

Professor Jennifer Hellwarth
FS101.41: I AM?: Interdisciplinary Approaches to
Mindfulness
MWF 9-9:50 am
Oddfellows 206
Fall 2010

Oddfellows 232
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Office Hours: MW 2-3pm., TTh 11-noon, and by
appointment

FS101.41: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Mindfulness

Course Web Page: <http://webpub.alleg.edu/employee/j/jhellwar/index.html> and go to "Courses"
Sakai Site: sakai.allegheny.edu

Course Description and Objectives

This course will ask you to slow down and reflect through writing and speaking. This reflection will help you hone your skills in:

- writing crisp, vivid summaries and descriptions,
- speaking courageously and thoughtfully,
- navigating your way through the library,
- solving problems that initially may seem insurmountable, and
- managing your time effectively.

This course focuses on developing descriptive skills, on synthesizing and summarizing multiple sources, on sustaining descriptive narrative, both in written and oral form, and on revising for clarity of style.

Reading and writing assignments are drawn from the various academic disciplines including the Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and the Humanities, with a focus on Mindfulness and Buddhism. This focus will especially be directed at understanding the ways that mindfulness is manifested in the world and can help us understand not just our own minds, but our relationships and our society. Course goals will include:

- considering the relationship between Buddhism, mindfulness, and how we understand the world and our place in it
- examining interdisciplinary ways of understanding mindfulness
- exploring a personal mindfulness, meditation, and yoga practice

Required Texts

- David Loy, *Money Sex War Karma: Notes for a Buddhist Revolution* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2008)
- Ethan Nichtern, *One City: A Declaration of Interdependence* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2007)
- *Shambhala Sun*, March 2010
- *Shambhala Sun*, September 2010
- course reader (CR)

Course Requirements and Assignments

You will be asked to do various kinds of assignments over the course of the semester, both written and oral, including writing three papers, giving two presentations/speeches and one more formal speech, plus various in-class and out of class exercises, including keeping a blog and responding to blogs of classmates. We will also be doing **grammar exercises** during the course of the semester as needed! **You must complete and/or turn in all the major assignments listed below in order to pass the class!**

Descriptive Essay	10%
Summary Essay	10%
Evaluating Websites Exercise	10%
Research Essay	15%
Reading Presentation	5%
Summary Presentation	10%
Final Speech	15%
Journal/Blog	5%
Participation	10%
Peer Review	10%

Journal/Blog Prompts:

When you write your journal/blog, think about the following questions. You need not answer and respond to each of them, but they will give you a place to start.

- Pick a sentence or two from the day's reading that you find compelling. Do you agree with it, disagree with it, or partially agree with it? Bring in examples from your own life or from other readings you've done that seem relevant to the issue.
- Connect the day's course reading with some activity or other reading that we've done for this course. How are they similar or different?
- Does the author ever seem to contradict him/herself? If so, what do you make of it?
- What themes are emerging for you as you read this author's work?
- What assumptions does the author seem to have? Do you agree with those assumptions?
- Reflect upon your experience with your practice, connecting it, if you wish, to concepts introduced in the readings.

We will go over blog etiquette and guidelines in class, but, in general, you want to be aware that what you put on your blog, when it is published, is viewable by potentially anyone and everyone (including your grandparents!), and is part of your permanent record. With this in mind, be honest and authentic, but also be thoughtful and appropriate in your entries (these aren't mutually exclusive). You will also be asked to respond to your classmates' blogs.

*****Please read the attached criteria for class participation and essay grading*****

A few notes and caveats:

In this class we will be discussing various aspects of Mindfulness and Buddhist principles and practices. We will also be, as part of this course and your co-requisite course, DMS 190: Yoga and Meditation with Professor James Reedy, taking up a mindfulness practice. This practice does not require any particular materials, though it could if you chose (you could purchase a meditation cushion—a zafu and/or a zabuton), but it will require a short, daily time commitment.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is Required! Allegheny policy requires class attendance; I expect that you will come to every class and be present in mind as well as body. That means being prepared. Come to class having done the assigned reading (take notes, record comments!) and with at least one thing in mind that you would like to contribute to the class. I understand that life happens and sometimes you must be absent. If this is the case and you know you will be absent, please let me know (by phone message or e-mail). Also remember: if you miss class YOU are responsible for finding out what you have missed; check with a classmate about readings and assignments. (Please **please, please** do not ask if you have missed anything!!) Unexcused absences will lower your grade accordingly.

Participation includes oral contribution to class discussion in the form of answers, questions, comments, and disagreements both in small group work as well as paired activities and peer responses to writing and speeches.

Oral Presentations**Rationale/goals:**

A poll of Allegheny alumni suggested that speaking effectively was one of the core workplace skills that Allegheny graduates had that many others did not. As with writing, such skills are developed over time and with much practice. We'll provide a supportive atmosphere for one another so that speaking publicly starts to become second nature to you.

Policies:

- Speeches must be accompanied by a full sentence outline and, when appropriate, a works cited page (details on what precisely a full sentence outline is will accompany the first assignment).
- It is vital that you come prepared to present on the days you are assigned to give an oral presentation. Failing to do so lets down the entire class and disrupts the course significantly. If there are extenuating circumstances that will prevent you from presenting on your assigned day, you must discuss with me ahead of time.

A Note on Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. Please read the Honor Code in *The Compass* and/or the College Catalogue. We will discuss various ways to avoid unintentional plagiarism. Please note that plagiarism includes (but is not limited to) direct or indirect use of any words or ideas other than your own without proper acknowledgment. Using the words or ideas of another person, including internet sources, without proper citation is a crime and could result in failure of the assignment or course. In addition, all cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Honor Committee.

Disabilities

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning challenge that may have an impact on your ability to carry out assigned course work, I strongly urge you to contact John Mangine, the Director of Student Support Services, in the Pelletier Library at (814) 332-2898 or john.mangine@allegheny.edu. John Mangine and the staff at the Learning Commons will review your concerns and determine, with you, if and/or what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation of disability is entirely confidential.

Course Syllabus and Assignments

******Please Note: The syllabus is subject to change! Please pay attention to announcements regarding any changes in course readings and assignments!*****

- Friday 27 Aug **First Day. Practice Makes Practice. Learning Styles; Quiz: the Syllabus.**
Reading: Mattieu Ricard, "Why Meditate" pp.38- *Shambhala Sun*, Sept. 2010,
Nichtern, Prologue and Chapters 1 & 2
- Monday 30 Aug Reading: "How to Meditate" pp.43-47, Norman Fisher, "Getting Started" pp.48-
and Cyndi Lee, "Body and Posture" pp. 50-53, *Shambhala Sun* Sept. 2010,
Joseph Goldstein, "To Open, To Balance, To Explore" and "Exercise/Concepts
and Reality" (CR 1-7)
- Wednesday 1 Sept Reading: Nichtern, Chapters 3 & 4

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***"You say that life is suffering, but
isn't it also complaining?"***

- Friday 3 Sept **Origins and Contexts: There's No Time.** Reading: Loy, pp. 1-23
- Monday 6 Sept Reading: Donald Mitchell, "The Teachings of the Buddha" (CR 9-42)
- Wednesday 8 Sept Reading: Loy, pp. 37-63, Natalie Goldberg, "Old Friend from Far Away" (CR
45-49)
- Friday 10 Sept Reading: Dzongsar Khyentse, "What Makes You Not a Buddhist" (CR 53-63),
Daniel Menaker, "So you want to be a Buddhist" (CR 65-68); review basic
concepts/origins. Honor Code Presentation: Meet with Professor Wesoky's
section in Carr 225.

Monday 13 Sept **Descriptive Narrative Paper: 1st Draft due in class; please bring copies for peer editing group**



"Are you not thinking what I'm not thinking?"

Wednesday 15 Sept **Neuroscience and Mindfulness: It's All in Your Head.** Reading: Daniel Siegel, "The Science of Mindfulness" pp. 66- in *Shambhala Sun*, March 2010)

Friday 17 Sept Reading: Daniel Goleman "The Lama in The Lab" (CR 71-79), John Geirland "Buddha on the Brain" (CR 81-84), The Dalai Lama, "The Monk in the Lab" (CR 85-86)

Final Draft of Descriptive Narrative Paper: Due in Class

Monday 20 Sept Barry Boyce, "The Science of Love" (CR 87-94); Stephen Hall, "Is Buddhism Good for Your Health" (CR 95-98)

NO EXIT © Andy Singer

*HOW TO PRACTICE THE ZEN OF
RETAIL SERVICE JOBS:*



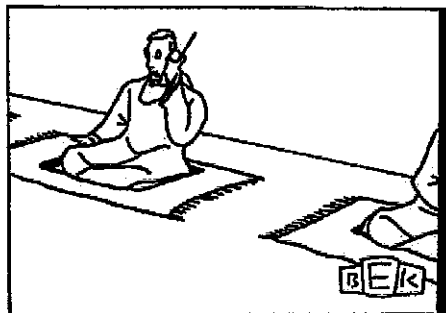
Wednesday 22 Sept **Economics and Environment: Craving and Saving.** Reading: Loy, pp. 25-36
 Friday 24 Sept Reading: Loy, pp. 79-102

Monday 27 Sept **Yom Kippur. No Class: Student Meetings with Instructor**
 Wednesday 29 Sept Reading: Nichtern, Chapter 5; Goleman "Making the Right Choice" in *Shambhala Sun* (March 2010)
 Friday 1 Oct **Summary Paper: 1st Draft due in class; please bring copies for peer editing group**

Monday 5 Oct Reading: Nichtern, Chapter 8; Carroll "Beyond the Elevator Speech" in *Shambhala Sun* (March 2010)
 Wednesday 7 Oct Reading: Loy, pp. 103-111, Loy, "The Nonduality of Ecology and Economy" (CR 99-101)
 Friday 9 Oct Reading: Joan Duncan Oliver, "Drink and a Man" (CR 105-107); **Summary Paper: Final Draft Due in Class**

Monday 11 Oct **Fall Break—No Class**
 Wednesday 13 Oct Reading: Loy, pp. 113-126; Brown "Let Your Passion Cook" in *Shambhala Sun* (March 2010)

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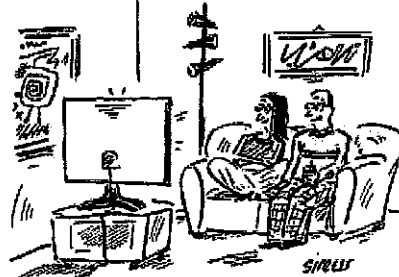
*"I'm crazed with this noble path—
 let me get back to you."*

Friday 15 Oct **Media and technology: Attention, grabbed**
 Reading: Nichtern, Chapter 6

Monday 18 Oct **Due in class: Evaluating Websites Paper**
 Wednesday 20 Oct Reading: Nichtern, Chapter 9; Silberman "Did You Get the Message?" in *Shambhala Sun* (March 2010)
 Friday 22 Oct **Summary Speeches**

Monday 25 Oct **Summary Speeches**
 Wednesday 27 Oct **Summary Speeches**
 Friday 29 Oct **Library Trip: Final Paper Topics and Research for Final Paper**

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"This week on 'The Amazing Race to Enlightenment,' can Jim and Suzy achieve right mindfulness? And will Barb and Candy be eliminated for relentless clinging to the self?"

Monday	1 Nov	War and Peace: What are They Good For? Reading: Loy, pp. 127-138; Nichtern, Chapter 7
Wednesday	3 Nov	Claude Anshin Thomas visits. Reading: Claude Anshin Thomas, "Finding Peace after a Lifetime of War" (CR 110-112)
Friday	5 Nov	Claude Anshin Thomas visits. Reading, Claude Anshin Thomas, "The Flame at the Tip of the Candle" (CR 115-121) readings/discussion

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"As far as I can tell, meditation is just worrying minus the content."

Monday	8 Nov	Love and Sex. Reading: Loy, pp. 65-77
Wednesday	10 Nov	Reading: John Welwood, "The Perfect Love We Seek, The Imperfect Love We Live," (CR 125-130)
Friday	12 Nov	Reading: Simmer-Brown "Romantic Vision versus Everyday Disappointment" and Miller "Do Dishes, Rake Leaves" in <i>Shambhala Sun</i> (March 2010)
Monday	15 Nov	Final Paper: 1st Draft due, bring copies for peer editing
Wednesday	17 Nov	Reading: Loy, pp. 139-152
Friday	19 Nov	David Loy visit. Final Paper due in my box or office by 4 p.m.

Monday	22 Nov	No Class: Student Meetings with Instructor
Wednesday	24 Nov	Thanksgiving Break: No Class
Friday	26 Nov	Thanksgiving Break: No Class

Monday	29 Nov	Freshman Registration Begins. Reading: Nichtern, Chapter 10 and Epilogue.
Wednesday	1 Dec	Final Speeches
Friday	3 Dec	Final Speeches

Monday	6 Dec	Final Speeches
Wednesday	8 Dec	Last Day of Class : Final Speeches; Reflection Essay, Self and Group Evaluation: Due in class

Criteria for Grading Class Participation:

A participation is marked by its active nature, its consistency, and its quality. An A participant doesn't wait to respond to questions that the professor poses but initiates discussion by coming prepared with questions, ideas, observations about the reading assigned that day. This participant will also be consistently engaged in class discussion, always letting us know that she/he has engaged the reading thoroughly and thoughtfully. Finally an A participant will not try to substitute *quantity* of participation for *quality* (being consistent is not the same thing as dominating a discussion). To earn the highest grade for your participation, you will want to make it possible for others to participate productively too (this is not a competition); thus, habits such as interrupting others and taking up too much conversational space will not enhance your grade. It will also do you no good to participate if you haven't done the reading. I expect participation to be firmly grounded in careful and thoughtful reading. As the A reader reads, she or he *prepares* to participate in a class discussion with other readers.

A B participant is less consistent than an A in initiating discussion but is active in responding to questions or problems posed by the teachers and other students. To get a B in participation, you will need to be in class and talk regularly--more, certainly, than once a week or so. Regular means regular. This level of class participation will also communicate clearly to me that you have done *all* the reading for the day and that you have done it thoughtfully. This level will also include productive discussion habits, such as engaging the ideas of others, not dominating, listening carefully, etc.

A C grade for participation means that you have contributed in an *average* way to the discussion. Your contributions have been less frequent than those of the B participant or have let me know that you are not always keeping up with the reading or have, in some way, interfered with good discussion. In short, you have not been silent or absent or altogether uninvolved, but your involvement did not work consistently to make the class a productive learning experience.

A D grade means that you were there physically most of the time and maybe even piped up three or four times during the semester but that's it. It's just the grade it should be--a minimal passing grade.

An F grade should need no explanation. I do give "F" participation grades when warranted.

Essay-grading criteria:

An essay in the A range is founded on an original, logical and coherently organized set of ideas; it makes a clearly discernible and persuasive argument (even if the reader disagrees with its argument); its thinking is, at each turn, absolutely clearly articulated: words carry thought, they don't obscure it; its sentences use only the words their ideas require, not any more; its paragraphs have distinct though related roles in the essay's larger argument, each holding one thoroughly asserted idea (not two competing ideas, not one idea half-asserted); if appropriate it accurately and thoughtfully uses other sources; and its sentences are without the grammatical, spelling or typographical mistakes that exacting proofreading would catch. (All of this takes *a lot of work*. If it is all very nearly accomplished, the essay usually earns an A-.)

An essay in the B range: a very good paper, founded on solid, persuasive thinking, the writing of which is clearly and effectively executed. What usually prevents an "A" is a lack of originality, thorough thinking or careful proofreading. If two of these virtues are absent, the essay will usually earn a B-.

An essay in the C range: some conspicuous flaw usually earns an essay a C; its argument is really underdeveloped, it is disorganized, its diction is consistently inarticulate, it is in dire need of proofreading.

A D essay either contains more than one of the large problems cited in the "C" description or finds another way to convince its reader that the author has not spent nearly enough time on the thinking or writing in the essay.

An F essay misses on all criteria (originality, articulateness, persuasiveness, organization, the absence of writing mistakes) or is handed in very late. (Most grades below C are earned this way.)

