



Syllabus

PSY 245 Mindfulness in Psychology: The Science and Practice of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

General Information

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Course Prefix PSY

Course Number 245

Course Title Mindfulness in Psychology: The Science and Practice of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

Course Information

Catalog Description The first eight weeks of this innovative course are dedicated to the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program, an evidence-based approach to improving wellbeing and managing stress. Here, students receive practical instruction and learn skills through mindfulness exercises, movement, and group inquiry. The remaining weeks transition to an academic exploration, where students study clinical research on the outcomes of Mindfulness-Based programs and the theories that explain their effectiveness. In the 8-week MBSR program, which serves as the course's practical core, students experience what mindfulness is—and just as importantly, what it isn't—through hands-on practice. By cultivating our innate ability to be aware without judgment, we can better understand our experiences. In having more clarity we can recognize when our automatic, habitual responses to stress are no longer helping and may be causing us harm. This mindful awareness lends us the calm space we need in order to adapt and respond to stress in new, creative ways. The remainder of the course serves as a more conventional academic framework, inviting students to dive into the research and discourse surrounding Mindfulness-Based Interventions. Through lectures, presentations, literature reviews, and critical inquiry, this “outer container” of the course equips students with a nuanced understanding so they can contribute to the discussion on mindfulness-based programs’ efficacy from both a personal and empirical perspective.

Credit Hours 3

Lecture Contact Hours 3

Lab Contact Hours 0

Other Contact Hours 0

Grading Scheme Letter

Prerequisites

PSY 100

Co-requisites

None

First Year Experience/Capstone Designation

This course DOES NOT satisfy the outcomes applicable for status as a FYE or Capstone.

SUNY General Education

This course is designated as satisfying a requirement in the following SUNY Gen Ed categories

None

FLCC Values

Institutional Learning Outcomes Addressed by the Course

Vitality, Inquiry, and Perseverance

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to articulate key psychological concepts and theories that underpin stress and stress management, as well as the foundational principles of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction
2. Students will practice a variety of mindfulness practices, such as meditation, body scans, and mindful breathing, and will be able to employ these techniques to manage stress in both academic and real-world scenarios.
3. Students will examine and discuss modern research findings about the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions, as well as some of the cross-cultural traditions related to practices.
4. Students will be able to describe how Mindfulness-Based interventions are employed in clinical settings, such as in the treatment of addiction or chronic pain, and articulate its advantages and limitations.

Outline of Topics Covered

Weeks 1-9: MBSR Curriculum

The first 8 weeks are the experiential, evidence-based MBSR program. To maintain the emphasis on exploration and discovery, specific details are intentionally kept minimal here. Preparatory readings and home assignments will be given in a timely way throughout the 8 weeks. Each week will require active class participation, dedicated practice outside of class, and a guided written reflection about your experience.

Week 1: MBSR Module 0. Orientation and Introduction to MBSR Program, Course overview, logistics and guidelines discussion.

Week 2: MBSR Module 1. “Wholeness and Capability”

Week 3: MBSR Module 2. “Perception and Creative Responding”

Week 4: MBSR Module 3. “Power of Presence”

Week 5: MBSR Module 4. “Stress and Responding”

Week 6: MBSR Module 5. “Mindfulness in Action”

Week 7: MBSR Module 6. “Communication and Connection”

Week 8: MBSR Module 7. “Integration and Inputs”

Week 9: MBSR Module 8. “Reflection and Commitment”

Weeks 10-13: Unpacking Mindfulness-Based Approaches in Psychology

After the 8-week program, the course transitions into an academic exploration of mindfulness-based programs, their clinical outcomes, and the mechanisms and theories that explain their effectiveness. Through lectures, group presentations, reading and discussing the literature, students will critically examine what we can (and cannot) say about the role of mindfulness in different psychological contexts.

Week 10: Mindfulness, Anxiety, and Depression

Week 11: Mindfulness and Stress

Week 12: Mindfulness and Working Memory

Week 13: Mindfulness and Health

Weeks 14-15: Research Project

For their final assignment, students will compose a paper exploring the application of mindfulness techniques in a specific context of interest, such as teaching mindfulness to children, its efficacy in workplace contexts, or its role in enhancing focus, etc. This paper will critically examine existing research and summarize the potential benefits and challenges of implementing a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program for the selected population. The paper must incorporate articles that were not included in the course reading assignments.