The science of compassion	Davidson (2012)	Science day questions/tweets
	R	Meditation lab: Loving-kindness practice	Keown (2013) Hopkins (2008)	Meditation lab journal #7 Paper 1 rough draft due
8 10/7, 10/9	T	The science of compassion	Weng et al. (2013)	Science day questions/tweets
	R	Meditation lab: Methods to cultivate compassion	Keown (2013) Hopkins (2008)	Meditation lab journal #8
9 10/14, 10/16	T	NO CLASS, FALL BREAK		
	R	Presentation tech day		Paper 1 final draft due
10 10/21, 10/23	T	The science of compassion	Kang, Gray, & Dovidio (2014)	Science day questions/tweets
	R	Meditation lab: Methods to cultivate compassion	Keown (2013) Hopkins (2008)	Meditation lab journal #9
11 10/28, 10/30	T	The science of self-compassion	Neff (2011)	Science day questions/tweets
	R	Meditation lab: Methods to cultivate compassion	Hopkins (2008)	Meditation lab journal #10
12 11/4, 11/6	T	The science of self-compassion	Leary, Et al. (2007)	Science day questions/tweets
	R	Meditation lab: Methods to cultivate compassion	Hopkins (2008)	Meditation lab journal #11 Paper 2 rough draft due

13 11/11, 11/13	T	Meditation lab: Methods to cultivate compassion	Hopkins (2008)	Meditation lab journal #12
	R	The science of self-compassion	Neff & Pommier (2012)	Science day questions/tweets
14 11/18, 11/20	T	Open day		
	R	Open day		Paper 2 final draft due
15 11/25	T	Presentations		
	R	NO CLASS Thanksgiving		
16 12/2, 12/4	T	Presentations		
	R	Presentations		
Finals		Presentations		