

TUFTS UNIVERSITY
Institute for Global Leadership
Experimental College

Achieving Flow: Learning to Meditate And Developing Your Full Human Potential
Fall 2020

SYLLABUS

Schedule:

Class Discussions Sessions

Tuesdays 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Paige Hall Terrace Room

Instructors:

Professor Edward L. De More

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GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

This is a course in maximizing your potential. It will include: discussion of the biology and neuroscience of the brain, breath training to optimize your brain function and achieve Flow, an analysis of your skills and passions and identification of where they intersect, identifying what is the most important thing in your life-your guiding light, and creating a list of objectives to achieve your most important goal in life.

Upon successful completion of this course you will have:

- Knowledge and understanding of Meditation and Flow
- Developed your breathwork practice to achieve Flow
- Knowledge and understanding of basic brain biology/neuroscience and brain functions
- Developed your ability to research local and online resources to develop and deepen your practice
- Identified your skills, curiosities, passions, and aspirations and mapped each of these to identify where they intersect
- Identified the most important thing in your life-your guiding light
- Developed your life plan to optimize your human potential and live a fully and deeply engaged life

Upon successful completion of this course you will also have begun to learn the importance of:

- Exercise and a healthy diet
- Work aligned with your life purpose and is of value & service to others
- Intimate social relationships-family, friends, professional relationships

- A focused engagement with nature, art, reading, film, and music
- Importance of financial comfort through a simple lifestyle.

COURSE APPROACH:

The course uses a variety of means to learn the arts of practice.

1. Readings and Videos
2. We Will Learn Through Interactive Dialogue so students will be expected to read and watch the videos prior to class, and come to class prepared with questions to lead the class discussions. This is a student-centered course and the success of the course depends on each student's participation.
3. Students will identify their Skills, Curiosities and Passions through discussion and written assignments
4. Students will apply life experiences and aspirations as they relate to being in Flow

FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS:

1. Class Will Begin and End with Flow Meditation
2. On-time attendance
3. Participation during each class
4. A weekly Reading and Video Assignments
5. A weekly Written Reflection Assignment
6. A final presentation analyzing your introspective process, and outcome
7. We Will Honor and Respect Each Other

COURSE MATERIALS:

1. List of Readings and Videos
2. Brain and Flow Images

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

1. Sounds True and Other Online Resources
2. List of Notable Teachers
3. List of Local Meditation Centers

COURSE CALENDAR

The course Calendar lists the topics, readings, and learning activities that comprises this course on a weekly basis. These activities support the overall objectives and are required to successful completion of this course.

Weekly Reflections

Students must submit a weekly document that addresses the specified questions each week and in which they reflect about their progress. All weekly essays should be maximum one page long (11 points, single space) and must be submitted by Friday 6pm before the next class.

The Course Calendar lists the material and learning activities that comprise this course on a weekly basis. These are directly related to learning outcomes that support the overall course objectives. There are a total of 120 points that can be achieved during this 12-week course, with each week offering a total of 10 possible points. Four points are earned by participating fully in the discussion with a minimum of 1 intervention and 1 post. Six points are earned with a well-written reflection. Students are able to gauge their performance according to this grading scale throughout the duration of the course. We strongly recommend you print this out and refer to it often.

Readings and Videos

All course Readings and Videos are listed on the CANVAS Course page. The Readings and Videos should be read and students should prepare questions for leading that week's class discussion.

Class 1 **Course Introduction** **Sept 8**

Purpose: We have two objectives, introducing ourselves to each other i.e, students and teaching team and reviewing the course syllabus and approach. The introductions will enable the teaching team to model and refine the course to best serve students needs and goals.

Assignments:

- PDF: How to meditate - Establishing a Practice
- Article: How Breathing Calms Your Brain
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/daviddisalvo/2017/11/29/how-breathing-calms-your-brain-and-other-science-based-benefits-of-controlled-breathing>
- Article: This Is Your Brain on Meditation by Rebecca Gladding
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/use-your-mind-change-your-brain/201305/is-your-brain-meditation>
- Video: The Brain by National Geographic
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRFXSjpkKWA>
- Video: Flow by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8h6IMYRoCZw>

Class 2
Sept 15

Meditation, Flow and Breathwork: Establishing a Practice

Purpose: Recognize the practice of meditation as a path to realization of human potential. Understand the associated changes in the mind and brain that stems from a rigorous practice. Identify the benefits of embedding this technique into everyday life.

Assignments:

- Article: 11 Activities and Exercises to Induce Flow State (+6 examples) by Elaine Houston
<https://positivepsychology.com/flow-activities/>
- PDF: The Habit of Ferocity by Steven Kotler. Part 1 Stacking Motivations
- PDF: Brain Images
- PDF: What Are Brainwaves
- PDF: Neurochemistry of Neurochemicals
- Video: The Brain by National Geographic
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRFXSjpkKWA>
- Video: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey
<https://www.youtube.com/user/phuckmediocrity>

Class 3
Sept 22

Meditation, Flow and Breathwork: Establishing a Practice

Purpose: Recognize the practice of meditation as a path to realization of human potential. Understand the associated changes in the mind and brain that stems from a rigorous practice. Identify the benefits of embedding this technique into everyday life.

Assignments:

- PDF: The Habits of Ferocity by Steven Kolter. Part 2 The Science of Goal Setting
- Video: The 4 Fs of Flow by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXD8QjpQrFc>
- Reflection: Students will prepare a written reflection on their course practice and their course observations thus far which the teaching team will use to assess their effectiveness in addressing student's course needs.

Class 4
Sept 29

Flow, Beauty and Awe: Poetry, Visual Art, Music, Dance

Purpose: Recognize that discipline and conscious choices allow artists to achieve great outcomes. You can witness the powerful effect of watching others perform/create and appreciate the results of hours of focused concentration that merge into effortless and beautiful works of art. The cultivation of an aesthetic attitude opens us to losing ourselves in artistic production and liberates us from

conformity.

Assignments:

- Video: Find your Creative Flow State by Jason Silva
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXwLsba2TOY>
- Video: Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy Working with Time by Cinedigm - Land Artist
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AT3lveJmjY8&t=18s>
- Video: Doria by Olafur Arnalds - Icelandic Composer and Musician
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFp6xnJbs0w>
- Video: Misty Copeland Defies Physics in a Stunning Dance Performance by Robin Dimaggio - Prima Ballerina
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yw_LfOx-1-c
- Video: We wear the mask by Maya Angelou – The Poet’s Inspiration
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HLol9lnMlc

Class 5
Oct 06

Mindful and Loving Relationships

Purpose: Identify the Flow in mindful relationships. Own the ability to rewire your brain for the development of healthy successful relationships. Address the necessary commitment to establish mindful relationships. Understand the neural modifications derived from compassion and meditation.

Assignments:

- Ebook: The Art of Loving by Erich Fromm
<https://archive.org/details/TheArtOfLoving/page/n1/mode/2up>
- Article: How to Love: Legendary Zen Buddhist Teacher Thich Nhat Hanh on Mastering the Art of ‘Interbeing’ by Maria Popova
<https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/03/31/how-to-love-thich-nhat-hanh/>
- Video: Mindful Relationships by Rick Hansen
<https://www.rickhanson.net/mindful-relationships/>

Class 6
Oct 13

Compassionate and Ethical Relationships in a Diverse World

Purpose: Understand the relationship between breathwork and empathy development. Realize the importance of expanding your universe to accept and value differences. Acknowledge the brain modifications derived from a long-term practice of compassion and empathy.

Assignments:

- Ebook: The Art of Loving by Erich Fromm
<https://archive.org/details/TheArtOfLoving/page/n1/mode/2up>

- Video: Congressman John Lewis
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BID2qsfiBrg>
- Article: Loving Intelligence and Empathy by Congressman John Lewis
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/30/opinion/john-lewis-civil-rights-america.html>
- Article: Qualities Of An Emotionally Intelligent Person by Christopher Connors
<https://medium.com/personal-growth/the-10-qualities-of-an-emotionally-intelligent-person-f595440af4fb>
- Article and video: The Neuroscience Of Racism by Catriona Nguyen-Robertson
<https://rsv.org.au/the-neuroscience-of-racism/>
- Article: How to Fight Racism Through Inner Work by Jill Suttie
https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_fight_racism_through_inner_work

Class 7 **Your Personal Exploration of Your Skills, Curiosities, Passion, and Aspiration**

Oct 27

Purpose: Expand your capacity to conduct introspective examinations. Align the visualization of your purposes with your outcomes through breathwork. Consider the usefulness of checking your goals periodically in your life. Appreciate the neurochemical alterations that grow out of an achiever's mind.

Assignments:

- PDF: The Habit of Ferocity by Steven Kolter. Part 3 Do The Hard Thing
- Article: Interpretations of Joseph Campbell and the Hero's Journey
<https://msu.edu/~jdowell/pdf/JosephCampbellPathHero.pdf>

Class 8 **Optimizing Well-Being**

Nov 03

Purpose: Comprehend how well-being changes the brain. Extend mindful meditation benefits into care and respect for your body. Boost your human potential by cultivating discipline and a sense of honor to your physical being.

Assignments:

- PDF: The Zen and The Art of Happiness by Chris Prentiss
- Article: What Does It Mean To Be Self-Actualized in the 21st century? By Scott Barry
<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/beautiful-minds/what-does-it-mean-to-be-self-actualized-in-the-21st-century/>
- Article: Delight As A Daily Practice by Maria Popova
<https://www.brainpickings.org/2019/11/20/laylas-happiness-mariahadessa-ekere-tallie/>

- Video: Finding Fulfilment In a Frantic World
The Mindfulness Summit
https://theminfulnesssummit.com/sessions/finding_fulfilment/?utm_source=The+Mindfulness+Summit&utm_campaign=03c3a7636f-SelfCompassion_TMS_180309&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f5531060c6-03c3a7636f-107347541#player

Class 9
Nov 10

Resilience, Grit and Flow

Purpose: Comprehend the effects of resilience and self-judgement in your brain and life. Direct thought energy towards a balanced life. Keep a curious perspective about your circumstances and how you can work with them to achieve your goals.

Assignments:

- PDF: The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari by Robin Sharma
- Book: The Habit of Ferocity by Steven Kolter. Part 4

Class 10
Nov 17

Your Life Plan to Optimize Your Human Potential & Live A Fully and Deeply Engaged Life

Purpose: Beware the power of vulnerability and let your inner self get empowered by drafting and presenting your Life Plan.

Assignments:

- Student Presentations

Class 11
Nov 24

Your Life Plan to Optimize Your Human Potential & Live A Fully and Deeply Engaged Life

Purpose: Beware the power of vulnerability and let your inner self get empowered by drafting and presenting your Life Plan.

Assignments:

- Student presentations

Class 12
Dec 01

Closing Remarks

- Time for final public reflections by students, closing chapter

Academic Integrity:

You are expected to follow Tufts University policies on academic honesty and integrity. Violations of policy are not tolerated. Sanctions including expulsion from the school may result. The purpose of student groups is not for the completion of assignments, but for the enhancement of your understanding and learning experience. Each student is responsible for creating and submitting their own work. Students are also expected to meet Tufts rules for citation. The ideas of others should be properly cited in all your work.