

For people interested in what my Mindfulness course, going from classical meditation practices to mindfulness in the midst of life is like, this is the syllabus for Fall 2013.

Course Title: **Mindfulness**

Course Number: PRES3079

Number of Units: 2

Quarter/Term Offered: Fall 2013

Instructor

Name: **Charles T. Tart**

Phone Number: 510-526-2591

Email: Charles.Tart@Sofia.edu.

Office Hours

Dates: Tuesdays

Times: no office hour time scheduled as of this writing, but you can always call (510-526-2591) or email (cttart@ucdavis.edu) and we'll set a time...TBA

Time of Class (Residential Programs Only)

Day of Week: Tuesdays

Time: no class time scheduled as of this writing, TBA

Instructor's Philosophy of Teaching

A few years ago when we were still the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, the faculty attended a workshop that emphasized that students feel more comfortable and work more effectively in courses where they understand the instructor's philosophy of teaching from the beginning, so here, in a nutshell, is mine.

I always thought I was very lucky and blessed to be able to go to college and graduate school and to make a living doing stuff which, except for some necessary administrative work, was really interesting to me. I sit at my desk occasionally and think "I like to read, to talk, to think, to write, to do research, and to teach – and they pay me to do it! Wow!" By contrast, so many people, sadly, must work at jobs they dislike or are bored at or make the world a worse place...

I teach this course, even though I'm old enough to retire, because I think its subject matter is interesting and important in making at least a small contribution to our individual and collective psychological and spiritual growth. That you are

here at Sofia of your own volition, that you're taking this course which is an elective, rather than required, allows me to assume that you too are really interested in its subject matter. Thus I don't have to motivate you to keep up with the readings, to read relevant material beyond what's required, to contribute both your enthusiasm *and doubts* and questions in class, and to find it a privilege to write small papers each week to share your own enthusiasm and thinking with me and your fellow students. I bring to class my interest and enthusiasm to share with you, and I'm rewarded by your interest and enthusiasm. Yes, I bring lots of expertise in content too, but that interest and enthusiasm is more important. When I see you grappling with our material, intellectually and experientially, in class or in your papers, I feel I'm a success as a teacher!

To put this another way, this is a class for self-motivated, curious people, willing to act on the procedures taught for mindfulness. It's not an undergraduate sort of course where the instructor will simply talk at you and you take notes.....

If, God forbid, it ever reaches a point where nobody says anything interesting in class and the papers are all nothing but book reports, then it will be time to stop teaching.... I know this may happen someday if I get too old or sick, but I doubt it will happen for lack of student interest and enthusiasm.

Prerequisites and Priority Registration

The following courses are required in order to take this course: N/A

Priority Registration: N/A

Students in the above program will receive priority registration for this course. (All others will be admitted if space allows.)

Course Is: Open

Requires Permission of Program Chair: No

Other Course Requirements: N/A

Fulfillment of Program Requirements

This course fulfills requirements in other programs, as follows: N/A

Course Description

[your official course description from the Registrar's Office]

Exploration of the concept of Mindfulness as a psychological process employed in everyday life for lessening the effects of consensus trance.

Here is my own description:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Even though that which is usually called "mind" is widely esteemed and much discussed,

Still it is not understood or it is wrongly understood or it is understood in a one-sided manner only.

Since it is not understood correctly, just as it is in itself,

There comes into existence inconceivable numbers of philosophical ideas and assertions.

Furthermore, since ordinary individuals do not understand it,

They do not recognize their own nature,

And so they continue to wander among the six destinies of rebirth within the three worlds, and thus experience suffering.

Therefore, not understanding your own mind is a very grievous fault.

PADMASAMBHAVA

The contents of SOFIA UNIVERSITY (WAS ITP) 3079, Mindfulness, as taught by Prof. Charles Tart during the Fall academic quarter at SOFIA UNIVERSITY (WAS ITP), are copyright Charles T. Tart (c) 2012. All federal and state copyrights are reserved for all original material presented in this course through any medium, including lecture or print. Individuals are prohibited from being paid for taking, selling, or otherwise transferring for value, personal class notes made during this course to any entity without the express, written permission of Charles T. Tart. In addition to legal sanctions, students found in violation of these prohibitions may be subject to SOFIA UNIVERSITY (WAS ITP) disciplinary action.

This statement is not intended to restrict the sharing of class notes among students who are currently enrolled in SOFIA UNIVERSITY (WAS ITP) 3079 at SOFIA UNIVERSITY (WAS ITP).

Conceptual Framework and Rationale: The only "tool" you really own is your consciousness: this includes your skills to perceive, to reason, to emotionally evaluate, to control your behavior, to access your instincts and higher faculties, etc. While high levels of development of consciousness are needed to cope adaptively with the world, especially in interacting with others, our educational system strongly tends to assume that we already have great skill in managing our consciousness, and spends its time filling us with more and more *content* to be managed. On many occasions you need to focus your attention in spite of distraction or conflicting emotions, e.g., but how many of us have had "Concentration 101" in college? Or "Emotional Discrimination 101?" Or "Subtle Bodily Perceptions and their Role in Health, 101 and 102?" The enormous amount of maladaptive perception, thought, feeling and behavior in everyday life, among people who are stuffed with more intellectual knowledge than most of the "wise" people in history ever had, testifies to the results of not teaching basic skills in understanding and using consciousness.

Contemporary psychology is just beginning to become aware that one of the most significant psychological dimensions affecting people's behavior is, to use Harvard psychologist Ellen Langer's term, "mind~~l~~essness." We now have enormous numbers of both experimental and clinical demonstrations to show that much of the time we live inside a kind of waking daydream. This means that our perceptions are often distorted and biased, as are our thinking and emotional evaluations - and all these processes tend to run automatically, with little or no volitional control. Consequently our behavior, based on biased and distorted understandings of our selves, of other people and of physical reality, can not only be maladaptive, but pathological in a way that further affects and distorts other's perceptions and reactions to us, in a vicious cycle.

G. I. Gurdjieff was an early pioneer in taking internal skills for developing awareness, perceptiveness and wisdom, as taught in the East, and experimenting with ways of making them accessible to modern Westerners. This course (which may be repeated if a student finds it useful) uses two books by the instructor¹ and one by Gurdjieff's best-

¹ A third book by the instructor, *Mind Science: Meditation Training for Practical People*, is recommended, but not required.

known student, P. D. Ouspensky, to provide a conceptual scaffolding for the idea that we tend to live in a waking daydream, as well as drawing on modern psychological research. While we begin with classical Buddhist meditation techniques for training concentration and mindfulness, the primary emphasis will be on learning and practicing techniques to bring attention back to basic perceptions of self, others, and world *in the moment, while we are active in the ordinary world*, in order to facilitate more accurate perceptions of world and self.

In science, theory and understanding rest on fact and observation, *data*. A brilliant thinker, working with biased and inadequate data, will come up with intellectually (and emotionally) stimulating theories that are often *wrong*: they don't really explain reality. Similarly in the rest of life, our beliefs and concepts can be no better than the data they are based on, so this course will constantly pull attention back to the raw data of perception, what we actually perceive *here and now*, and stress checking our concepts and understandings against this improved perception/data.

While useful for *everyone*, particularly researchers, these techniques should be especially valuable for counselors and therapists, where accurate perception of the client is of the essence.

Class Attendance/Posting Requirements

Course Format: Ten² two-hour classes, with no break in the middle and ending slightly early. Class time will be both intellectual and experiential, stressing mindfulness of the moment. Discussion will be about sharing and working with our understandings and puzzlements about both the readings and concepts and about experiential effects on the students of the mindfulness procedure.

Much of the important work of the course will be done in your everyday life, as you practice the primary mindfulness technique there.

Attendance: Our class meetings are sequenced for optimal learning, and the experiences and discussions in class are an important part of that learning and integration process, so please attend all classes. Life does interfere at times, though, so if you should miss a class, please study and reflect on the assigned readings and keep up with the regular writing and mindfulness assignments. You can miss one class (but no due papers) in a quarter with no problem as long as all of your regular writing assignments are completed in a reasonably timely way, but if you miss more than one class, you should write an extra paper, commenting on the readings assigned for that class, for each class you miss. Please indicate at the top of this paper that it's a

² The instructor will be away at a meditation retreat on one class day, so a lecture video will be shown that day or a substitute class time will be arranged.

makeup for a particular class (which one?) you missed. If more than two classes are missed and not satisfactorily made up, Sofia policy is that you cannot receive credit for the class.

Auditing Policy: Auditors are not allowed unless they plan to come to all classes. People who just drop in occasionally are disruptive to the group spirit of the class. Also, auditors, if any, and significant others do not have the privilege to write papers for the instructor or other students to read and comment on.

Course Aims and How They Relate to the Learning Objectives

The objectives of this course are, (1) on the academic level, to familiarize the student with the nature of ordinary consciousness and its too often mindless nature, and with the possibilities of becoming more perceptive, mindful and sensitive in life, (2) on the professional level, to sensitize the student to recognize the occurrence of relatively mindless functioning and its implications for dealing with the person experiencing them, and, (3) on the personal level, to foster sensitivity to variations in the functioning of consciousness and so be able to discern more appropriate and mindful styles of cognition and action. These objectives are congruent with the general Sofia learning objectives of

(a) *mindfulness* (what state is a person I'm interacting with in, e.g., and how does that influence their view of their world and their selves? What state am I in?),

(b) *compassion* (empathizing with the apparent absolute truthfulness of an emotional state, e.g., while mindfully seeing its embeddedness in a greater whole and so being able to evaluate and communicate more effectively),

(c) *appreciating differences* (the assumption that we are all in the same "normal" state of consciousness and so see the world the same way, e.g., is quite misleading) and

(d) *discernment* (seeing how, e.g., various automatized and mindless states give particular views of the world that seems true within those states, but that must be understood in a broader context to move closer toward real truth).

By providing self-observational training the student will also have opportunities to observe the culture-boundedness of many things taken for granted and so have a chance to appreciate other cultures.

Behavioral Objectives: There are three primary objectives:

- To intelligently discuss course material from lectures and readings in class.
- To intelligently discuss course material from lectures and readings in assigned papers.
- To work with and report on effects of mindfulness exercises, both verbally and in written form.

Required Reading

Abbreviations: (These are print books, ebook versions may be available too)(Instructor will try to bring paperback copies of WU and LML to class for sale at \$ 13.00 and \$ 17.00, WU and LML)

WU=Tart, ***Waking Up***; ISBN-10: 0877734267; **ISBN-13:** 978-0877734260

LML=Tart, ***Living the Mindful Life***: ISBN-10: 1570620032; ISBN-13: 978-1570620034

ISM=Ouspensky, ***In Search of the Miraculous***, ISBN-10: 0156007460; ISBN-13: 978-0156007467

Recommended Reading

Tart, Mind Science: Meditation Training for Practical People (new edition out about

10/13, both paperback and ebook)

Required books can be purchased online. Please check with the library about the availability of ebooks that relate to this course. There may be additional readings assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Method of Instruction (class format subject to change)

Didactic: [didactic proportion of class time]	≈	10-30%
Discussion: [discussion proportion of class time]	≈	20-40%
Experiential: [experiential proportion of class time]	≈	30-60%

Assignments

Required Papers: Beginning with the second class, a two-page, double spaced, **typed** paper is due at the beginning of each class, dealing with the readings assigned for that

day and/or your observations/reactions to the primary mindfulness exercises as used in both class and your everyday life. [If the class is overenrolled (it happens sometimes - more than 10 or 12 students), papers are still due at each class and, as explained below, fellow students will provide feedback, but the instructor will only comment on some of the papers, selection largely at random.] The final paper should be about 4-6 pages and cover your general learning in the course. Because of the importance of APA style at Sofia *use APA style whenever you can in your writing*. As my eyes are not what they used to be, please use 12 point type (not smaller or larger) and double space.

Three copies of each paper are to be brought to class, one for the instructor to comment on, and two for other students who will write comments on them and return them to you at the next class. This latter feature will add to the sharing dimension of the class, as well as give some preparation for being teachers yourselves someday.

These papers are to be intellectually coherent reflections and analyses on the course topics, *not* merely personal reactions.

The instructor will respect your personal experiences in these papers, but may provide critical intellectual feedback on content and style as part of his educational responsibility.

Note that one of the reasons for these papers is to give you practice in professional level writing. Thus, parallel to the Sofia rule for the paper that shows competence for advancing to the PhD level, you should *carefully proof your papers for grammar and spelling or other composition errors before turning them in*. If a paper has more than 5 such errors, the first time it will be turned back with instructions to rewrite it. After that, such papers will be marked unacceptable.

Auditors, if any, and significant others do not have the privilege to write papers for the instructor or other students to read and comment on.

Assessment: Students will receive ongoing formative feedback from the instructor as part of class discussions. The summative assessment will be based primarily on successful completion of paper assignments, described below, as well as class discussion and attendance. The paper assignments also provide formative feedback from both the instructor and from other students. Ongoing feedback on the various papers is in lieu of further feedback at the end of the class.

Incompletes and Late Papers

You may miss one assigned paper (not the final, integrative one) with no penalty. If you don't turn in a due paper on its assigned due date, you are required to turn it in at the next class (or email it to the instructor in the meantime). If you fail to turn in more than two papers, you may fail the course.

Class Outline

Mindfulness, - Reading and Paper Assignments

Abbreviations: WU=Tart, ***Waking Up***; LML=Tart, ***Living the Mindful Life***:
ISM=Ouspensky, ***In Search of the Miraculous***

NOTE: WU and LML can be bought from the instructor the first day of class for \$ 13.00 and \$ 17.00, plus tax, respectively. Or you can find them online in advance. ISM can be found online.

Week	Date	Turn in	Topic	Readings
1	Sept 24		Overview: Attention deployment strategies	
2	Oct 1	1 st paper	Consciousness not needed for life	WU: intro, 1,2,3,4,5; ISM: 1
3	Oct 8	2 nd paper	Living in a simulation of reality	WU: 6,7,8; ISM: 2; LML: intro, 1
4	Oct 15	3 rd paper	Trance/hypnosis of everyday life	WU: 9; ISM: 3; LML: 2
5	Oct 22	4 th paper	Consensus trance	WU: 10; ISM: 4;

				LML: 3
6	Oct 29	5 th paper	Identification & identity states Halloween tonight...	WU: 11,12; ISM: 5; LML: 4
7	Nov 5	6 th paper	Defense mechanisms, groups, problems	WU: 13,21,22; ISM: 6; LML: 5
8	Nov 17	7 th paper	Balance, false personality, essence	WU: 14,15; ISM: 7; LML: 6
	Nov 26		Thanksgiving BREAK	
9	Dec 3	8 th paper	Catching up	Rest of WU & LML
10	Dec 10	9 th paper	Putting it all together & academic overview Remember this last paper is 4-6 pp on what you've learned from the course.	Article: Tart, C., 1990, Extending mindfulness to everyday life. <i>Journal of Humanistic Psychology</i> , 30, 81-106, plus Baraz & Tart (unpublished) Initial Application of Mindfulness Extension Exercises in a Traditional Buddhist Meditation Retreat Setting, on <a href="http://www.paradigm-
sys.com/cttart/">www.paradigm- sys.com/cttart/

Individual and Cultural Differences

This course is intended to be inclusive of multiple viewpoints that reflect and honor the voices of people with a variety of individual and cultural differences, including but not limited to differences related to gender, age, sexual orientation, religion/spirituality, physical/mental ability, socioeconomic status, and race/ethnicity. The instructor will honor and respect multiple viewpoints expressed within class discussions and included in a scholarly manner in course assignments. This course specifically incorporates individual and cultural differences in the following manner: [your specific individual and cultural differences policy]

Other Information

All other information and materials related to the syllabus can be found within the Syllabi link of Course Resources on the ANGEL home page:

http://itp.angellearning.com/section/content/default.asp?WCU=CRSCNT&entry_id=610D2D75F8224D52AD23D3E3C09D6B15

This includes:

- Online Learning
- Information Literacy Requirements and Use of Sofia Library
- Writing Requirements
- Self-Disclosure
- Confidentiality
- Academic Honesty/Integrity Statement
- Harassment Statement
- Netiquette Policy
- Accommodations for a Disability
- Mid-Quarter Evaluation
- Institutional Learning Objectives
- Program Learning Objectives

Standards for Course Assignment Evaluation

Assessment: Students will receive ongoing formative feedback from the instructor as part of class discussions. The summative assessment will be based primarily on successful completion of paper assignments, described below, as well as class discussion and attendance. The paper assignments also provide formative feedback from both the instructor and from other students. Ongoing feedback on the various papers is in lieu of further feedback at the end of the class.

[*Changes made to this syllabus require Chair/Director approval prior to posting]