

Psychology 175: Science of Mindfulness

Winter, 2021

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Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 2:00 – 3:20 pm, <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/97642903765>

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11 am – noon, <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/94958418812>

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 focus on different aspects of Mindfulness, with all of us reading and discussing a single research article related to that week’s topic (the other paper(s) that week will be *optional* reading). For each week, the Tuesday session will be me giving a lecture on the topic and an overview of the required research article.

The Thursday session will involve a group discussion of the article.

- 1) Everyone will be required to submit 1 or 2 questions about the article as an assignment in Canvas by **1 pm on Thursday**.
- 2) When we first start on Thursday, we will break out into rooms, maybe 3 or 4 (which I will hop in between) to talk about where we are confused about the article.
- 3) Then, we will come back together as a larger group to discuss, with me leading and answering questions.
- 4) Each week, one of you will create a **10 – 15 minute video giving a mini-lecture on a “bite-size” piece of information from that week** (either stats, the paper, or something from my Tuesday lecture), uploaded as an assignment on Canvas by **Sunday 5 pm of that week**. *If it’s your week to make the video, I will meet with you in advance to “coach” you on your video! ☺*

I will upload your mini-lecture video for all the class to watch and give you (anonymous) feedback (yikes ☺). *The feedback from the other students will be uploaded as an assignment in Canvas by **Sunday 5 pm the following week**, with the following info.*

- a) Positive feedback
- b) Constructively critical feedback
- c) One thing to change if they were to do it again

I will gather everyone’s (anonymous) feedback and share with you!

Grading: The grade for this class will be based on class participation (60%), your mini-lecture video (30%, based on what *I see*, not the feedback from the other students) and a joint video (10%), which you all work on together that is about 30 minutes, regarding your experience in the class, which we can all keep as a memento! *There is no final exam.* **Because I expect everyone to contribute, and everyone to have read the papers, I randomly call on people during class.** So, be prepared!

Weekly Schedule

Yellow highlighted papers are reviews.

NOTE: Each week, I will only pick one paper as required reading. The others will be optional.

Week 1 (Jan 5 and 7): Introduction to Mindfulness and “Basic Statistics”

- 1) Simmons et al, 2011. False-positive psychology: Undisclosed flexibility in data collection and analysis allows presenting anything as significant. *I will send out.*

Week 2 (Jan 12 and 14): Psychological Mechanisms of Mindfulness

- 1) Grabovac et al. 2011. Mechanisms of mindfulness: A Buddhist psychological model.
- 2) Wallace & Shapiro, 2006. Mental balance and well-being - Building bridges between Buddhism and western psychology.

Week 3 (Jan 19 and 21): Measuring the “True Self”

- 1) Schlegel et al, 2009. Thine own self true self-concept accessibility and meaning in life.
- 2) Schlegel et al, 2012. To discover or to create-metaphors and the true self.

Week 4 (Jan 26 and Jan 28): Happiness (and is this different from Mindfulness?)

- 1) Veenhoven, 1988. The utility of happiness.
- 2) Myers & Diener, 1995. Who is happy?
- 3) Gilbert & Ebert, 2002. Decisions and Revisions: The affective forecasting of changeable outcomes.

Week 5 (Feb 2 and 4): Gratitude and Positive Psychology

- 1) Seligman et al, 2005. Positive psychology progress.
- 2) Jamieson et al, 2011. Turning the knots in your stomach into bows.
- 3) Chen et al, 2012. Does gratitude always work?

Week 6 (Mar 9 and 11): Interoception (How does your body feel?)

- 1) Dunn et al, 2010: Listening to your heart: How interoception shapes emotion experience and intuitive decision making.
- 2) Fox et al, 2012: Meditation experience predicts introspective accuracy.
- 3) Sze et al, 2010: Coherence between emotional experience and physiology: Does body awareness training have an impact?

Week 7 (Feb 16 and Feb 18): Meditation and Pain

- 1) Zeidan et al, 2015. Mindfulness meditation-based pain relief employs different neural mechanisms than placebo and sham mindfulness meditation-induced analgesia.
 - 2) Zeidan et al, 2016. Mindfulness-meditation-based pain relief is not mediated by endogenous opioids.
- Guest lecturer: Jennifer N. Baumgartner, PhD, Department of Anesthesiology, UCSD**

Week 8 (Feb 23 and 25): Compassion

- 1) Goetz et al, 2010. Compassion-An evolutionary analysis and empirical review.
- 2) Condon et al, 2013. Meditation increases compassionate responses to suffering.
- 3) Neff & Vonk, 2009. Self-compassion versus global self-esteem: Two different ways of relating to oneself.

Week 9 (March 2 and 4): Empathic Accuracy

- 1) Ickes, 1993. Empathic accuracy.
- 2) Cohen et al, 2012. Eye of the beholder- the individual and dyadic contributions of empathic accuracy and perceived empathic effort to relationship satisfaction.
- 3) Zaki et al, 2015. It takes two- the interpersonal nature of empathic accuracy.

Week 10 (Mar 9 and 11): Oxytocin and the “Tend and Befriend” System

- 1) Kosfeld et al, 2005-Oxytocin increases trust in humans.
- 2) Bartz et al, 2010. Oxytocin selectively improves empathic accuracy.
- 3) Nave et al, 2015. Does oxytocin increase trust in humans? A critical review of research.