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Class meets Mondays 6 to 8:40 pm, Fine Arts 206
Office hours: Monday 4-5, Tuesday 1-3,
or by appointment



Art when really understood is the province of every human being. It is simply a question of doing things, anything, well.

—Robert Henri

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the world of contemplative practices (such as meditation and journaling), to artists who create through inward-focused processes, and to the art they produce. Both practical, hands-on learning experiences and analytic learning experiences will enable students to experiment with their own creativity as they explore artistic processes and learn about and experience contemplative practices. CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES AND THE ARTS fulfills the divisional Arts core requirement for all students.

COURSE GOALS

My hope is that CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES AND THE ARTS will help you develop the ability to approach learning holistically—with both intuitive/heart-centered and intellectual ways of knowing—and to apply holistic learning in other areas of study. The goals of the course are to:

- 1) introduce you to various contemplative practices—with an emphasis on meditation and journaling,
- 2) increase your understanding of artists who work with contemplative practices,
- 3) expose you to art created contemplatively and art with spiritual themes,
- 4) encourage you to explore your own creativity in various art forms, and
- 5) empower you to develop a means of presenting yourself, your experiences, and your analyses and understandings in a variety of creative formats.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the requirements of this course, you will be able to:

- utilize meditation, journaling and other contemplative practices effectively;
- articulate ideas and communicate meaning through practiced use of language and voice—in written, oral and multimedia forms;
- identify and discuss artists working in various genres who create contemplatively and/or incorporate spiritual themes in their work;
- reflect on and articulate your understanding and analysis of artistic products and creative projects done contemplatively;
- pursue creative acts of expression and discovery informed by diverse ways of knowing about the world;
- develop an electronic presentation of your experiences, reflective processes, creative projects and learning.

FOURTH HOUR JUSTIFICATION

This four-credit course meets for only three contact hours each week. To complete the contact hours and provide the rigor of a four-credit course, additional learning will take place in out-of-class assignments, practices, and experiences.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators.

—Paulo Freire

I include this quote because I view the learning process as an interactive endeavor in which you and I both have responsibilities. My role is to prepare assignments and facilitate class activities that I believe will be effective in the learning process, to evaluate your work in a timely manner, and to create a safe space in which everyone can be who she (or he) is and freely contribute to the class. Your role in the learning process is to complete assignments on time, attend class sessions and out-of-class events, and share your thoughts, knowledge and questions—substantively—in discussions and activities.



This is not a time to live without a practice. It is a time when all of us will need the most faithful, self-generated enthusiasm (enthusiasm: to be filled with god) in order to survive in human fashion. Whether we reach this inner state of recognized divinity through prayer, meditation, dancing, swimming, walking, feeding the hungry or enriching the impoverished is immaterial. We will be doubly bereft without some form of practice that connects us, in a caring way, to what begins to feel like a dissolving world.

—Alice Walker



The requirements for this course include:

1. Meditation and Journaling Practices: regular practices of meditation and Morning Pages (described in *The Artist's Way*) along with a Journal and a Meditation Log.

You will be meditating and engaging in other contemplative practices within and outside of class, and reflecting on and tracking your practices. In your private Journal (for your eyes only), you will write Morning Pages at least three times each week. You should also bring your Journal to class, as you will be expected to write down your experiences of meditating and doing other contemplative practices in class.

In addition, you will meditate for at least 15 minutes at least three days a week and will track your meditations, noting dates and lengths—along with any experiences you care to share with me—in an online Meditation Log, which I will read. I will review your Meditation Log twice during the semester. I encourage you to write down private thoughts about your meditation experiences in your Journal, which only you will see.

I also encourage you to write in your Journal your reactions to various course activities and experiences, your responses to performances, the gallery visit, the Hahn Woods visit, and Moodle reflections, as well as any other related thoughts you have. Keeping notes about these will help you with your various reflection papers and with your Digital Narrative project.

2. Moodle Reflections: postings of your responses to prompts based on *The Artist's Way* and other readings and experiences, as well as occasional responses to classmates' postings. You will post a substantive entry (of at least 300 words) by 11 pm each Thursday and Sunday.

3. Arts Viewing Experiences: attendance at three on-campus performances—the Drama and Dance productions of *Seven Guitars* and *Flow*, and Spelman Dance Theatre's fall concert—and a visit to the current exhibit of the Spelman Museum of Fine Art, *Howardena Pindell*. You will submit extended Reflections postings for each on Moodle. You are also encouraged to attend *An Evening with Howardena Pindell and Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell* and write a reflection post for extra credit.

4. Contemplative Arts and Research Explorations: participation in all in-class contemplative arts experiences, two out-of-class "Artist Dates" and a Digital Sabbath experience—with extended Reflections on these—and research for creative projects.

5. An Observation Paper (1000 words), in which you write about your experiences of the hour-long observation exercise and the museum exhibit, and any insights that arose.

6. Two Reflection Papers (1000 words each), one on your meditation and Morning Pages practices and one on your experiences of contemplative computing.

7. A Creativity Project, in which you use contemplative practice to create a work of art (in any genre). You will work on the piece over the semester and will perform or present it during the final exam period, on *Monday, December 7, 6 to 8 pm*. If needed, you should be able to photograph or record the completed work for presentation to the class, and if you like, inclusion in your Digital Narrative. I encourage you to document your process of creation in your Journal as you will also write a two-page reflection paper discussing your approach, practices, goals, and experience of creating.

8. A Digital Narrative: such as a webpage, Facebook page, or blog (on the blogging website of your choice—Blogger, Wordpress, Wix, etc.) or a video and screen capture project (with Camtasia or other software), that tracks your experience and understanding of "the contemplative" over the course of the semester. You will complete the project in several steps, a paragraph of your idea, a draft, and the final project, which you will present in class on Monday, November 30.



REQUIRED TEXTS & A NOTE ABOUT READINGS

Cameron, Julia. *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*. NY: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2002.

Pang, Alex Soojung-Kim. *The Distraction Addiction: Getting the Information You Need and the Communication You Want, Without Enraging Your Family, Annoying Your Colleagues, and Destroying Your Soul*. NY: Little, Brown and Company, 2013.

Williams, Mark and Danny Penman. *Mindfulness: An Eight-Week Plan for Finding Peace in a Frantic World*. NY: Rodale, Inc., 2012.

I will post additional required readings about contemplative practice—in general and specifically related to various topics—on Moodle for you to read. These readings are taken from some of the texts listed in the "Other Resources of Interest" section.





ARTIST FOR A SEMESTER

Although we will be learning about professional artists and their work this semester, I believe that you will get the most from this course by approaching it as if you are an artist for a semester. Some of you are artists—you're musicians or poets or sculptors or dancers—and may be majoring in an art form. Others of you may not consider yourselves to be artists and may be majoring in a "non-art" discipline. I love the Robert Henri quote at the beginning of the syllabus because it means that all of us can be artists if we bring our passion and skill to our efforts. So, I invite you to think of your major discipline—or whatever focus of study or activity you choose—as your art. See how you can apply some of the concepts and contemplative practices to deepen your experience of your chosen art form.



This is an absolute necessity for anybody today. You must have a room, or a certain hour or so a day, where you don't know what was in the newspapers that morning, you don't know who your friends are, you don't know what you owe anybody, you don't know what anybody owes you. This is a place where you can simply experience and bring forth what you are and what you might be. This is the place of creative incubation. At first you may find that nothing happens there. But if you have a sacred place and use it, something eventually will happen.

— Joseph Campbell



COURSE POLICIES

EVALUATION		GRADING SCALE	
Class and Moodle Participation	20%	A	95 and above
Meditation and Journaling Practices (with <u>Journal/Meditation Log</u>)	15	A-	90-94
McIntyre IBL Assignment	5	B+	87-89
Proctor/Evans IBL Assignment	5	B	83-86
Observation Paper	10	B-	80-82
Conscious Computing Reflection Paper	12.5	C+	77-79
Meditation Reflection Paper	12.5	C	73-76
Creativity Project (with Documentation Paper)	10	C-	70-72
Digital Narrative	10	D+	67-69
		D	63-66
		F	62 and below
	100		

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Classroom participation is an important element of this course and absence prevents participation. Missing classes is especially problematic for a course that meets only once a week. Therefore, you are allowed only one absence without penalty. Also, habitual tardiness will not be tolerated. Two tardies equal one absence. Arriving in class more than 15 minutes late will constitute an absence.

A NOTE ABOUT LATENESS

I have structured class sessions so that we learn contemplatively as we learn about contemplative practices and the arts. Because all aspects of the class contribute to deepening awareness and knowledge, it is important that you arrive in time to participate in everything we do. If you happen to arrive for class during meditation, please wait quietly outside the door until it is opened. I encourage you to use this time to bring yourself fully present for class by doing some simple stretches or deep breathing exercises.

All written assignments are to be submitted on the class Moodle site—papers, via Turnitin links. Grades for late assignments will be lowered one letter for each day late. Assignments received more than 72 hours after they are due will receive grades of zero.



I was never drawn to participate in sacred dance classes. I feared my irreverence, cynicism, and snobbery. Little did I realize that my problem was linguistic. Sacred dancing is redundant.

—Deborah Haynes



CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

As you might imagine, a class focusing on contemplative practices can seem at odds with the technology that is such an important part of our lives. Our technological devices encourage us to spread our attention and contemplative practices help us to focus. You will see that Pang's book is designed to help us use electronic devices contemplatively. Your attention and presence are important and expected during this class. So I am asking that you set aside some typical ways of being during our class sessions.

First, please turn your cell phone off—not to “vibrate,” which is still audible—and place it out of sight before you come to class. A ringing or vibrating cell phone will equal a tardy. We will have a pause in the middle of the class, where you may check in with others, if needed.

Next, please let me know if you are reading your books electronically. If so, you may use your laptop, iPad or cell phone in class. But, if it *appears* that you are texting, checking email or Facebook, or are focusing somewhere other than this class, you will lose the privilege of using technological devices in class for the rest of the semester.

Finally, studies show that students who take notes on their laptops do less well than those who taken notes by hand. I'm just sayin'.....

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (FROM SPELMAN COLLEGE BULLETIN)

At the heart of Spelman College’s mission is academic excellence, along with the development of intellectual, ethical and leadership qualities. These goals can only flourish in an institutional environment where every member of the College affirms honesty, trust, and mutual respect. All members of the academic community of Spelman College are expected to understand and follow the basic standards of honesty and integrity, upholding a commitment to high ethical standards. Students are expected to read and abide by the Spelman College Code of Conduct (see the Spelman College Student Handbook) and are expected to behave as mature and responsible members of the Spelman College academic community. Students are expected to follow ethical standards in their personal conduct and in their behavior towards other members of the community. They are expected to observe basic honesty in their work, words, ideas, and actions. Failure to do so is a violation of the Spelman College Academic Integrity Policy.

STUDENT DISABILITIES

Spelman College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the College's programs or services, you should contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as soon as possible. To receive any academic accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with ODS. The ODS works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without their permission. ODS serves as a clearinghouse on disability issues and works in partnership with faculty and all other student service offices. For further information about services for students with disabilities, please contact the ODS at 404-270-5289 (voice), located in MacVicar Hall, Room 106.



OTHER RESOURCES OF INTEREST

- Albright, Ann Cooper and David Gere, eds. Taken By Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003.
- Artress, Lauren. Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Practice. NY: Riverhead Books, 2006.
- Barbezat, Daniel and Mirabai Bush. Contemplative Practices in Higher Education: Powerful Methods to Transform Teaching and Learning. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2014.
- Bayles, David and Ted Orland. Art & Fear: Observations on the Perils (and Rewards) of Artmaking. Capra Press, 1994.
- Durgananda, Swami. The Heart of Meditation. NY: SYDA, 2002.
- Dustin, Christopher A. and Joanna E. Ziegler. Practicing Mortality: Art, Philosophy, and Contemplative Seeing. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Foster, Susan. Dances That Describe Themselves: The Improvised Choreography of Richard Bull. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2002.
- Franck, Frederick. Zen of Seeing: Seeing/Drawing as Meditation. NY: Vintage Press, 1973.
- Gibbs, Jake J. and Roddy O. Gibbs. The Mindful Way to Study: Dancing with Your Books. O'Connor Press, 2013.
- Haynes, Deborah J. Art Lessons: Meditations on the Creative Life. Boulder, CO: West View Press, 2003.
- Hull, Gloria Akasha. Soul Talk: The New Spirituality of African American Women. Rochester, VT: 2001.
- Johnson, Charles. Turning the Wheel: Essays on Buddhism and Writing. NY: Scribner, 2003.
- Kabat-Zinn, Jon. Wherever You Go There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life. NY: Hyperion, 2005.
- Kornfield, Jack. Meditation for Beginners. Sounds True, Incorporated, 2008.
- Loori, John Daiso. The Zen of Creativity: Cultivating Your Artistic Life. NY: Ballantine Books, 2005.
- Piver, Susan, ed. Quiet Mind: A Beginner's Guide to Meditation. Boston: Shambhala, 2008.
- Richards, Mary Caroline. Centering in Pottery, Poetry, and the Person. Rev. 2nd ed. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1989.
- Ruis, Don Miguel. The Four Agreements: A Toltec Wisdom Book. San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing, 1997.
- Sark. Sark's New Creative Companion: Ways to Free Your Creative Spirit. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, Inc. 2005.
- Senge, Peter, C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski, Betty Sue Flowers. Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future. Cambridge, MA: Society for Organizational Learning, 2004.
- Tharp, Twyla. The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use It for Life. NY: Simon & Schuster: 2006.
- Walker, Alice. We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For: Light in a Time of Darkness. NY: New Press, 2006.
- Welwood, John. Ordinary Magic: Everyday Life as Spiritual Path. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1992.
- Zajonc, Arthur. Meditation as Contemplative Inquiry: When Knowing Becomes Love. Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books, 2009.

