THE MINDFUL THERAPIST

PCO 6939

Syllabus - Spring 2013

Instructor: Dr. Roberta Seldman (seldman@ufl.edu) - office ph. 392.1575

Meeting Time: Thursdays – 6-8 period

Location: Peabody rm. 401

Office hours: Thursdays 9-12 by appointment

OVERVIEW

This class explores the interface between Western psychology and the world’s contemplative practices. In particular, we will examine how the practice of mindfulness meditation can enhance one’s life by both quieting the mind and providing awareness into life’s greatest questions. This course will be highly experiential, combining the practice of sitting meditation and other simple contemplative and yoga practices that foster inner stillness and clarity. We will also study the wealth of Eastern thought that when applied to a therapeutic setting can enhance well-being as well as foster authentic presence, that quality that has been shown repeatedly to be the most important therapeutic agent of change.

The core of the course is the practice and application of mindfulness meditation. Meditation is a process of slowing down the mind & body and letting go of all thoughts that may occupy our mind and cause us worry, fear, anger, judgment or any other negative emotion. Some define it as a state of "emptiness". By letting go we achieve a state of awareness that gives us both clarity and peace. We can then carry this with us in our daily lives making our normal experience much more meaningful and mindful. It has been proven that daily practice of meditation has many health benefits. It brings a sense of understanding, compassion and deeper awareness to people who regularly practice it.

The course will focus on how to apply these ancient wisdom principles to the practice of psychotherapy.
Home practice: Due to the nature of this class, at home meditation practice is a mandatory and essential aspect of this course. Detailed instruction will be given weekly on the practice of Shamatha-Vipasshana meditation and body-centered meditation techniques. You will be provided with a journal to track and describe your practice. Supplementary articles on mindfulness will be handed out weekly.

Required Books

*Toward a Psychology of Awakening*  John Wellwood, Ph.D.

*Wherever You Go There You Are*  by Jon Kabat-Zinn, M.D.

*Thoughts Without a Thinker*  by Mark Epstein, M.D.

*The Wise Heart*  by Jack Kornfield, Ph.D.

Students will be required to complete the following:

1. Attend and participate in class discussion (20%)
2. Complete at home daily meditation practices and log (30%)
3. Write one page reaction papers in response to readings. (20%)
4. Write one “wisdom” paper and present this topic to the class (30%). This paper (20pgs.)/presentation will focus on the integration and application of Mindfulness to specific psychological phenomenon such as: Depression, anxiety, trauma, OCD, eating disorders, addictions, relationships, etc.
Tentative Schedule of Topics (subject to change at any time)

JANUARY 10 – Introduction – “Mindfulness Therapy”
   Meditation practice and Buddhist principles
   East vs. West?
   Course requirements/structure: Practice, contemplation, application

January 17 – What is “meditation” and why is it considered the “gate to liberation”
   Next week’s Readings: Welwood, pgs. 1-23, Ch. 9, JKZ, Intro-32,
   Kornfield, Ch. 2 and Ch. 7

JANUARY 24 – East vs. West. Basic goodness vs. pathology
   Compassion practice and Tonglen
   Next week’s Readings; Epstein, forward, intro and Ch. 1-6, Kornfield, Ch. 16
   JKZ – Pg. 33-42

January 31– FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS and the Truth of Suffering
   Next week’s Readings, JKZ – pg. 47-74 handouts re: meditating with the body,
   Kornfield Ch.8

FEBRUARY 7- Meditating with the body -The Body as the Path to Awareness
   Next week’s Readings: Welwood, Ch. 3-8, Singer article (reaction paper)
   Quest speaker – Cassie Hessler-Smith, Ph. D.

FEBRUARY 14– EGO, SELF and EMPTINESS
   Next week’s Readings; JKZ, pg. 74-106, Welwood Ch. 12-14, Kornfield Ch. 9-11

FEBRUARY 21 - Working with Emotions from a Mindfulness Perspective
   Selected articles

MARCH 1-Working with Emotions cont. Quest therapist
Readings for week of March 15

Welwood Ch. 10-11, Kornfield Ch. 17—18, Epstein, Ch.6, Kornfield Ch. 21-24.

MARCH 7 – **NO CLASS**

MARCH 14- **HOW TO BE A MINDFUL THERAPIST** - Bare Attention and Authentic Presence

Readings: JKZ pg. 134-176 selected handouts

MARCH 21 – **The Mindful Therapist** continued.........focusing and other methods of “presence”

MARCH 28 – **Application of Mindfulness to Psychological Diagnosis** – class presentations

APRIL 4 -presentations

APRIL 11- presentations

APRIL 18 – retreat

APRIL 25 - retreat

Dr. Seldman is a Counseling Psychologist from the University of Florida Counseling and Wellness Center. She has practiced both psychotherapy and meditation for the past 25 years. She has trained with many teachers including Dr. Reggie Ray, one of the founders of Naropa Univeristy, as well as Tsultrim Palmo and Pema Chodron of Gampo Abbey, Jack Kornfield and others. She is a member of Dharma Ocean Sangha and Shambhala International, both groups started by The Venerable Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche.