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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>380-400</td>
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<tr>
<td>360-379</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>345-359</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>336-344</td>
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<td>256-271</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>240-255</td>
<td>D-</td>
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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 PASS Office in Lamson Library (535-2270) to determine whether you are eligible for such accommodations. Academic accommodations will only be 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.

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: 

Here is a link to the Fair Grading Policy: 

**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)