This document describes the activities of the
Contemplative Communities cluster project from March 4-July 31, 2017

Overview:
Contemplative Communities is a group of Plymouth State students, staff, faculty, and community members who are dedicated to purposeful living-- to reducing suffering and increasing joy-- through use of contemplative practices.

We steward courses on contemplative inquiry, create contemplative spaces on campus, advise an emerging student organization, and draw input from our broader communities about how best to serve, responding nimbly to needs as they arise.

We are particularly interested in integrating course work and community engagement, offering students real world experience applying contemplative approaches to problem-solving, and supporting students' residential life so that they may develop and practice a sense of agency, resilience, and curiosity in and beyond the classroom.

We aim to create a climate for contemplation and action, for reflection and service, for mindfulness and agency. To this end, we engage in meditative and contemplative practices as well as discussions about purpose and meaning to more effectively and ethically serve our communities.

Timeline (items described in more detail throughout this report):
March 4, 2017 Approval of Contemplative Communities Cluster Project
March 23, 2017 Meeting with Educational Leadership Team
March 28, 2017 Campus Information Session
March 30, 2017 Contemplative (“closed”) labs proposal
April 3, 2017 Approval of Revised Budget
April 18, 2017 Initial General Education Team meeting
April 21-22, 2017 Presentation at Keene State on “Contemplative Education: Impacts, Outcomes, Transformations” (unfunded by this project)
April 25, 2017 Guidelines of the Advisory Board established
May 1, 2017 Student Organization constitution drafted
May 23, 2017 General Education Team meeting
June 20: 2017 Advisory Board membership confirmed
June 26: 2017 Identification of the old Episcopal Church to be converted into interfaith reflection, ritual, worship, and meditation space (“Paws Space”)
June 27, 2017 Filming for promotional video
June 5-11, 2017 Summer Research Institute with the Mind and Life organization in Garrison, NY
July 10, 2017 Presentation at Ed.D. Social
July 11, 2017 “Emotional Agility” reading group
July 11, 2017 Filming for promotional video
July 11, 2017 Copy sent to Cory Hoyt for Contemplative Communities webpage

This report does not include plans for the coming months and years as they are outlined in the initial project proposal and have not changed.
Budget:
On March 4, 2017 the Contemplative Communities Cluster Project was approved by Health and Human Enrichment and Education, Democracy, and Social Change clusters with an initial budget of $1028 to fund participation in the Mind and Life Summer Research Institute, described below. On April 3, 2017 HHE and EDSC clusters approved an additional $800 to fund the “Living with Purpose” initiative. The application documents are available for anyone to access through the Library of Contemplative Education’s Outlook Group.

Advisory Board:
At the April 25, 2017 meeting, participants created the guidelines for the Advisory Board. Details: This cluster project is overseen by an Advisory Board. Advisory Board members bring ideas to the Board, attend and help promote events, and advise on activities.

- The Board consists of at least one undergraduate student, one graduate student, one community partner, one staff member, and one faculty member.
- The Board can have as many as ten and as few as five members.
- Board members will bring initiatives forward and will be responsible for following through on tasks.
- The Board is a collaborative entity.
- The Chair will be elected for a one-year term, no limits.
- The Chair will call meetings, craft and circulate agendas, record and circulate minutes.
- Contemplative Communities also features Associate Members—people who attend meetings and events but are not official Advisory Board members.
- Twice-a-month meetings will be scheduled around the Advisory Board members’ schedule. Meetings will be held as needed. There is no requirement to meet physically if business and reports can be otherwise communicated.
- Associate members and Advisory Board members report out to their communities and report in to our group.
- Associate members and Advisory Board members attend and advertise events. They are active on social media, if appropriate, and in their communities, especially with students.

On June 20, 2017, members of the Advisory Board were finalized.

Current Advisory Board:
Brigid C. O’Donnell, Ph.D. (Faculty in Biological Sciences, TESD and HHE Clusters) is an integrative biologist who studies mayflies and wild brook trout in NH. Her approach to research and teaching focuses on linking across scales and bridging field and laboratory investigations to better understand biological phenomena. Her interests in Contemplative Communities centers on how curiosity, wonder, and creativity are the wellspring of rigorous questions/hypotheses in science, and the role of focused observations of natural phenomena in generating biological knowledge.

Victoria Forester Courtland, MA, CAGS (Graduate Student in Learning, Leadership and Community, EDSC Cluster) is a doctoral candidate in the Learning, Leadership and Community Ed.D. program at Plymouth. The current focus of her dissertation research is on the lived experience of embodied spiritual awakening and its impact on healing. Victoria works as a writer and yoga instructor and holds certifications as a professional life coach, meditation facilitator, holistic chef, and Reiki master.

Raegan Young (Undergraduate Student in Environmental Science and Policy, TESD Cluster) is a third year undergraduate student who has found articulation for her concerns and interests in contemplative pedagogy. With an enthusiasm for change, personal awareness and improvement, Raegan hopes to voice the
needs of the undergraduate population who could benefit most from contemplative action. She is also actively involved with her department, as well as the Geography department, TRIO, and the Writing Center.

Ryan Donathan (Staff in Student Affairs) is a Student Success Coach. Previously he worked in Residence Life, both here at Plymouth but also during his time in graduate school. Originally from the Cleveland area of Ohio, he has bounced around northern & southern Ohio, Kentucky, and now New Hampshire. He earned a BS in Education and MS in Human Development and Leadership, focusing on College Student Personnel. He is committed to helping students help themselves through a variety of approaches to life and learning. He is a big sports fan, loves hiking & camping, craft beer, and traveling.

Sandra Van Gundy (Faculty in Nursing, Health and Human Enrichment Cluster) is a holistic nurse and certified yoga instructor committed to compassionate kindness. She supports the integration of contemplative practices in the lives of PSU community members in and out of the classroom. Through this integration she aims to create a compassionate awareness. These efforts are put forth with the desire to alleviate suffering, and promote well-being with hope for a more just and peaceful world.

Kathy Tardif (Community liaison) has been a campus minister at Plymouth State since 2005. She enjoys helping students of all faiths and perspectives in answering the big spiritual questions about finding meaning and purpose, developing their gifts for the sake of their community and the world, thriving in the midst of stress and suffering. As a member of the Peace & Social Justice Studies Council, she led the effort to create a Peace Garden on campus. She was on the advisory board for the three years of the University’s Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant and is a suicide prevention trainer. And she was a founding co-advisor for the University’s Student Support Foundation. She has M.A.s in English and Pastoral Ministry and a Post-Master’s Certificate in the Practice of Spirituality.

Karolyn Kinane, Ph.D. (Faculty in English, Arts & Technology Cluster, Contemplative Communities Project Manager and Advisory Board Chair) has been a medievalist at Plymouth State since 2006, studying the social and historical roots of western Christianity’s spiritual cravings, experiences, and articulations. She researches and teaches on Arthurian legends, Chaucer, and Shakespeare as well as New Religious Movements, mysticism, and contemplative pedagogy. Her purpose in higher education is to cultivate awareness, compassion, and curiosity to encourage ethical action.

Associate Member Aurelia Moran, M.Ed., is the Home Visiting Program Supervisor for the State of New Hampshire. She received her BA from the University of New Hampshire where she studied Psychology with a double minor in Women’s Studies and Race, Culture, & Power. She received her Master’s degree in Education from Plymouth State University where she studied Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Aurelia is passionate about social justice and currently her work focuses on health equity for prenatal women, children, and families.

Associate Member Rev Mary Francis Drake, MA, MSW, LICSW, is a minister, hospice manager and faculty at UMASS Lowell with 30 years of experience in meditative and contemplative practices. Rev Drake is an ordained minister in a contemplative, mystical Christian Holy Order and has served as a hospice and hospital chaplain, a member of several clergy organizations, the PSU Caring Campus Community group, and has actively taught meditation and contemplative practices at the Pure Life Meditation Center in Plymouth for the last 4 years. Prior to that, she was a parish priest for 10 years in MA. She also offers services, sacraments and spiritual mentoring/counseling at Grace Chapel which is located in her home in Plymouth.

An additional undergraduate representative will join us in September. That student will be a representative from CAPE (Contemplative Action Purposeful Expression), the proposed student Organization, described in the “Student Organization” section.
Contemplative Classrooms and Multi-Purpose Space:
A “Closed Labs” proposal emerged from the March 28, 2017 Contemplative Communities information session. It was submitted to Deans, Cluster Guides, and select Cabinet members in April, with follow-up emails in May and June to see if the proposal had been discussed anywhere with anyone. While various people expressed ideological support for this proposal, it was unclear who could move this proposal forward and to whom it should be sent. The Contemplative Communities Project Manager met with Tracey Claybaugh Monday June 26th 10:30 to discuss this proposal, included below (Appendix 1).

What follows are the excerpted notes from that meeting:

1. The Episcopal Church north of D&M will be converted into spiritual, mindful, and reflection space.
   - We will do a walk through once the papers are signed to see what needs to be done to ensure the space welcomes all faith traditions and spiritualties.
   - In addition to other necessary construction (roof, bathroom):
     - We will install a foot-washing station and a place to remove shoes upon entering.
     - We will have ample storage space (lockable closets) for ritual items.
     - We will remove pews and altar to accommodate all practices.
     - We will purchase meditation cushions and prayer rugs.

2. The Church has space below. On the walk through we will determine if the space is usable as a classroom (30 capacity). If usable, it would need to have flexible, movable seating and tables (as used in the ALLwell Mountain Room) so the room could be converted for contemplative movement practices. It would also need beanbag chairs (Museum of the White Mountains) and lapdesks.

3. Could part of the church NOT have wireless?

4. Tracey will put Karolyn in contact with Don (or a rep from Physical Plant) to walk through Bagley House. Bagley house could house mindful and contemplative classroom space.

5. Contemplative Communities cluster project can have access to the windows/storage display cases in front of Center Lodge.

Ideally, we would have two rooms (20 capacity and 30 capacity) that are reservable for full-semester courses. These rooms would have flexible use of classroom space to accommodate active and reflective contemplative practices. That means walking meditation and journaling, for example. And so, fold up/movable furniture (again, the Mountain Room in ALLwell) complemented by beanbag chairs and lapdesks.

If the Church can be reserved for full-semester courses and both the main level and basement are suitable for classes, then we could be all set! We could stack functions-- holding classes in the same space that serves as reflection and spiritual space.

Funding for furnishings of these spaces would come out of the Innovation Fund, per Tracey’s email of June 28, 2017.

Presentations and professional development:

- Medieval and Renaissance Forum (unfunded by this project):

  April 21-22, 2017 students, alumni and faculty presented at the 38th Annual Medieval and Renaissance Forum at Keene State College on the topic of “Contemplative Education: Impacts, Outcomes, Transformations”
Presenters: Karolyn Kinane (Faculty), Lindsey DeRoche ('17), John Rodgers ('18), Rachael Ferranti ('12), Jessica Eldridge ('16)
Over the coming year we will work on polishing these presentations into academic papers to be submitted for publication.

Report attached in Appendix 2.

Mind and Life Summer Research Institute (funded by this project):

June 5-11, 2017 Karolyn Kinane (Project Manager) attended the highly competitive Summer Research Institute with the Mind and Life organization in Garrison, NY. Report attached in Appendix 3.

Suite of Contemplative General Education Courses:
Annette Holba, Karolyn Kinane, and Brigid O'Donnell met April 18, May 23, and July 12, 2017 to develop Contemplative Approaches to Self & Society, Past & Present, Creative Thought, and Scientific Inquiry. These courses will be submitted as “Experimental” courses to be run Spring 2018.

We are designing courses to build students’ resilience, self-awareness, and curiosity so that they may be more effective in work and life.

These courses use contemplative approaches as effective tools to decrease stress, to help students become more compassionate and mindful toward self and others, and to improve cognitive and non-cognitive skills. Students will build habits of thought through presence, observation, compassion, and non-judgment. These practices will help students be more effective in problem solving, purposeful communication, and ethical/informed citizenry. Goals, outcomes and assessments described on syllabuses, Appendix 4.

These courses will have cohesiveness in that they will:
- Be learner-driven
- Value both process and product
- Cultivate and explore agency, curiosity, and resilience
- Build community
- Allow space for playfulness, incubation, reflection, and “uselessness”

As part of their course work, Spring ’18 students will help faculty identify and shape the experience for the following semesters. Students will offer feedback and generate ideas for application—for “open lab” elements in following semesters. We will at that time consider “micro-credentials” depending upon university standards.

Course titles are, tentatively:
- Curiosity, Ethics, and the Public Good (SSDI)
- Curiosity, Observation, and the Scientific Method (SIDI)
- Curiosity, Receptivity, and the Creative Process (CTDI)
- Curiosity, Perspective, and Shakespeare (PPDI)

Draft syllabuses are available in Appendix 4.

Student Organization:
Inspired by the March 25, 2017 information meeting, undergraduate students Grace Brooke and Joseph Scala drafted a constitution to form a new Student Organization “Contemplative Action, Purposeful Expression” (CAPE), which will be brought to Student Senate at the start of Fall 2017.
Now and into the future, Advisory Board Chair will serve as Advisor to CAPE. President or designee of CAPE will serve on the Advisory Board.

**Graduate Student Outreach:**
Program Manager met with the Education Leadership Team (Linda Carrier, Christie Sweeney, Marcel LeBrun) March 23, 2017. Program Manager spoke at the Ed.D. program’s Social July 10, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. to introduce Contemplative Communities and solicit interest. Five additional Ed.D students opted into the Contemplative Communities email list as a result of this event. Three reached out for specific participation in their dissertation projects, in addition to the two current Ed.D. student affiliates.

Contemplative Approaches to Higher Education will be offered for graduate students in all programs Spring/Summer 2018.

**Community Outreach:**
The Summer Reading Group on “Emotional Agility” by Susan David was widely advertised through town via campus emails; flyers designed by Rachael Young were hung up downtown, notice was sent to The Record Enterprise and Laconia Sun; and emails were sent to Genesis Behavioral Health and Pemi Baker Community Health. The event was held Tues July 11, 2017 on the Alumni Green at 4 pm. with fourteen attendees: faculty, undergrad student, graduate student, and staff representation. One community member expressed interest and regret at being unable to attend.

Lia Moran, Home Visiting Program Supervisory for the State of New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, has joined the project as an associate member. She will observe for a year and then consider joining the Advisory Board. She is interested in how contemplative approaches can transform family experiences in the Home Visiting Program. She is also interested in working with our Social Work and other students.

**Misc. Campus Connections and Communications:**
On Tues March 28, 2017 we held an information session, which was recorded here: [https://vimeo.com/210618806](https://vimeo.com/210618806). Handout available below (Appendix 5).

We hosted three Finals Week meditation sessions, with nineteen students participating. Sandra Van Gundy will take on this event as point-person for Fall 2017 and Spring 2018. As point-person she will
1) Gather facilitators, reserve locations, and advertise events in advance of finals week.
2) Keep attendance records and take photos, when appropriate, for all of the events by date and location.
3) Create and share a document that gathers feedback from events so we can plan for next time.

We hosted Meditation Mondays Spring 2017 from 12:15-12:30 in Frost Commons.

Celebrating Nurse’s Week, we hosted a Labyrinth Walk Friday May 12, 2017 from 2-4 p.m. with promotional support from the White Mountain Chapter of the American Holistic Nurses Association.

In Spring 2017 we made contact with Corey Hoyt, Internal Communications Lead, to find a way to establish web presence for Contemplative Communities. Corey is creating a place for cluster project information to be delivered to on- and off-campus stakeholders at the “Our Learning Model” portion of the website. Copy about the project was delivered to Corey from the Program Manager July 11, 2017.
The Project Manager has been working with Ian Halter (MCCS) since April to create a promotional video, describing the project and encouraging participation. They engaged in filming Tues June 27th and Tues July 11th the video should be ready July 15, 2017 for circulation on our webpage.

We currently communicate with over 60 members (faculty, staff, students, community members) of the Contemplative Education Outlook user group.

**Living with Purpose:**
“Living with Purpose” is a co-curricular experience initiated from the Interim VP for Student Affairs Mark Fischler last year. Adapted from a Harvard University model, “Living with Purpose” brings first year students into small group discussions on issues they find pressing. The experience is designed to help students increase a sense of agency, to increase resiliency, and to ensure the university recognizes the student as a whole person—with emotional and spiritual needs and questions.

The program has come under the umbrella of Contemplative Communities for operational assistance. In Fall 2017, Gary Goodnough, Mark Fischler, Annette Holba, and Karolyn Kinane will be gathering student interest and focusing questions and running this pilot Spring 2018.
APPENDIX 1
“CLOSED LABS” PROPOSAL

Mindful and Contemplative Spaces (“closed labs”)
A request of Contemplative Communities
March 29, 2017 (rev. June 21)
Plymouth State University

Request:
One room capacity 30
One room capacity 20

Design:
Carpeted, with enclosed areas for shoes to keep the room clean
Large, locked storage cabinets (to hold cushions, beanbags, candles, incense) along one wall
Wifi disabled or inaccessible
50 Meditation cushions (divided between the rooms)
50 Beanbag chairs (divided between the rooms)
50 Lap desks
Heating and cooling for winter and summer use
Foot washing station for one room
Permission for candle and incense use

Rationale:
To complement Open Labs, Plymouth State University will create Mindful and Contemplative spaces that can function as “closed labs.”
These are places for faculty, staff, and student reflection, meditation, contemplation, and incubation.

Just as the virtual presence of PSU (website) has a public and private side-- external facing and internal facing-- so must the physical presence.

Teaching and Learning:
At first, one could say “Closed Labs” already exist, as our standard classrooms.

However, our classrooms are not designed for the kind of teaching and learning that has been happening at Plymouth State University for at least a decade. The White Paper submitted to the campus this Spring, co-written by Nancy Puglisi, Cheryl Baker, and Annette Holba, describes teaching models and philosophies that have been practiced at Plymouth State in cramped form due (in part) to poor facilities. Classrooms are crowded with desks in rows. Rooms are difficult to reconfigure or move around in. The lead author, Puglisi, chooses to offer most courses at a remote site, Silver Fox Inn at Waterville Valley, because our campus does not provide the kind of environment that promotes this teaching and learning philosophy—which includes contemplation and action, mindfulness and agency, reflection and service.

These adaptable, non-standard rooms will enhance the teaching and learning already taking place at Plymouth State.

Student Wellness:
Student Senate has been exploring ways to create interfaith space for worship, ritual, and reflection on campus. These large, clean, “closed” rooms with storage for ritual items (Torah, candles, altars) can serve these purposes. The room would also require a foot washing station (see SNHU’s).
Student-athletes have requested space for stretching and mindfulness—for injury-prevention and to cultivate emotional regulation during high-stress, high-performance moments. These rooms can complement the “active” sites for physical exertion and training currently on campus.

We would like to work with the HHE Cluster Project that is focusing on Student Wellness to determine if there is some overlap in needs so that we can create a space with stacked functions. Perhaps that group is exploring a way to serve the needs of students that had previously been served by the Wellness Center (formerly in the HUB) and the Wellness Dorm or Hall (Grafton). Revitalizing or creating these spaces recommit Plymouth State University to the wellness Mission and serve a clear student need for spaces of this kind.

Current Reflection and Spiritual Care Center has a capacity of 6-8 people and is insufficient for these purposes.

Transdisciplinary work:
Faculty, staff and students use this space for mindful gathering, facilitating transdisciplinary work.

Use:
Facilities will be available to faculty, staff, and students 24/7, except when class meetings are scheduled in these spaces.

Space will be used by faculty, staff, and students for
- interfaith worship and ritual
- for mindful service work and gathering
- for individual contemplation and meditation
- for contemplative courses
- for group and club activities around mindfulness, reflection, meditation, contemplation
- for informal contemplative movement experiences and offerings

Course scheduling:
Faculty across the campus—namely in Nursing, Biology, English, Communication and Media Studies, Counselor Ed, and in various CAGS programs—have been discussing the creation of such a space for more than four years. Because classrooms are currently “owned” by Departments, this cross-disciplinary need has gone ignored.

Courses could be scheduled for 1/3 of their face-to-face meeting time in this space, with the other 2/3 of the meeting time scheduled elsewhere, either in “home” classrooms or Open Lab spaces.

Respectfully submitted,

Karolyn Kinane on behalf of Contemplative Communities
Brigid O’Donnell
Annette Holba
Kathy Tardif
Sandra Van Gundy
Kathleen Norris
Gary Goodnough
With undergraduate students Joseph Scala, Kate Fredericks, Nathan Theriault, and Raegan Young
APPENDIX 2
REPORT ON MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE FORUM

Report to the College of Arts and Sciences
Professional development funding
May 1, 2017

Purpose: Students, alumni and faculty present at the 38th Annual Medieval and Renaissance Forum
Project: Contemplative Education: Impacts, Outcomes, Transformations
Location: Keene, NH
Dates: April 21-22, 2017
Presenters: Karolyn Kinane (Faculty), Lindsey DeRoche ('17), John Rodgers ('18), Rachael Ferranti ('12), Jessica Eldridge ('16)

This trip was an opportunity for Plymouth State students and alumni to communicate the value and impact of their Liberal Arts education to a broader audience. Students synthesized course experiences, content, theories, and practices to deliver first-person accounts of transformative education in the discipline of English. This panel contributed to scholarship on the role and value of both the Liberal Arts and contemplative approaches to education. It also built a sense of community between past and present students and among students and faculty.

I asked the participants to send me three or four sentences about their experiences for this report.

**John Rodgers ('17) Presentation: "Questing for Purpose"

While attending the Medieval Renaissance Forum at Keene State College, I was given the unique opportunity to write and reflect upon my time in British Literature with Karolyn Kinane and then present it to a new audience made up of medievalists from all over the country. The experience gave me insight to a scholarly community, and taught me about the often surprising ways Medieval Studies is relevant and powerful today.

Our panel was well-received by the audience with great enthusiasm. I got many comments that we represented to school in a very character-driven and professional manner. Opportunities to practice public speaking are great for professional development. Also, we clearly conveyed to the audience how our literature programs at Plymouth State not only taught their students well, but encouraged us to spread the knowledge and apply it in other instances in life. Thank you for this opportunity!

**Rachael Ferranti ('12) Presentation: "Can my Sins come to Church?"

Having been graduated from Plymouth State University for about five years now, and two years into a new career, my opportunities to apply my analytical, close reading, interpretative skills to a work of literature are few and far between these days. Often I crave the mental exercises of intense processing, reflecting,
critiquing, and transforming meaning of a text, exercises that I was so accustomed to practicing as a student through frequent writing and discussion. 

When Dr. Kinane invited me to present in the 38th Annual Medieval and Renaissance Forum, I lunged at the opportunity because I knew it would allow me to wear my old student hat again, if even for a few weeks. I turned to a beloved text from my undergraduate days, *Paradise Lost*, but this time with a more contemplative focus per our panel’s theme. Revisiting the text, its lasting significance in my life, and my old academic self all at once was an immensely comforting experience that is bittersweet to see come to an end. Participating in the Forum proved to me how deeply the lessons and materials from my undergraduate are rooted within me, and allowed me to invite these teachings into my present. I am grateful for my time at Plymouth State and very grateful for this opportunity to reconnect.

**Lindsey DeRoche ('18) Presentation: "Mysticism and Interconnectedness"

After weeks of revising the paper for my first experience giving a scholarly presentation, I had the privilege of accompanying peers and professors to the 38th annual Medieval and Renaissance Forum at Keene State College. I was extremely apprehensive before I spoke, but found, once I took the podium, that my fear dissipated. I gained more confidence regarding speaking in front of strangers, and enjoyed the talks I attended, where many scholars connected the present to texts from the past. I relished in the enjoyment of socializing and traveling with a classmate, alums, and professors in a personal setting, where we could be our most authentic selves. It was a pleasure to speak about contemplative pedagogies, which have done so much for me, with people whom I hold in such high esteem. Thank you for supporting students in this way!

**Jessica Eldridge ('16) Presentation: "Resistance, Persistence, and Transformative Education"

Attending my first academic conference, I was surprised at the deeply personal comradery I observed that bound a multiple-generational and dimensional community of medieval scholars and enthusiasts. 

Having barely studied medieval literature, my voice and discussion was comparatively amateur. But I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Christine Axen who shared with me the etymology of 'amateur,' whose meaning is rooted in love. Illuminating! 

I enjoyed hearing the academic talks of medieval scholars deeply devoted to study of texts not distanced from them, along with the more intimate conversations I shared with my smaller community of PSU peers and professors, with whom I am now more deeply connected. Thank you for this challenge and this opportunity.
APPENDIX 3
REPORT ON MIND AND LIFE SUMMER RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Karolyn Kinane
Contemplative Communities
Report on Mind & Life Institute
June 17, 2017

From June 5-11, 2017 I participated in the Mind and Life Summer Research Institute held at the Garrison Institute, Garrison, NY. The Institute accepted 115 participants (from over 350 applicants) from thirty two countries and six continents. I am truly honored for this opportunity to represent Plymouth State University among this group of leading scholars and researchers.

The Institute’s theme, “Intersubjectivity and Social Connectivity,” invited scientists, clinicians, philosophers, legal and economic experts, and others to address how we relate to ourselves, to others, and to community and strangers. Sessions explored the science of implicit bias as well as how social and cultural histories shape individual and collective well-being. Most striking for me were the new research findings on interconnectivity of mind, health, empathy, and compassion and their cultivation through meditative practices.

Much of the epistemology, methodology, and pedagogy of modern Western institutions (corporate, medical, academic) rest on the ontological position that humans are isolated individuals. Such a perspective invisibly shapes our ethics. The Contemplative Communities Cluster Project allows the Plymouth State and broader community consider an alternative to the default ontological position: Interconnectedness.

As the Mind and Life Organization demonstrates, when we operate from an ontological position of interconnectedness, new possibilities emerge for scientific inquiry, social structures, and ethical systems. Neurologists, cognitive scientists, humanists, and contemplatives are amassing a generous body of work that demonstrates how humans co-create our experiences, how our environment co-creates our experiences, and the very real effects of this participatory sense-making.

As a result of participating in this week-long Institute, I am now able to share with students, colleagues, and community members information, connections, and concrete activities including but not limited to the following topics:

- The plasticity of the brain—which can help us embrace the “growth mindset” and thrive in work and life
- Emerging theories of participatory sense-making—which expands our notions of the “self” and “other”
- The enactive approach to cognition—which embeds brain-focused neuroscience within social, historical, and cultural contexts
- The ethics of interdependence—which underpins a call to service
- The benefits of various meditative practices—which can refine the ways we use contemplative practices in the classroom and to what effect

These topics complement and enrich contemplative approaches to inquiry and teaching already practiced by members of the Contemplative Communities Cluster Project.

As a humanist, a literary scholar, a contemplative pedagogue, and a medievalist, I was able to bring a unique perspective to many of my co-participants at the Institute. My immediate impulse to embed experience in social and historical contexts helped some neuroscientists consider the limitations of brain-focused research. It also illuminated for a marketing executive-- who wanted to blast the nation with a one-size fits all model of meditative practice-- the need for local teachers whose experiences and perspectives could resonate with cultural peer groups. I also reminded meditators of the very rich Western tradition of contemplative inquiry when an uncritical focus on Eastern traditions seemed to emerge. Throughout the experience I focused on how
what we were learning, practicing, doing and becoming could enrich the student-experience at Plymouth State University.

I will be sharing these and other insights through a variety of channels (i.e. workshops, discussions, blog posts, publications) with the Contemplative Communities Cluster Project team and the broader community in the coming year.

Thank you.
APPENDIX 4
Contemplative Approaches to General Education DRAFT Syllabuses (i.e. not for approval or wide circulation)

BIDI 1XXX (3CR): CURIOSITY, OBSERVATION & THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS (COSP)

Instructor  Dr. Brigid O’Donnell
Office: 201B Boyd  
bcodonnell@plymouth.edu
Office hours: TBD

Meetings  Section 1: TUES 9:30-11:30AM, Section 2: TUES 2-4PM in location TBD
Section 1 + 2: WED Incubator 1:25-2:15 (?) in Bradford Room (location different than above)

All other required readings will be available on Moodle.

Catalog description:  COSP is organized around the workings of the scientific process, and in particular, how focused observation and curiosity comprise the cornerstone of rigorous hypotheses in biology. Careful and repeated observations of biological phenomena necessarily precede scientific understanding, and it is precisely this practice of focused observation that gives rise to robust questions that fuel rigorous scientific investigations. This course focuses upon the use of repeated observations of biological phenomena and the connection of these observations to the construction of strong hypotheses and the execution of the scientific process. This semester, you will use the practice of focused observations for biological phenomena of interest to you with the goals of formulating hypotheses, designing experiments, and gathering data to test your hypothesis. This course cultivates students’ curiosity, builds a sense of agency, and demonstrates how engaged observation is integral to scientific investigations. (SIDI)

This is a Scientific Inquiry Directions (SIDI) course and as such, you will be exposed to the practices of biological investigations from a conceptual perspective as well as in a hands-on manner. The following assessments, among others, will be used to ascertain your growing skill set in these areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Assessment(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>Repeated use of the scientific process; formulation of hypotheses following observational periods; design of experiments/data collection to test hypotheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Lab/field notebook records &amp; drafting of experimental designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting research</td>
<td>Design of experiments/additional observations to test hypotheses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative reasoning</td>
<td>Creation of figures/tables based on data collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information technology</td>
<td>Use of Web of Science to locate pertinent published studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with others</td>
<td>Group work in hypothesis formulation &amp; design of experiments; small group discussions in class</td>
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By the end of the semester, you will:

• understand the scientific process both conceptually and in practice
• appreciate the integral role of observation and curiosity in the scientific process
• participate in repeated observations of biological phenomena
• use the scientific process to pose questions, collect data, and assess support for hypotheses

This course takes a contemplative approach to scientific inquiry, and is learner-driven with a focus on first-person knowing.

Grade determination
A. Observational data (lab/field notebook) 300
B. In class activities 300
C. Pre-class reactions to readings of *The Forest Unseen* (posts on Moodle) 200
D. Figures/tables summarizing data collected 75
E. Final presentation (finals week) 100
F. Professionalism, participation, engagement 25

Total Points 1000

Grade determination: A minimum score of 60% is required to pass the course. Final grades will be assigned as follows: A 94-100; A- 90-93; B+ 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83; C+ 77-79; C 74-76; C- 70-73; D+ 67-69; D 64-66; D- 60-63; F 59 or below. At any point in the semester, you should be able to calculate your grade and assess where you stand – feel free to contact me about your grade-in-progress at any time.

Late Policy: Late submissions will be penalized at a loss of 10% of the total points per day, including weekend days.

Classroom Etiquette: Students are not allowed to use phones in any of my courses (except in cases of emergencies - you should speak with me prior to class meetings when this is the case). Prior to class, during breaks, and after class are the only times that phone use is acceptable. This is a non-negotiable policy and failure to abide will result in you being asked to leave the classroom.

Attendance: You are expected to attend class regularly. A failure to attend class will result in academic consequences in terms of your preparation for class assignments and performance on assessments.

Participation in Discussions/In-class Activities: Active participation in discussions and in-class activities is expected. Please come to class prepared and ready to offer commentary of substance at each session.

Honesty Code: Students will adhere to the standards of academic honesty described in the Plymouth State University handbook. Plagiarism, cheating or any other violation of the code will result in immediate referral to the Academic Integrity Panel for further action.

ADA Statement: Plymouth State University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you should immediately contact the Disability Services Office (DSO) in the Center for Student Success in Mary Lyon (535-3065) to determine whether you are eligible for such accommodations. Academic accommodations will only be considered for students who have registered with DSO. If you have a Letter of Accommodation for this course from DSO, please provide the instructor with that information privately so that you and the instructor can review those accommodations.

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considered for students who have registered with the PASS Office. If you have a Letter of Accommodation for this course from the PASS Office, please provide the instructor with that information privately so that you and the instructor can review those accommodations.

Please note: If you are struggling (experiencing difficulties, missing classes, personal or family problems, etc.) there are offices at PSU available to provide academic support as well as career and personal counseling. The PSU Counseling and Human Relations Center (across from Hyde Hall) 5-2461 can direct you to the proper source of help. Confidentiality is assured.

Moodle: This course will use Moodle, an online learning system. Moodle will be the primary mode of communication during the semester. Checking in with Moodle several times a week is necessary to stay up to date with class activities, expectations, and any shifts in the schedule or content as they arise.

**Spring 2018 schedule (subject to change)**

**Week 1, Jan 31 & Feb 2**  
Course Introduction  
The Nature of Science  
*Initial Observational Period*  
*Moodle post 1 due*

**Week 2, Feb 7 & 9**  
The Scientific Process  
*Moodle post 2 due*

**Week 3, Feb 14 & 16**  
Qualitative and Quantitative Data  
*Moodle post 3 due*

**Week 4, Feb 21 & 23**  
Subjectivity and Objectivity  
*Moodle post 4 due*

**Week 5, Feb 28 & March 2**  
Integrative Approaches to Biology  
*Moodle post 5 due*  
*Notebook check-in #1*

**Week 6, March 7 & 9**  
**Week 7, March 14**  
**Week 8, SPRING BREAK**  
**Week 9, March 28 & 30**  
**Week 10, April 4**  
**Week 11, April 11 & 13**
Contemplative Communities

Week 12, April 18 & 20

Week 13, April 25 & 27

Week 14, May 2 & 4

Week 15, May 9 & 11

Final Exam: Section 1: Section 2:

CMDI 2XXX: Curiosity, Ethics, and the Public Good

Dr. Annette M. Holba – Spring 2018

TR 12:30-1:45pm Bradford Room, Centre Lodge

Should there be a statement in the syllabus indicating that this course is part of a general education pathway and include the names of the other courses? Also include a statement about what a pathway is (or whatever we end up calling these themings)?

Course Description

Using meditation, contemplation, writing, and reflection, students will explore ways to approach the public good as an engaged citizen taking public action and making those actions meaningful to themselves and others. Students will learn about socially broad mindful movements such as engaged Buddhism and the Slow Movement as they relate to public advocacy and social justice. This course cultivates students’ curiosity, builds a sense of ethical agency, and emphasizes meaningful action toward the public good. (75 words)

This course takes a contemplative approach to Self and Society:

- This course is learner-driven: As a student, you will co-create this course, noticing and nourishing your own curiosity.
- This course values process and product: As a student you will focus your intention, effort, and present-moment experiences as well as your goals and the fruits of your labor.
- This course is a community: As a student, you will engage in collaborative meaning-making, developing respect, humility, curiosity, agency, and resilience through communal creative play.
- This course values first-person knowing and ethical service: As a student, you will explore your ways of knowing and being to apply your perspective about self and society in ways that increase joy, reduce suffering, and encourage ethical action on behalf of others.

Self and Society Directions Catalog Description

A rich and productive life encompasses an understanding of one’s self and one’s relationship to the world. An educated person must grapple with a question that has interested human beings for centuries: the relationship between self and society. To understand one’s self, one must understand and acknowledge the impact of society on the
development of identity and the formation of beliefs. The needs of the individual sometimes conflict with the needs of society. Cultures differ in the relative value they give to the individual and to the group. Using issues that impact on students’ lives, Self and Society courses explore questions of these sorts. They encourage students to inquire into multiple dimensions of self including the social, physical, emotional, and cognitive, and to investigate the interactions between individuals and the spatial, temporal, political, economic, and technological aspects of the social environment. Self and Society courses emphasize the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, critical thinking, conducting research, and collaborating with others.

Required Readings


(and other scholarly and trade publications in Moodle)

Articles will be on topics:

- Public Good (Diogenes, Plato, Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, John Locke, Hannah Arendt, Judith Butler, others)
- Cosmopolitanism (Kwame Anthony Appiah, 2 articles)
- Engaged Buddhism (Thich Nhat Hanh, Pema Chodron)
- Ethics and the Public Good (Peter Singer)
- Contemplative Inquiry
- Mindfulness Meditation (Vipassana)
- Contemplative Practices
- MBSR
- Public Advocacy/Social Justice

Course Objectives

1. To learn how a self-practice of compassion meditation can enhance and inform their work life and community.
2. To learn the value of reflection in writing about ideas, process, relationships, and agency.
3. To practice ethical collaboration with other students, faculty, and other community members.
4. To build a set of skills, dispositions, and habits to engage in practices that advocate for others and enhance the public good.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students will

1. experience a practice of contemplative approaches to expand mindfulness of the present moment and participate in compassion meditation.
2. maintain a contemplation journal.
3. collaborate with students in other general education courses that take a contemplative approach to course content on activities such as discussions, creating open education course resources, or project engagement.
4. participate in the development and implementation of a community-based project that contributes to the public good.

Assignments/Assessments
1. **Contemplation Journal** – Students will maintain a Contemplation Journal. There will be ten journal entries, five of these entries are open and the other five are initiated by a prompt. Each entry should have between 350-500 words and is worth 10 points for a total of 100 points by the end of the semester.

2. **Check-In reflections** – As indicated in the syllabus, there will be five check-in reflections during the course of the semester. These reflections can be about anything we read or do during the semester. Each reflection is worth 10 points each for a total of 50 points. These reflections will be used to stop and reflect about our experiences during the semester and will create the points of discussion for the associated class period.

3. **Small Group Social Action Community Project** – This project will be co-created by the students during the first four weeks of the semester. Students will create the parameters of the project and the assessment(s) for the project. Peer grading will also be part of the overall student grade. The two requirements for this project that we begin with include: 1) must include some kind of reflection/contemplation/mindfulness and 2) must touch a community outside of the classroom. This assignment will be worth 100 points and the breakdown of the grade will be determined by students through the co-creation process.

4. **Collaborative Open Lab Activity: The Incubator Experience** – Students will participate one day per week in the Incubator Experience where we gather with students and faculty from the other contemplative-themed general education courses. This is an open lab activity focusing on contemplative activities and discussions; activities will be different weekly. Students will maintain an Incubator log within a discussion forum in Moodle. They will be responsible to post at least two entries per month, for a total of eight entries. Each entry is worth 5 points or a total of 40 points.

5. **Reflection Paper** – Students will submit a reflection paper during finals week. During the final exam period, students will participate in a Roundtable Discussion, where they discuss elements of their reflection papers—offering reflective insight, revelation, or emergent questions about their experience in the course. The paper/presentation includes an “Intention” section that describes their individual intentions for engaging contemplative practice(s) beyond the course time period/setting. The paper is worth 100 points and participation in the roundtable is worth 10 points for a total of 110 points.

**Point Structure:**

- Contemplation Journal – 100 points
- Check-In reflections (Moodle) – 50 points
- Social Action Community Project – 100 points
- Incubator Log – 40 points
- Reflection Paper – 110 points
- Total – 400 points

**Grade Structure on a 400 point Scale**

(If this is Pass/Fail: 240-400 = Pass and 0-239 = Fail)

If this is a 400 grade point scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>380-400</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>360-379</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>345-359</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>336-344</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320-335</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>306-319</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>296-305</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280-295</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272-279</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Academic Integrity

Please read the following statement of departmental policy very carefully: The work you submit in this course must be your own. Whenever possible, it is preferred that students paraphrase/explain key concepts in their own words and cite the original source material appropriately. However, if you include four or more consecutive words directly from any source, be certain to surround them with quotation marks, and to properly cite the source and page number. Plagiarism, however unintentionally it may occur, is a serious violation of academic integrity. A student who is found to have plagiarized on any assignment should expect to receive a failing grade for the entire course. There are no exceptions to this policy.

From the Plymouth State University Academic Catalog: "Violation of academic integrity includes any act which portrays a member of the academic community as having acquired knowledge through legitimate study or research which, in fact, has been stolen. Violation of academic integrity includes also any act which gains one member of the academic community an unfair advantage over another. This includes any act hindering the academic accomplishment of another." I will pursue violations of academic integrity to the fullest extent possible. Any student who has questions about what constitutes such violations is encouraged to consult the Academic Catalog and/or discuss the issue with me. Here is a link to the policy: https://www.plymouth.edu/undergraduate/files/2010/11/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf

Here is a link to the Fair Grading Policy: https://www.plymouth.edu/undergraduate/files/2010/11/Fair-Grading-Policy-03162013.pdf

Attendance Policy and the Use of Media/Devices

PARTICIPATE DAILY! We will begin each class period with mindfulness meditation (Vipassana Meditation), so please arrive to class on time. If you arrive and we have already begun to meditate, please be mindful about how you enter the classroom and respect the silence as you negotiate to your seat. Cell phones, lap tops, or any other devices will not be present in the classroom unless otherwise specified. So please keep these devices in your backpack, tote bag or other carrying accessory. If you do need to engage your devices for an emergent reason, you should leave the classroom and use it in the hallway. Texting, surfing social media sites, etc. during class time is not only rude to other students, it is disrespectful to the professor or anyone else talking/discussing/working in class. It also distracts from the contemplative framework of the course.

Course Schedule:

Week 1 – Introductions, Definitions, Expectations, Concerns, Questions
Mindfulness Meditation, Engaging Silence, Nothing, Alignment of Mindset and
Learning to Journal

Week 2 - Mindfulness Meditation, The Slow Movement (Honore), Public Good, Creating/Developing the Social Action Community Project, Tonglen Meditation

Week 3 – Mindfulness Meditation, Cosmopolitanism & Ethics (Appiah), Open Mind Meditation, Metta, Continue development of Social Action Community Project

Week 4 – Mindfulness Meditation, Engaged Buddhism (Hanh), Plum Village, Mindful Movements (with TNH), Public Good

Week 5 – Mindfulness Meditation, Engaged Buddhism, developing empathy, compassion, Nonjudgment activities, Public Good

Week 6 – Mindfulness Meditation, Group Work on Social Action Project, Engaged Buddhism, The Practice of Presence, Jhana, Two kinds of Peace, Grit

Week 7 – Mindfulness Meditation, Engaged Buddhism, Desire, Radical Reflections, Wounded Warrior, Four Bodhisattva Vows, Metta, Public Good

Week 8 – Mindfulness Meditation, The Slow Movement/Engaged Buddhism/Cosmopolitanism

Week 9 – Journaling/Reflection week (Spring Break)

Week 10 – Mindfulness Meditation, The Slow Movement, Engaged Buddhism, Cosmopolitanism, Mind/Body connections/stress reduction/compassionate heart

Week 11 – Social Action Community Project

Week 12 – Social Action Community Project

Week 13 – Social Action Community Project Poster Session, Mindfulness Meditation, Metta, Tonglen

Week 14 – Beholding exercise, Journaling Cosmopolitan Ethics

Week 15 – Engaged Buddhism, Cosmopolitan Ethics, the Public Good (synthesizing, summarizing, critically reflecting, noticing)

ENDI XXXX: Curiosity, Perspective, and Shakespeare
Dr. Karolyn Kinane – Spring 2018
T R 11-12:15 Bradford Room
Weds 1:25-2:15 Bradford Room

Office: Reed 14 Office Phone: 535-2402 E-mail: kkinane@plymouth.edu
Office Hours: XXX (& by appointment at other times)

Catalog Description:
Using meditation, contemplation, reading, writing, performance, discussion, research, and reflection, students will explore the relationships among the past and the present. Students will use the works of Shakespeare and later adaptations to consider how and why we approach large themes differently over time, space, and other contexts. This course cultivates
students’ curiosity, builds a sense of agency, encourages purposeful expression, and demonstrates the significance of how the past and present shape one another. (PPDI)

**Contemplative Pathway:**
Students will reflect on questions of meaning, a process that can help us to live more informed and fulfilling lives. As we engage with these plays we will consider our own (past and present) answers to questions such as: what is love? what does it mean to be civilized? are humans essentially good? what does power do to humanity? Through dialogue with one another and with these plays, we will seek to understand ourselves and our world in more compassionate ways.

- This course is **learner-driven**: As a student, you will co-create this course, noticing and nourishing your own curiosity.
- This class **values process and product**: As a student you will focus on your intention, effort, and present-moment experiences as well as your goals and the fruits of your labor.
- This course is a **community**: As a student, you will engage in collaborative meaning-making, developing respect, humility, curiosity, agency, and resilience through communal creative play.
- This course values **first-person knowing** and **ethical service**: As a student, you will explore your ways of knowing and being to apply your perspective about the past and present in ways that increase joy, reduce suffering, and encourage ethical action on behalf of others.

**General Education:**
As your catalog states concerning General Education Directions (Past and Present) courses: In order to comprehend the present and envision the future, we must understand the past. Cultures and societies discern time and construct chronologies of significant events to explain the past, comprehend the present, and envision the future. By examining issues and events that are currently impacting students’ lives, Past and Present courses explore how people interpret causes and effects within events, and how actions and reactions circumscribe the “origin” of an event. These courses encourage students to realize that different times shape different views of the world. Any form of knowledge is vital and in flux. For students to realize that all fields of knowledge are subject to change, they need to study the changes that have taken place within those fields. They also need to understand the dialectic movement between the past and present: just as the past shapes the present, so does the present shape our understanding of the past. There are multiple perspectives and interpretations of the same events and these interpretations are subject to revision.

Past and Present courses emphasize the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, critical thinking, and conducting research.

**Goals and Outcomes:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Outcome/Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Students will learn how understanding the past is essential to understanding and acting in the present and future. | Students will use literature from the past and present to provoke ethical reflections on our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. | Class participation  
Writing prompts  
Personal-critical explications  
Research project |
| Students will gain familiarity with Shakespearean materials from the Renaissance to the present. | Students will read, write and research about a variety of plays and poems by William Shakespeare | Class participation  
Reading quizzes  
Writing prompts  
Research project |
| Students will understand how reflection enriches the writing and research process. | Students will engage in appreciative inquiry and contemplative approaches to reading, writing and thinking. | Class participation  
Writing prompts |
Contemplative Communities

Students will learn how to ask interesting and significant questions about texts, ideas, and situations.

Students will practice curiosity as well as critical, contemplative, and creative reading practices

Research project

Class participation

Writing prompts

Personal-critical explications

Research project

Students will understand how language changes over time and space and the impact of such changes.

Students will practice close and slow reading to determine how language functions dramatically, poetically and/or rhetorically, and to what effect.

Class participation

Writing prompts

Personal-critical explications

Readings:
Folger Shakespeare Library's editions of Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *The Tempest*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth*.

Course Work
20% of Final Grade: Class preparedness and participation
We will engage in dialogical inquiry and practice contemplative skills. During class discussions students will be asked to engage in

- Mindfulness (non-judgmental awareness of one’s thoughts, emotions, sensations)
- Active listening
- Mindful speech (offering criticism without sarcasm, mockery, or condescension)
- Service (to truth, truthfulness, or the generation of shared meaning)
- Non-attachment to views
- Openness to transformation

10% Reading quizzes
10% of Final Grade: Student generated by Week 4
25% Personal-critical explications
15% Writing prompts
20% Research Project

Course Topics:
Week 1: Introduction to contemplative approaches to the past and present
Weeks 2-3 Imagination, foolishness, transformation, fathers and daughters, falling in love, God/gods (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*)
Week 4 Personal-critical explication
Weeks 5-6 Revenge, grief, nature, civilization, fathers and daughters, bias, God/gods (*The Tempest*)
Week 7 Personal-critical explication
Weeks 8-9 Jealousy, homosocial space, fathers and daughters, lies, bias (*Othello*)
Week 10 Personal-critical explication
Weeks 11-12 Ambition, naturalness, homosocial space, duty, grief, guilt (*Macbeth*)
Week 13 Personal-critical explication
Weeks 14-15 Research project

Final Exam Meeting Time: XXX
Attendance policy:
If you miss three or more class meetings with unexcused absences, your grade will be lowered. If you miss seven or more with unexcused absences, you may fail the course. In some cases, if you have an excessive number of absences, even if they are excused, it is possible that your grade will be lowered or you may fail the course.

Excused absences include illness as verified by a doctor's note, death in the immediate family, jury duty, military service, religious holidays, and participation in school sports events. Excused absences do not include vacations, transportation problems, or employment. In case of an excused absence, you must notify me of your excuse preferably before you miss class, but no later than 24 hours after the absence.

If you are absent for any reason, you are responsible for all material covered in class. It is up to you to take the initiative to find out what this material is. I encourage students who have excused absences to meet with me in my office to go over missed work and assignments.

Tardiness may be considered equivalent to unexcused absences. In addition, if you are unable to function adequately in class (e.g., if you fall asleep or have not brought appropriate materials), you may be considered to have unexcused absences. See University attendance policy here: https://www.plymouth.edu/undergraduate/files/2010/11/Class-Attendance-Policy.pdf

The “sponge”: I will expect you to come to class prepared each day with the reading done, ready to discuss. I may call on you randomly. But once during the semester, you may come to class unprepared and simply be a “sponge” with no penalty to your participation grade. This is a once-per-semester option, so use it wisely. Note: you will have to wear the sponge for the entire class period, and only two sponges will be available per class meeting, so come early to claim your sponge.

Late Assignments:
Late work will be marked down ½ letter grade for each 12 hours it is late, unless it is your “gift”.

The “Gift”: Once during the semester for any reason you may hand in one assignment 2 full days late with no penalty to your grade. This one-time-only grace period covers such “need more time” situations such as computer problems, sickness, or a need to study for an exam in another class, so use your “gift” wisely. Always write “GIFT” on the top of the assignment! Please note: “The gift” is good for two days, not two class meetings. If something were due on Thursday, you would hand it in Saturday with no penalty. May not be used for presentations or pop quizzes.

A note on contacting me:
I can often respond to you right away via email. However, you should anticipate a 24-hour period before I may respond to your email. When writing an email to me, be sure to use a salutation (i.e. “Dear Prof. K”) and closing (“Sincerely, Jane Doe”). Please try to be polite and clear. Emrg. cell #: 603-960-1363

Handing things in:
See the University Academic Integrity policy here: https://www.plymouth.edu/undergraduate/files/2010/11/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf

Please note that your assignments must be uploaded to Moodle or stapled and handed in at the start of class time otherwise they are incomplete or late. Do not email your papers to me. I only accept hard copies or Moodle submissions as indicated on assignment descriptions.

Grading:
A "C" is equivalent to basic fulfillment of requirements; to achieve a grade higher than a "C" you will have to perform beyond the basic requirements. Please keep the following scale and criteria in mind:
A: Achievement outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
B: Achievement significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
C: Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect
D: Achievement worthy of credit, even though it fails to meet course requirements fully
F: Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either: (1) completed but at a level of achievement not worthy of credit; or (2) was not completed.

Failure to complete an assignment could result in failure of the class.
Grading guide: I will use the +/- system as follows:

93 above A 87-89 B+ 77-79 C+ 65-69 D
90-92 A- 83-86 B 73-76 C Below 65 F
80-82 B- 70-72 C-

See the University Fair Grading policy here: https://www.plymouth.edu/undergraduate/files/2010/11/Fair-Grading-Policy.pdf

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**Questions?**
Email me, call me, stop by my office. I’m glad to chat with you.

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**ENDI XXXX: Curiosity, Receptivity, and the Creative Process**
**Dr. Karolyn Kinane – Spring 2018**
T R 12:30-1:45 Bradford Room
Weds (Incubator) 1:25-2:15 Bradford Room

Office: Reed 14         Office Phone: 535-2402    E-mail: kkinane@plymouth.edu
Office Hours: XXX (& by appointment at other times)

**Catalog Description:**
Using meditation, contemplation, writing, and reflection, students will explore ways to approach work and life creatively. This writing-intensive course foregrounds playfulness, experimentation, and uselessness as key parts of the creative process. This course cultivates students’ curiosity, builds a sense of agency, and shows how creative enterprises can be a lasting and meaningful part of life. (CTDI)

**Contemplative Pathway:**
This course takes a **contemplative approach** to creativity. Students will use open-minded observation and compassion to identify their habitual ways of reading, writing, living and learning. Using a self-designed creative process, they will develop goals and take action to transform some aspect of their lives or communities.

- This course is **learner-driven**: As a student, you will co-create this course, noticing and nourishing your own curiosity.
- This class **values process and product**: As a student you will focus on your intention, effort, and present-moment experiences as well as your goals and the fruits of your labor.
• This course is a **community**: As a student, you will engage in collaborative meaning-making, developing respect, humility, curiosity, agency, and resilience through communal creative play.

• This course values **first-person knowing** and **ethical service**: As a student, you will explore your responses, reactions as well as your ways of knowing and being to find creative approaches to life that increase joy, reduce suffering, and encourage ethical action on behalf of others.

**General Education:**
People need to be creative in order to thrive in our complex and changing world. People need to understand the creative processes that lead to the generation of ideas and to engage in new interpretations of existing ideas. Creative thought courses encourage students to recognize beauty in its many manifestations and to become aware of formal elements of creative expression. These courses also encourage students to view themselves as creative beings, to appreciate creativity in others, and to regard creativity as an essential component in all areas of human endeavor. In these courses, students develop and value perseverance and a tolerance for ambiguity. Students are challenged to appreciate aesthetic forms, to use their imaginations, and to develop the skills and attitudes that allow creativity to flourish: independence and non-conformity, the ability to organize and reorganize information, and the confidence to think in new ways.

Creative Thought courses emphasize the skills of critical thinking, reading, writing, listening and speaking, and working with information technology.

**Goals and Outcomes:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Outcome/Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Students will develop an appreciation for creative endeavors | Students will write, talk, think, read, and act from a creative process | Class participation  
Writing responses  
Action Plan  
Journal  
Reflection Prompts |
| Students will develop practices to help them (one or more of the following):  
- Explore questions of meaning  
- Reduce stress  
- Improve focus  
- Increase a sense of agency and/or resilience | Students will engage in contemplative practices in and out of class. | Class participation  
Reflection Prompts |
| Students will develop a set of skills, dispositions, and habits to creatively approach tasks and/or situations. | Students will wonder, ponder, play, and experiment without fear of failure or grasping for outcomes.  
Students will practice introspection, data collection, synthesis, publication, and reflection.  
Students will develop curiosity, appreciative inquiry, powers of observation and communication. | Class participation  
Writing responses  
Journal  
Action Plan |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will learn introspection and reflection</th>
<th>Journal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will develop a regular, sustained (and sustaining) habit of writing that can last a lifetime.</td>
<td>Students will share their creative writing and processes with peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will recognize and benefit from the role of collaboration in the creative process.</td>
<td>Class participation Reflection prompts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Work**

20% of Final Grade: Class preparedness and participation

We will engage in dialogical inquiry and practice contemplative skills. During class discussions students will be asked to engage in

- Mindfulness (non-judgmental awareness of one’s thoughts, emotions, sensations)
- Active listening
- Mindful speech (offering criticism without sarcasm, mockery, or condescension)
- Service (to truth, truthfulness, or the generation of shared meaning)
- Non-attachment to views
- Openness to transformation

20% of Final Grade: The Writer’s Journal

Throughout this semester you’ll have the chance to keep a WRITER’S JOURNAL! This journal will feature:

- All of our in-class writing
- Some assigned homework and class prep prompts
- Twice-a-week entries from you about anything at all! The minimum length is one side of a page, but who wants to do just the MINIMUM? Remember to date these entries!
- This journal is a great place for you to copy down interesting/inspiring quotations, song lyrics, overheard snippets of conversation, lists, questions, etc. It’s your inspiration station!

One caveat – this is not an entirely private journal. I will collect the journals four times during the semester so that you can get credit for completing this part of the course work (and a little feedback). I will assign a grade on a 100 point scale each time the journal is collected.

Your journal will be assessed based on its **completeness** (all in-class writing and any homework accounted for and dated; plus an additional two pages a week outside of class), and the degree to which it demonstrates **enthusiastic, imaginative persistence** (you keep going, you push yourself in new/interesting/risky directions, you don’t just phone in the bare minimum or go on for pages and pages doing basically nothing).

10% Reflection prompts: Four times a semester you will complete a reflection assessment to track your learning and development.

10% Writing Responses: Open-ended responses to course readings and materials.

10% Action Plan: Students will use open-minded observation and compassion to identify their habitual ways of reading, writing, living and learning. Using a self-designed creative process, they will develop goals and take action to transform some aspect of their lives or communities.

15% of Final Grade: Developed collaboratively by week 4
15% of Final Grade: Developed collaboratively by week 8
What are the best ways for us to achieve our goals and document our progress? Students will help to design this course as we learn from ourselves and each other, tweaking course goals and designing outcomes that serve our purposes.

**Course Materials:**
Excerpts from primary and secondary sources on theories of imagination, creativity, curiosity, and playfulness will be provided on Moodle.

*Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention* Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

You will require 1) an old fashioned notebook and 2) reliable internet access.

**Course Topics:**
- **Week 1:** Introduction to contemplative approaches to living and learning (Reflection Prompt)
- **Week 2:** Receptivity, awareness, present-moment observation
- **Week 3:** Reflection, meaning-making, contemplative inquiry
- **Week 4:** Curiosity, engagement, playfulness, uselessness (15% of grade goals and outcomes developed, Reflection Prompt)
- **Week 5:** Living with purpose, walking the talk (Journals collected)
- **Weeks 6-9** Theories of imagination, creativity, and the writing process
  - **Week 8:** (25% of grade goals and outcomes developed, Reflection prompt)
  - **Week 9:** (Journals collected, Action Plan)
- **Weeks 10-15:** Student-designed projects, experiences. Journals collected Week 13

**Final Exam Meeting Time:** XXX (Reflection Prompt)

**Attendance policy:**
If you miss three or more class meetings with unexcused absences, your grade will be lowered. If you miss seven or more with unexcused absences, you may fail the course. In some cases, if you have an excessive number of absences, even if they are excused, it is possible that your grade will be lowered or you may fail the course.

Excused absences include illness as verified by a doctor's note, death in the immediate family, jury duty, military service, religious holidays, and participation in school sports events. Excused absences do not include vacations, transportation problems, or employment. In case of an excused absence, you must notify me of your excuse preferably before you miss class, but no later than 24 hours after the absence.

**If you are absent for any reason, you are responsible for all material covered in class. It is up to you to take the initiative to find out what this material is.** I encourage students who have excused absences to meet with me in my office to go over missed work and assignments.

Tardiness may be considered equivalent to unexcused absences. In addition, if you are unable to function adequately in class (e.g., if you fall asleep or have not brought appropriate materials), you may be considered to have unexcused absences. See University attendance policy here: https://www.plymouth.edu/undergraduate/files/2010/11/Class-Attendance-Policy.pdf

**The “sponge”:** I will expect you to come to class prepared each day with the reading done, ready to discuss. I may call on you randomly. But once during the semester, you may come to class unprepared and simply be a “sponge” with no penalty to your participation grade. This is a once-per-semester option, so use it wisely. Note: you will have to wear the sponge for the entire class period, and only two sponges will be available per class meeting, so come early to claim your sponge.

**Late Assignments:**
Late work will be marked down ½ letter grade for each 12 hours it is late, unless it is your “gift”.
The “Gift”: Once during the semester for any reason you may hand in one assignment 2 full days late with no penalty to your grade. This one-time-only grace period covers such “need more time” situations such as computer problems, sickness, or a need to study for an exam in another class, so use your “gift” wisely. Always write “GIFT” on the top of the assignment! Please note: “The gift” is good for two days, not two class meetings. If something were due on Thursday, you would hand it in Saturday with no penalty. May not be used for presentations or pop quizzes.

A note on contacting me:
I can often respond to you right away via email. However, you should anticipate a 24-hour period before I may respond to your email. When writing an email to me, be sure to use a salutation (i.e. “Dear Prof. K”) and closing (“Sincerely, Jane Doe”). Please try to be polite and clear. Emrg. cell #: 603-960-1363

Handing things in:
See the University Academic Integrity policy here: https://www.plymouth.edu/undergraduate/files/2010/11/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf

Please note that your assignments must be uploaded to Moodle or stapled and handed in at the start of class time otherwise they are incomplete or late. Do not email your papers to me. I only accept hard copies or Moodle submissions as indicated on assignment descriptions.

Grading:
A "C" is equivalent to basic fulfillment of requirements; to achieve a grade higher than a "C" you will have to perform beyond the basic requirements. Please keep the following scale and criteria in mind:

- A: Achievement outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
- B: Achievement significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
- C: Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect
- D: Achievement worthy of credit, even though it fails to meet course requirements fully
- F: Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either: (1) completed but at a level of achievement not worthy of credit; or (2) was not completed.

Failure to complete an assignment could result in failure of the class.

Grading guide: I will use the +/- system as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Above 93</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 65</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See the University Fair Grading policy here: https://www.plymouth.edu/undergraduate/files/2010/11/Fair-Grading-Policy.pdf

Americans with Disabilities Act: Plymouth State University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you should immediately contact the Disability Services Office (DSO) in the Center for Student Success in Mary Lyon (535-3065) to determine whether you are eligible for such accommodations. Academic accommodations will only be considered for students who have registered with DSO. If you have a Letter of Accommodation for this course from DSO, please provide the instructor with that information privately so that you and the instructor can review those accommodations.

Questions?
Email me, call me, stop by my office. I’m glad to chat with you.😊
Contemplative Communities

Information Session
March 28, 2017
Frost Commons 3:30

The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again,
is the very root of judgment, character, and will.
No one is compos sui [i.e., master of him or herself] if he have it not.
An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence.

*William James (1890). The principles of psychology. Available online at:
http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/James/Principles/index.htm*

Terms:

- **Mindfulness**: Attention to what’s happening right here, right now, internally and externally.
- **Reflection**: A process of pausing to notice where we’ve been, where we are, and how we got here. We then make meaning out of that data to move forward with clarity of intention.
- **Contemplative**: Approaches that tend to first-person experience—including physical reactions, thoughts, and emotions—so that we may be more effective agents of transformation and growth in our lives and communities.

Experiences:

- **Advisory Board** Of students, faculty, staff, and community members.
  - Curiosity, commitment, compassion
- **General Education** “Contemplative approaches to” SS, PP, SI, CT
  - Students design experiences and applications
- **“Living with Purpose”** First year discussions
  - Purpose, agency, resiliency
- **Bridging Graduate and Undergraduate**
  - Graduate students bring personal and professional goals to undergrads
- **Campus Ethos**: Habits of awareness, compassion, curiosity
  - Meditation Mondays, book group, etc.
  - Nourishing and joyous experiences rather than taxing and obligatory ones

For more information, contact Karolyn Kinane, Professor of English, kkinane@plymouth.edu and join the Contemplative Education Group in Outlook.