

Kindness Lessons: How Mindfulness and Spirituality Improve College Life, Student Activism and the Academic Experience

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The issue of burnout and sustainability has emerged as major issues among UCLA students. Stress, anxiety and depression have been prevalent during the pandemic. Many students have lost friends and loved ones. They have struggled through feeling of isolation and loneliness during the shift from in-person classes to remote instruction. Since 2015, the UCLA Labor Studies Program has offered a course for students involved with the work for social justice entitled, *Spirituality, Mindfulness, Self-Compassion and Social Justice Activism*. It has become one of the Labor Studies Program's most popular course. Through this course, students learn more about the role of spirituality and mindfulness practice in the work of non-violence and social justice.

By Victor Narro¹ and Lou Marie-Reyes²

Executive Summary

Burnout and sustainability have become a pressing issues with UCLA students, especially more recently during the pandemic. Physical and emotional burnout are about more than just a busy and hectic week with classes or at work—it's the long-term result of carrying a burden of continual stress, exhaustion, anxiety, or isolation. Taking the time to engage in a process of self-compassion can help students experience sustainability and find a healthy balance with their coursework and jobs. A regular routine of self-compassion activities helps them to approach their stress and anxiety with self-kindness.

For the past five years, the UCLA Labor Studies Program has offered a course for students involved with the work for social justice, entitled *Spirituality, Mindfulness, Self-Compassion and Social Justice Activism*. This course has become one of the program's most popular, with a long waiting list of students wanting to enroll each year. In this course, students learn about the role of spirituality and mindfulness practice in the work of non-violence and social justice. The course focuses on the teachings of Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, H. H. Dalai Lama, Pema Chödrön, Desmond Tutu, Thich Nhat Hanh, Ji Hyang Padma, Brother David Randl-Stendl, and other spiritual activist leaders through case studies, workshops, videos, and guest lecturers (scholars and activists).

With grant support from the UCLA Bedari Kindness Institute, the UCLA Labor Center conducted a survey of students who had enrolled in the course, and analyzed how the course teachings were continuing to benefit them today. In addition to launching this survey, we selected twenty students for an in-depth qualitative interview in which they were able to share more about their experiences with the class, and how they were applying the course materials and teachings to their daily work and personal lives.

This course has been transformational for many UCLA students. From course readings, discussions, and workshops, they learn the important role of kindness and compassion in their daily lives. This class provides them with a safe space to go deep inside and plumb the depths of compassion they can bring to others and to themselves. They develop their own community through this course and often continue to stay connected to each other and to the Labor Studies Program faculty and staff. Today, they continue to apply what they learned from the course

materials and workshops. We constantly receive messages and feedback from them about how this course has changed and improved their lives.

The following are two key recommendations based on the findings of this report:

1. UCLA should consider offering courses and workshops for faculty, staff, and students that introduce them to mental and emotional well-being as well as mindfulness practices and meditation.
2. Professors, adjunct faculty, and lecturers should set aside time for UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center (MARC), Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and other UCLA-based programs to do a presentation or session with the students in their classes.

This project's goal is to elucidate the societal benefits of practicing kindness at the individual and community levels. We hope this report will promote dialogue and effective strategies for university students and faculty on the practice of self-kindness and compassion toward others to create sustainability and a healthy balance. We believe that application of the class's rich and meaningful curriculum will help them avoid burnout and become more skillful in navigating challenging situations. These and similar courses and workshops support student efforts to cultivate mindfulness and a range of other practices to better deal with the stress, anxiety, and demands of college life. The result will manifest as improvements in their academic performance, daily relationships, and work-life balance.

Introduction

For the past five years, the UCLA Labor Studies program³ of the UCLA Institute for Research on Labor and Employment (IRLE)⁴ has offered a course for students involved with the work for social justice, entitled Spirituality, Mindfulness, Self-Compassion and Social Justice Activism. This course has become one of the program's most popular, with a long waiting list of students wanting to enroll each year. In this course, students learn about the role of spirituality and mindfulness practice in the work of non-violence and social justice. The course focuses on the teachings of Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, H. H. Dalai Lama, Pema Chödrön, Desmond Tutu, Thich Nhat Hanh, Ji Hyang Padma, Brother David Randl-Stendl, and other spiritual activist leaders through case studies, workshops, videos, and guest lecturers (scholars and activists).

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Burnout and sustainability have become a pressing concern with UCLA students. Physical and emotional burnout are about more than just a busy and hectic week with classes or at work—it's the long-term result of carrying a burden of continual stress, exhaustion, anxiety, or isolation. Taking the time to engage in a process of self-compassion can help students experience sustainability and find a healthy balance with their coursework and jobs. A regular routine of self-compassion activities helps them to approach their stress and anxiety with self-kindness. Our course provides a toolkit and connects students to resources and programs like the UCLA *Mindful Awareness Research Center* (MARC) and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). In this course, the students tailor a daily practice to their needs. This practice helps them connect to their purpose and their inner wisdom. Mindful breathing, yoga, meditation, prayer, and journal writing are all in the course's toolkit.

With grant support from the UCLA Bedari Kindness Institute⁵, the UCLA Labor Center⁶ launched this project to contribute to the understanding of the societal benefits of practicing kindness at individual and community levels. We hope that this report will promote dialogue and effective strategies for students and faculty in the practice of self-kindness and compassion toward others to create sustainability and a healthy balance. We conducted a survey of students who had enrolled in the course, and analyzed how the course teachings were continuing to benefit them today. In addition to launching this survey, we selected twenty students for an in-depth qualitative interview in which they were able to share more about their experiences with the class, and how they were applying the course materials and teachings to their daily work and personal lives. This report discusses the importance of mindfulness, self-compassion, and kindness practices for student activists to staying connected with purpose and care for themselves and others. Moreover, the applications of what they learned in class will help them avoid burnout and become more skillful in dealing with challenging situations. This report highlights the need for these types of college courses and workshops, which help students cultivate mindfulness and similar practices in order to better understand how stress and anxiety impact performance, relationships, and the work-life balance.

Methodology

The following is an outline of the methodology for this project. We created a quantitative survey and series of qualitative interviews that would address our boarder impact goals.

Approach/Methodology

1. We filed an application with the Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP) for IRB approval for the project.
2. We compiled all of the documents—workshop materials, readings, assignments, syllabi, curricula, and evaluations—from the course since it was first offered in 2015.
3. We created a literature review of surveys on similar courses offered in other universities.
4. We created a survey instrument and survey methodology. The complete survey can be found in Appendix A.
5. We created a database of the students who enrolled in the course since it was first offered in 2015.
6. We conducted a quantitative survey of the students who enrolled in the course for the past five years. We compiled a data base and created a Qualtrics survey instrument.
7. We conducted qualitative in-depth interviews in which we will randomly selected a few survey respondents to participate and asked them about how they are implementing what they learned from this course.

Analysis of Literature Review

This project focuses on the stress and anxiety impacting college students today. Our research and findings contribute to the literature on how mindfulness and meditative practices serve as beneficial interventions and coping mechanisms for college students. Scientific research on the mental and physical health benefits of mindfulness meditation for college students has grown exponentially in recent years. The latest studies show that mindfulness practices improve work-related capacities and provide a variety of physical, psychological, and social benefits.

Emotions are ubiquitous in the classroom and important for learning. Many studies highlight how mindfulness and similar practices are among the most effective strategies for improving emotional experiences and outcomes in the lives of college students. What the literature is lacking, however, is scholarship that demonstrates how these practices are also effective at enhancing learning outcomes inside the classroom. As the global research into mindfulness meditation is revealing many positive effects on everyday life for those who practice it, studying its effects on academic performance has potential for university and college academic learning departments, especially with regard to how students are learning and coping during the pandemic and remote instruction process. Below, I discuss a few key studies relevant to this topic.

Anxiety disorder is now the number-one mental health diagnosis on college campuses. Particularly troubling is the rate of growth nationally, which doubled from 10% in 2008 to 20% in 2016. In the University of California (UC) system, the rate increased almost threefold in the same time period (from 6.3% to 15.4%). In the California State University (CSU) system, 13.3% of students reported being diagnosed or treated for anxiety disorder in the last twelve months during 2015–2016. Indeed, these numbers probably increased dramatically during the pandemic. The UC and CSU rates are likely to be lower than the national average because of their diverse student populations—non-White students are half as likely to report diagnoses or treatment of anxiety disorders as White students.⁷

This report is one of a handful of assessments of how a course focused on self-compassion and mindfulness can help the students beyond the classroom. In a 2016 study entitled *Impact of Mindfulness Meditation Intervention on Academic Performance*, the authors analyzed the effects of mindfulness meditation on short-term and long-term academic performance. They found that students who received a consistent experiential process of mindfulness meditation received both short-term and long-term academic performances. Finally, their survey results revealed that most students enjoyed the mindfulness meditation process and agreed that the intervention improved in-class learning efficiency.⁸

In a more recent 2019 study entitled *A Multicourse, Multi-Semester Investigation of the Impact of Cognitive Reappraisal and Mindfulness Instruction on Short- and Long-Term Learning in the College Classroom*, the authors evaluated whether giving students tools for cognitive reappraisal and mindfulness at the start of class would benefit short-term and long-term learning of the material that followed the interventions (compared to a control condition). They observed significant effects of focusing activities and cognitive reappraisal at the start of class on long-term learning. The study concludes that offering these practices during an entire course would be even more powerful, and the authors of this study plan to test this intriguing possibility in future research.⁹

In another recent study, *Mindfulness, Happiness, and Anxiety in a Sample of College Students before and after Taking a Meditation Course*, the authors explored differences in mindfulness, happiness, and perceived anxiety in a sample of college students before and after taking a meditation course. The participants were college students at a primarily undergraduate institution enrolled in an experiential meditation class and a non-meditation class comparison group. The study design was a before-after observational study with two groups and three dependent variables: the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale, the State Trait Anxiety Inventory, and the Subjective Happiness Scale. Mindfulness scores increased and anxiety decreased more for students in the meditation class compared to students in the non-meditation class. This research provides evidence that taking a semester-long meditation course is associated with improvements in college student well-being.¹⁰

As we highlight in our survey, the majority of the students who enrolled in this course were first-generation college students of color. This population of college students endures the highest level of symptoms associated with stress and anxiety. According to *Depressive and Anxiety Symptoms in First Generation College Students*, a study that surveyed 58,000 students, first-generation students were more likely to have competing job responsibilities, competing familial responsibilities, weaker math and English skills, and worse study skills. As a result, these first-generation students demonstrated a higher degree of anxiety symptoms. Importantly, first-generation college students—defined as the first persons in their immediate family to attend college—may be at increased risk for symptoms of mental illness, although research is limited. This topic warrants further study. Our quantitative data from our survey, qualitative interviews, and course evaluations shed some light on this subject.¹¹

College students may be particularly stressed as they struggle to balance college life, work, family, and relationships, all while engaging in career exploration and attempting to find meaning and purpose in their lives. In a survey report entitled *Promoting the Inclusion of Mindfulness and Contemplative Practices in the College Classroom*, the authors explore incorporating mindfulness and contemplative practices into the higher education classroom to identify students' perceptions of how useful the activities might be for managing their personal stress and anxiety. The students who participated in this study performed mindfulness activities as part of in-class and out-of-class assignments during an introductory personal health course. The study findings indicated that the majority of student participants found mindfulness practices were helpful when it came to decreasing stress and anxiety or relaxing. Making time outside the classroom to practice mindfulness behaviors, however, was a challenge. The authors conclude that college-level instructors should incorporate mindfulness and contemplative activities into the curricula of their health education courses to help college students master mindfulness strategies and to encourage their use in reducing stress and anxiety.¹²

Finally, *Determinants and Consequences of Students' Burnout in Universities* presents a new concept, “the quality of learning experience” (QLE) which integrates various approaches into one framework. This study defines QLE as students’ perceptions of the direct and indirect inputs they receive from their colleges. Direct inputs refer to college investments in the educational program in terms of content, resources, and flexibility; indirect inputs consist of the processes by which colleges attempt to enhance learning—for example, student-faculty contact and intrinsic involvement in academic programs. The main theoretical assumption of this study is that student burnout may result from learning conditions that demand excessively high levels of effort and do not provide supportive mechanisms—that is, quality of learning experience components that facilitate effective coping. Previous studies indicate that support plays a key role in understanding the burnout process. Research on social support has expanded rapidly and the concept is of great interest to a number of disciplines. Social support has been viewed as a major resource with the potential to reduce the negative consequences of stress and to improve well-being.¹³

Course Syllabus and Evaluations

The course syllabus has focused on the role of spirituality and mindfulness practice in the work for non-violence and justice. Each class session begins with a mindful breathing meditation to bring each student fully into the classroom space and the present moment. For the first part of each class session, the students read and discuss the teachings of Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, H. H. Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Ji Hyang Padma, and other spiritual activist leaders through case studies, workshops, videos and guest lecturers (scholars and activists). The second part of the class session focuses on a specific workshop. The topics for the workshops range from walking meditation to breakthrough conversation and active listening. For this report, we analyzed all course evaluations that students submitted at the end of the quarter.¹⁴

Throughout all course evaluations an overwhelming majority of respondents (95% and over) answered “very high or always” when asked if they learned something valuable from the course. Subject interest achieved the same rating level upon completion of the course. Students reported that, before taking the course, mindfulness was an “abstract” concept to them. However, the class discussions and practice sessions enabled them to learn about mindfulness and how to apply it in their daily lives. Students reported that the activities in class were purposeful in having practical applications. The weekly meditation sessions helped them during stressful weeks, such as mid-terms and finals. In addition, students learned the importance of taking care of their mental health and well-being.

In their evaluations, many students mentioned that self-care is pertinent for academic success and has the potential to positively impact retention rates at UCLA. They reported that the course helped them to become grounded as human beings. It introduced them to practices such as mindful meditation, breathing meditation, and walking meditation. Many students added that it was a privilege to be in such a class and that UCLA should mandate it for all students. As one student commented, “This course is universally needed for UCLA students.”

The course was therapeutic in that it provided a safe space for students to engage in meaningful conversations while simultaneously learning materials applicable on a personal level. Many students reported the importance of the course in facilitating their understanding of taking care of themselves and developing compassion. Many also implored UCLA to provide more similar courses because of the strong need for collective and safe spaces. As one student offered, “As a person of color in an institution like UCLA, there are limited spaces as to where I can truly communicate my thoughts and feelings, and be validated.”

The course gave “activist-minded” students the opportunity to understand social movement more profoundly by learning how mindfulness and spirituality solidifies the commitment to public service. Students planning to pursue work in the field of social justice found the course highly beneficial because they could integrate its teachings and apply what they learned from the workshops. As one activist student explained:

This course forces you to be critical not only of the world around you, but also of yourself. And when I say critical, I mean reflective. There is always something to be learned, something to embrace and something to try and understand better—whether it’s your own emotions or someone who thinks and acts differently than you. This course teaches the value of organizing to promote change and that we all have a voice. If we choose to speak with one another, rather than over one another, change for the better will come.”

In their course evaluations, students highlighted the different learning modalities that helped them engage critically with a wide array of materials that included videos and guest speakers. Students emphasized that the competitive climate at UCLA fosters deep insecurities that can then lead to mental health issues. The course helped students understand the importance of self-compassion and embracing their present situation with a wider perspective. In addition, working students highlighted that the course is applicable for any workplace setting. Students left the class not only inspired, but also with deeper knowledge about life balance and purpose. Students felt much more grounded in their purpose about what they wished to pursue during their college years and in their career paths. Student suggested that the course be required for all students despite their major concentration. Importantly, the course helped them to prioritize their mental health and emotional well-being—which are not often the priorities of many UCLA students.

In their evaluations, a number of students suggested that the course be offered throughout the year as a core course option for their majors. As one student reported:

“I have learned so much about the philosophy of nonviolent action, and while it is theoretical, it applies to our everyday social reality. This class is my first one where I learned something that I could apply in my everyday life. This class has given me the tools to be both a better student and a better person. Any academic institution that claims to care about mental health and well-being should promote more classes like this one.”

Another survey comment conveyed a perspective much like that of other students who had taken the course over the years:

This class taught me the right way to live. I think that no matter what one will want to do after they graduate, this is a class they will need. This is because this class teaches students how to overcome difficulties, which is inherit for as long as we live. Not only does this help the individual, but it also enhances the experience between two individuals. Specifically, how can we try to understand each other better, feel for each other, and so on. More personally, I used this class as a form of self-help because I didn’t have the time to focus

on myself. Indeed, it has taught me valuable information that I will be able to carry, and hopefully learn about more in the future. I love that there is a class like this, and I hope that UCLA continues to provide to future students (maybe even make it a requirement!)

As the pandemic forced UCLA to shift its courses to remote instruction, we offered this class twice during Summer Session 2020 and 2021. The curriculum and workshops helped students cope with loss, stress, and anxiety from the pandemic. Students found the class transformative and eye-opening in a way that promoted greater perspective and well-being.

Many survey respondents felt that the course was especially important for students during the pandemic—especially those who wanted to pursue a life of social justice and service to others. As one student stated: “This class should be expanded for more students in the future. It is more relevant than past classes I’ve taken because I’ve learned how to address the difficulties incurred from managing all the activities in my life. This class teaches me to be a better person through being compassionate towards others.”

Another student offered:

This class is one of the most “academic” classes I’ve taken, because it made me look introspectively into myself through the philosophical teachings of the accompanied book by the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu, and the experiences of my peers. It’s no joke that a lot of students deal with debilitating mental issues that impede them from reaching their full potential, and this course teaches them to understand themselves better and live in a way that brings joy every day. I highly recommend for students in other departments to enroll in this course. The things I learned will not be dumped out of my memory, unlike other classes.

Finally, a student from the most recent Summer Session 2021 course commented:

Out of all the courses I have taken at UCLA up until now, this course is certainly the one that resonated with me the most. I came into this class simply looking to fulfill a minor requirement, but I am leaving this class with so much more. I now possess a better understanding of myself, of others, and of humankind, and I am only slightly exaggerating when I say that this is the most enlightened I have ever felt.

Survey Instrument, Implementation, and Analysis

Our goal was to obtain accurate, statistically representative estimates of how the classroom experience, course readings, and workshops benefited the students in their work and personal lives. More specifically, we wanted to document how the course materials and workshops provided students with a toolkit for coping with and reacting to challenging situations and conflicts. We wanted to document how the class helped them re-engage with their sense of purpose to feel rejuvenated in their work and goals. Finally, we sought to better understand the harmful and negative impact of stress and anxiety on their job performance, relationships, and work-life balance.

We created a survey instrument with questions that focused on our goals. More specifically, we included a few questions that focused on social justice, as the course was geared toward students who were active in community service or social justice work.

Because we offered an online survey, we were sensitive to respondent fatigue, especially during the period of the pandemic during which we performed most of our work in remote environments with our computers and laptops. We created a draft survey instrument that we presented to experienced quantitative survey researchers and analysts at the UCLA Labor Center. They provided us with feedback and helped us combine repetitive questions and discard irrelevant ones. We hosted the survey on the Qualtrics platform and tested it with a few participants. The final version required respondents to spend 10 minutes filling it out.

Our key challenge was how to reach out to the past and current UCLA students who had enrolled in the course since its inception in 2015. Because UCLA students continue to have access to their UCLA emails after they graduate, we worked with the UCLA Registrar’s office to create an email database of every student who enrolled in this course. Once we finalized the survey and database, we submitted the project to, and received clearance from, the university’s Institutional Review Board (IRB).

We found discrepancies in the total number of students enrolled in the course over the years when compared to the data we received from the Registrar’s office, which reported a total of 185 students enrolled. However, this number is incongruent with the course evaluations, which indicated that 389 students enrolled in all seven courses, from 2016 to 2019. Taking into consideration that 100 of those students enrolled in both the larger and the smaller class, 289 is the estimated number of students we should have surveyed. The Registrar’s office provided contact information for 185 students. Nevertheless, we had a sufficient sampling size of students enrolled in this course during its five-year period to produce a quantitative analysis.

We launched our survey using the email database and Qualtrics platform, followed by two email reminders. We sent an email with the survey to a total of 185 current and past UCLA students who enrolled in the course. The response rate was 33%, which accomplishes our goal of obtaining an accurate, statistically representative sampling.

Table 1: Potential Participant Email Response Rate

Qualtrics report	89 responses
Preview	-13
Not completed	-13
Reported not taking the class	-2
Total	61
	33% of 185

The survey instrument can be found in Appendix A. Below are a few graphics that demonstrate key outcomes of the survey and elucidate the course’s contributions to the students’ academic performance, mental and emotional well-being, and daily lives.

The majority of students enrolled in the course were students of color. Latinx students comprised the greatest portion, followed by Asian students. (See Table 2)

Table 2: Race and Ethnicity of Students Enrolled in the Labor Studies Program

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0	1	1	1	1.00
Asian	5	0	1	1	5	1.00
East Asian	3	0	1	1	3	1.00
Filipino	1	0	1	1	1	1.00
Southeast Asian	1	0	1	1	1	1.00
South Asian	2	0	1	1	2	1.00
Other Asian	0					
Black	1	0	1	1	1	1.00
African American/Black	3	0	1	1	3	1.00
African	0					
Cambrian	0					
Other Black	0					
Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander	0					
Hispanic/Latina/o/x	31	0	1	1	31	1.00
Mexicanx/Chicanx	31	0	1	1	31	1.00
Puerto Rican	1	0	1	1	1	1.00
Central American	4	0	1	1	4	1.00
South American	2	0	1	1	2	1.00
Other Hispanic	1	0	1	1	1	1.00
White	5	0	1	1	5	1.00
Valid N (listwise)	0					

Table 3 shows the breakdown of the gender makeup of the students enrolled in the course. Most of the students enrolled in this class identified themselves as “female,” which reflects the population group that tends to be involved in mindfulness practice and learning. Although in much smaller numbers, the course did attract male students. Additionally, students identified as trans-male, genderfluid, genderqueer, and non-binary. As discussed in this report, the students benefited significantly from the course.

Table 3: Gender Breakdown for Course Participants

Descriptive Statistics									
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
GI PreferNotSay	1	0	1	1	1	1.00	.	.	.
GI Female	43	0	1	1	43	1.00	.000	.000	.000
GI Male	11	0	1	1	11	1.00	.000	.000	.000
GI Trans female/Trans woman	0								
GI Trans male/Trans man	1	0	1	1	1	1.00	.	.	.
GI GenderFluid	2	0	1	1	2	1.00	.000	.000	.000
GI GenderQueer	3	0	1	1	3	1.00	.000	.000	.000
GI Non-Binary	4	0	1	1	4	1.00	.000	.000	.000
GI SelfDescribe	0								
Valid N (listwise)	0								

Table 4 highlights the depth of the migration experiences of many students enrolled in this course. Almost 84% had foreign-born parents who migrated to the United States from another country. Almost 20% of the students who enrolled in the course were born in another country. Additionally, almost 79% of the students were first generation. First-generation students tend to have high stress levels and other struggles in college. More research will be needed to explain why a high level of first-generation students enrolled in this course. A possible explanation may be a lack of available resources for their specific needs at UCLA.

Table 4: Parent Immigration Status of Course Participants

Parents immigrate from another country

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	51	83.6	83.6	83.6
	No	10	16.4	16.4	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Born outside the US

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	12	19.7	19.7	19.7
	No	49	80.3	80.3	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

First Gen Student

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	48	78.7	78.7	78.7
	No	13	21.3	21.3	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Transfer students comprised 47.5% of those who enrolled in the course. This high level of nontraditional students may highlight the lack of resources available to them. Moreover,

85.2% of the respondents were no longer UCLA students, which suggests how much they have continued to benefit from the class after their graduation. (See Table 5)

Table 5: Distribution of Current Students and Transfer Students Who Participated in the Course

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	9	14.8	14.8	14.8
	No	52	85.2	85.2	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	29	47.5	47.5	47.5
	No	32	52.5	52.5	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

As the tables below show, almost 69% of the activist-minded students did not have a unique balance between self-care and service as a student and/or activist prior to taking this course. For many of them, this concept was new. Indeed, outside of this class, students had little opportunity to learn more about self-care and access to self-care. Many had some knowledge, but did not know how to apply it.

These responses indicate that teaching self-care is about much more than giving a packet of information to students. The university needs to offer more, as students want to cultivate in-person connections. UCLA must expand opportunities for students to access different services, resources, and counseling.

The survey responses highlight a major theme: the class creates a foundation for the students to learn about the importance of practicing mindfulness and self-compassion. For many students, the classroom became their community space in which to learn and practice the fundamentals of mindfulness and breathing meditation. As many of the students worked full or part-time jobs, the class was the only time of the week for them to engage in such activities. Figures 1-4 below describe how the course helped the students to develop newfound knowledge about self-compassion and the benefits of mindfulness practices like meditation.

I already had a unique balance between self-care and service as a student and/or activist prior to taking this course.

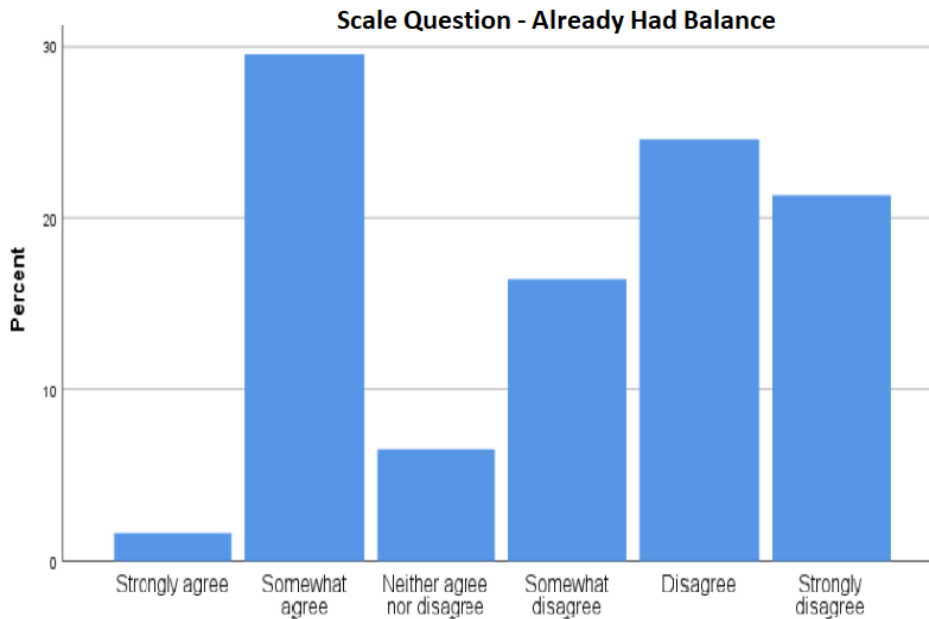


Figure 1: Rates of Self-Care among Student Participants before Course

I already had knowledge about self-compassion, self-care, and mindfulness prior to taking this course.

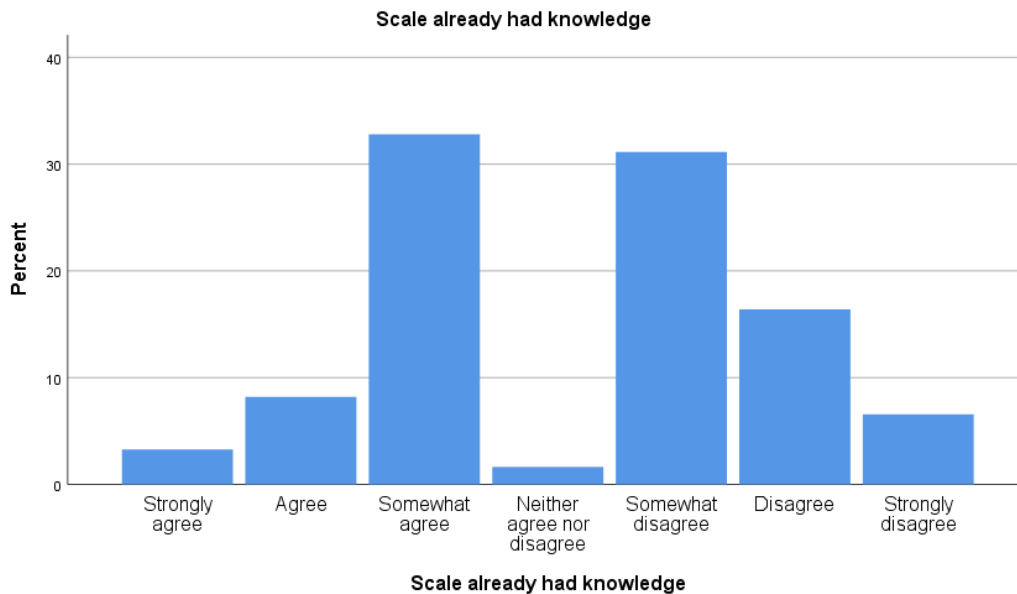


Figure 2: Student-Participant Knowledge of Mindfulness before Course

I practiced mindful breathing or daily meditation prior to taking this course

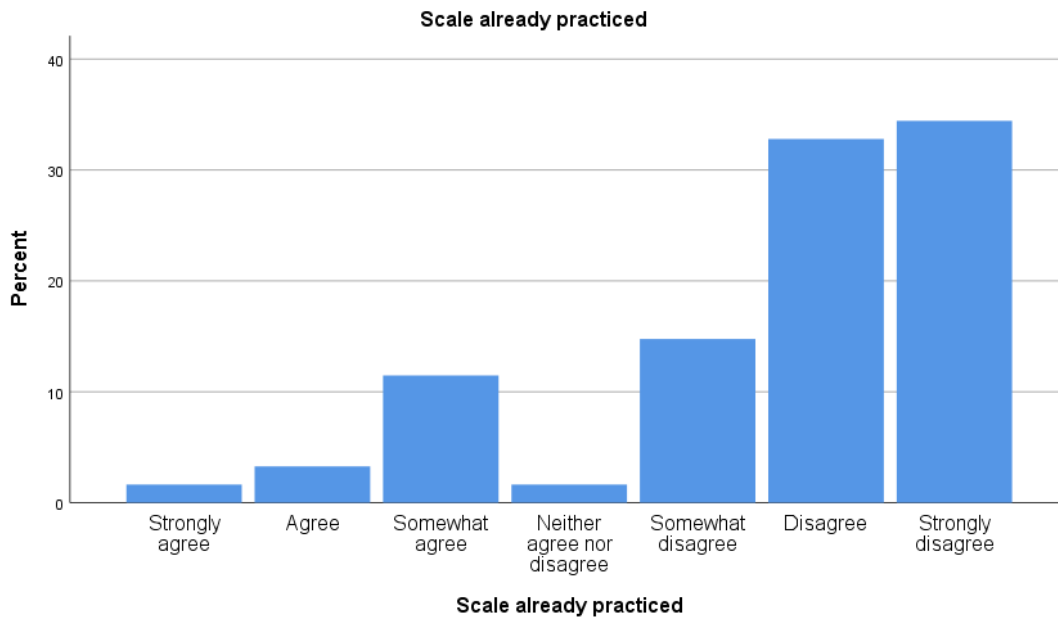


Figure 3: Mindfulness Practice of Student-Participants before the Course

The class taught me how to practice mindfulness and self-care activities.

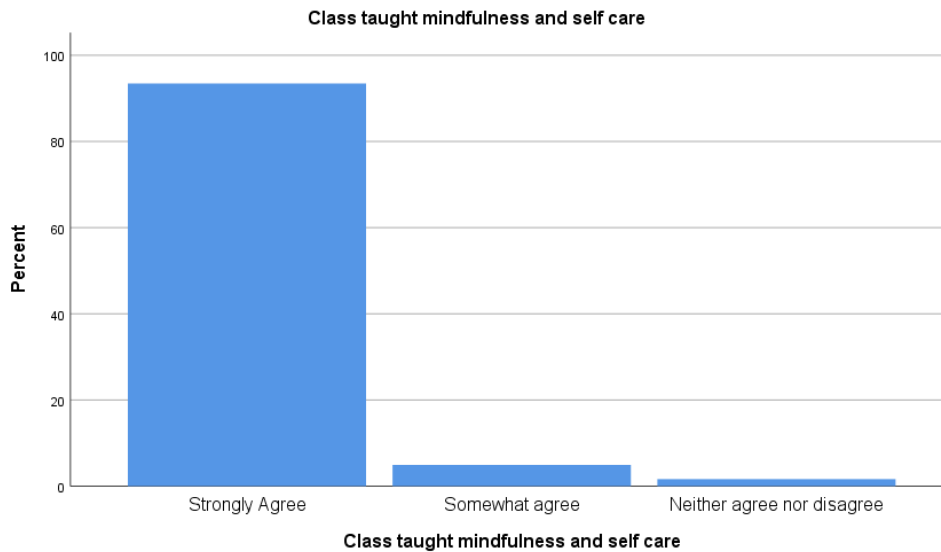


Figure 4: Student-Participant Benefits of Course Curriculum on Mindfulness and Self-Care

Many students took the class because of its focus on the integration of spirituality into social justice work—a finding consistent with recent surveys of young adults who are embracing spirituality but do not consider themselves religious. For the students who did practice a religion, this class deepened their religious faith and connected it to social justice.

I learned to pursue social justice activism while maintaining my spiritual beliefs and/or religious faith through this class.

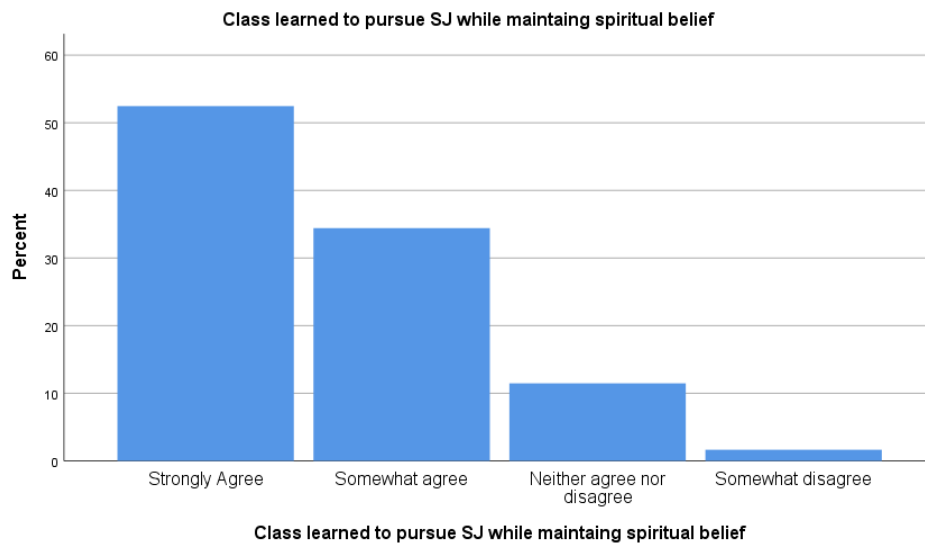


Figure 5: Rates of Student-Participant Learning in Spirituality and Religious Faith

Qualitative Interviews

Application/Benefits of the Course

The class offered many tools for the students to take with them beyond the course. The student-interviewees recalled taking meditation walks, engaging in different sitting meditation practices, and participating in workshops from the readings. Students even shared material from the course and *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World* with their parents, siblings, and friends.¹⁵

For one student, this course was the last one before the pandemic and UCLA shifted to remote instruction. During the pandemic, she lost a lot of people in her life. The class helped her with the loss of her family members and friends, and the emotional transition from in-class sessions to Zoom instruction in 2020.

How the Course Helped to Prioritize Mental Health

During the course, many students learned the importance of balancing the compassion and kindness we give to others with our own self-compassion and self-kindness. The interviewees expressed this sentiment. For example, one interviewee remarked:

Personally, prior to the class, I struggle a lot with some of the mental health and well-being. Obviously, you have to take care of yourself, but it is important to be doing things for the world, for the other people. The class is very useful in framing in that you can't take care of other things if you are not in a place where you will be effective at it because you are neglecting your mental health and well-being. Taking care of your mental health in a way that is tied to everything else in the world instead of being separate. The class helped me to help the world but also helping myself at the same time.

For students using CAPS and other mental health services, this course was a beneficial supplement to their process of building emotional and mental well-being. They found the approach of class sessions, workshops, and reading discussions to be a valuable complement to the help they were seeking.

Zoom Instruction Experience

Even though they were no longer in the classroom due to COVID-19 protocols, the students we interviewed found it beneficial to be in Zoom instruction. Many students were in a comfortable location where they could relax with the option of being off-camera. And, they were able to build a sense of community through functions like breakout rooms and the chat box.

Students appreciated the class time spent on mindful breathing meditation. As mentioned previously, for many, busy work schedules and juggling other classes meant that this was the only time they had to engage in this practice. In these experiences, they learned about slowing down and being in the present. One student commented

on how much the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh (Thay) continued to inspire her, and used his readings and videos to remind herself of the importance of taking a break and finding a quiet place to engage in mindful breathing. Indeed, many students found Thay's teaching of engaged meditation extremely helpful during the pandemic. They practiced mindful walking regularly—connecting to the earth with each step as a moment for grounding, centering, and being present with body and mind. Also, the students found new meaning in daily chores like doing the laundry or washing the dishes.

For students who were already practicing mindfulness, the course strengthened their practice or encouraged them toward new insights. One interviewee spoke of integrating the course teachings into her clinical work. She described using mindfulness breathing during every session with her clients. Another interviewee was a student from the first time the course was offered, in 2016. Back then, she was in a transition period, trying to figure out how to ground herself spiritually. Coming from a Catholic background, the class helped her create a spiritual path and develop a strong connection to nature and animals.

The class provided an opportunity to forge community and cultivate a safe space, in which students could ground themselves through the course workshops, readings, and discussion. The work of the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Desmond Tutu, and other spiritual leaders and activists taught the activist students how to work for peace and justice in a world with violence.

Many students had experienced mindfulness on and off. They had attended a meditation session here or there before enrolling in this course. They credited the guidance and understanding of mindfulness that they received in class with their sustainable practice today. They learned to embrace the process of healing and building community. Although the course was non-traditional in many ways, they felt that more of this type of class should be offered so that other UCLA students could benefit from the same workshops and tools.

Students seeking counseling and therapy from CAPS and other services viewed this class as a useful supplement. The class fostered the strong support of a community they created together. And they felt very comfortable in the class space, especially as the majority were transfer students, first-generation students, and students of color.

Of enormous value is that the course reshaped the students' perspective of academia and higher education. The storytelling exercises, workshops on developing one's life purpose, and other activities enabled students to integrate their life experiences into their learning process. This new approach to learning helped them better assess and plan their other courses, student activities, work schedules, applications for graduate schools, and job interviews. All interviewees felt that the life of a UCLA student is filled with constant stress and anxiety, especially for the first-generation and transfer students, who are constantly juggling work with studying and dealing with many issues in their family lives.

Interviewees commented on how learning to embrace awareness of the present moment and being grounded helped them with their academic learning in their other classes. They were able to think more critically. They devel-

oped a new perspective on putting words together on paper with clarity. The course requirement of reflection papers improved their writing significantly.

Further, students felt that this was the only class experience that allowed them to explore themselves, to reflect inward and tap into another source of wisdom outside of their heads. Many continued to utilize their reflection papers and zine projects even after they graduated. For many students, this was the only class from their years at UCLA whose materials they continued to refer back to.

During the interviews, students commented on how the class helped them to tap into their joy and express gratitude for the present moment. They began to appreciate that daily living involves embracing stressful situations and unforeseeable issues, and learned to accept their inability to have total control over the future.

Students who took the course during the pandemic via Zoom felt that it was invaluable to have a set time each week during which they came together and discussed ways to get through the crisis. They appreciated the mindfulness activities and learning tools that they could apply later on their own. Establishing boundaries became more important during the pandemic, especially because many students lost any sense of balance between work and home. They realized that boundary setting was important for their academic workload and their work. They also learned that it is okay to take a break from their studies or work fewer hours for mental and emotional health. Through the course, many students began to recognize the benefits of counseling and reached out to CAPS to begin therapy sessions.

The course helped the students develop a broader framework of what academic learning is. For them, this class was highly academic because it integrated navigating the emotions of daily living, deepening their learning process, and creating a framework for their life's work. They learned tools that would help them to succeed. They learned how to handle situations that cause fear and uncertainty. Finally, they learned how acts of compassion and giving to others are ways of being compassionate with themselves. Finally, the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh, Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, and other spiritual leaders taught the students how to cope with and manage anger, how to transform it into healthier and more compassionate forms of expression.

Recommendations

As we emphasize throughout this report, issues of burnout and sustainability have become a foremost concern with UCLA students. Physical and emotional burnout are more than just a busy and hectic week with classes or work—it is the long-term accumulation of relentless stress, exhaustion, anxiety, or isolation. Our survey and qualitative interviews indicate that many students felt that an email was not sufficient encouragement for them to seek the mental health and other services available to them. The following are recommendations based on the findings of this report:

1. UCLA should consider offering courses and workshops for faculty, staff, and students that introduce them to mental and emotional well-being as well as mindfulness practices and meditation.
2. Professors, adjunct faculty, and lecturers should set aside time for UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center (MARC), Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and other UCLA-based programs to do a presentation or session with the students in their classes.

Conclusion

This project's goal is to elucidate the societal benefits of practicing kindness at the individual and community levels. We hope this report will promote dialogue and effective strategies for university students and faculty on the practice of self-kindness and compassion toward others to create sustainability and a healthy balance. We believe that application of the class's rich and meaningful curriculum will help them avoid burnout and become more skillful in navigating challenging situations. These and similar courses and workshops support student efforts to cultivate mindfulness and a range of other practices to better deal with the stress, anxiety, and demands of college life. The result will manifest as improvements in their academic performance, daily relationships, and work-life balance.

Appendix A

Survey Instrument

The Individual and Societal Benefits for UCLA Students and Young Activists of Practicing Self-Kindness and Loving-Kindness Towards Others

Q1

Introduction

This survey is being conducted by the UCLA Institute for Research on Labor and Employment (IRLE). For the past five years, the UCLA Labor Studies Program has offered a course for students involved with the work for social justice entitled, *Spirituality, Mindfulness, Self-Compassion, and Social Justice Activism*. Through this course, students learn about the role of spirituality and mindfulness practice in the work of non-violence and social justice. Many students from this class have been using the teachings and workshop learning process with them as they continued on with their lives and work for justice.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you were previously enrolled in the *Spirituality, Mindfulness, Self-Compassion, and Social Justice Activism* course offered by the IRLE. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Goals and Objectives

This research study aims to understand and assess how the teachings from this course have a potential impact on students. Survey questions will focus on how you were able to utilize, apply and replicate practices and knowledge gained in this course. After the data collection and analysis of this survey, we will produce a report of our findings and submit it for publication in an academic journal that focuses on the effects of spirituality and mindfulness practice on the lives of students. In addition, our findings will be used to better inform colleges and universities on the effect of these types of courses.

Participation and Time

If you agree to be part of this study, your participation is completely confidential which includes completing an online survey and signing up for a voluntary follow-up interview. Also, you may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Benefits

While there may not be any direct benefit to you for participating, your responses will help greatly with creating the opportunity for knowledge production to academia. Academics, researchers, and students will be able to utilize this survey report to better appreciate and understand the effects of offering courses that focus on spirituality, mindfulness, and self-compassion in relation to student life and social justice activism.

Protecting your Privacy

The data collected during this study will be stored on a secured website with 2-factor authentication. Your responses will be kept confidential and the results of the study will be reported only as aggregate data. The research team

and authorized UCLA personnel may have access to the data and records to monitor the study. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not identify you by name (this study will not ask for your name). The researchers intend to keep the research data and records indefinitely for future research. We are aware of breach of confidentiality and taking extra steps to ensure your safety and privacy. We will store your information in the most secure way possible.

Personal Identifying Information

Please be assured that your identity will not be connected to your survey responses. Your responses will be strictly confidential; we will not be collecting or retaining any information about your identity except an email address that we can use to contact you later on about the raffle and if you volunteered for the follow-up survey. Your email address will not be linked to your data.

Raffle & Prize

All participants who partake in the survey, regardless of whether their survey responses are complete or not, will be brought to the same end of the study page asking for their email if they wish to enter in the draw to win 1 of 3 \$50 [ADD] gift cards. Therefore, whether or not a participant participates or fully completes the survey, all participants will have a chance to enter the raffle.

Contact Person for the Research Project

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the following:

Victor Narro – UCLA Labor Center

Email: vnarro@irle.ucla.edu

Phone: 310-980-8841

Rights as a Participant

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty or loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.

You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may leave the study at any time without consequences of any kind. You are not waiving any of your legal rights if you choose to be in this research study. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may contact the UCLA OHRPP by phone: (310) 206-2040; by email: participants@research.ucla.edu; or by mail: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.

Consent to Participate

Clicking on the “CONTINUE” button below indicates that you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; Your questions have been answered to your satisfaction, and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. If you meet the eligibility and agree to participate, please click the CONTINUE button below.

Q2 Did you take the Labor Studies Course entitled Spirituality, Mindfulness, Self-Compassion, and Social Justice Activism (LBR & WS 167, LBR & WS 188, LBRSTD 177)?

Yes

No [Redirect to Q34 using Skip Logic]

Q3 Approximately when did you take the Labor Studies Course entitled Spirituality, Mindfulness, Self-Compassion, and Social Justice Activism (LBR & WS 167, LBR & WS 188, LBRSTD 177)?

Winter 2016

Winter 2017

Winter 2018

Spring 2018

Winter 2019

Spring 2019

Summer 2020

Other:

I do not remember

Q4 #9 What was the **main reason** you decided to take the Labor Studies Course entitled Spirituality, Mindfulness, Self-Compassion, and Social Justice Activism? (only choose one)

To meet a course requirement for my major/minor

Interested in the course topic

To learn tools to cope with stress and anxiety

To learn strategies to sustain my commitment to social justice activism for my community

Someone recommended that I take this course

Other: _____

Q5 Using the Likert scale, please give your rating about the degree to which you personally agree or disagree with each statement. Record your response to the left of each item.

Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statement:

I already had a unique balance between self-care and service as a student and/or activist prior to taking this course.

Strongly Agree -- Agree -- Neither Agree or Disagree -- Disagree -- Strongly Disagree

- a. I already had knowledge about self-compassion, self-care, and mindfulness prior to taking this course?

Strongly Agree -- Agree -- Neither Agree or Disagree -- Disagree -- Strongly Disagree

- b. I engaged in discussions about self-care or self-compassion prior to taking the course.

Strongly Agree -- Agree -- Neither Agree or Disagree -- Disagree -- Strongly Disagree

- c. I practiced mindful breathing or daily meditation prior to taking this course.

Strongly Agree -- Agree -- Neither Agree or Disagree -- Disagree -- Strongly Disagree

Q6 Using the Likert scale, please give your rating about the degree to which you personally agree or disagree with each statement. Record your response to the left of each item.

Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statement:

This class taught me how to practice mindfulness and self-care activities.

Strongly Agree -- Agree -- Neither Agree or Disagree -- Disagree -- Strongly Disagree

- a. I learned to pursue social justice activism while maintaining my spiritual beliefs and/or religious faith through this class

Strongly Agree -- Agree -- Neither Agree or Disagree -- Disagree -- Strongly Disagree

- b. The class helped me develop a process to find balance between advocacy, service, and self-care.

Strongly Agree -- Agree -- Neither Agree or Disagree -- Disagree -- Strongly Disagree

- c. The class helped me to be a successful student.

Strongly agree -- Agree -- Neither Agree or Disagree -- Disagree -- Strongly Disagree

- d. UCLA should offer more classes that teach students about self-compassion and mindfulness

Strongly Agree -- Agree -- Neither Agree or Disagree -- Disagree -- Strongly Disagree

- e. This class taught me the importance of prioritizing my mental health and well-being.

Strongly Agree -- Agree -- Neither Agree or Disagree -- Disagree -- Strongly Disagree

f. The class taught me strategies to sustainably engage in service for my community.

Strongly Agree -- Agree -- Neither Agree or Disagree -- Disagree -- Strongly Disagree

Q7 Do you find this course helpful in your personal and work life?

____ Yes ___ No

Q7a List one or two ways this course helped you in your personal life and work? [Display logic if Q7 is Yes]

#1 _____

#2 _____

Q8 Have you been able to apply the theoretical foundation of mindfulness, spirituality and self-care learned from this course?

___ Yes ___ No

Q9 If yes, how? [Display logic if Q8 is Yes] _____

Q10 If no, why not? [Display logic if Q8 is No] _____

Q11: For the past month (30 days,) have you recently engaged in activities that focus on spirituality, mindfulness, and self-compassion?

Yes

No

Q11A: Please write the activities that you engaged in during the past month (30 days) that focus on spirituality, mindfulness, and self-compassion: [Display logic if Q11 is YES]

Demographic Section: the following questions will focus on demographic information, job history, and education. The purpose of this section is for the research team to determine trends and gain background information from participants.

Q12 Are you (**Select all that apply**)

American Indian/Alaska Native

Asian

East Asian (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese)

Filipina/o/x

Southeast Asian (e.g., Cambodian, Vietnamese, Hmong)

South Asian (e.g. Indian, Pakistani, Nepalese, Sri Lankan)

Other Asian (please specify below)

Black

African American/Black

African

Caribbean

Other Black (please specify below)

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Hispanic/Latina/o/x

Mexican American/Chicana/o/x

Puerto Rican

- Central American
- South American
- Other Hispanic or Latina/o/x (please specify below)
- White
- Other: Please specify _____

Q13 What is your gender identity?

- Prefer not to answer
- Female
- Male
- Trans female/Trans woman
- Trans male/Trans man
- GenderFluid
- GenderQueer
- Non-Binary
- Prefer to self-describe: _____

Q14 What is your sexual orientation identity?

- Prefer not to say
- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Straight/Heterosexual
- Prefer to self-describe: _____

Q15 Did your parents immigrate from another country?

Yes

No

Q16 Were you born outside of the United States?

Yes

No

Prefer not to answer

Q17 Are you a first-generation college student?

Yes

No

Q18 Are/were you working while attending classes at UCLA?

Yes

No

Q19 On average, are/were you working more than 15 hours a week while attending classes at UCLA? [Display logic Q18 if yes]

Yes

No

Prefer not to answer

Q20 Did you work to contribute to your college expenses (housing, food, transportation, books etc.)? [Display logic Q18 if yes]

Yes

No

Prefer not to answer

Q21 What year were you born?

Q22 Are you a current student?

Yes

No

Q23 How many years have you been at UCLA? [Display Logic if Q22 is YES]

- Less than 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- More than 4

Q24 What is your current major and minor if applicable? [Display Logic if Q22 is YES]

Major: _____

Minor: _____

Q25 When is your expected graduation date? [Display Logic if Q22 is YES]

Month: _____

Year: _____

Q26 What year did you graduate? [Display Logic if Q22 is NO]

Q27 What degree did you earn at UCLA? [Display Logic if Q22 is NO]

Major: _____

Minor: _____

Q28 Were or are you a transfer student?

Yes

No

Q29 Please specify where (check all that apply) [Display Logic if Q28 is YES]

- Community college
- California State University
- Private University
- University of California
- Other, please specify below

Q30 What is your **current** status based on the options below? **Check all that apply**

- Undergraduate student
- Graduate student
- Professional school student
- Doctoral/Ph.D. student
- Not attending school
- Working part-time
- Working full-time
- Unemployed (not working)
- Other: _____

Q31 We are interested in your experience with mental health providers/therapists. Please rate your experience below:

- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Not applicable
- Prefer not to answer

Q32 The researchers may want to contact you for a follow-up in-depth interview to discuss more of your experience with the course and its applications. The interview will be about 30 minutes long. Would you like for us to consider you for a follow-up interview? If yes, please provide the best email for us to contact you. If you are selected for an interview, we will provide you a \$25 gift card for your participation. Thank you.

Email: _____

Q33 Thank you for completing the survey. If you would like to be entered for a raffle to win a \$50 [Add]

Gift Card, please enter your email below:

Email: _____

Q34 Based on your response, you do not meet the eligibility to participate in this study. However, you have the option to enter in a draw to win 1 of 3 \$50_____gift cards. If you'd like to enter, please provide your email below. If not, please click continue to exit the survey. Thank you! [Display logic - Q1]

Email: _____

Q35 Thank you for participating in this survey. By clicking "CONTINUE," you will be prompted to the end of the survey and will not be able to go back to change any of your responses

END OF THE SURVEY

We greatly appreciate and value the information you have provided and your responses have been recorded.

Appendix B

Course Syllabus

UCLA Labor and Workplace Studies

LBR&WS 188 WINTER 2018

The Teachings of Spirituality, Mindfulness, Non-Violence, and Self-Compassion in the Work for Justice

Wednesday 4:00PM-6:50PM

Perloff Hall Room 1102

Course Overview:

As activists, it is incumbent upon us to find a unique balance between self-care and service. We must find this balance for ourselves, our families, our friends, and our community. Our spaces for self-compassion and self-retreat become a critical part of our activism. We must find our own unique balance between self-compassion and service. We need to disconnect and enter into our own periods of self-reflection and renewal in order to have lasting meaningful impact as activists. It is the life-giving balance between retreat and reflection (meditation or prayer), and service. We have special gifts as activists that we must share with others. Going into our personal spaces for reflection and meditation keeps us mindful of our special gifts and how we must share them. This process of self-compassion leads to community care.

Through this course, you will learn more about the role of spirituality and mindfulness practice in the work for non-violence and justice. Throughout the quarter, we will focus will on the teachings of Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, H.H. Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Ji Hyang Padma, and other spiritual activist leaders through case studies, workshops, videos and guest lecturers (scholars and activists).

Textbook and Course Readings:

I will be posting the weekly readings on the class website.

Week 1 (January 9) - Introduction to the Class, Each Other and Discussion of the Syllabus Introduction, Course Overview

No assigned readings for first class.

Week 2 (January 16) – Thich Nhat Hanh - Peace is Every Step: Active Listening and Loving Speech

Reading: Thich Nhat Hanh, *Essential Writings* Introduction by Sister Anabel Laity pp. 1-16 *Seeds of Compassion*, pp 79-99.

Workshop:

Mindful Breathing and Walking Meditation

Video: Thich Nhat Hanh: Compassion and Suffering

Week 3 (January 23) - Brother David Steindl-Rast – Gratefulness in Present Moment and Thich Nhat Hanh – Peace is Every Step

David Steindl-Rast. *Introduction*. *Grateful Living*, pp. 9-36.

David Steindl-Rast. *Essential Writings*. *Grateful Living*, pp. 39-60.

Thich Nhat Hanh, *Essential Writings*, *Seeds of Compassion*, pp 99-115.

Video: Brother David's Ted Talk

Brother David and Thich Nhat Hanh

Workshop:

Mindful Breathing and Walking Meditation

*Reflection Paper # 1 Due

Week 4 (January 30) - The Spirituality of Nonviolence

Reading: Selected readings from Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Mohandas Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, Msgr. Oscar Romero. Readings will be posted on class website.

Video: A Force More Powerful: A Century of non-Violent Conflict

Workshop:

Breakthrough Conversation and Active Listening

Week 5 (February 6) - Generaciones en Acción (Generations in Action)

Reading: TBD

Workshop: Carla Osorio Veliz, Patricia Amacal Veliz, and Amanda Amacal will lead a workshop: *How can we create an intergenerational communication? How can we learn to validate each other, learn about each generation's legacy, and how to create healthy intergenerational relationships?*

Week 6 (February 13) Grounding Yourself in Your Story

Reading: TBD

Guest Speaker: Ernesto Rocha, Organizer | Storyteller | Transformational Coach TEDx Speaker

*Reflection Paper # 2 Due

Week 7 (February 20) Zen Practice for Transformative Times

Reading:

Ji Hyang Padma, Living the Season: Zen Practice for Transformative Times. Winter: *Finding Light in the Darkness*. (2013).

Ji Hyang Padma, Living the Season: Zen Practice for Transformative Times. Spring: *New Life Beginning*. (2013).

Workshop: Writing without limits. Creating your Purpose and Vision

Week 8 (February 27) Soul Collage®: An Intuitive Collage Process for Self-Discovery & Community

Reading: Seena B. Frost. Soul Collage: **An Intuitive Collage Process for Self-Discovery & Community. Pp. 1-4, 87-102**

Website: www.soulcollage.com

Workshop: Soul Collage® by Laureen Lazarovici and Victor Narro Soul Collage Facilitators

Week 9 (March 6) Daring Greatly

Readings: TBD

Brené Brown Ted Talk

<https://brenebrown.com/blog/2015/06/18/own-our-history-change-the-story/>

https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability

***Reflection Paper #3 Due**

Week 10 (March 13) Empathy and Joyfulness – Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Readings: Selected reading from *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World* by H.H. The Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Workshop: Joyful Activism (Transforming Hate and Anger into Love and Compassion)

Final Take Home Exam Due on Friday March 22 @ 5pm

Endnotes

1Victor Narro is Project Director of UCLA Labor Center and Core Faculty of UCLA Labor Studies Program.

2Lou Marie-Reyes is a Master of Social Welfare candidate (2022) for UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs.

3The Labor Studies program offers UCLA undergraduates an opportunity to learn about the workplace and the social, political, and economic forces that influence it. The program places emphasis on the labor market, public policy, employment relations, unions, and working-class movements. It also explores issues of race, class, and gender in the workplace. <https://irle.ucla.edu/labor-studies/about/>

4The **Institute for Research on Labor and Employment (IRLE)** is a multidisciplinary research center dedicated to research, teaching, and service on labor and employment issues. <https://irle.ucla.edu/>

5The UCLA Bedari Kindness Institute was established to provide an interdisciplinary platform dedicated to the research, education, and practice of kindness, with the goal of transforming the individual and society as informed by the understanding and practice of kindness. The interdisciplinary research of the Institute is achieved through deep engagement across UCLA. <https://kindness.ucla.edu/>

6The UCLA Labor Center believes that a public university belongs to the people and should advance quality education and employment for all. Their research, education, and policy work lifts industry standards, creates jobs that are good for communities, and strengthens immigrant rights, especially for students and youth. <https://www.labor.ucla.edu/>

7 Richard M. Scheffler, in collaboration with Daniel Arnold, Jessie Harney, Ben Kane, Lauren Linde, Caterina Liu, Luke O’Neill, Hinnaneh Qazi, and Niki Vora (2019). Anxiety Disorder on College Campuses: The New Epidemic. https://gspp.berkeley.edu/assets/uploads/page/Anxiety_Disorder_on_College_Campuses_UCB_Study_FINAL.pdf

8 Jian Wei Lin and Li Jung Mai. Impact of Mindfulness Meditation Intervention on Academic Performance. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 55, no. 3 (2018): 366–75.

9 S. R. Cavanagh, J. M. Lang, J. L. Birk, C. E. Fulwiler, and H. L. Urry. A Multicourse, Multisemester Investigation of the Impact of Cognitive Reappraisal and Mindfulness Instruction on Short- and Long-Term Learning in the College Classroom. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology* 7, no. 1 (2019): 14–38. <https://doi.org/10.1037/stl0000174>

10 C. Crowley, L. R. Kapitula, and D. Munk. Mindfulness, Happiness, and Anxiety in a Sample of College Students before and after Taking A Meditation Course. *Journal of American College Health* 5 (2020): 1–8.

11 J. K. Noel, H. A. Lakhan, C. J. Sammartino, and S. R. Rosenthal. Depressive and Anxiety Symptoms in First Generation College Students. *Journal of American College Health*, July 27, 2021, 1-10.

12 H. L. Vilvens, D. L. Frame, and P. C. Owen. Promoting the Inclusion of Mindfulness and Contemplative Practices in the College Classroom. *Pedagogy in Health Promotion* 7, no. 2 (2021): 148–58.

13 Y. Neumann, E. Finaly-Neumann, and A. Reichel, A. Determinants and Consequences of Students’ Burnout in Universities. *The Journal of Higher Education* 61, no. 1 (1990): 20–31.

14 Course evaluations on file with author PI available upon request.

15 Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, and Douglas Carlton Abrams. *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World*. New York: Penguin, 2016.