

**PSY407 – Contemplative Science**  
University of Oregon, Spring 2018  
Monday/Wednesday 2:00-3:20pm, STB 257

**Professor:** Robin Hertz, MS; rhertz@uoregon.edu

**Office Location & Hours:** STB 468; Mondays & Wednesdays 3:30-4:30 (right after class), or by appointment

**Course Description:** Contemplative practices (e.g., meditation, yoga) have existed for millennia and have recently become increasingly popular in Western societies. Contemplative practices (e.g., mindfulness practices) are currently being utilized for clinical, educational, organizational, and self-help purposes. In this rigorous, upper level interdisciplinary course we will explore contemporary research from a variety of disciplines and perspectives that tests the impact of contemplative practices on brain, body, and health. We will learn about the mind-body systems related to contemplative practice, and critically evaluate the empirical methods used to study them. We will integrate empirical research and current theories with self-knowledge from personal contemplative practice in the pursuit of understanding how and why contemplative practices influence human experience. We will also discuss the historical roots of contemplative practice and inquire into the issues related to appropriating these practices into secular Western contexts. This course will utilize contemplative education techniques to build students' awareness and appreciation of their own subjective experiences as valuable and valid sources of information, which serve as a complement to external empirical and theoretical knowledge. Students will have the opportunity to engage in personal meditation practice, and to create and test hypotheses about how these practices influence outcomes of interest, such as stress and wellbeing.

**Learning Objectives:**

- To acquire, and reflect on, experiences with contemplative practice
- To generate and test hypotheses about how contemplative practice influences outcomes of interest, such as stress and health
- To learn about, and critically evaluate theories, empirical findings, and research designs employed in contemplative science
- To critically evaluate popularized accounts and uses of contemplative practices

*Learning objectives based on Dr. Jennifer Mascaro's (Emory University) Spring 2016 Contemplative Science and Health course*

**Contemplative Practice:** Each class session will begin with a guided meditation practice lasting approximately 20 minutes. Students are strongly encouraged to participate; however, those who object to or otherwise wish not to engage in these practices are welcome to simply observe and/or do another silent, nondistracting activity (e.g., reading or journaling, but no laptop or cell phone use). Additionally, students will be asked to maintain a regular schedule of contemplative practice at home during weeks 2-7. Students will not be penalized if they choose not to engage in these practices; however, you *will be required to report* on the amount, duration, and type of contemplative practice that you engage in, even if the amount of home practice is zero.

**Readings:** All readings will be available on Canvas.

### Grade Breakdown

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Total Points</u>	<u>Weighted Percentage of Final Grade</u>
<b>Class Participation</b>	20	25%
<b>Reading Quizzes</b>	85	25%
<b>Discussion Leader</b>	10	10%
<b>Class Project</b>		
<b>Contemplative Practice Data Submissions</b>	50	40%
<b>Method Section</b>	10	
<b>Literature Review</b>	10	
<b>Results Section</b>	10	
<b>Final Paper</b>	100	
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Class Participation:** Each class will feature 1-2 reflection questions that will involve written reflection and discussion in pairs, small groups, or as an entire class. Please come to class having read the assigned pages and be prepared to share your thoughts and questions. You will turn in *brief* written comments at the end of each class to earn participation credit. **Participation is worth 20 points and makes up 25% of your grade.**

**Reading Quizzes:** Beginning on the second day of class, prior to each class students will be expected to complete a reading quiz covering content from the day's assigned readings. These quizzes will be short (5-6 questions) and untimed. This means you can take the quiz as you read. *Quizzes are due at 1:59pm (immediately prior to class) on the day for which those readings are assigned.* Reading quizzes for Week 1 will be made available on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of class. Reading quizzes for Weeks 2-10 will be made available each Thursday prior to the beginning of that week. This means you will have the freedom to work ahead, if you choose. Your 2 lowest quiz scores will be dropped. **Each quiz will be worth 5 points for a total of 85 points, weighted at 25% of your final grade.**

**Discussion Leader:** Each student will sign up to be a discussion leader on one day of class. The discussion leader has 3 main responsibilities: (1) provide a brief summary of the day's assigned readings in the form of a Powerpoint presentation or handout, (2) prepare and present up to five discussion questions, and (3) help to moderate the discussion. **Leading a discussion is worth 10 points and makes up 10% of your final grade.**

**Class Project (180 points total; weighted at 40% of your final grade):** Direct, first-hand experience is critical for a deeper understanding of contemplative practice. In this class you will have the opportunity to gain first-hand experience with several contemplative practices, including attention-based practice, open monitoring practice, and compassion meditation. During the first week of class we will design an empirical self-study together, and collect data on ourselves throughout the term. Amount and type of practice will be the independent variables, and we will select 2-3 self-report measures representing outcomes of interest that will serve as dependent variables (e.g., anxiety, depression, quality of life). You will write a full APA-style report of our class self-study in the same format as your PSY 303 Research Methods lab papers. The project will be broken down into the following components:

- **Contemplative Practice Data Collection (50 points total):** The class project pre-test will consist of a mindfulness measure (the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire [FFMQ]; Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006) and 2-3 health-related self-report measures representing outcomes of interest. These questionnaires will be made available online for students via a Qualtrics survey. The pre-test must be completed by 11:59pm on Monday of Week 2 (4/9). We will repeat these measures after 6 weeks of practice. The post-test will be due by 11:59pm on Friday of Week 7 (5/18). **The pre- and post- tests are worth 10 points each for a total of 20 points.**

Additionally, you will be asked to complete home practice on days when we do not have class. On Friday of Weeks 2-7, you will submit data on the number of sessions, duration of each session, and type of practices that you engaged in that week via a Qualtrics survey link that will be provided to you. Each student is responsible for submitting data 6 times (at the ends of Weeks 2-7 respectively). **Each data submission is worth 5 points for a total of 30 points.**

- **Method Section:** A first draft of your Method section will be due Friday 4/20 at 5:00pm. This section should be in APA-style and contain subsections describing Participants, Measures, and Procedures **(10 points)**.
- **Literature Review:** A first draft of your literature review, or introduction, will be due Friday, 5/11, by 5:00pm. It should be written in APA-style and integrate at least **ten** empirical sources that pertain to our research question. You may use papers from our course readings as your sources if you choose, or you may find your own. Sources should be up-to-date, preferably published within the last 10-15 years. The literature review should end with a statement of the research question addressed by our study, as well as your hypotheses **(10 points)**.
- **Results Section:** We will discuss the results of our study in class on Monday, 5/21 – **don't miss it!** The SPSS output of the analysis will be provided to you on Canvas. Students will not be expected to analyze the data independently. However, it is your responsibility to report the results fully in APA-style. This section should include descriptive statistics of participants and amount, duration, and type of contemplative practices that we engaged in, as well as a report of the test of our hypotheses, including relevant effect sizes. A first draft of the results section will be due Friday, 5/25 **(10 points)**.
- **Final Paper:** The final paper will include an APA-style title page, Abstract, Literature Review, Method section, Results section, and Discussion section. You must integrate all feedback from your first drafts into your final papers. In addition, you will be responsible for writing a discussion section where you restate your hypotheses and findings, explain the findings, provide an account of study limitations, and suggest ideas for future research. Please note there is no opportunity to turn in a first draft of the discussion section; consider it the equivalent of your final exam. Additionally, you must provide an APA style References section. Your final paper will be due Monday of Finals Week, 6/11, at 11:59pm **(100 points)**.

### Course Policies

**Attendance Policy:** Please be aware lectures and course activities will supplement (rather than summarize) the readings. This is a small class that relies on discussion, so we need bodies and brains in the seats. Missing class will inevitably result in lost points and hurt your final grade. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor, and to contact other students to acquire any notes and remain updated on information that you may have missed.

**Grading Policy:** Written assignments will always be due at the date and time listed in the class schedule (see end of syllabus). **Written assignments submitted past the deadline will be deducted 10% for each calendar day that it is late. Late quizzes will not be accepted** (but remember, you get to drop your two lowest scores). Extensions will be granted in rare instances and on a case-by-case basis at the instructor's discretion. Students wishing to request an extension must do so **no less than 2 days in advance**. Requests for extensions that are less than 2 days in advance, or after the deadline, will generally be denied, with exceptions for documented medical emergencies. All written assignments will be submitted online in Canvas via VeriCite, which will check your work for plagiarism.

The grading system used in this course is as follows (with minus and plus grades assigned per the instructor's discretion):

**A (100-90%)** = Outstanding performance relative to that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at the highest level.

**B (89-80%)** = Performance that is significantly above that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at a high level.

**C (79-70%)** = Performance that meets the course requirements in every respect; demonstrates an adequate understanding of course content.

**D (69-60%)** = Performance that is at the minimal level necessary to pass the course but does not fully meet the course requirements; demonstrates a marginal understanding of course content.

**F (<60%)** = Performance in the course, for whatever reason, is unacceptable and does not meet the course requirements; demonstrates an inadequate understanding of the course content.

**Use of Technology:** Research suggests that the use of laptops during class is highly distracting and results in poorer information retention and lower scores for both the laptop user and those seated nearby. You are encouraged to use an old-fashioned notebook and pen for note taking. Please refrain from using laptops and cell phones during class. Cell phones should be silenced and put away for the duration of class. If you think you require the use of an electronic device during class, please discuss this with me in advance.

**Academic Etiquette:** Respect and dignity are expected in all of your actions and interactions in this course. Please arrive on time to class. If you need to arrive late or leave class early or momentarily for any reason, please do so as quietly as possible so as not to disrupt lecture and disturb your fellow students. Please be courteous when speaking to your classmates and instructor. We are each responsible for treating the statements, ideas, and feelings of others with respect, *especially when we disagree with someone or find that an idea triggers difficult emotions*. We will practice engaging in evidence-based discussion. You will be challenged to back-up your contributions to classroom discussion with facts and information from the course readings. The course requires and expects critical thinking about, and sensitivity to, the impact of diversity (culture, religion/faith, gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomics, physical and cognitive ability, sexual orientation, and other considerations) on society and our classroom. Students are encouraged to develop and expand their respect for and understanding of diverse identities and experiences. If you notice or experience offensive speech or behavior in class, I encourage you to speak out directly to the person(s) involved, or speak with me privately. I am also available to assist in facilitating difficult conversations. If you believe you have been the target of or a witness to harassment, bias, or a hate crime, you may report this (anonymously, if desired) to the Bias Response Team at 346-2037 or <http://bias.uoregon.edu>.

**Academic Misconduct:** Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. The University Student Conduct Code (available at [conduct.uoregon.edu](http://conduct.uoregon.edu)) defines academic misconduct. Acts of academic misconduct include giving or receiving (or attempting to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments without express permission from the instructor. Students should avoid plagiarism by properly citing the source of any information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) that is not the student's original work (for more information see: [researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism](http://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism)). If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. When in doubt, cite! All written work will be electronically submitted and analyzed by plagiarism detection software (Vericite) via the course Canvas page. Cases of academic misconduct will be reported to the Dean of Students per University policy.

**Students with Disabilities and Athletes:** If you have a documented disability or are associated with a University athletic team and may need accommodations, please let me know during the first week of class. Please request that the Accessible Education Center (AEC; formerly Disabilities Services) or the Athletic Director's office send a letter verifying your disability or athletic involvement. Contact the AEC for more information (164 Oregon Hall; 346-1155; [aec.uoregon.edu](http://aec.uoregon.edu)). Without documentation, accommodations are not guaranteed and are to be made at the discretion of the instructor.

**Responding to Disclosures of Discrimination, Harassment, and Assault:** I am a student-directed employee. As such, I will direct students who disclose sexual harassment or sexual violence to resources that can help, and I will only report the information shared to the university administration when the student requests that the information be reported (unless someone is at imminent risk of serious harm, or under age 18). I am required to report all other forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment to the university administration. For more information about my reporting obligations as an employee, please see <https://titleix.uoregon.edu>. Students experiencing any form of prohibited discrimination or harassment, including sex or gender based violence, may seek additional information online at <http://safe.uoregon.edu>, <https://respect.uoregon.edu>, or <https://aaeo.uoregon.edu>, or contact the non-confidential Title IX office (541-346-8136), AAEO office (541-346-3123) or Dean of Students offices (541-346-3216), or call the 24-7 hotline 541-346-SAFE for help. I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse (please note, this applies to disclosures made by students under 18 years of age). Please find more information at <https://hr.uoregon.edu/policies-leaves/general-information/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect/presidents-message>.

**Important Dates:**

Activity	Date
Class Begins	Monday, April 2
Last Day to Drop w/o a 'W'	Monday, April 9
Last Day to Change Grading Option	Wednesday, April 11
Last Day to Drop w/ a 'W'	Sunday, May 20

**List of Assignments and Due Dates:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due Date/Time</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	
Discussion Leader – Sign up in class	Varies
Reading Quiz #1	Wed. 4/4 @ 1:59pm
<b>Week 2</b>	
Reading Quiz #2	Mon. 4/9 @ 1:59pm
Class Project Pre-Test	Mon. 4/9 @ 11:59pm
Reading Quiz #3	Wed. 4/11 @ 1:59pm
Contemplative Practice Data Submission #1	Fri. 4/13 @ 11:59pm
<b>Week 3</b>	
Reading Quiz #4	Mon. 4/16 @ 1:59pm
Reading Quiz #5	Wed. 4/18 @ 1:59pm
Contemplative Practice Data Submission #2	Fri. 4/20 @ 11:59pm
Class Project Method Section - 1 <sup>st</sup> draft	Fri. 4/20 @ 5:00pm
<b>Week 4</b>	
Reading Quiz #6	Mon. 4/23 @ 1:59pm
Reading Quiz #7	Wed. 4/25 @ 1:59pm
Contemplative Practice Data Submission #3	Fri. 4/27 @ 11:59pm
<b>Week 5</b>	
Reading Quiz #8	Mon. 4/30 @ 1:59pm
Reading Quiz #9	Wed. 5/2 @ 1:59pm
Contemplative Practice Data Submission #4	Fri. 5/4 @ 11:59pm
<b>Week 6</b>	
Reading Quiz #10	Mon. 5/7 @ 1:59pm
Reading Quiz #11	Wed. 5/9 @ 1:59pm
Contemplative Practice Data Submission #5	Fri. 5/11 @ 11:59pm
Class Project Literature Review - 1 <sup>st</sup> draft	Fri. 5/11 @ 11:59pm
<b>Week 7</b>	
Reading Quiz #12	Mon. 5/14 @ 1:59pm
Reading Quiz #13	Wed. 5/16 @ 1:59pm
Contemplative Practice Data Submission #6	Fri. 5/18 @ 11:59pm
Class Project Post-Test	Fri. 5/18 @ 11:59pm
<b>Week 8</b>	
Reading Quiz #14	Mon. 5/21 @ 1:59pm
Reading Quiz #15	Wed. 5/23 @ 1:59pm
Class Project Results Section – 1 <sup>st</sup> draft	Fri. 5/25 @ 11:59pm
<b>Week 9</b>	
Reading Quiz #16	Mon. 5/28 @ 1:59pm
Reading Quiz #17	Wed. 5/30 @ 1:59pm
<b>Week 10</b>	
Reading Quiz #18	Mon. 6/4 @ 1:59pm
Reading Quiz #19	Wed. 6/6 @ 1:59pm
<b>Finals Week</b>	
Class Project Final Paper	Mon. 6/11 @ 11:59pm