Buddhist Mindfulness Meditation

EMP 2019HF

Fall 2015

Seminars: Wednesday 7:00 to 9:00 PM

Office Hours: Wednesday 5:00 to 7:00 PM or by appointment

Instructor: Anne S.C. Low, Ph.D.

E-mail: SorChing@utoronto.ca

Course Description:

Mindfulness Meditation is a Buddhist practice that has in recent times expanded into the secular such as psychotherapy and counseling. This course will focus on the religious context and soteriological goals for which meditation is practiced within the Buddhist traditions. To this end, students will focus on the Theravada School and the Eight-Fold Path but will also look at the other Buddhist lineages that are centered on meditation, namely, Zen, Chan, and Son within the Mahayana School. This course will enable students in pastoral care, Buddhist or otherwise, to see the benefits of meditation in the two contexts of the sacred and the secular and thereby make appropriate application of mindfulness meditation within their own profession. Basic meditation techniques will also be introduced and students’ mindfulness in class will count towards class participation. Towards the end of the course, students will examine the application of mindfulness in secular places such as hospitals, schools, and therapy clinics and begin to compare the benefits of meditation as they are described in the Buddhist texts and that claimed by proponents who have introduced mindfulness meditation to secular setting.

Course Methodology:

Students will read primary and secondary religious texts as well as contemporary essays. Each seminar will be driven by students’ participation in class discussions. To this end, students will prepare one page (double-spaced, 12 Times New Roman) reflection papers and present them in class. These papers will be collected at the end of each class. They will not be graded but will count towards the overall participation and attendance grade.

A Short Mid-term Essay

A Final Essay
Course Outcomes: At the completion of this course, 

A. Students will display knowledge of key Buddhist teachings by reading primary and secondary texts.

B. Students will show awareness of the traditional religious contexts in which Buddhist teachings are taught and the different strands that had developed and evolved in the West.

C. Students demonstrate understanding of the parameters in which mindfulness meditation is practiced within the Buddhist traditions and, in relation to this, grow in the capacity to make informed decisions as caregivers, counselors, and chaplains.

D. Students show sensitivity and developing skill in inter-faith dialogues, particularly in Buddhist chaplaincy and ministry works within secular and interreligious communities.

E. Students have grown in critical thinking skills by engaging with essays by leading critics and proponents and examining claims of affinities with cognitive science and theories of attentional regulation.

CRPO Competencies (see handout: Competency Profile)

- 1.4c, 1.4d
- 1.5a, 1.5c, 1.5e
- 2.1a, b, c, d, e, f, g
- 2.2a, b
- 2.3b
- 3.4.a

Course Resources

Required texts to buy


Additional Readings: articles that can be accessed via Blackboard (BB hereafter) will be indicated. All others can be accessed via the Toronto Public Library.

Encyclopedia Articles

Morse, “Ritual Objects”: 726–29; Tweed, “United States”: 864–70


Mindfulness of Breathing (An-Apana-Ssati) (Second Revised Edition) explained by the Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw (Blackboard).


Shunryu Suzuki, Zen Mind Beginner’s Mind (BB)

Sarah Shaw, Introduction to Buddhist Meditation. New York: Routledge. 92- 110 (BB)

http://terebess.hu/zen/mesterek/Seung-Sahn-Only-Don-t-Know.pdf
**Course Evaluation:**
**Mid-Term Essay: 30%** (Essay Guideline will be posted on Blackboard)

Weekly class presentation of your reflection papers will count towards your engagement of text, participation, and attendance grade: 30%  
Papers will be collected end of class. Note: more than two absences will automatically lower your grade in this portion of the evaluation, and more than three absences may result in the loss of the course credit (unless circumstances are extenuating and specially arranged extra work is negotiated with the professor).

**Final Essay 40%**

**Schedule**

September 16 Religious Context  
**Reading:** EB: Poceski, “China”: 139–45; Cohen, “India”: 352–60; Payne, “Ritual”: 723–26; Shaw 92-110; Gil Fondsdal, “Insight Meditation in the United States”

September 23 Buddhist World View  
**Reading:** Goldstein, 1-90

September 30 Cultivating the Path  
**Reading:** Goldstein, 90-171

October 7 Anapanasati  
**Reading:** Sayadaw, Mindfulness of Breathing 1-20

October 14 Anapanasati and Benefits  
**Reading:** Sayadaw, Mindfulness of Breathing 20-35

October 21 Satipatthana sutta  
**Reading:** The Four Foundations of Mindfulness in Plain English, 1-101  

October 28 Reading Week

November 4 Satipatthana  
**Reading:** The Four Foundations of Mindfulness in Plain English, 105-166

Nov 11 Responses from other Buddhist Traditions  
**Reading:** Buswell, The Zen Monastic Experience, 161-202  
Shunryu Suzuki, Zen Mind Beginner’s Mind  

**Mid-term Essay Due**
November 18  **Responses from other Buddhist Traditions**  
**Reading:** Uchiyama, Opening the Hand of Thought, 21-60.  
Wallace, Meditations of a Buddhist Skeptic, 34-59

November 25  **Mindfulness-Based Interventions**  
**Reading:** The Mindful Way through Depression, 1-50  
The Mind’s Own Physician, 1-63

December 2  **Praxis Leading Theory?**  
**Reading:** R. Gethin, "On Some Definitions of Mindfulness" See BB  
Jon Kabat-Zinn, “Some reflections on the origins of MBSR, skillful means, and the trouble with maps” See BB  
The Mind’s Own Physician, 207-221

December 9  Review  
**Final Essay Due on last day of Exam Week**  

**Recommended Reading**


Sheng Yen. Hoofprints of the Ox: Principles of the Chan Buddhist Path as Taught by a Modern Chinese Master, Oxford University Press, 2002


Welwood, J. Toward a psychology of awakening: Buddhism, psychotherapy and the path of personal and spiritual transformation. Shambhala: Boston, 2002.


**Course Policies**

Policies for courses are contained in the TST Basic Degree/Advanced Degree Handbooks:

1) **Late Policy:** no penalty if acceptable reason is provided prior to the due date. Otherwise a penalty of 5% per day will be applied.

2) Completion of Course Work: All course work (including any late work) must be completed by the end of term, the last day of exams. Only in the case of illness (with a note from a doctor), bereavement or other unusual circumstances will an extension be considered and this must be authorized by the Basic Degree Committee and the Faculty.

3) Assignments: Essays and assignments can be submitted on Blackboard.

4) Consultation: Please do not hesitate to consult with me about any questions you may have.

**Academic Integrity:**

Students should read carefully the academic discipline policy on, and severe penalties for, plagiarism and cheating. These are set out in the University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters available through the Office of the TST Director (cf. TST Basic Degree Handbook, p. 45) and on the web (http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm).
**Grading Scheme:**

The grading scheme for this course, as with all TST courses, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>profound and creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>excellent: clear evidence of original thinking, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound critical evaluations, broad knowledge base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>good: good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues, good familiarity with the literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>satisfactory: adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues and with the literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FZ</td>
<td>0-69</td>
<td>failure: failure to meet the above criteria</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Course grades.** Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (http://www.soverningcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm) or college grading policy.

**Policies**

**Accessibility.** Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices (information is available at http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca). The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

**Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks (if small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still-counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST Basic Degree Handbook and the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters.