

GS 1181: Presence and Mindfulness: Time and Freedom

Section: F07 Classroom: A005

MW 12:00-12:50 This course is an 8 week, 1 credit hour course meeting 01/17-03/10

Instructor: Dr. Laurence Musgrove Office: Academic 010 Office Hours: MW 2-3pm

Contact information: lmusgrove@angelo.edu

1181 Freshman Seminar (1-0). Seminar on various contemporary topics. This course is designed to introduce incoming freshmen to the intellectual and cultural environment of the university and the impact it will have on their lives as students. Freshman Seminars incorporate various integral elements in order to facilitate first-year students' transition from high school to college-level learning. Emphasis will be on communication, critical thinking, and information literacy. Open to all majors; restricted to and required of first-time-in-college students.

What kinds of assignments are required in this course?

You will be practicing college-level reading, writing, and research skills. You will also have the opportunity to attend an event on campus and record your learning via a writing assignment.

Why is this section of GS 1181 called "Presence and Mindfulness"?

This course provides you with an introduction to mindfulness, both through reading, writing, and contemplation practices. You will read and write about the benefits of present-mindfulness to your studies, work, and relationships. You will also learn individual and group practices designed to increase understanding of self and others by identifying and limiting distractions, slowing and concentrating time, and achieving wakefulness and calm. The goal of all of these practices is to reduce stress and distraction by gaining control of one's breath and one's thinking with the added results of greater confidence and freedom.

What Do I Need For This Class?

I will supply you with all of the materials for this course, but you will need access to Blackboard.

Do I Need a Textbook?

You will not need to purchase a textbook. I will provide you all materials via lectures and materials in class.

What Else Should I Know About Being Successful in this Course?

For most new students, college will be quite a different sort of learning experience than they had in high school. You will have to develop new strategies for managing your time and your work. And of course, college life and new friends will offer all kinds of new distractions that will want your attention. Prioritizing your school work, attending class, and scheduling the completion of assignments will present daily challenges. Simply coming prepared to class each day and turning assignments in on time should be top priorities. If you succeed in these two areas, your college experience will probably be very successful.

What Skills Should I Be Able to Learn in This Course?

GS 1181 is designed to help students practice the skills necessary to successfully persist toward graduation.

More specifically, upon completion of GS 1181, students will be able to

1. Gather, analyze, evaluate and synthesize information relevant to a question or issue;
2. Develop, interpret, and express ideas through effective written communication;
3. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate choices, actions and consequences as related to ethical decision-making;
4. Locate campus resources to solve problems/answer questions

Your feedback on the degree to which this course helped you achieve those abilities will be assessed at the end of the term through a student survey with the following three emphases:

- 8) Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing;
- 9) Learning how to find, evaluate, and use resources to explore a topic in depth;
- 11) Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Beyond These Skills, What Else Will I Learn?

Additionally, because this is a course on the topics of presence, mindfulness, time, and freedom, students will learn

1. How to practice mindfulness;
2. How others use mindfulness to their benefit.

How Will My Final Grade be Calculated?

1. Reflection Paper on Time and Freedom: 10 points
2. Reflection Paper on Distraction and Controlling Time and Place: 10 points
3. Reflection Paper on Initial Contemplation Practice: 10 points
4. Information Literacy Assignment: 10 points
5. First Summary Assignment Paper: 10 points
6. Midterm Reflection Paper on Presence and Mindfulness: Time and Freedom: 10 points
7. Second Summary Assignment Paper: 10 points
8. Community Event Reflection Paper: 10 points
9. Final Reflection Paper on Presence and Mindfulness: Time and Freedom: 20 points

Is Extra Credit Available?

No.

Attendance and Campus Safety

The work of this class will take place during class time and during the time out of class when you will compose reflection and summary papers. During class time, we will explore together a number of contemplation practices, share our reflection papers, and discuss together the course issues of presence, mindfulness, time, and Freedom. Your presence and attention in class is necessary so that you can rehearse the practices designed for your learning. Thus, four absences of any kind will result in your failure of this course. In addition, because of campus safety issues, I close the door at about 5 minutes after the beginning of the class and the door will stay closed until the class is dismissed. Therefore, late arrival and early departure is not allowed. If the door is closed, do not disturb the class in progress.

Academic Honesty

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. You are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions of the Student Handbook. In essence, the willingness to cheat undermines our purpose at the university. Students who cheat risk failing the course.

Students with Disabilities

Angelo State University is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation. Student Contact: The Student Life Office is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability, and it is the student's responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, at (325) 942-2191 or (325) 942-2126 (TDD/FAX) or by e-mail at student.life@angelo.edu to begin the process.

Student Absence for Observance of Religious Holy Days

If you intend to be absent from class to observe a religious holy day, you should make that intention known in writing to me prior to the absence.

Mindfulness Practices

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|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Breathing | 6. Listening | 11. Dressing |
| 2. Sitting | 7. Speaking | 12. Washing/Bathing |
| 3. Eating | 8. Standing in Line | 13. Reading and Writing |
| 4. Walking | 9. Driving | |
| 5. Chores | 10. Waking | |

Tentative Schedule of Assignments

		Monday		Wednesday
Week 1	1/16	No Class	1/18	Introduction to Course and Big Ideas
Practices				Guided Contemplation on Time and Freedom
Week 2	1/23	<i>Due in Class: Reflection Paper on Time and Freedom</i>	1/25	<i>Due in Class: Reflection Paper on Distraction and Controlling Time and Place</i>
Practices		Guided Contemplation on Distraction and Managing Time and Place		Basic Ingredients of Contemplation Practice: Body, Mind, and Breath
Week 3	1/30	<i>Due via Blackboard: Information Literacy Assignment</i>	2/1	<i>Due in Class: Reflection Paper on Initial Contemplation Practices</i>
Practices		Initial Contemplation Practices and Reflective Writing		Contemplation Practices and Reflective Writing
Week 4	2/6		2/8	<i>Due in Class: Midterm Reflection Paper on Presence and Mindfulness: Time and Freedom</i>
Practices		Contemplation Practices and Reflective Writing		Contemplation Practices and Reflective Writing
Week 5	2/13	<i>Due in Class: First Summary Assignment Paper</i>	2/15	
Practices		Contemplation Practices and Reflective Writing		Contemplation Practices and Reflective Writing
Week 6	2/20		2/22	
Practices		Contemplation Practices and Reflective Writing		Contemplation Practices and Reflective Writing
Week 7	2/27	<i>Due in Class: Second Summary Assignment Paper</i>	3/1	
Practices		Contemplation Practices and Reflective Writing		Contemplation Practices and Reflective Writing
Week 8	3/6	<i>Due in Class: Community Event Reflection Paper</i>	3/8	<i>Due in Class: Final Reflection Paper on Presence and Mindfulness: Time and Freedom</i>
Practices		Contemplation Practices and Reflective Writing		Final Contemplation Practices and Reflective Writing

More Detail on Assignments

1. Reflection Paper on Time and Freedom: 10 points

Two paragraph one-page typed paper in which you reflect on (paragraph 1) the degree to which you feel you have control over your time and (paragraph 2) the degree you feel you have the freedom to make decisions about the direction of your life.

2. Reflection Paper on Distraction and Controlling Time and Place: 10 points

Two paragraph one-page typed paper in which you reflect on (paragraph 1) the kinds of distractions that interfere with your life and (paragraph 2) how you might take better control over your daily schedule and the locations where you live and work.

3. Reflection Paper on Initial Contemplation Practice: 10 points

Two paragraph one-page typed paper in which you reflect on (paragraph 1) how you felt during your first contemplation practice in class and (paragraph 2) what you learned about yourself and contemplation during that practice.

4. Information Literacy Assignment: 10 points

See Blackboard for this assignment.

5. First Summary Assignment Paper on Mindfulness: 10 points

See next page for details.

6. Midterm Reflection Paper on Presence and Mindfulness: Time and Freedom: 10 points

Two paragraph one-page typed paper in which you reflect on (paragraph 1) the degree to which you feel you have gained more control over your time and (paragraph 2) the degree you feel you have gained more freedom to make decisions about the direction of your life.

7. Second Summary Assignment Paper on Mindfulness: 10 points

See next page for details.

8. Community Event Reflection Paper: 10 points

Two paragraph one-page typed paper in which you (paragraph 1) describe the community event and (paragraph 2) reflect on the degree to which you were able to practice mindfulness, concentration, calm, and confidence at this event.

9. Final Reflection Paper on Presence and Mindfulness: Time and Freedom: 20 points

Two paragraph one-page typed paper in which you reflect on (paragraph 1) the degree to which you feel you have gained more control over your time and (paragraph 2) the degree you feel you have gained more freedom to make decisions about the direction of your life.

Reflection Paper Evaluation Criteria

<p>Satisfactory (10-6 points): The paper represents careful, engaged, open-minded, and clear reflection on the two prompts provided. The writing is easy to understand, flows clearly from idea to idea, and is free of grammatical, spelling, and format errors.</p>
<p>Unsatisfactory (5-0 points): The paper represents careless, disengaged, perfunctory, or unclear reflection on the two prompts provided. The writing contains grammatical, spelling, and format errors that interfere with clarity and easy comprehension.</p>

Two Summary Assignments on Mindfulness

What is the Purpose of these Assignments?

To practice writing a summary using available library resources.

What is a Summary?

When we summarize a piece of writing, we write in our own words the most outstanding ideas another writer makes in his or her own writing *without evaluating* those ideas. A summary will be much shorter than the text we summarize because we only highlight the most important ideas offered in the original text. For example, it would only take us a few minutes to summarize the plot of a recent movie that we have seen for a friend, even though the movie may have lasted 90 minutes or longer. This is the value of summary: we can communicate a big idea or several connected ideas in a short amount of time or writing space.

Why is Summarizing Important in College?

Summarizing plays an important part in academic writing. Before we can productively enter the conversation on a given topic, we need to develop a careful understanding of what has already been said. For academic purposes, developing such an understanding often involves doing library research to find relevant articles on a particular subject and then reading (and rereading) those articles carefully until we fully understand the complex ideas they present. We have to understand the existing body of knowledge before we can meaningfully contribute to it. After developing an understanding of the ideas already in play in the conversation, we become better positioned to offer our own perspectives on a given topic by placing them in the context of what has already been said. In other words, when we write academic essays, we often do so in response to ideas set forth in an ongoing “conversation” on a particular issue. If we do our jobs well in this research and reading stage of the writing process, we will be able to summarize a lot of complex information for our readers and thereby provide the proper conversational context for them to understand the issues we address in our essays.

The Summary Assignment

Because summarizing is such an important part of the academic writing process, it’s an academic skill you should get comfortable with early in your time as a college student. This assignment will give you the opportunity to practice this skill. Here are the specific details of your summary assignment:

1. **Find the Article Using the Library Database:** Access the library database and search for an article on the role mindfulness plays in a specific situation. This article may be from a popular magazine, newspaper, or peer reviewed scholarly journal. We will review how to access articles in class, and you may request assistance from library staff as well.
2. **Scan and Read the Article:** Scan the article without reading. How long is it? Identify the main sections as divided by subtitles and illustrations. Then read the article at least twice through. While reading the first time through, take note of the main point the author is trying to make in the essay. During the second time through, pay closer attention to the evidence from other sources the author uses to support the larger point of the essay. Highlight or underline important words and sentences along the way.
3. **Draft a Summary:** Draft a rough summary, proceeding as though you were just describing the article to a friend. Give this imaginary audience a sense of what the author’s main idea is and what evidence or sub points he or she presented to make the overall point. Your main goal in this step is to just write out the main points of the summary in a way that makes sense to someone just like you. Aim for about 250 words.
4. **Revise the Summary:** Revise the draft you created in step three, making sure you’ve summarized the main ideas of the article accurately and objectively. Remember, your sole task is to condense and explain the information in the article as clearly and accurately as possible; you should not evaluate it or let on in any way whether you liked the article or not. Additionally, adjust the tone and style of your writing so that it is a little more formal. Think of your professor as your audience now instead of your friend. **Note:** It’s usually best to work with a partner during the revision stage to get an outsider’s perspective on how your writing is coming along. Be sure to partner up with someone from class to exchange drafts so you can offer each other feedback.
5. **Edit the Summary:** Now that you have drafted and revised your summary, your content should be in pretty good shape. It should provide a concise yet accurate and complete description of the main ideas in

the article without passing judgment on the article itself. Now edit the summary carefully, checking carefully for typographical errors, spelling mistakes, confusing sentences, or awkward phrasing. Again, it's best to exchange drafts with a classmate at this stage so you can help each other out with careful editing. Since summaries are short, try reading it out loud to your partner so he or she can listen carefully for confusing or awkward passages and point them out to you. Return the favor by listening to your partner read his or her summary to you.

The Summary Formal Requirements and Timeline

This summary will be no more than one page typed and should include an original title, an introductory paragraph introducing the author, title of article, title of journal, and general topic. Then the summary should have one or two more paragraphs that summarize the significant ideas contained in the article.

Summary Assignment Evaluation Criteria

Satisfactory (10-6 points): The summary concisely yet accurately reflects the full range of ideas presented in the original article and does so using audience appropriate language and style. The writing or recording is easy to understand, flows clearly from idea to idea, is free of grammatical, mechanical, spelling, and format errors, and does not express the author's personal opinion about the quality or validity of the ideas presented in the article.

Unsatisfactory (5-0 points): The summary misrepresents the ideas presented in the original article and/or fails to recognize several significant ideas offered in the original article. The writing or recording is difficult to understand and/or stylistically inappropriate for an academic audience, and it contains grammatical, mechanical, spelling, and format errors that interfere with clarity and easy reading/listening comprehension. The author expresses his or her personal opinion about the article and/or its ideas in the summary.

Student's Name
Professor Musgrove
GS1181
Assignment Title
Date

Title of Paper

For the purposes of this class, this page demonstrates the standard format for all papers. Left, right, top, and bottom margins are set at one inch. The standard heading at the top left is left-justified and single-spaced. After the heading, the title of the essay is centered above the body of the essay. This title does not require quotation marks or underlining, nor does it need to be bold.

All of the other text is left-justified, double-spaced, and set in Calibri, Arial, or Times New Roman font no larger than size 12. The first line of each paragraph begins with a one-half inch tab or five spaces, and there should be no extra spaces between paragraphs.