Psychology 193: Science of Mindfulness
Winter, 2019

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Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 12:30 – 1:50 pm, Mandler 1539

Professor Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10 - noon, Rm. 5117 McGill Hall

Supplementary Text: Science of Mindfulness, Ronald D. Siegel

Purpose: This course will review the scientific research surrounding the topic of Mindfulness, which has been approached from multiple disciplines including Buddhism, Positive Psychology, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Neuroscience. Mindfulness has an operational definition of “Paying attention, on purpose, to the present experience, without judgment”, and is intricately related to a variety of very human experiences, including those related to oneself -- deep emotions (joy and pain), gratitude, challenging our limiting “stories”, body awareness, as well as to others --- compassion, connection and love.

Because Mindfulness is so multi-faceted, with many variables involved, the scientific study of Mindfulness requires rigorous research methods and statistics to carefully parse out the relationships between different variables. For this reason, a solid understanding (and appreciation) of research methods and statistics is a large focus of this course. The mathematical modeling aspect of statistics is profound – it is what we humans use to approximate “the truth”.

Format: The first week will consist of me lecturing on Mindfulness as well as the “ins and outs” of statistical methods used to study Mindfulness. The following weeks will consist of everyone reading and discussing research articles (2 to 3 each week) on the topic of Mindfulness, with the emphasis on a different topic each week. For each week, the Tuesday session will be more of an overview on the topic and the papers (with myself leading the discussion).

Thursday will involve a more detailed discussion of the assigned papers, to be led by one of the students (assigned in advance). Students should prepare about a 15 – 20 minute presentation, and provide a 1- to 4- page summary of the paper, for all the class to read (and I will provide a template for this). A list of potential papers for each week is provided along with the weekly schedule, below. The final list of papers will be provided the week before each topic is discussed (with access to a web site for downloading the papers).

Grading: The grade for this class will be a weighted average of class participation (40%), your oral presentation (40%) (no slides needed), and the 1- to 4-page summary you write for your week (20%). Regarding discussion, because I expect everyone to contribute, and everyone to have read the papers, I randomly call on people during class. So, be prepared! There is no final exam.

CourseKey: I will be using CourseKey to take attendance, and monitor lateness. Instructions for using CourseKey are provided below. NOTE: Only ONE absence (or one lateness) will be allowed, after that, it will affect your grade.
Weekly Schedule

Yellow highlight papers are review papers

Week 1 (Jan 8 and 10): Introduction to Mindfulness and Statistics
1) Simmons et al., 2011. False-positive psychology: Undisclosed flexibility in data collection and analysis allows presenting anything as significant.

Week 2 (Jan 15 and 17): Psychological Mechanisms of Mindfulness

Week 3 (Jan 22 and 24): Measuring the “True Self”
1) Schlegel, 2009-Thine own self true self-concept accessibility and meaning in life
2) Schlegel, 2012-To discover or to create-metaphors and the true self.pdf

Week 4 (Jan 29 and Jan 31): Happiness (and is this different from Mindfulness?)
1) Veenhoven, 1988. The Utility of Happiness. (yellow are review papers)
2) Myers & Diener, 1995. Who is happy?

Week 5 (Feb 5 and 7): Gratitude and Positive Psychology
2) Jamieson, 2011. Turning the knots in your stomach into bows.
3) Chen, 2012. Does gratitude always work?

Week 6 (Feb 12 and 14): Interoception (How does your body feel?)
1) Dunn, 2010: Listening to your Heart: How interoception shapes emotion experience and intuitive decision making.
2) Fox, 2012: Meditation experience predicts introspective accuracy.
3) Sze, 2010: Coherence between emotional experience and physiology: Does body awareness training have an impact?

Week 7 (Feb 19 and 21): Compassion
1) Goetz, 2010. Compassion-An evolutionary analysis and empirical review
2) Condon, 2013. Meditation increases compassionate responses to suffering

Week 8 (Feb 26 and Feb 28): Empathic Accuracy
1) Ickes, 1993. Empathic Accuracy Review
2) Waldinger, 2012. Eye of the beholder- the individual and dyadic contributions of empathic accuracy and perceived empathic effort to relationship satisfaction
3) Zaki, 2015. It Takes Two-The interpersonal nature of empathic accuracy

Week 9 (Mar 5 and 7): Oxytocin and the “Tend and Befriend” System
1) Kosfeld 2005-Oxytocin increases trust in humans
2) Bartz, 2010. Oxytocin selectively improves empathic accuracy

Week 10 (Mar 12 and 14): What is Death?
TBD
This class will be using CourseKey (https://coursekeyeducation.com). CourseKey is a classroom communication and management system that will be used for daily attendance (and in the future, for in-class assessments and polls, activities, and constructive dialogue).

Please make sure you download the CourseKey iOS or Android application on your mobile device (recommended).

Once you register your account, you will be able to login in the app and add the class by using our unique “Join Code” (listed below).

To add this class,

please search for your professor’s name or by adding the following Join Code: XXX (I will send you the code once I get it)

Should you require assistance or technical support, please contact CourseKey Support Team directly by way of email (support@thecoursekey.com) or by using any of the tools found in the app itself under the “Support” button. Please note there is a live chat Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm PST where you can talk directly and immediately to our support team. Please remember that the Support Team will likely require specific user information to troubleshoot any issue you have may have.

Please have this set up by the first day of class! Thanks. (But note: You have 2 weeks before you actually have to PAY for it, which means there is time to drop the class is you want to).

Also note that the way it works is that you have to sign in when you get to the classroom, and it checks where you are at that point, but it does not know your whereabouts in general!