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## Syllabus Development of a Mindful Exploration of Contemplative Chanting Course

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**Syllabus Development of a Mindful Exploration of Contemplative Chanting Course**

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**Abstract**

Contemplative chanting has a long history across a broad cross section of the world's civilizations. However, with the modern American acceptance and expansion of Eastern-based contemplative practices, chanting has not at present firmly established itself. Within this context, further investigation into the physiological and neurological effects of chanting, the various ritualistic traditions and purported transformational effects of chanting, and the role of chanting within the modern American mindfulness movement is warranted. To this end, a syllabus for graduate level study is developed herein based upon a literature review of the existing English-language discourse, the Lesley University Mindfulness Studies program design, and the author's own contemplative practice experience.

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### **Syllabus Development of a Mindful Exploration of Contemplative Chanting Course**

Chants are simplistic both in linguistic content and in musical form, some of which can even be considered pre-language and pre-music intonations. But chanting is powerful beyond its humble form: “The magic of chant is that just a few short words, simply repeated with sweet passion, and refined beauty, can unlock treasure upon treasure of healing, wisdom and love” (Gold, 2013, p. xii). Contemplative chanting plays a significant role in the lives of millions of practitioners across the globe every day. Admittedly, within the two main streams of contemplative practices within the U.S., namely yoga and mindfulness, the chanting element has not been a significant component to date. However, given the expansive role of chant in many of the Eastern applications of both of these traditions, combined with the uniquely unconventional societal basis upon which the American contemplative practice expansion is progressing (e.g., secular meditation centers, corporate wellness, mainstream medical therapeutic applications), it is not out of the realm of possibility that chanting will indeed emerge as increasingly relevant in this setting. However, not all parts of these predominantly Eastern traditions transition into the American culture, and considering why certain elements resonate with the American psyche and which do not is also part of its exploration. This project will contribute by providing a foundational understanding of the contribution of chanting to enable further consideration of its potential for incorporation into the trajectory of mindfulness practices and study within the U.S.

The foundational thesis of this work is that chanting, while representing an enduring and broad distribution across multiple traditions, represents a valuable but under-studied topic within the growing field of English-language speaking community’s contemplative application and inquiry. As a unifying theme, and as a structural component to help organize the journey, the course will proceed through a *mindfulness* lens. This is deemed as appropriate given the current

high level of attention that exists within the U.S. on this particular approach to contemplative techniques, as well as the robust historical and religious connections directly between mindfulness and chanting outside of the U.S.

The envisioned project will examine *contemplative chanting* practices across various traditions as a topic of study at a graduate level. The term *exploration* in the title, not only reflects the foundational thesis' position that this topic is largely uncharted within the U.S. academic discourse, but also presages the format of a relatively broad scope of inquiry. As a rough roadmap to traverse this territory, the inquiry will first look at developing an understanding of the mechanics of chant, of the intersection of speech, music, and their impacts on both the physiological and neurophysiological state. This will be followed by a consideration of chanting across multiple contemplative traditions, highlighting the both the commonalties and differences, in terms of ritual applications and as well as envisioned mystical and transformational powers. A slightly increased focused will be given to Buddhist practices given its lineage of mindfulness development. With the strong presence of mindfulness as a core component of the American contemplative practice experience, consideration will then be extended to the current lack of strong chanting traditions to date, and what is the potential for a wider future role.

### **Literature Review**

This literature review is being conducted as a precursor to designing a graduate level course of instruction as a mixed academic and experiential survey of contemplative chanting and its potential applicability in the American mindfulness experience. Since the overarching project is envisioned as a multidisciplinary survey course, the literature review must take a broad perspective in terms of relevancy and potential inclusion in the generated curriculum.

The English-language academic contemplative practices discourse is both expansive and highly resistant to the objectifying process inherent in language (Dorjee, 2016). The nebulous nature of the terms involved and the wide range of fields for consideration result in three significant challenges to the conduct of this literature review: 1) scoping of boundaries for consideration; 2) depth of individual discipline-specific review; and, 3) organization of the narrative presentation. Both the horizontal boundaries of scope and the vertical limits of scale will be guided by the overarching curriculum design of Lesley University's M.A. in Mindfulness Studies Program, as a representative contemplative practice program. As a survey course, it will expand slightly beyond many of the more focused course offerings, but will limit this expansion to fields in which the program already presents (e.g., social engagement, hierology, ethnohistory and neuroscience). An exception to this will be in the introduction of a new field, musicology, since this is critical to any exploration of a music-based practice. In terms of depth of investigation, the literature review will use the program entrance requirements for student intake as an expectation of an existing background knowledge base, coupled with the course accreditation standards for expected student hourly participation requirements, to establish a depth of investigation limit that would be reasonably attainable given these two constraints.

While chanting represents a field of interest to me, it does not represent a field of expertise for me at present. Therefore, the literature review was primarily conducted by engaging with the discourse and following observed connections as the review progressed. From this wide-net approach, thematic groupings became evident, and I have arranged the review under these groupings. The organizational presentation that follows is based on an engagement with the literature itself, as well as the nominal structural envisioning of thematic modules within the

program's course duration and delivery method. Therefore, it is important to note that the following categories do not represent preconceived differentiations between dialogues within the field, nor universally acknowledged groupings from those engaged with chant in any one of these fields. Neither the practice of chant, nor its study, is limited to any of these lines of inquiry in isolation. It is also critical to note that none of the examined sources were limited in their exploration to any of these singular categories; each of the listed references, regardless of the subset under which they are presented herein, includes valuable and insightful information across these externally imposed classifications and delineations.

This following literature review on contemplative chant will be organized along seven major thematic subsections: 1) Terminology of the Field; 2) Physiological Effects; 3) Behavioral Effects; 4) Mindfulness & Chanting Intersections; 5) Sacredness & Spirituality; 6) Ethnography, History & Musicology; 7) Chanting and Social Impact. The literature review will end with a final section exploring the availability of chant related experiential pedagogical resources. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, nor selective in terms of identifying the best specific materials for the eventual course syllabus. Rather it is intended to examine the extent to which practical chanting resources are available for potential course integration given the thematically derived lines of study, and the structural execution of the course (e.g., public-access or for-cost options; session and program duration; spiritual or secular approaches).

### **Terminology of the Field**

Chanting, especially liturgical chanting, is both temporally and geographically wide-ranging. Across religions and societies common practices have developed and continue to be relevant: responsorial psalmody, performed by a soloist with congregational responses in 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Century Europe (Boynton, 2011), is paralleled with Sikh kirtan call and response (van der

Linden, 2013). Despite the recognition of chanting as having the global presence, the twenty-five iterations of the *Bibliography of Liturgical Chant* (Pauker, 2016) focus almost exclusively on Western Christian chant and plainsong. In addition to the sacred, chanting practices are present in secular settings ranging from private meditation practices (e.g., Smith, 2018; Sexton & Dobrovsky, 2011; Profeta, 2015), political movements (Kozak, 2020; Welsh & Rovee, 2012), and even sporting events (Cummins, 2018). Given the broad and inconsistent application of terms within both the academic and public spheres, an examination of the foundational components of key terms is used necessary to establish a stable baseline upon which to build the narrative.

With a specific intent to describe the term *chant*, Welsh & Rovee (2012) provide a reasonably concise definition of: “A mode of verbal performance between speech and song, chant is, strictly speaking, oral poetry organized rhythmically by the internal rhythms of language and the external rhythms of music.” However, they also acknowledge that it is an “ambiguous term,” and they directly follow their concise definition with lists of common identifying attributes that includes twenty commas, semi-colons & ‘ands.’ Cummings (2018) states it directly that the term chant resists a straightforward definition. Apart from dictionaries, it is extremely difficult to find scholarly articles or books that even attempt an overarching definition. More frequently, they use distinguishing modifiers such as *plainchant*, *Gregorian*, *liturgic*, *meditative*, *Om*, and generally rely on the reader having a pre-existing recognition of the core component, namely chanting. As an illustration, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* contains ten entries for types of chants (e.g., Gregorian, Vedic, Ethiopian), but does not include an entry for chant, itself (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc). It is likewise challenging to precisely categorize *what chant is not* in the literature. At one end there is speech and at the other end is song, yet

chant incorporates aspects from each. Not surprisingly, therefore, chant is sometimes characterized as a specialized<sup>1</sup> form of speech with overlaying basic rhythmic and melodic patterns, and sometimes as a specialized form of singing in which rhythm and melody are minimized to heavily weight the emphasis on each word (Bickford, 2007; Daenzer, 2019).

Another relevant and commonly employed term, especially in the context of mindfulness and meditation, is the Sanskrit word *mantra*. Both Gonda's (1963) and Alper's (1989) historical review covering several millennia, mostly in Indian subcontinent, illustrate a wide variety of interpretations and applications. Burke et al., (2017) in their examination of mantra meditation in Western medical practices draw from a Sanskrit-English dictionary to describe mantra as an "instrument of thought, and sacred text" (p.2), which in essence brackets the meaning with the extremes of cognition and belief, between internal (*thought*) and external (*text*). This wide range of employment is reflected throughout the current literature. Chaudhary (2020) primarily examines the tonal quality of a mantra, the *bija* or *seed* mantra, as encompassing a force that cannot be conveyed through semantic understanding of a word. Om Swami (2017) resides at the other end of the spectrum who equates mantra with the sacred connotation of the word itself: "...the deity of the mantra, plays a vital role. In fact, it is the key to awakening the mantra and simply using some sound in your meditations does not mean that you are practicing mantra yoga," (Om Swami, 2017, p. 14). There is also a large breadth of meaning along the axis of vocalization, as mantra practices can be either audible or internalized enunciations of the words (Britannica, 2013). As such, clarification through term modifiers (e.g., *vocalized*, *internalized*,

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<sup>1</sup> Neitsche labels this type of speech as "imitating music" (Bickford, 2007 citing [Nietzsche, 1872])

*seed, sacred, kirtan [call & response], solitary, communal*) are frequently encountered and required within the discourse.

Similar to the above examples with chant and mantra, compound and hyphenated terms modifying other forms of vocalization are seen throughout the discourse: prayer-chant (e.g., Cohen, 1950), plainsong (e.g., Boynton, 2011), chanted recitations (e.g., Al Faruqi, 1978), chant poem (e.g., Collom, 2015). Therefore, as a generalization, the basic terminology within these related topical discourses is imprecise, and require clarification as to the particular form and characteristics under discussion within the context of that specific discussion. This attention to modifiers and descriptors is especially important when discussing multiple categories and genres of this “mode of verbal performance between speech and song,” (Welsh & Rovee, 2012).

### **Physiological Effects**

The rise in interest and studies in the therapeutic and neurophysiological effects of meditative practices has included investigations into chanting forms. Even though the chanting focused studies only represent a small portion of this expanding field of investigation, the numbers for review are still beyond what is possible in this short paper. Therefore, what follows is intended to bracket the scope of the studies, highlight key findings, and identifying gaps and challenges within this field.

The recognition that sound has a physiological impact on the human body and health has been recognized for multiple centuries (Chaudhary, 2020; Paul, 2004; Stanley, 2013). Within Western science and medicine, the human physiological impacts of sound have been a growing field of inquiry from early in the Twentieth Century (Wej, 1969). There is a growing convergence between conventional and alternative/traditional medical perspectives that sound is

a useful tool for mental, physical and emotional wellbeing (McKusick, 2016). Both tonal elements (Vercueil et al., 2011; Healing Frequencies, 2020) and rhythmic components (Chaieb et al., 2015; Muehsam & Ventura, 2014; Olga, 2017; Nunez, 2016) have been demonstrated to elicit response psychophysiological responses. In certain combinations, sounds become music with complex melodies that expand the human response into the complex somatic and conceptual (Reybrouck et al., 2019; Sendelbach et. al., 2006). Brudzynski's (2010) extensive compiled examination of mammalian vocalization places these full spectrum of sound impacts in the context of vocalization, both through self-generation and recognition of external, same-species vocalizations. Kualgi (2015) provides a very brief but insightful consideration of the multiple ways in which external sounds & music, as well as internally created sounds and music, impact human physiology, psychology, health and emotions.

Porges & Lewis' (2010) discussion of *polyvagal theory*<sup>2</sup>, provides a substantial integrated physiological and neurological explanations for a broad range of these noted effects. However, as the discussion extends to the realm of vocalization, and its intersection with cognition, belief and social dimensions, the word "theory" is replaced with the word "hypothesis" (p. 262) to reflect the lack of robust maturity of this model's acceptance within the field. This lack of an established model is relevant and impactful to many of the scientific and medical studies investigating the effects of chanting. In chanting/mantra meditation, there is the sound itself, the semantic content of that sound, and the belief structure surrounding the cognitive intent to chant. Disaggregating the effects of these components within most of these studies is not readily availability based on their design, the lack of standardized terminology and application, and a

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<sup>2</sup> *Polyvagal theory* is generally attributed to Porges, but it has continued to be developed and expanded across several decades through independent and collaborative (e.g., Lewis) scholarship.

paucity of repeated studies. For example, *Om meditation* is a relatively frequently examined technique (Harne et al., 2019), yet this single syllable is treated across the spectrum as a tonal physical construct (e.g., Innes et al., 2018; Pereira, 2016), as a sacred construct based solely on its physical properties (e.g., Kalyani, 2011; Gurjar & Ladhake, 2009), and as a sacred<sup>3</sup> construct based on its physical and semantic properties (e.g., Anand, 2014; Dudeja, 2017; Sachdev & Sittiprapaporn, 2020; Nalluri et al., 2019). Most of the traditional mantras that are recognizable and studied in the West, have this mix of sound, meaning and belief components such as the Mahamantra (Sekar et al., 2018), Kundalini yoga chants (Flores et. al., 2017), and Amitābha Buddha chanting traditions (Gao et al., 2017; Gao et al., 2019; Gao et al., 2020). This is not limited to just the Eastern mystical applications as the same disambiguation challenges can be seen in similar examinations of Christian repetitive prayer rituals (e.g., Bernardi et al., 2001).

Different types of meditation traditions have different loci and effect sizes (Tomasino et al., 2014; Amihai & Kozhevnikov, 2014), and it is anticipated that given the wide range of chanting traditions that this will also apply to chanting. However, very few studies involve comparisons with different mantra-based techniques, or even against other non-chanting contemplative practices. The ability to evaluate efficacy and make meaningful correlations to the observed outcomes is further complicated by the wide range of conditions against which some form chanting is applied. Some examples include:

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<sup>3</sup> Most of these sacred frequencies and patterns fall under religious deified ontologies, but Grünhagen (2012) presents the possibility that they could represent morphic resonance of historically shared human experience and learning.

- Psychological therapeutic interventions: PTSD (Bormann et al., 2013); Sports competitive anxiety (Routhan & Ruhela, 2014); high blood-pressure (Arora & Dubey, 2018)
- Localized pain reduction, speech and hearing therapies: osteoarthritic knee pain (Innes et. al., 2018); vocal fatigue (McCabe & Titze, 2002); tinnitus (Taneja, 2018); nonfluent aphasia (Curtis, 2017)
- Neuroscience: default-mode (Simon et al., 2017); fear response (Gao et. al., 2017)
- Well-being, stress reduction and happiness (Kenny et al., 2005; Lolla, 2018; Lesiuk, 2015; Lynch et. al., 2018; Waeobut et. al., 2019)

### **Behavioral Effects: Language, Memory & Learning**

The earliest written records detailing meditative practices from Southwest Asia describe teachings, stories and rituals to reveal a continuity over a millennium wherein the transmission was orally recorded and transmitted in the form of chants (Ashley-Farrand, 2000; Greene & Wei, 2004; Mabbett, 1993). Thaut (2005) has shown that the use of musical elements is an effective mnemonic device. The application of chanting with a mnemonic and epistemological processes within the historic Gregorian chanting tradition has been postulated by Baker (2012) and by Busse Berger (2005). Ghaligi et al.'s (2006) study demonstrate memory benefits from using a Vedic chanting method.

Most of the recent English-language studies connecting chanting with memory and learning, however, have been focused on children. Qualitative benefits of relying on music in terms of level of effort and pleasure in completing memorization and learning tasks is a frequently investigated topic (Hayes, 2009; Richards, 2010; Forster, 2006). A mixed-methods

study on reading achievement for first-graders showed indications of both qualitative and quantitative benefit from incorporating chanting protocols (Cochran, 2008). Narayanan & Venugopalan's (2020) population included adolescents and applied Gayatri mantra practices over 16 weeks, which also provided significant findings for improved spatial and language memory.

There have been several studies wherein control groups were included that utilized adjacent vocalization and melodic methods (e.g., poetry recitation & traditional Indian music) to the focal group which employed chanting. In both Pradhan & Derle's (2012) study and Padam et al.'s (2020) investigation, findings suggested measurable task benefits from the chanting group as compared to these related but differentiated practice controls.

### **Mindfulness & Chanting Intersections**

While the course is envisioned to include a survey of chant across multiple contemplative traditions, the overall program at Lesley is centered in the Buddhist lineage of mindfulness. Burke et al.'s (2017) survey of American meditation practitioners differentiates between mantra meditation and mindfulness meditation, with results showing an equivalent number of practitioners (~2.5%) within the general population for each approach. However, there are, and have been, hundreds of millions of Buddhist chant practitioners, despite early Buddhist prohibitions against music, especially for the clergy, with only specific forms and ritual applications permissible (Greene & Wei, 2004; Liu, 2018). Over the time, and exposure and integration with multiple cultures, some traditions have incorporated more musical components and chanting has expanded (Lin, 2012). Aside from the various cultural contexts over which the spread of Buddhism encountered, Mabbett (1993) postulates that the underlying transcendental

nature of core spiritual beliefs correspond to the transcendental components that music represents universally as a form of expression and reception to the normative conditions of speech and noise. Seymour's (2018) examines the multiple applications of Buddhist chanting in the Chinese medieval period through subjective descriptions of practitioners to illustrate these multivariate effects. Therefore, it is not an imposed institutional artificiality to examine chanting through a mindfulness lens.<sup>4</sup> However, this requires additional depth of review to specifically examine chant in this context since within the American mindfulness experience to date, chanting is not a prevalent mindfulness technique.

Within this specific context significant attention and resources are provided to examine the challenges in defining mindfulness across multiple courses within the Lesley Mindfulness Studies Program (e.g., Olendzki, 2019; Olendzki, 2020). This literature review will not replicate these discussions that cover multiple centuries and cultures, but will merely bracket the term with its original appearance in the earliest Buddhist texts, and with a contemporary common definition within the American scholarly discourse. As noted Buddhist scholar Olendzki (2014) explains, mindfulness (*sati*) is attributed as a revolutionary discovery by the Buddha himself, and represents a fundamental component of much of Buddhist dharma. Etymologically, Olendzki offers: "The term *sati*, which is based on a word for memory, may originally have referred to the state of mind needed to recall from memory vast tracts of oral literature when chanting (p. 63). But like Gethin (2011) he rapidly distances its use in the mindfulness context from this

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<sup>4</sup> Burke et al. (2017) survey across American respondents found that mantra meditation practitioners were significantly more aligned with coincidental yoga practices than mindfulness meditators. However, the data did not show that mantra meditation represented a solely yogic technique.

recollection process to a present moment observational activity. Similarly, Gunaratana (2019) posits:

Mindfulness is present time awareness. It takes place in the here and now. It is the observance of what is happening right now, in the present moment. It stays forever in the present, surging perpetually on the crest of the ongoing wave of passing time. If you are remembering your second-grade teacher, that is memory. (p. 83)

This focus on the present is a key feature of the ubiquitous Western definition of mindfulness coined by Jon Kabat-Zinn (Dorjee, 2010; Gethin, 2011). However, Lee (2018) points out that many key aspects have shifted from the original Buddhist intention for mindfulness as a component within a broader ethical and ontological system that is not necessarily present in its current Western application.

Olendzki (2009, 2014) identifies this within the context of that time-period to point out that many of the contemplative practice techniques, such as meditation, mantra recitation and chanting, were already established prior to the Buddha. Early Buddhist teachings moved beyond these practices themselves as the keys to transcendence, but did not discount the value of many of these practices, such as meditation, which can be seen as a tool to develop mindfulness attributes (Olendzki, 2009, Gunaratana, 2019; Grossman & Van Dam, 2011). Obstacles can be encountered to meditation (*samadhi*), so techniques and tools to assist (Olendzki, 2009) and chanting can be viewed as a device to facilitate attainment of this state as a gateway for mindfulness practices (Gao et al., 2017). In this framework, it can be seen as a sequential progression with the chant as a tool to establish the prerequisite mental conditions for mindfulness.

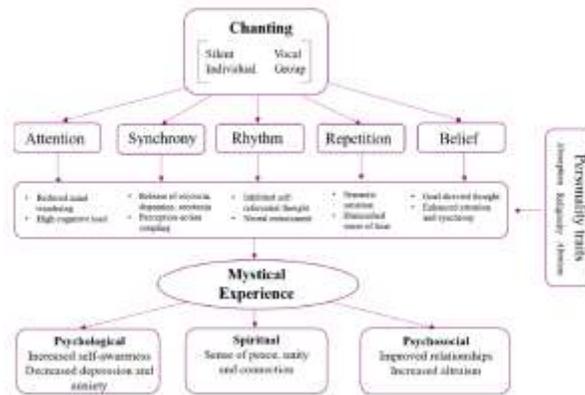
In classical Buddhist texts, mindfulness is not independent and is always accompanied by other wholesome traits (Olendzki, 2009). These wholesome connections are bidirectional: “Whether one is chanting, studying, meditating, debating, or engaging in daily affairs, mindfulness is a crucial ingredient to the practices of a Buddhist in any of its manifestations” (Olendzki, 2014, p. 68). Vipassana is a specific meditative practice to incorporate mindfulness within a meditative state (Gunaratana, 2019). In this framework, chant and mindfulness can be coincidental. However, some sects of Buddhism, in reaction to the challenges of developing mindfulness for most individuals (Olson, 2005), have developed techniques wherein chanting subsumes mindfulness. Mindfulness is still relevant, but it is the externally bestowed reward for the devotional and concentrated practice of chant (Payne, 2015; Olson, 2005)

There are not many references focused on the intersection of different forms of chanting and their relationship to mindfulness, but there are some discussions regarding the intersections of meditation & mindfulness. Since chanting and mantra are frequently characterized as a form of meditation within their respective traditions, it is worthwhile to consider chanting techniques in the literature as a proxy for various forms of meditation. There are many different types of meditation with differing psychophysiological effects (Thomas & Cohen, 2014), and Gunaratana (2019) points out that not all forms of meditation (e.g., trances) are conducive to mindfulness. Burke et al., (2017) differentiate between focused meditation, mindfulness meditation and spiritual meditation techniques across the American population. There is growing recognition that different contemplative techniques have different physiological, emotional and spiritual effects, the rubric for precisely determining these relationships does not appear in the literature. Even Jon Kabat-Zinn, (2011) the father of the modern American definition of mindfulness, specifically notes the challenges with relying too heavily on these conceptual maps; a large part

of any meaningful understanding of mindfulness, and the approaches to it, must be accomplished experientially. A clear example of this unclarity of interrelated components is seen in a study led by Borman in the therapeutic work with veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). An article published in 2013 (Bormann et al.) seems to point toward a mantra-based practice's effect relying on the benefit of providing a non-judgmental or reactive response damper to a PTSD trigger (memory event). While a 2014 (Borman et al.) article using the same dataset applies the subjective Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) and shows a positive correlation from the mantra practice with improvements to attentional abilities. While these are positive outcomes, the ability to disentangle whether the practices are sequential, coincidental or subsuming to a particular mindfulness component remains a challenge.

### **Sacredness and Spirituality**

Delmonte (1983) takes the question head-on as to whether a sacred component to a mantra is required. His investigation into transcendental meditation (TM) indicated that a recognized sacredness may not be necessary, but that this does not completely discount benefits from an individual's spirituality and mystical beliefs associated with a particular mantra. Orion (2013) presents this as question of sacredness of the chant versus individual spiritual beliefs as a sort of middle ground; chanting provides the same physiological effects and draws from the inherent sacredness at a subconscious level, but any life transforming realizations only come with intention and belief. Perry et al.'s (2021) model provides a worthwhile visualization of the combination of these components from their review of similarities in mystical state achievement across multiple chanting traditions:



**Figure 1. Chanting Components & Mystical States**

Potvin & Argue (2014), drawing from an incorporation of a spiritual component into music therapy protocols, reason that embodiment of sacred experience and the expression (prayer) of positive belief result in a bidirectional relationship between therapy and ministry with the potential for an additive healing psycho-emotional effect and simultaneous spiritual growth.

Historically in America, sacredness and spirituality were frequently synonymous with religiosity. However, increasingly there is a growing delinking of these terms within the American populace (Lipka & Gecewicz, 2020). Chanting is certainly evident as a ritual and liturgical device, but it is often viewed as representing a pathway for directly experiencing the sacred and the spiritual within a formal structure (Ballou, 2017). However, Friel (2017) argues that the aesthetics behind sacred music are used to ground in objective reality of idealism (i.e., formal doctrine), as a counter to pure modern trend for subjectivity and relativism (i.e., individual spirituality). Case studies of the highly structured routines and religious practices common to Christian monastic life often incorporate a significant component of chanting as a bridging function between the objective and the subjective. Howard (2016) notes that the paradoxical nature of the extensive role of chant in monastic traditions that center on silence is evidence that it provides a distinctive contemplative technique beyond silent prayerful

meditation. Lyon (2018) identifies both the key features of discipline gained from the “psycho-somatic challenge” of multiple hours of continuous chant (p. 4) and the sacred infusion from the *gammum mysticum* (mystic scale) with semantic meaning (joy, hope, compassion, fear, and sorrow) that becomes embodied through the repetitive practice.

These Christian examples have analogous structured rituals in other religions which include repetition, embodiment, and discipline components in concert with chanting vocalizations (e.g., Hindu prayer beads [Mohan, 2016]; Nichiren Buddhist Daimoku [Blaine, 2012; Matsudo-Kiliani & Matsudo, 2010]). These techniques align with Patton’s (2005) hermeneutical consideration of religious chant wherein the process evolves from conceptual association to verbal metonymy and eventual embodied substitution.

### **Ethnography, History & Musicology**

Both Jeffery (1992) and Zon (2014) argue that the roots of modern Western musicology can be traced back to the nineteenth century’s study of liturgical chanting. However, the current status of the musicological discourse has expanded well beyond simplistic chants, with limited attention to this form at present. And where chanting is a focus, the examinations rarely, if ever, are presented from a single-discipline perspective; it was impossible to find an example that did not combine at least two of the three disciplines listed in this section’s heading, with many of them giving equal weighting to all three. Just from the title, *The Buddha’s Voice: Ritual Sound and Sensory experience in Medieval Chinese Religious Practice* (Seymour, 2018), it is obvious that there is at least a multi-disciplinary discussion across ethnology, history and musicology within its pages. Upon further investigation, it becomes apparent that the vast majority of these works are *interdisciplinary* as they do not internally distinguish independent disciplinary

perspectives, but rather provide a holistic narrative focusing in on chanting as the point of intersection of these perspectives.<sup>5,6</sup> There are certain chanting traditions with high prevalence in these English-language<sup>7</sup> interdisciplinary examinations centering around Gregorian chants (e.g., Šter, 2020; Urberg, 2016; Wilcoxon, 2016; Hughes, 1937) and Southeast Asian Buddhist chants (e.g., Greene, 2004; Hahn, 1983; Tsukamoto, 1983), but there are also some available examples to be found of yogic employment of Vedic and Tantric mantras (e.g., Hanneder, 1997; Patton, 2005; van der Linden, 2013), indigenous cultures (e.g., Mendoza, 2019), and plainsong (e.g., Alpin, 1979).

There is an emerging body of literature that incorporates the contact between cultures and societies as part of its ethnographic framework (Savage, 2019). This is particularly relevant to this project since chanting is not a mainstream American tradition, so current exposure to contemplative chant will likely have a cross-cultural component. Yulianto's (2017) exploration of Buddhist vocal ritual in the beat poetry movement and Samuel's (1995) consideration of Western commercial consumption of exotic music points out the potential for appropriation of elements without consciously addressing underlying semantic and cultural import. But as pointed out by Bokulich's (2016) analysis of the fusing of genres across liturgical and secular musical traditions in the Fifteenth Century, and by Dixon's (2017) work on the reception and employment of Pacific hula oral traditions, music and dance across America in the Twentieth

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<sup>5</sup> As with any generality, there are exceptions; Lam's (2019) dissertation that includes case studies of French secular chants is presented with a singularly musicological focus; McLellan, Reeves & Toop (1939) examine specific beat pattern alignments to lyrics' syllabic distributions.

<sup>6</sup> It should also be noted that a notable proportion of these are in books and doctoral dissertations as their interdisciplinary nature requires a depth of study and density of presentation that does not easily align with academic journal publication foci, processes or formats.

<sup>7</sup> It is important to stress this accessibility issue since the academic discussion itself is broader, but frequently segregated due to language of practice and of publication (Greene et. al., 2002)

Century, this issue of intersocietal linguistic and musical transmission is not a new concern. Juxtaposed with these, are works that explore hybridization and transformation process from cultural assimilation and migration in works by Chen (2005), Ng (2011) and van der Linden (2013), for example.

### **Community and Social Impact**

Groups chanting simple phrases in unison have powerful political impacts and have a long history in social movements (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). Wouters & Walgrave (2017) show that other than size of demonstration, the displayed unity of group embodied in a cohesive message represents the biggest impact on officials' reactions. Slogans and chants can be used as both a unifying force to establish and maintain an authoritarian framework (Reisnour, 2018) and as unifying voice to reach those in authority with a demand for change (Turley, 2017). Within this political soundscape, chants are especially effective for bringing a present moment immediacy to the issue, centering in on disappointment and restitution rather than on the less actionable considerations of despair and hope (Marcus, 2018). And these powerful effects extend beyond the political arena as crowd cheering or booing has even demonstrated a statistical effect on sports teams' winning percentages (Jamieson, 2010).

The unifying force of collective voices chanting can also be used without an external goal or outcome; chants can be used with the purpose of communion itself. There are noted harmonizing physiological effects when people rhythmically chant together (Ruiz-Blais, Orini & Chew, 2020), as well as social-emotional benefits of belonging and acceptance (Perry et al., 2016). Communal chanting with intentional social connectivity objectives is applied both by religions (e.g., Black Brown, 2014; Hagerty, 2008) and in secular settings (Adeyo, 2017).

**Experiential Learning Resources Pedagogical Resources**

There are approximately fifteen programs worldwide that have a main focus on mindfulness or embodied consciousness<sup>8</sup>, but only one of these is within the United States (findmasters.com; mastersportal.com). None of these universities appear to offer a course either focused on chanting, or include chant as an identified topic.<sup>9</sup> While the lack of a current course on chant within the contemplative practice academic programs illustrates a gap to potentially be addressed, the paucity of overall programs in this field and the specific omission from topical investigation of chanting within these programs, limits readily accessible representative models. Kelly (2011) highlights the importance of an integrated curriculum within which an individual course should reflect connectedness in both content and delivery, which would further diminish the value of a course designed independent of a composite whole. As a further challenge, course design and curriculum development are under-emphasized components of graduate education (Newton & Hagemeyer, 2011), and reflected specifically as gaps in my own personal experiences in higher education. A singular example within the United States for an accredited contemplative practice postgraduate degree program can be found in the Lesley University's Mindfulness Studies program (*Lesley University Mindfulness Studies*), which can serve as resource for curriculum design and certification, and teaching best practice guidance.<sup>10</sup> Program handbooks,

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<sup>8</sup> The exact number of programs is difficult to precisely ascertain and is subject to interpretation of which ones represent a targeted focus on contemplative practices. The numbers expand by 5- to 10-fold if one considers programs in the fields of psychology, counseling, neuroscience, cognitive science, education and environmental science that include mindfulness components within their curricula.

<sup>9</sup> This appraisal is based off of visits to the program websites and review of course descriptions where available.

<sup>10</sup> The official curriculum management system (CMS), however, is not accessible to the public or current students (Lesley University, n.d.). As a current Lesley student nearing the completion of a graduate degree, I do have access to multiple programmatic documents and syllabi within the Mindfulness Program.

faculty handbooks, a faculty resources website, and a student handbook collectively provide unifying program objectives, standards of performance, prohibitory thresholds, and available technological resources (Lesley University, 2021; Lesley University, 2020a; Lesley University, 2020b; Lesley University, 2019; Lesley University).

Since this literature review is being conducted to explore the concept of creating a course with a significant experiential learning component, a survey of available materials to develop students' chanting practice was also conducted. Chanting and mantra practice instructional materials such as self-help books, online courses, and single session guided chanting sessions do exist, but represent only a small fraction within the more prevalent seated-meditation corpus. Pierce (2015) argues for an expansion of music-based experiential learning within the American academic system, however, English-language self-help chanting texts are of limited supply on the market, and many of these are finely focused on a singular approach, and linked to a specific spiritual tradition. Hanh's (2007) work combines both ancient and modern-day created Zen Buddhist chants<sup>11</sup>, and Tanahashi & Nagase (2015) provide an English version of Zen chants transcribed from Chinese ideographic versions. Gyamtso (2010) provides insight gained from decades of teaching Tibetan Buddhism to provide a self-help guide with an extensive reliance on song in a work endorsed by both the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Seventeenth Gyalwang Karmapa. Om Swami's (2017) book was written with the intention of providing "a guide for those *seriously seeking* to develop a mantra yoga practice who do not have access to a guru"<sup>12</sup> (p. ii) for people with a deep spiritual commitment. Gold's (2013) instructional approach is centered in the Jewish faith using Hebrew language and music traditions to provide readers with a

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<sup>11</sup> This book is currently out of print with limited copies available at any given time.

<sup>12</sup> Italics added for emphasis.

resource for developing a spiritual chanting practice. However, it proceeds with an ecumenical intention and draws from intellectual investigation of theory and other chanting traditions to build a solid explanatory framework for chanting not particular to the Jewish religion. Ashley-Farrand (2000) provides a more generalized approach:

...a practical manual for using mantras and the rhythms of healing sounds to help solve everyday life and health problems.

*Beginners* will find here a lucid and solid grounding in sound meditation, but even those who *already practice some energy-based* techniques will discover much to enrich their spiritual journey to healing and freedom.<sup>13</sup> (2)

This work includes discussions on, and techniques from liturgical, aboriginal and secular chanting traditions. Sacredfire (2017) provides a compendium of chants for multiple life-purposes drawing from a wide range of Hindu and Buddhist traditions. Girish (2016), a musician by training, provides a singing format through the combination of traditional chants and modern melodies for practice and exploration of Bhakti yoga.

There are a limited number of multi-week practical courses. At the time of this writing, there are two courses listed through UdeMy educational marketplace, Inavolu & Inavolu (n.d.) and Meshcheryakova (2021), as well as offerings from meditation, yoga and spiritual centers and professionals (e.g., Stone, n.d.; 4 week meditation and chanting, 2021; 7-Day chanting workshop, n.d.). These courses generally focus on a singular technique for both explanation and exercises. In addition to multi-session courses, there are a wide range of chanting, mantra

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

meditation and plainsong videos covering multiple traditions available on streaming services like YouTube (YouTube) and SoundCloud (*The Yoga Mantra and Chant Music Project*).

Most mindfulness-based programs are structured around groups, but limited discussion is available for pedagogical approaches for mindfulness instruction techniques in this context (Griffith et al., 2019). Brandsma (2017) acknowledges the importance of understanding group dynamics, but for the sake of space and focus consciously limits his discussion on the topic. McCown et al. (2011, 2016) provide significantly more emphasis on group settings and dynamics in their instructor resource training guides. Group development and dynamics in a virtual learning environment, however, add further complexity to this issue (Johnson et al., 2002). There are limited discussions about virtual learning environments, and the group dynamics within this setting, specifically addressing mindfulness to draw from.

Britton & Lindahl (n.d.) strongly recommend that any contemplative practice instruction undertaking be conscious of potential adverse effects. Information and toolkits for addressing these possible challenges are provided at their website and by other others (e.g., Schlosser et. al., 2019). Additionally, since this is an integrated conceptual and experiential learning endeavor, tools to facilitate self-evaluation and monitoring are relevant. The American Mindfulness Research Association (2014) provides a representative directory of commonly applied devices within the field.

### **Conclusion**

Based upon the original intention, the research and the structural process as described above, the creative project, the syllabus itself, can be generated with confidence that it will meet content and structural course requirements. However, merely meeting the standards within this

framework does not guarantee that the course will be worthwhile, meaningful and engaging for its target audience. This rationale paper establishes the technical proficiency necessary for the syllabus design, but absent the creative component of the educator, both in the syllabus design and in any eventual course delivery, the effort is largely wasted.

My personal journey engaged with multiple forms of contemplative practice (e.g., yoga, meditation, qigong, and chanting) in both practice and academic study, combined with my professional experience as a contemplative practice guide and as an academic lecturer, are all grounded in the desire to share for the benefit of others. Augmenting my own insights are the wisdom, perspectives and recommendations from fellow classmates that point toward pedagogical approaches that deeply resonate and produce positive learning outcomes. Drawing from these creative forces, as applied within the structural framework, I sincerely hope that the Mindful Exploration of Contemplative Chanting Course Syllabus represents best-practice, inspiration and resonating compassion for those who engage with it.

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[https://my.lesley.edu/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course\\_id=78702\\_1&mode=reset&content\\_id=2253066\\_1&crosscoursenavrequest=true](https://my.lesley.edu/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course_id=78702_1&mode=reset&content_id=2253066_1&crosscoursenavrequest=true)

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Wej, B. L. (1969). Physiological effects of audible sound. *Science* 166(3904), p. 533+.  
<https://doi.org/10.1126/science.166.3904.533>

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Wilcoxon, B. (2016). *Performing community: Benedictine chant in Post-Vatican II Catholicism* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Florida State University. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

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<https://doi.org/10.1558/jsrnc.v3i4.458>

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<https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122417690325>

YouTube. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/>

Yulianto, H. J. (2017). *East meets West: Spontaneity in Beat Poetry as Buddha-Dharma and Visions of Spiritual Ecology* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. University at Buffalo, State University of New York.

Zon, B. (2014). Science, Theology, and the Simplicity of Chant: Victorian Musicology at War. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 75(3), 439+. Retrieved February 25, 2021, from

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43289676>

Lesley University – Mindfulness Studies Program  
GMIND 9999  
Mindful Exploration of Chanting

*Semester/year:* Summer 2022

*Professor:* Dr. Edwin Ebinger

*Email:* [xxxxxxx@lesley.edu](mailto:xxxxxxx@lesley.edu)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course, students will bring mindfulness concepts into an exploration of techniques and traditions of contemplative chanting practices. Students will develop an understanding of chanting theory across multiple traditions, investigate select techniques personally, and consider both their academic and experiential inquiries in the context of the social fabric of the United States' mindfulness trajectory. Students will bring a mindfulness lens to modern employment of chanting techniques and consider their potentialities for inclusion into the growing mindfulness movement within the United States.<sup>14</sup>

### **WELCOME & INTRODUCTION**

I am excited to partner in this course with each of you. Like many people in America that have investigated contemplative practices, I have been amazed and intrigued by the power of such outwardly simplistic techniques.

I am naturally drawn to paradoxes, and I am inextricably drawn to paradoxes that can have lifechanging impacts. It is in my nature to be curious *about* contemplative practices as I progress through my experience *within* contemplative practices. In keeping with the overall Mindfulness Studies approach, this course will utilize a pedagogy that recognizes the need for both a didactic and experiential epistemological framework: "Mindfulness is inherently nonlinear and non-conceptual, thus trying to define and teach it using only the conceptual logical mind leaves significant gaps" (Shapiro et al., 2018, p. 1194). Additionally, from both my own personal experience as a student and as a lecturer, I have found that understanding the 'method to the madness' can be helpful as we begin our journey. In that vein, Appendix A to this syllabus is provided to illustrate how this course design balances the conceptual and experiential components within structural constraints of this 3-credit course.

I also appreciate the challenge of how to approach the incredibly broad field of contemplative practices within American society. On the surface, this program's focus on mindfulness, a contemplative practice with a traceable Buddhist lineage, appears to be a simple partitioning of the expansive field into a more manageably sized plot. And while it

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<sup>14</sup> This focus on the role and applicability of chanting within the social fabric of the United States will not disadvantage international students participating in the course. A lived-experience within American society is not required as a knowledge base, nor is it required to contribute to the discussion; perspectives both internal and external to American society provide equally valid contributions toward the course objectives.

does serve to provide a focal point for examination, it also treats that focal point as an approachable doorway rather than as a final destination, through which a wide range of explorations can proceed. The program takes advantage of the structural benefits mindfulness' traceable incursion into American culture and its highly developed resources for providing guidance into facilitating first-hand experiential learning. However, it does not limit the educational process to the particular technique of mindfulness in isolation; it uses it as a thread to follow as mindfulness weaves in an out of multiple disciplines (e.g., neuroscience, medicine, social sciences, and humanities) to help form the fabric of the broader field of contemplative practices in its entirety.

I hope that this sounds as exciting to you as it does to me.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the conclusion of the course, each student will have developed proficiency in:

- 1) Engaging in reflection and dialogue about the impact of chanting on the connection to contemplative practices, with specific focus on mindfulness traditions;
- 2) Understanding the physiological neurological impacts of chanting;
- 3) Exploring the ritualistic role of chanting across various religious and social systems;
- 4) Exploring the mystical and transformational role of chanting across various religious systems;
- 5) Exploring how meditation and contemplative practices are being encountered and adapted by modern cultures, and imagine how they might be further adapted in the future;
- 6) Bringing a mindfulness lens to bear on reflections and discussions of chanting approaches in relation to experienced meditative states, both in individual and group settings;
- 7) Engaging in various forms of chanting practices from different traditions, and developing a consistent personal chanting-based mindfulness practice, attending to the impact of such a practice on emotional and social well-being;

### **TEXTS AND READINGS**

The following books (available in both print and ebook format) will be required for this course:

- Ashley-Farrand, T. (2000). *Healing mantras: Using sound affirmations for personal power, creativity, and healing*. Dublin: Gateway.
- Gold, S. (2013). *The magic of Hebrew chant: Healing the spirit, transforming the mind, deepening love (For people of all faiths, all backgrounds)*. Jewish Lights.
- Hernández Ana. (2005). *The sacred art of chant*. SkyLight Paths Publ.
- Kaivalya, A. (2014). *Sacred sound: discovering the myth & meaning of Mantra & Kirtan*. New World Library.
- Tanahashi, K. (2015). *Zen chants: Thirty-five essential texts with commentary*. Shambhala.

Other required course materials will be included in modules—either as links or attached as .pdf files—and will include a variety of sources, including articles from academic journals, online materials, and book chapters.

## **COURSE ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENT**

The assignments for this course will include a 15-page research paper, a paper proposal (submitted mid-semester), a reflective response to questions drawing from a weekly practice log with notes on 5x/week chanting sessions (the log will not be submitted but will serve as an aid in reflection), and two weekly discussion board posts. Students must plan to write two thorough discussion board posts, plus at least one response to a fellow student's post, per week.

Lectures, Videos, and Assigned/Optional Readings: While there are no defined point assignments for engaging with the online course materials, they do make up the primary conceptual learning component of this course. Each week, students are expected to fully engage with all of the assigned material. For most weeks, in addition to the assigned reading material which requires close reading, a list of optional reading materials may also be provided. Depending on the week, guidance will be provided as to the number of these additional materials that students should at least skim/survey to gain an awareness of ongoing considerations within the broader topical discourse. Readings beyond this weekly minimum are at the discretion of each student based upon their particular interests, but these optional reading lists may also provide a valuable resource for consideration when selecting and writing your final papers.

Contemplative Exercises: Each week there will be assignments for the experiential component of the course. To the maximum extent possible, you should attempt to establish a regular daily practice, and to space the practices out over the week. While there is no grading assigned for the maintenance of the log, it is expected that students maintain some form of note keeping for each session. This is a survey class over several different techniques and lenses through which these techniques are viewed; maintaining reference points for your felt experience will be invaluable in your overall evaluation of the experience. The reflective assignment will draw primarily from your own personal practical experiences, in consideration within the thematic course material studied.

Synchronous Class: A single synchronous class session via Zoom® of 2 hours is scheduled for xx August. Attendance and participation are expected for each student. Please notify me immediately if there is a conflict that will not permit your attendance.

### Paper Proposal (10 points / 10% of grade):

Mid-semester, students will submit a proposal to present their plans for their final papers. These proposals should be no more than 3 pages long and discuss: 1) a description of your proposed topic; 2) linkage to course materials/discussions; 3) which additional resources you are planning to investigate; 4) reflective thinking about why this topic is interesting to you and how you are connected to it.

### Research Paper (50 points / 50% of grade):

The 15-18-page final paper will be a synthesized, integrated final product on the topic of your choosing; it will contain a clear thesis statement, strong organization, accurate

citations, smooth transitions, correct APA formatting, and grammatical and syntactical accuracy. The paper may be written on any chanting topic based principally on academic sources and include at least 10 references, but should also bring a reflective component to the discussion drawing from the course's experiential component where the author evaluates how their own positionality and exposure to chant affects their understanding of the issue. The paper topic must be approved by the instructor via a research paper proposal to be submitted mid-semester.

Practice Log Review (20 points / 20% of grade):

Each week, students will be expected to engage in at least five chanting practice sessions related to the weekly topic, and record notes of the experience in their practice logs. These weekly practices will be of at least 15 minutes each session. Practice logs will not be submitted, but it is important that students complete all five practices every week in order to keep up with their logs. At the end of Week 7, students will submit short-answer responses to a series of questions utilizing their own exposure to chanting throughout the course; the overall submission will be 6-7 pages in length.

Discussion Board Posts (20 points / 20% of grade)

Every week, students will make two original posts on the discussion board, and are also expected to read all of their fellow students' weekly posts, and respond to at least one. Students will be graded based on the clarity and thoughtfulness of their writing on these posts. In general, the two original posts will be:

- 1) *Mindful consideration on the weekly topical assignments.* In this thread, students will write 1-2 paragraphs describing on how the weekly chanting topic intersects with an aspect of mindfulness practices and/or applications as explored in the overall curriculum of the Lesley Mindfulness Studies Program (a minimum of 2 courses are required as prerequisites for this class and will be sufficient to provide a foundation for fulfilling these discussion board assignments).
- 2) *Directed Inquiry.* In this thread, students will write a 1-2 paragraph post responding to the weekly prompt. This should be composed writing, not just a stream-of-consciousness reaction to the prompt.

## **SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Weekly Submissions**

Every Sunday evening, I will post the material for that week's module. The weekly schedule and assignments will generally follow the weekly schedule presented in this syllabus, but you are responsible for checking these online module postings for any updates or modifications. You have the entire week to read the material contained in the module, *including the articles and/or videos*, and complete your weekly assignment by 11:55 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) on the following Sunday night. On weeks when additional assignments are due, as noted on the syllabus, these assignments should also be posted on Blackboard.

**Late Work Policy**

As a general rule, extensions will not be granted on assignments unless you have a documentable illness or a family emergency, and **contact me directly in advance**. Without prior approval for a delayed submission, **1 point will be deducted from the assignment grade for every day late**.

**Course Outline**

*Modules will be posted by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time).*

*Assignment submissions due on the **following Sunday night by 11:59 p.m.** (Eastern Standard Time), unless otherwise specified.*

**Week 1: June x-June xx****Chant**

This week's module will provide students with the opportunity to introduce themselves and become acquainted with the instructor. Resources on learning more about chanting practices will be shared, and students will spend time learning about and reflecting on the use of sound as part of their meditation practice.

- *Lectures and viewings:*
  - *Course Introduction (Blackboard Module 1)*
- *Required readings:*
  - Chapters: 1, 2 & 4, in Ashley-Farrand, T. (2000). *Healing mantras: Using sound affirmations for personal power, creativity, and healing*. Dublin: Gateway.
  - Dudeja, J. P. (2017). Scientific analysis of mantra-based meditation and its beneficial effects: An overview. *International Journal of Advanced Scientific Technologies in Engineering and Management Sciences*, 3(6), 21+. <http://www.ijstems.org>
  - Pages: 1-17, in Kaivalya, A. (2014). *Sacred sound: discovering the myth & meaning of Mantra & Kirtan*. New World Library.
  - Kalugi, (2015). How sound affects us. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 5(6). ISSN 2250-3153. <http://ijsrp.org/>
  - Welsh, A., & Rovee, C. (2012). Chant. In *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton University Press. <https://search-credoreference-com.ezproxyles.flo.org/content/entry/prpoetry/chant/0?>
- *Optional readings (select 2 to skim):*
  - Bickford, T. (2007). Music of poetry and poetry of song: Expressivity and grammar in vocal performance. *Ethnomusicology*, 51(3), 439+. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20174545>
  - Gonda, J. (1963). The Indian mantra. *Oriens*, 16, 244. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1580265>
  - Muehsam, D., & Ventura, C. (2014). Life rhythm as a symphony of oscillatory patterns: electromagnetic energy and sound vibration modulates gene

- expression for biological signaling and healing. *Global Advances in Health and Medicine*, 3(2), 40+. <https://doi.org/10.7453/gahmj.2014.008>
- Nalluri, V. R. S., Sonti, V. K. K., & Sundari, G. (2019). Impact of signal energy from Vedic chanting on human neurological system. *International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering*, 9(2S3), 102+. <https://doi.org/10.35940/ijitee.B1024.1292S319>
  - Pereira, C. (2016). Frequencies of the Buddhist Meditative chant – Om mani padme hum. *International Journal of Science and Research*, 5(4), 762+. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301284106>
  - Reybrouck, M., Podlipniak, P., & Welch, D. (2019). Music and Noise: Same or Different? What Our Body Tells Us. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01153>
  - *Contemplative Practice:*
    - *Day 1:* Silent meditation
    - *Day 2:* Meditation with music
    - *Day 3:* Meditation with mantra music (Kaur, S. (2010, July 29). *Mantra Music: Ong namo by Snatam Kaur*. Spiritvoyage. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1XCS0g6J4A>.)
    - *Day 4:* Meditation with seed mantra (Gaia Meditation. (2020, November 1). *All 7 Chakras Healing Chants (Chakra Seed Mantra Meditation YouTube)*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hh34UPzocxs>.)
    - *Day 5:* Meditation with vocal chant (Om, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti). Resources for this can be found within Hernandez text, as well as online (Bodhipaksa. (2021, July 3). *Om shanti shanti shanti*. Wildmind. <https://www.wildmind.org/mantras/figures/shanti>).
  - *Blackboard posts:*
    - *Mindful consideration on the weekly topical assignment:* Based on your current understanding of mindfulness, does the introductory material to chanting resonate as consistent, as a parallel alternative, or as contradictory?
    - *Directed Inquiry:* Why did you chose to take this class?

## **Week 2: June xx-June xx**

### **Physiological Effects**

This week's module will focus on the body's response to the physical act of chanting. While chanting is a form of meditation, it is also requires more physical activity than most forms of meditation and depends on an active breathing patterns. The reading resources, as well as the experiential practices this week, will provide an opportunity to consider the unique effects of this form of meditation practice.

- *Lectures and viewings:*
  - *Breath, Muscles & Nerves* (Blackboard Module 2)
- *Required readings:*
  - Gao, J., Leung, H. K., Wu, B. W. Y., Skouras, S., & Sik, H. H. (2019). The neurophysiological correlates of religious chanting. *Scientific Reports*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-019-40200-w>

- Gurjar, A. A., Ladhake, S. A. (2009). Spectral analysis of Sanskrit divine sound om. *Information Technology Journal*, 8(5), 781+. <http://ansinet.com/itj>
- Kalyani, B. G., Venkatasubramanian, G., Arasappa, R., Rao, N. P., Kalmady, S. V., Behere, R. V., Rao, H., Vasudev, M. K., & Gangadhar, B. N. (2011). Neurohemodynamic correlates of 'OM' chanting: A pilot functional magnetic resonance imaging study. *International journal of yoga*, 4(1), 3+. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0973-6131.78171>
- Kualgi, M. (2015). How sound affects us. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 5(6). <http://www.ijsrp.org/research-paper-0615/ijsrp-p4219.pdf>
- McKusick, E. (2016, January 26). The Therapeutic Use of Sound in Alternative and Conventional Medicine. *Foundation for Alternative and Integrative Medicine*. <https://www.faim.org/the-therapeutic-use-of-sound-in-alternative-and-conventional-medicine>.
- Stanley R. (2013) Origins and Applications of Music in Chronic Illness: Role of the Voice, Ancient Chant Scales, and Autonomic Nervous System. In: Stoltzfus M.J., Green R., Schumm D. (eds) *Chronic Illness, Spirituality, and Healing*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137348456\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137348456_6)
- *Optional readings (select 2 to skim):*
  - Anand, H. (2014). Effects of meditation ('Om' chanting) on alpha EEG and galvanic skin response: Measurement of an altered state of consciousness. *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology*, 5(3), 255+. [http://www.iahrw.com/index.php/home/journal\\_detail/19#list](http://www.iahrw.com/index.php/home/journal_detail/19#list)
  - Bernardi, L., Sleight, P., Bandinelli, G., Cencetti, S., Fattorini, L., Wdowczyk-Szulc, J., & Lagi, A. (2001). Effect of rosary prayer and yoga mantras on autonomic cardiovascular rhythms: comparative study. *BMJ (Clinical research ed.)*, 323(7327), 1446+. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.323.7327.1446>
  - Chaieb, L., Wilpert, E. C., Reber, T. P., & Fell, J. (2015). Auditory beat stimulation and its effects on cognition and mood States. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 6, 70. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2015.00070>
  - Gao, J., Fan, J., Wu, B. W., Halkias, G. T., Chau, M., Fung, P. C., Chang, C., Zhang, Z., Hung, Y. S., & Sik, H. (2017). Repetitive religious chanting modulates the late-stage brain response to fear- and stress-provoking pictures. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7(JAN). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.02055>
  - Harne, B. P., Tahseen, A. A., Hiwale, A. S., & Dhekekar, R. S. (2019). Survey on om meditation: Its effects on the human body and om meditation as a tool for stress management. *Psychological Thought*, 12(1), 1+. <https://doi.org/10.5964/psyct.v12i1.275>
  - Innes, K. E., Selfe, T. K., Kandati, S., Wen, S., & Huysmans, Z. (2018). Effects of mantra meditation versus music listening on knee pain, function, and related outcomes in older adults with knee osteoarthritis: An exploratory randomized clinical trial (RCT). Evidence-Based *Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2018/7683897>
  - Porges, S. W., Lewis, G. F., (2010). The polyvagal hypothesis: Common mechanisms mediating autonomic regulation, vocalizations and listening. In

- S. Brudzynski (Ed.). *Handbook of mammalian vocalization: an integrative neuroscience approach* (pp. 255-64). Elsevier.
- Sachdev, S., & Sittiprapaporn, P. (2020). Electroencephalographic study of auditory system while listening to Ohm chanting. *Asian Journal of Medical Sciences*, 11(1), 75+. <https://doi.org/10.3126/ajms.v11i1.26529>
  - Simon, R., Pihlsgård, J., Berglind, U., Söderfeldt, B., & Engström, M. (2017). Mantra meditation suppression of default mode beyond an active task: A pilot study. *Journal of Cognitive Enhancement*, 1(2), 219+. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41465-017-0028-1>
  - Waeobut, N., Boonyahotara, V., Sarikaphuti, A., & Sittiprapaporn, P. (2019). Chinabunchorn chanting causes stress level reduction evaluated by Thai Stress Test. *Asian Journal of Medical Sciences*, 10(5), 90+. <https://doi.org/10.3126/ajms.v10i5.22344>
- *Contemplative Practice*: This week we will explore one of the most commonly employed, and shortest, form of chanting. The OM (or OHM, AUM) chant is a yogic chant that many of you may be familiar with at some level. Often, it is employed with a singular or few repetitions to start or close a yoga, pranayama or meditation session, but it can also be used in an extended form. Through this week, we will try to build up individual sessions to be a full 15 minutes, **but ensure that you maintain your physical comfort level at all times**. There are several good resources available online that provide descriptions and demonstrations of an OM chant (e.g., <https://www.yogajournal.com/yoga-101/mastering-om/>). Feel free to explore different approaches to find a source that works well for you. (Note: some sources have more discussion and emphasis on the spiritual meaning of OM; feel free to explore this, but the primary focus this week will be on the sound itself and its extended repetition in a meditative context).
    - *Day 1*: Review OM chanting resources and practice forming the sound, paying specific attention to the sensation of resonating sound formed within and heard externally.
    - *Day 2-5*: OM chanting sessions (guided or self-led as you are most comfortable).
  - *Blackboard posts*:
    - *Mindful consideration on the weekly topical assignment*: Based on your current understanding of mindfulness, and drawing from another course you have taken within the program, what in this week's material resonates as consistent, as a parallel alternative, or as contradictory?
    - *Directed Inquiry*: A number of readings this week discussed the role of sound, music and chanting as medical treatments. These are not common approaches within Western medicine. Did the readings convince you of effectiveness as a treatment? Why?

### **Week 3: June xx-June xx**

#### **Attitudinal and Aptitudinal Effects**

This week's module will focus on the purported state changes to disposition and abilities from chanting practices. Chanting/mantra meditation is generally considered as a form of

focused meditation, but it is also used as a component in mindfulness/open-monitoring traditions. The reading resources, as well as the experiential practices this week, will provide an opportunity to consider the unique mental state effects of this form of meditation practice.

- *Lectures and viewings:*
  - *Memory, Clarity and Focus* (Blackboard Module 3)
- *Required readings:*
  - Ghaligi, S., Nagendra, H. R., & Bhatt, R. (2006). Effect of Vedic chanting on memory and sustained attention. *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge* 5(2), 177+. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228494221\\_Effect\\_of\\_Vedic\\_chanting\\_on\\_memory\\_and\\_sustained\\_attention](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228494221_Effect_of_Vedic_chanting_on_memory_and_sustained_attention)
  - Hayes, O. C. (2009). *The use of melodic and rhythmic mnemonics to improve memory and recall in elementary students in the content areas* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Dominican University of California. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
  - Immink, M. A., Colzato, L. S., Stolte, M., & Hommel, B. (2017). Sequence learning enhancement following single-session meditation is dependent on metacontrol mode and experienced effort. *Journal of Cognitive Enhancement*. doi:10.1007/s41465-017-0019-2.
  - Narayanan, K. A. M., & Venugopalan, N. (2020). View of effect of Gayatrimantra chanting on cognitive functions in school children. *Pediatric Review: International Journal of Pediatric Research*. <https://pediatrics.medresearch.in/index.php/ijpr/article/view/366/730>
  - Padam, A., Jopher, S., & Sastri, O. (2020). Evaluating a practical approach to targeted memory reactivation by Vedic chants and Indian classical music during daytime nap. *National Journal of Physiology, Pharmacy and Pharmacology*, 10(6), 444+. <https://doi.org/10.5455/njppp.2020.10.10337201924032020>
  - Pradhan, B., & Derle, S. G. (2012). Comparison of effect of Gayatri Mantra and Poem Chanting on Digit Letter Substitution Task. *Ancient Science of Life*, 32(2), 89+. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0257-7941.118540>
  - Richards, J. C. (2010). Evidence-based and child-friendly: shared book reading with chants support young children's language and literacy development. *Reading Improvement*, 47(4), 188+. <https://go.gale.com/ps/anonymous?id=GALE%7CA252446857&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=fulltext&issn=00340510&p=AONE&sw=w>
  - Simon, R., Pihlsgård, J., Berglind, U., Söderfeldt, B., & Engström, M. (2017). Mantra meditation suppression of default mode beyond an active task: A pilot study. *Journal of Cognitive Enhancement*, 1(2), 219+. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41465-017-0028-1>
- *Optional readings (select 2 to skim):*
  - Forster, E. (2006). The value of songs and chants for young learners. *Encuentro*, 16, pp. 63+. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-value->

[of-songs-and-chants-for-young-learners-Forster/6b9c30f57223866742dbed4fe65c68e438b8e2b1](https://doi.org/10.1097/MLR.0000000000000200)

- Bormann, J. E., Oman, D., Walter, K. H., & Johnson, B. D. (2014). Mindful attention increases and mediates psychological outcomes following mantram repetition practice in veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder. *Medical care*, 52(12 Suppl 5), S13+. <https://doi.org/10.1097/MLR.0000000000000200>
- Gao, J., Skouras, S., Leung, H. K., Wu, B. W. Y., Wu, H., Chang, C., & Sik, H. H. (2020). Repetitive religious chanting invokes positive emotional schema to counterbalance fear: A multi-modal functional and structural MRI study. *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnbeh.2020.548856>
- Kenny, M., Bernier, R., DeMartini, C. (2005). Chant and be happy: The effects of chanting on respiratory function and general well-being in individuals diagnosed with depression. *International Yoga Therapy*, 15(1), 61+. <https://doi.org/10.17761/ijyt.15.1.878t7l2441p80h17>
- Lolla, A. (2018). Mantras help the general psychological well-being of college students: A pilot study. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 57(1), 110+. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-017-0371-7>
- McCabe, D. J., & Titze, I. R. (2002). Chant therapy for treating vocal fatigue among public school teachers: A preliminary study. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 11, 356+. [https://doi.org/10.1044/1058-0360\(2002/040\)](https://doi.org/10.1044/1058-0360(2002/040))
- Lynch, J., Prihodova, L., Dunne, P. J., Carroll, Á., Walsh, C., McMahon, G., & White, B. (2018). Mantra meditation for mental health in the general population: A systematic review. *European Journal of Integrative Medicine*, 23, 101+. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eujim.2018.09.010>
- Routhan, T., & Ruhela, S. (2014). Chanting: A therapeutic treatment for sports competitive anxiety. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 4(3). <http://www.ijsrp.org>
- Sekar, L., Niva, W., Maheshkumar, K., Thangavel, G., Manikandan, A., Silambanan, S., Shriram, V., & Ramaswamy, P. (2019). Effect of Mahamantra chanting on autonomic and cognitive functions-An interventional study. *Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research*, 13(5), CC05+. <https://doi.org/10.7860/jcdr/2019/41236.12877>
- Sharma, N., & Saraswati, S. B. (2018). Effect of mantra chanting on cognitive and emotional measures in primary school children: A randomized controlled trial. *J. Psychiatry* 21, 86. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2378-5756-C8-057>
- *Contemplative Practice*: This week we will utilize our experience with the OM chanting to explore its impact on our state of consciousness. Specifically, rather than performing an extended chanting meditation session, we will utilize the chanting as a precursor and/or completion transition to a contemplation session within your established practice. After settling in, OM chant for 3-5 minutes, conduct a

mindfulness practice of choice for 10 minutes, and then OM chant for 3-5 minutes following your practice.

- *Blackboard posts:*
  - *Mindful consideration on the weekly topical assignment:* Based on your current understanding of mindfulness, and drawing from another course you have taken within the program, what in this week's material resonates as consistent, as a parallel alternative, or as contradictory?
  - *Directed Inquiry:* Within schools and in some corporate settings, there are growing inclusions of mindfulness, meditation and breathing techniques. Did the readings convince you of effectiveness of chanting to the point that you would consider participating in chanting in your school or workplace setting? Why?

#### **Week 4: June xx-June xx**

##### **Intersections with mindfulness**

From your previous or ongoing courses in this program, many of the purported effects and benefits examined over the last two weeks will likely seem similar to those ascribed to mindfulness and other forms of meditation. This week we will spend some effort disambiguating some of the concepts of mindfulness, meditation and chanting, and then consider how chanting and mindfulness relate to each other.

- *Lectures and viewings:*
  - *The Mindfulness Paradox, and Chanting's Position* (Blackboard Module 4)
- *Required readings:*
  - Bormann, J. E., Oman, D., Walter, K. H., & Johnson, B. D. (2014). Mindful attention increases and mediates psychological outcomes following mantram repetition practice in veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder. *Medical care, 52*(12 Suppl 5), S13+. <https://doi.org/10.1097/MLR.0000000000000200>
  - BuddhAbility. (2020, October 8). Why Chanting is #NextLevel Mindfulness. buddhability. <https://buddhability.org/practice/why-chanting-is-nextlevel-mindfulness/>
  - Dorjee, D. (2010). Kinds and dimensions of mindfulness: Why it is important to distinguish them. *Mindfulness, 1*(3), 152+. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-010-0016-3>
  - Lee, K. C. (G). (2018). Demystifying Buddhist mindfulness: Foundational Buddhist knowledge for mindfulness-based interventions. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice, 5*(3), 218+. <https://doi.org/10.1037/scp0000133>
  - Lesiuk, T. (2015). The effect of mindfulness-based music therapy on attention and mood in women receiving adjuvant chemotherapy for breast cancer: A pilot study. *Oncology Nursing Forum, 42*(3), 276+. <https://doi.org/10.1188/15.ONF.276-282>
  - Shapiro, S., Siegel, R., & Neff, K. D. (2018). Paradoxes of mindfulness. *Mindfulness, 9*(6), 1693+. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-018-0957-5>
  - Page 23, in Tanahashi, K. (2015). *Zen chants: Thirty-five essential texts with commentary*. Shambhala.

- *Contemplative Practice*: This week we will utilize our experience with the OM chanting to directly consider its role in a mindfulness-centric practice. We will consider it in the context as a preparatory, augmentary and direct-access technique. In previous weeks we have primarily approached the OM chant as form of focused meditation. In the context of mindfulness/open monitoring meditation, it may be viewed as a tool (similar to maintaining a focal point on the breath) to bring oneself into a meditative state. But as our skills with chanting develop, it may be that the chant itself becomes somewhat automated to not require conscious control to proceed. So, similar to walking meditation, we can potentially use an outward chanting session to be internally mindful in a direct manner. A third option is to look at chanting as an augmentary technique to classic mindfulness, possibly in the vein of loving-kindness meditations serving as a foundation of compassion.
  - *Day 1*: Initial OM chanting directly followed by an open-awareness session
  - *Day 2*: Attempt to be mindful while OM chanting (ala walking meditation)
  - *Day 3*: Attempt to be mindful while OM chanting (ala walking meditation)
  - *Day 4*: Utilize a simple loving-kindness phrase or phrases in a vocal chant
  - *Day 5*: Utilize a simple loving-kindness phrase or phrases in a vocal chant
- *Blackboard posts*:
  - *Mindful consideration on the weekly topical assignment*: Based on your current understanding of mindfulness, and drawing from another course you have taken within the program, what in this week's material resonates as consistent, as a parallel alternative, or as contradictory?
  - *Directed Inquiry*: Considering the Shapiro, Seigel & Neff discussion on mindfulness and paradoxes, does chanting expand, maintain, confound or resolve any of these paradoxes? Why?

### **Week 5: July xx-July xx**

#### **Sacredness and Spirituality**

This week's module will focus on the content within the chant, both from words and from the sounds of their pronunciation. We will approach this first from a general, overarching perspective, with the examination of applications within selected religions in later weeks.

- *Lectures and viewings*:
  - *Not just words* (Blackboard Module 5)
- *Required readings*:
  - Chapter: *Fundamentals of Chant*, in Gold, S. (2013). *The magic of Hebrew chant: Healing the spirit, transforming the mind, deepening love (For people of all faiths, all backgrounds)*. Jewish Lights.
  - Chapter: *The Secrets of Chant*, in Gold, S. (2013). *The magic of Hebrew chant: Healing the spirit, transforming the mind, deepening love (For people of all faiths, all backgrounds)*. Jewish Lights.
  - Chapters: 2-7, in Hernández, A. (2005). *The sacred art of chant*. SkyLight Paths Publ.
  - Pages: 17-24, in Kaivalya, A. (2014). *Sacred sound: discovering the myth & meaning of Mantra & Kirtan*. New World Library.

- Potvin, N., & Argue, J. (2014). Theoretical considerations of spirit and spirituality in music therapy. *Music Therapy Perspectives*, 32, 118+. <https://doi.org/10.1093/mtp/miu022>
- Roccasalvo, J. L. (1995, October 28). The “sacred” in sacred music. *America*, 173(13), 19.
- Pages: 19-23, in Tanahashi, K. (2015). *Zen chants: Thirty-five essential texts with commentary*. Shambhala.
- *Contemplative Practice*: For the first four weeks we focused on the OM chant, and primarily on its physical properties of creating the sound, and experiencing that sound within the body and the mind. In many traditions, the sacred meaning of OM is also stressed and a key component of practice. But for the next phase of this course we will be shifting to chants with more of an obvious narrative content. Hopefully from these first four weeks you have gained an appreciation for the importance of resonance in the power of chanting, and that is also a very important aspect of sacred chanting; the meaning must resonate with you similar to the sound itself. So the main goal for this week’s practice session is to find a chant that resonates with you in a spiritual way, while also resonating with your body and voice. Resources are provided in the weekly module on Blackboard, and you can also conduct online searches, take recommendations from friends, or draw from your own spiritual traditions to find the right chant for you. Selected chants can be in any language and from any tradition.
  - *Day 1*: Scan the provided resources, and any others, and find 3-5 chants whose meaning resonates deeply within you. Read them before you go to bed, and have a great night’s sleep.
  - *Day 2*: Chant each option a couple of times aloud (*Hint: don’t try to memorize the chants at this point, go ahead and keep your eyes open and read the words as you chant*). See which ones resonate with your body and mind.
  - *Days 3-5*: Select the chant that resonates with you at all levels, and use for 10-15 minute sessions. Focus on the meaning of the words and why you chose this specific chant. Again, you may want to conduct these sessions with eyes open and reading the words. This may aid in maintaining the focus on content, and also eliminate the distraction of trying to memorize or remember phrasings.
- *Blackboard posts*:
  - *Mindful consideration on the weekly topical assignment*: Based on your current understanding of mindfulness, and drawing from another course you have taken within the program, what in this week’s material resonates as consistent, as a parallel alternative, or as contradictory?
  - *Directed Inquiry*: Hernandez talks about both sacredness and energy within chants, but approaches both of them with a sense of spirituality. How do these three concepts (sacredness, energy, and spirituality) relate to your understanding and experience of chanting?

**Week 6: July xx-July xx****Ritual**

This week's module will consider chant within a larger context and framework. Sometimes the object of attention or activity is a piece within a larger ritual or practice that might be taken for granted or not be recognized.

- *Lectures and viewings:*
  - *Rites, rituals and requirements* (Blackboard Module 6)
- *Required readings:*
  - Subchapter: *Chant Ritual*, in Gold, S. (2013). *The magic of Hebrew chant: Healing the spirit, transforming the mind, deepening love (For people of all faiths, all backgrounds)*. Jewish Lights.
  - Subchapter: *Chanting during Taharah*, in Gold, S. (2013). *The magic of Hebrew chant: Healing the spirit, transforming the mind, deepening love (For people of all faiths, all backgrounds)*. Jewish Lights.
- *Optional readings (select 3 to skim):*
  - Brummans, B. H., Hwang, J. M., & Cheong, P. H. (2019). Recycling stories: Mantras, communication, and organizational materialization. *Organization Studies*, 41(1), 103–126. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840618819033>
  - Déléage, P. (2020). Toward an epidemiology of ritual chants. *Social Analysis*, 64(3), 113+. <https://doi.org/10.3167/sa.2020.640307>
  - Greene, P. D. (2004). The Dhamma as sonic praxis: Paritta chant in Burmese Theravāda Buddhism. *Asian Music*, 35(2), 43+. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4098445>
  - Howard, H.W. (2016). Silence, solitariness, and Gregorian chant. *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 19(4), 47+. <https://doi.org/10.1353/log.2016.0032>
  - Patton, L. (2005). *Bringing the gods to mind: Mantra and ritual in early Indian sacrifice*. University of California Press.
  - Chapters 1-3 in: Urberg, M. A. (2016). *Music in the Devotional Lives of the Birgittine Brothers and Sisters at Vadstena Abbey (c. 1373-1545)* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Chicago. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- *Contemplative Practice:* Utilizing the same chant from last week, rather than focusing completely inward on the meaning of the chant itself, we will experience the chant in the context of other aspects of our lives. Pick an activity that you regularly do 2-3 times per day (e.g., getting in/out of bed, brushing teeth, meals, driving your car). For this week, prior to each instance of the selected activity, conduct a short chanting session of 1-3 minutes. Maybe think of it as the best intention for a night's sleep and the start of the day, a commitment to be mindful of brushing each tooth, a blessing of the meal, or the hope for safety and security for all on the road.
  - *Days 1-5:* Conduct short chants prior to each instance of your selected activity.
- *Blackboard posts:*

- *Mindful consideration on the weekly topical assignment:* Based on your current understanding of mindfulness, and drawing from another course you have taken within the program, what in this week's material resonates as consistent, as a parallel alternative, or as contradictory?
- *Directed Inquiry:* Gold approaches ritual as a structural reminder to focus on a specific content and meaning (e.g., "Mother's Day"). But frequently rituals are structural repetitions which seem to overshadow or be devoid of any real meaning. Where does chanting fall on this spectrum of ritual?
- *Assignment due:* Reflexive questions based on your experiential learning thus far in the course are posted on Blackboard. Using your practice logs, provide a written submission (5-7 pages) by 11:59 pm xx Jul.

### **Week 7: July xx-July xx**

#### **Shamanistic, Charismatic & Devotional Chant**

This week's module will engage with the ways in which chanting becomes an encompassing experience. Chant is not the creation of, or separate from chanter, but rather it becomes the force within which the chanter is encased.

- *Lectures and viewings:*
  - *Releasing self to the force* (Blackboard Module 7)
  - Shamanic chants video. The music is provided for just over 1 hour. Spend at least 15 minutes listening to it with full attention, move your body to the rhythm. You are then invited/encouraged to listen to the full recording as background sounds, if that can be accommodated in your schedule. *TheMeditativeMind. (2018, July 25). Healing Native American tribal chants with shamanic drums @432Hz. YouTube.*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Za7q6FNX18g>
- *Required readings:*
  - Chapter: *The Secrets of Chant*, in Gold, S. (2013). *The magic of Hebrew chant: Healing the spirit, transforming the mind, deepening love (For people of all faiths, all backgrounds)*. Jewish Lights.
  - Chapter: *The Uses of Chant* (**Note: Ritual & Taharah subchapters read in previous week**), in Gold, S. (2013). *The magic of Hebrew chant: Healing the spirit, transforming the mind, deepening love (For people of all faiths, all backgrounds)*. Jewish Lights.
  - Perry, G., Polito, V., & Thompson, W. F. (2021). Rhythmic chanting and mystical states across traditions. *Brain Sciences, 11*(1), 1+.  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/brainsci11010101>
- *Optional readings (select 3 for skim reading):*
  - Ba, A. H. (1993, September 1). The weaver and the blacksmith. *UNESCO Courier, 21*.
  - Braginsky, V. (2006). Meaning of the sound: Magic and Sufi mysticism in the phonic structure of the Malay charm and chant. *Indonesia & the Malay World, 34*(100), 281-314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639810601130168>

- DeWeese, D. (2014). Shamanization in Central Asia. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 57(3), 326+. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685209-12341351>
- Grünhagen, C. (2012). Healing chants and singing hospitals: Towards an analysis of the implementation of spiritual practices as therapeutic means. *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis*, 24, 76+. <https://doi.org/10.30674/scripta.67410>
- Mendoza, A. P. (2019). Semantic parallelism in traditional Kakataibo chants. *Open Linguistics*, 5(1), 383+. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opli-2019-0021>
- Mohan, U. (2016). From prayer beads to the mechanical counter: The negotiation of chanting practices within a Hindu group. *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 174, 191+. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24741071>
- Motomitsu, U. (2003). Seeds of Play, Words of Power: An Ethnographic Study of Iban Shamanic Chants (Book). *Asian Folklore Studies*, 62(2), 347+.
- von Stuckard, K. (2002). Reenchanted nature: modern western shamanism and nineteenth-century thought. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 70(4), 771–800. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaar/70.4.771>
- Walker, M. (2003). Music as knowledge in shamanism and other healing traditions of Siberia. *Arctic Anthropology*, 40(2), 40+. <https://doi.org/10.1353/arc.2011.0039>
- Winkelman, M. (2009). Shamanism and the origins of spirituality and ritual healing. *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture*, 3(4), 458–489. <https://doi.org/10.1558/jsrnc.v3i4.458>
- *Contemplative Practice*: Utilizing the same chant from the preceding two weeks, which hopefully by now we know by heart and can chant from memory without effort, we will embrace the charismatic aspect of the chanting experience. Lose yourself in the chanting experience. Rock, sway, soft, loud, whatever feels right at in the moment. Borrowing from the irreverent *Caddyshack*, “There’s a force in the universe that makes things happen. And all you have to do is get in touch with it, stop thinking, let things happen, and be the *chant* [ball].”
  - Days 1-5: Conduct 10-15 minute charismatic chanting sessions
- *Blackboard posts*:
  - *Mindful consideration on the weekly topical assignment*: Based on your current understanding of mindfulness, and drawing from another course you have taken within the program, what in this week’s material resonates as consistent, as a parallel alternative, or as contradictory?
  - *Directed Inquiry*: Perry, Polito & Thompson (2021) discuss the losing of oneself and the feeling of immersion within a unified, universal presence through shamanistic practices. How does this compare with your understanding of and experience with mindfulness in the Buddhist context of self?
- *Assignment due*: Submit your final paper proposal (2-3 pages) by 11:59 pm on xx Jul

**Week 8: July xx-July xx**  
**Buddhist Traditions**

This week's module will consider the history, and current relevancy of chanting across various Buddhist traditions.

- *Lectures and viewings:*
  - *From prohibited to principal component* (Blackboard Module 8)
  - Buddhist sutta chant video. *Dhammalink. (2013, March 12). Daily Buddhist Theravada Pali chanting by Ven Vajiradhamma Thera. YouTube.*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwAnE65Ous>
  - Buddhist healing chant video. The music is provided for just over 1 hour. Spend at least 15 minutes listening to it with full attention. You are then invited/encouraged to listen to the full recording as background sounds, if that can be accommodated in your schedule. *Meditation Music. (2020, April 23). Buddhist mantra for healing all sufferings, pain and depression - Tayata Om Mantra-wlZqghmN24U. YouTube.*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCulgNpWfbl>
  - Pure Land chant video. *Sakura, L. (2008, May 4). Namu Amitufo - Pure Land (1 Mala - 108 Repetitions). YouTube.*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ts8UYG8b8g>
- *Required readings:*
  - Greene, P. D., Howard, K., Miller, T. E., Nguyen, P. T., & Tan, H.-S. (2002). Buddhism and the Musical Cultures of Asia: A Critical Literature Survey. *Body and Ritual in Buddhist Musical Cultures*, 44(2), 135+.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41699430>
  - Greene, P. D., & Wei, L. (2004). Introduction: Mindfulness and change in Buddhist musical traditions. *Asian Music*, 35(2), 1+.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4098443>
  - Liu, C. (2018). Reciting, chanting, and singing: The codification of vocal music in Buddhist canon law. *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 46(4), 713+.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10781-018-9360-8>
  - Mabbett, I. W. (1993). Buddhism and Music. *Asian Music*, 25(1), 9+.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/834188>
  - Pages 17-55; 71-99 in Tanahashi, K. (2015). *Zen chants: Thirty-five essential texts with commentary*. Shambhala.
- *Optional readings (select 1 for skim reading):*
  - Hahn, M. (1983). The four musical types of Buddhist chant in Korea. *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 15, 45+.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/768641>
  - Payne, R. K. (2015). Pure land or pure mind? Locus of awakening and American popular religious culture. *Journal of Global Buddhism*, 16, 16+.  
[https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A491136389/AONE?u=les\\_main&sid=AONE&xid=fa2c2355](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A491136389/AONE?u=les_main&sid=AONE&xid=fa2c2355)
  - Seymour, K. (2018). *The Buddha's voice: Ritual sound and sensory experience in medieval Chinese religious practice* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation].  
<https://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/2814>
- *Contemplative Practice:* Utilizing the same chant from the preceding three weeks, practice daily in the manner that feels right for you.

- *Days 1-5:* Conduct 10-15 minute chanting sessions
- *Blackboard posts:*
  - *Mindful consideration on the weekly topical assignment:* Based on your current understanding of mindfulness, and drawing from another course you have taken within the program, what in this week's material resonates as consistent, as a parallel alternative, or as contradictory?
  - *Directed Inquiry:* The readings from Tanahasi are grouped in two sections, with one being labeled "Daily Chants" and the other "Chants for Enlightenment." Do these appear as separate forms of practice, connected or essentially the same? Why?

### **Week 9: August xx-August xx**

#### **Christian and Hebraic Traditions**

This week's module will consider the history, and current relevancy of chanting in the Christian and Hebraic traditions.

- *Lectures and viewings:*
  - *Centuries of chanting within the temple walls* (Blackboard Module 9)
  - Gregorian chant video. Please read the brief article and listen to the embedded YouTube link. The music is provided for just over 3 hours. Spend at least 15 minutes listening to it with full attention. You are then invited/encouraged to listen to the full recording as background sounds, if that can be accommodated in your schedule. Roberts, M. S. (2020, November 20). *French Benedictine nuns release 7,000 hours of Gregorian chant*. *Classic FM*. <https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/french-benedictine-nuns-gregorian-chant-neumz/>
  - Hebrew chants video. The music is provided for just over 1 hour. Spend at least 15 minutes listening to it with full attention. You are then invited/encouraged to listen to the full recording as background sounds, if that can be accommodated in your schedule. *Amsterdam Synagogue*. (2019, November 30). *Hebrew chants for the year*. *Virtutis Studio Productions*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-h0oqFcngw>
- *Required readings:*
  - Day, T. (1994, December 31). Gregorian chant: Time for a comeback. *America*, 171(20), 9.
  - Chapters: *The Practices; The Musical Notations* in Gold, S. (2013). *The magic of Hebrew chant: Healing the spirit, transforming the mind, deepening love (For people of all faiths, all backgrounds)*. Jewish Lights.
  - Kigner, E. (2011, May 20). Now close your eyes...The shuls are alive with the sound of chanting. *The Jewish Advocate*, 3.
  - Lyon, L. E. (2018). Affection, attention, and the will. *Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 49(1), 3+. <https://doi.org/10.2307/26844630>
- *Optional readings (pick 2 to skim read)*
  - Baker, J. T. R., (2012). "*Sing to the Lord a new song*": *Memory, music, epistemology, and the emergence of Gregorian chant as corporate knowledge*

- [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Tennessee, Knoxville.  
[https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_gradthes/1360](https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gradthes/1360)
- Friel, D. M. (2017). Is beauty subjective? Identifying criteria for beauty and recognizing them in chant. The Catholic understanding of beauty provides and objective anchor for the aesthetic experience. *Sacred Music*, 144(2), 23+. [https://www.academia.edu/35989488/Is\\_Beauty\\_Subjective\\_Identifying\\_Criteria\\_for\\_Beauty\\_and\\_Recognizing\\_Them\\_in\\_Chant](https://www.academia.edu/35989488/Is_Beauty_Subjective_Identifying_Criteria_for_Beauty_and_Recognizing_Them_in_Chant)
  - McClintic, A. (2019). *Authenticity, simplicity, variety, and reform in 20th Century Orthodox musical life*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Claremont Graduate University. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
  - Wilcoxon, B. (2016). *Performing community: Benedictine chant in Post-Vatican II Catholicism* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Florida State University. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
  - *Contemplative Practice*: Utilizing the same chant from the preceding four weeks, practice daily in the manner that feels right for you.
    - *Days 1-5*: Conduct 10-15 minute chanting sessions
  - *Blackboard posts*:
    - *Mindful consideration on the weekly topical assignment*: Based on your current understanding of mindfulness, and drawing from another course you have taken within the program, what in this week's material resonates as consistent, as a parallel alternative, or as contradictory?
    - *Directed Inquiry*: While there are some discussions about expanding the use of chant in formal religious settings (e.g., Day), many of the readings deal with monastic applications, or personal religious based chanting. Why do you think that chanting in church settings is not common within the U.S.?

### **Week 10: August xx-August xx**

#### **Chanting and Social Impacts**

This week's module will open space for consideration of chant in broader social settings. We will consider it as a group activity, both within and external to contemplative practice.

- *Lectures and viewings*:
  - *Chant as a group activity* (Blackboard Module 10)
- *Required readings*:
  - Black Brown, S. (2014). Krishna, Christians, and colors: The socially binding influence of Kirtan singing at a Utah Hare Krishna Festival. *Ethnomusicology*, 58(3), 454+. <https://doi.org/10.5406/ethnomusicology.58.3.0454>
  - Cummins, F. (2018). Joint speech as an object of empirical inquiry. *Material Religion*, 14(3), 417+. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17432200.2018.1485344>
  - DelCiampo, M. J. (2012). *Buying spirituality: Commodity and meaning in American kirtan music* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Florida State University. Diginole.  
<http://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu:182825/datastream/PDF/view>
  - Kozak, M. (2020, July 6). *Perspective | How music and chants bring protesters together*. The Washington Post.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/07/07/protest-chants-musicology-solidarity/>

- *Optional readings (pick 1 to skim read):*
  - Adeyo, T. L. (2017). *Women's chant group: Singing from our souls* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Arizona State University. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
  - Reinsour, N. J. (2018). *Voicing selves: Ethics, meditation, and the politics of religion in post-authoritarian Bali* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Cornell University. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- *Contemplative Practice:* Watch the assigned daily video, and then immediately perform your daily chanting practice.
  - *Day 1:* <https://youtu.be/GZNLimSH8U> followed by a personal chant session.
  - *Day 2:* <https://medium.com/@norikomanabe/chants-and-music-from-black-lives-matter-protests-june-2020-af854e4b31fb> followed by a personal chant session.
  - *Day 3:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8KDIqdOSBE> followed by a personal chant session.
  - *Day 4:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INDa0z-Vqrg> followed by a personal chant session.
  - *Day 5:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnPH8mu6gCI> followed by a personal chant session.
- *Blackboard posts:*
  - *Mindful consideration on the weekly topical assignment:* Based on your current understanding of mindfulness, and drawing from another course you have taken within the program, what in this week's material resonates as consistent, as a parallel alternative, or as contradictory?
  - *Directed Inquiry:* In what settings would you be comfortable joining in a social chant of some form or other (e.g., sports, political, festival/retreat, etc.)? Why?

### **Week 11: August xx-August xx**

#### **Synchronous, Harmonious and Resonating Chanting Explorations**

This week's module will provide us the opportunity to be together as a group, at least virtually together. Our two-hour session will be comprised of a short lecture, small group discussions, group chanting and full class discussions.

- *Required readings:*
  - Perry, G., Polito, V., & Thompson, W. F. (2016). *Chanting meditation improves mood and social cohesion.*  
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319851087>
  - Olga, A. (2017). The influence of musical rhythm on a person's psychophysical state. *MOJ Sports Medicine*, 1(3).  
<https://doi.org/10.15406/mojm.2017.01.00017>
  - Ruiz-Blais, S., Orini, M., & Chew, E. (2020). Heart rate variability synchronizes when Non-experts vocalize together. *Frontiers in Physiology*, 11.  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fphys.2020.00762>

- *Optional readings (read both, but just skim them):*
  - Nunez, S. (2016). Medicinal drumming: An ancient and modern day healing approach. *NeuroQuantology*, 14(2), 226+. <https://doi.org/10.14704/nq.2016.14.2.939>
  - Orion, D. (2013) The healing power of chant: Kirtan practitioner Snatam Kaur finds the vibrations that move us, body and soul. *Spirituality & Health Magazine*, 6(5), 29. <http://www.spirituality-health.com/spirit/>
- *Contemplative Practice:* On at least one day this week, conduct your personal practice where you might be heard. This does not mean that you need to seek out an audience, but conduct a practice session in a space and at a time where the possibility exists that someone else might hear you. Maybe this is opening a window or door, maybe it is out in a park under a tree, or maybe it is sitting out in front of your City Hall? Be mindful of your reaction to an outward public expression of an internal personal practice. (*Note: if this week's assignment raises to the level of anxiety rather than just as a possible level of uncomfortable curiosity, then omit this public expression experiment and just continue your personal practice in private.*).
  - *Day 1-5:* Continue to conduct your personal chant sessions, with one of them being in a setting that it might be overheard by others.
- *Blackboard posts:*
  - *Mindful consideration on the weekly topical assignment:* Based on your current understanding of mindfulness, and drawing from another course you have taken within the program, what in this week's material resonates as consistent, as a parallel alternative, or as contradictory?
  - *Directed Inquiry:* Draw from your experience both as a group chanting together, and from your personal chanting with the potential for public exposure. What was your feeling of relative comfort in each setting?

## **Week 12: August xx-August xx**

### **Summary**

This week will be focused on your independent project of writing your final paper. However, it is also an opportunity to briefly pull the course together. For this week, only the assigned readings are required, and they can be skimmed rather than needing close, analytical reading; optional readings are completely optional.

- *Required reading:*
  - Course syllabus *Learning Objectives* section
  - Burke, A., Lam, C. N., Stussman, B., & Yang, H. (2017). Prevalence and patterns of use of mantra, mindfulness and spiritual meditation among adults in the United States. *BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 17(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12906-017-1827-8>
  - Ng, N. (2011). Foreign places, hybrid spaces. *Continuum*, 25(4), 529+. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2011.576752>
  - Samuel, G. B. (1995). Buddhist chant in a Western frame. *Current Anthropology*, 32(3), 528+. <https://doi.org/10.1086/204394>.
- *Optional reading (completely optional this week):*

- Rothenberg, J., Morrow, C., & Schechner, R. (1990). Making Waves: An Interview with Charlie Morrow. *TDR (1988-)*, 34(3), 148–158. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1146077>
- Yulianto, H. J. (2017). *East meets West: Spontaneity in Beat Poetry as Buddha-Dharma and Visions of Spiritual Ecology* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. University at Buffalo, State University of New York.
- *Contemplative Practice*: Optional. From this point on, the choice to incorporate chant into your contemplative experience is yours. Hopefully this course has provided you with enough insight to determine if chanting may serve as a beneficial component to your ongoing practice.
- *Blackboard posts*: Optional for any last thoughts to share with classmates.
- *Assignment due*: Final paper (15-18 pages) due by 11:59 pm on xx Aug.

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## **ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION AND POLICIES**

### **Attendance Policy**

The academic integrity of our program depends upon students' regular attendance at participation, at the residency and online. Please let me know in advance if there is any portion of a residency class meeting you cannot attend due to an emergency. Additionally, consistent online attendance and participation is required and is factored into grades, as noted above. The complete attendance policy may be found at <http://lesley.smartcatalogiq.com/2019-2020/Graduate-Catalog/Academic-Policies-and-Procedures/Attendance>

### **Incomplete Grade Policy**

All incomplete grades are given at the discretion of the instructor. Specific instructions for requesting an incomplete grade must be followed by the student, and are outlined in full at

<http://lesley.smartcatalogiq.com/2019-2020/Graduate-Catalog/Academic-Policies-and-Procedures/Grading-Information-for-All-Schools>

### **Academic Integrity Policy**

Academic honesty and integrity are essential to the existence and growth of an academic community. Each member of the Lesley community is charged with honoring and upholding the University's policy. Students are full members of the academic community and, as such, are obligated to uphold the University's standards for academic integrity. Students should take an active role in encouraging others to respect these standards, and should become familiar with Lesley's policy. The policy details students' roles and responsibilities, and provides examples of violations (including information about failing to document sources, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication or falsification of data, multiple submissions of work, abuse of academic materials, complicity/unauthorized assistance, lying/tampering/theft, etc.). The complete policy can be found on Lesley's University Policies Webpage: <http://lesley.smartcatalogiq.com/2019-2020/Graduate-Catalog/Academic-Policies-and-Procedures/Copy-of-Academic-integrity-Statement>

### **Disability Services for Students**

Lesley University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and provide documentation of the disability. Eligibility for reasonable accommodations will be based on the documentation provided.

If you're a student with a documented disability, or feel that you may have a disability, please contact:

Dr. Daniel Newman, Executive Director, Academic Support Services, ADA/504 Coordinator  
Doble Hall, 2nd Floor  
617.349.8572 (voice)  
617.349.8324 (fax)  
[dnewman@lesley.edu](mailto:dnewman@lesley.edu)

*The contact person plays the role of facilitator between the student's needs, faculty requirements, and administrative guidelines of the University. Disability-related information is not shared without the permission of the student.*

### **Lesley University Library Services & Resources**

The [myLibrary tab on Blackboard](#) provides access to multiple services and authoritative resources for academic research including books, articles, tests, visual media, and teaching

resources. The Lesley University Library encourages students and faculty to use these academic resources for their assignments:

- Find help with library research through our [Ask-A-Librarian](#) service, as well as online guides to [APA](#) and [MLA](#) citation formats.
- Please click on the following for information about: [hours](#) / [directions](#) / [study room reservations](#)
- Visit our two libraries or contact us:
- 

**Sherrill Library**, the main university library, Brattle Campus, 617-349-8850

**Moriarty Library**, the arts library, Porter Campus, 617-349-8070

### **Lesley University Learning Community Syllabus Statement**

Faculty, staff and students are all responsible for advancing a campus and classroom climate that creates and values a diversity of ideas, perspectives, experiences and identities. As such, we aspire to engage together in a community where each person is respected and empowered to express themselves and be heard.

We commit to creating an environment and developing course content that recognizes the learning experience of every student with dignity and respect, regardless of differences that include, but are not limited to: race, socio-economic status, ethnicity, indigenous background, immigration status, nationality, gender identity/expression, language, abilities and accommodations, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, veteran status or membership in uniformed services, political views, age and physical appearance. Lesley University's Mission Statement states that "...Lesley prepares socially responsible graduates with the knowledge, skills, understanding and ethical judgment to be catalysts shaping a more just, humane, and sustainable world." Among many experts in the field, Diane Goodman has described the following competencies: (1) Building self-awareness, (2) Understanding and valuing others, (3) Knowledge of societal inequities, (4) Interacting effectively with a diversity of people in different contexts, and (5) Fostering equity and inclusion. Our mission and these competencies are embedded in our curricula and our classrooms. They provide a foundation for transformative teaching and learning, and approaches to social justice.

## **Appendix A**

### **Course Structure**

#### **Curriculum Integration**

Integration within a comprehensive curriculum represents best practices and facilitates positive learning outcomes. The available syllabi within the Lesley University Mindfulness Studies Program provide representative examples of course design and delivery within these aforementioned frameworks ranging from classes emphasizing experiential learning of a specific mode of contemplative practice (e.g., Franceschini, 2020; Waring, 2020) to primarily conceptual didactic investigations with an accompanying mindfulness component (e.g., Armstrong, 2019; Jean, 2019; Olendzki, 2020), and multiple courses falling along that spectrum (e.g., Armstrong, 2020; Chang, 2021; Fletcher, 2020; Jean, 2020; Olendzki, 2019; Waring, 2019). From this collection the framework and structure for this class has been derived.<sup>15</sup> A review of these approaches further breaks down delivery modes into four categories: 1) deductive, 2) inductive, 3) discussive, 4) experiential. Each of these categories is presented below in isolation, but it should be noted that many tasks and assignments combine one or more of these approaches. It should also be noted that these categories also encapsulate the graded exams and assessments within this course, as they are viewed primarily as instructional tools with a secondary purpose of evaluation.

#### ***Deductive Learning Mode (lectures, reading)***

This pedagogical technique relies primarily on instructor or expert presentation of concepts as supported by examples, with students being in a receive-mode. Assigned readings serve as the main conduit for this mode across most of the courses. Some courses do utilize instructor presentations and briefs. However, since this program is delivered virtually and primarily asynchronously, most of the instructor lectures are provided as pre-recorded rather than live. This constraint means that no so immediate transitions to or mingling with other learning modes is possible.

#### ***Inductive Learning Mode***

This mode of learning is a self-discovery approach to concepts as students are presented with materials and examples, and through their own consideration develop and recognize the conceptual context. The most clearly recognizable form of this mode in this program can be found in the student research paper process, which usually consists of a proposal and final paper submission. The exploration of a topic is almost wholly student driven with minimal instructor guidance. Instructor-posed prompts for weekly discussion board posts also fall into this category. Tests and quizzes are another type of employment available for this method, but neither the virtual asynchronous structure nor the subject matter of this program support this technique strongly, and it is not widely used.

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<sup>15</sup> These resources are included as Appendix A for readers not familiar with, or able to gain direct access to, these resources.

Given that this project will be at a master's level, an inclusion and reliance on inductive learning is expected. Although on an hourly basis, deductive learning, especially from assigned readings, represents a large proportions of effort. However, the significant weighting in the grading criteria (i.e., proposal, paper & posts) the quality of learning expected through this mode emphasizes its import.

### ***Experiential Learning Mode***

This mode is another form that relies on student-exploration, but it incorporates a phenomenological component through the actual integration of the subject matter into the student's personal experience. As previously mentioned, the Lesley Mindfulness Program incorporates experiential learning in each of its classes, with seated meditation practices being the most common. In conjunction with these embodied experiences, a reflexive component such as posting or journaling are sometimes included as formal course requirements.

This course is designed as an exploration of chanting across a wide range of traditions. It is not designed as an instructional chanting course for a specific form or forms. The embodied experience of chanting is critical to the pedagogical approach, but it is not a key learning objective in and of itself. While important, it serves as an augment to the conceptual exploration of physical, historical, spiritual, and social aspects of chanting. To ease the burden slightly from trying to get chanting itself just right, a slight shift in focus to the mindful awareness of the chanting as the key experiential intent is progressed through the inclusion of a journaling component.

### ***Discussive Learning Mode***

This approach relies on a dynamic and interactive exploration of a topic by introducing multiple perspectives through dialogue. Despite the challenges resulting from virtual asynchronous classrooms, there are several effective discussive mode approaches available for consideration. The Blackboard® platform's discussion board feature<sup>16</sup> permits both postings in response to an inductive prompt, as well as following responses by all class participants to create a discussive environment. Periodic virtual synchronous class gatherings (e.g., Zoom®, Webex®) most closely simulate an in-person classroom setting, but there are significant scheduling challenges given the distribution of students across multiple time zones. And while these virtual meeting spaces have many benefits, studies indicate that more than 5 participants limits the openness of the discussion and excludes some from the "social presence" aspects (Watson, 2020). Partnering or grouping of students for collaborative project work also creates an internal discussive learning environment in the generation of an output product. These groupings can rely solely on asynchronous forms of communication (e.g., emails), but with their fewer participants the coordination for synchronous virtual meetings is more accessible. Again from personal experience and from discussions with cohorts, full group meetings *can be* tremendously rewarding, but *are always* tremendously challenging logistically. Limiting the number and

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<sup>16</sup> Blackboard® is widely used by many academic institutions across the U.S., and the discussion board feature is closely mimicked in functionality on most of the major alternate virtual learning platforms.

duration of these full group meetings, along with advanced scheduling, are key logistical best-practices. For content, the successful examples all ensure that there is a strong participatory component incorporated, as well as an interactive discussive element between students. Small group and partnering experiences are highly rated when they focus on the experiential portions of the class, but become a logistical burden without significant contribution when they focus on the deductive and inductive conceptual material.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Inter-modal Balance & External Requirements***

In addition to this thematic and pedagogical mapping exercise, there is also a need to meet structural course constraints required by the course approval and accreditation processes. As this is envisioned as a 3-credit hour course, the projected student commitment is for 135 hours of effort, or approximately 11 hours per week over the 12-week summer semester period. As already mentioned, a unique feature of this program is its utilization of experiential learning combined with a 100% virtual, remote learning delivery for most courses. Therefore, a further breakdown of the general approach of 1-contact hour per week for each assigned course semester credit awarded upon completion shall be considered in the vein that synchronous sessions, taped lectures and assigned experiential learning exercises will constitute contact hours.

The segregation and sequencing of topics is posited as a logical progressing based the literature review and the external course delivery requirements (e.g., number of class weeks available). Certainly, as a survey course there are numerous other valid ordering of topics available. And its topical content is intentionally packaged that way to provide each week as a largely independent module.

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<sup>17</sup> The author postulates that this decrease in efficacy for conceptual topics is a result of differences in individual learning styles combined with the logistical challenges and virtual nature of collaboration that overwhelm the benefits from diverse perspectives or a feeling of strong bond over an intellectual exploration.

Week	Topics		Hours	Curriculum Intersections
	Conceptual	Experiential		
1	Introduction & Terminology	Direct Comparison between Silent Meditation and Meditation with Sounds	Ded: 6.0 Ind: 0.0 Exp: 1.5 Dis: 2.0	Practice, Theory & Science; Foundations of Contemp
2	Physiological Effects	Body Sensations of Chanting	Ded: 8.0 Ind: 0.0 Exp: 1.5 Dis: 2.0	Mindfulness & Brain; Mindful Move (QiGong)
3	Aptitudinal and Attitudinal Effects	Mental Sensations of Chanting	Ded: 8.0 Ind: 0.0 Exp: 1.5 Dis: 2.0	Mindfulness & Brain; Mindfulness & Education
4	Intersections with Mindfulness	Intentions & Preparation	Ded: 8.0 Ind: 0.0 Exp: 1.5 Dis: 2.0	Practice, Theory & Science; Foundations of Contemp; Mindful Retreat
5	Sacredness & Spirituality	Chanting with Meaning #1	Ded: 8.0 Ind: 0.0 Exp: 1.5 Dis: 2.0	Foundations of Contemplative Practice; Mindful Retreat
6	Ritual	Chanting with Meaning #2	Ded: 4.0 Ind: 4.0 Exp: 1.5 Dis: 2.0	Foundations of Contemplative Practice; Mindful Retreat
7	Shamanistic Chant	Chanting with Meaning #3	Ded: 3.0 Ind: 6.0 Exp: 1.5 Dis: 1.0	Foundations of Contemplative Practice; Mindful Retreat
8	Buddhist Traditions	Zen Chants	Ded: 8.0 Ind: 0.0 Exp: 1.5 Dis: 2.0	Practice, Theory & Science; Foundations of Contemplative Practice
9	Christian & Hebraic Traditions	Western Traditional Chant	Ded: 4.0 Ind: 4.0 Exp: 1.5 Dis: 1.0	Foundations of Contemplative Practice
10	Chanting and Social Impact	Public Chanting	Ded: 3.0 Ind: 6.0 Exp: 0.5 Dis: 1.0	Mindful Leadership; Mindfulness & Enviro; Mindful Communication
11	Synchronous Chanting Exploration		Ded: 0.0 Ind: 10.0 Exp: 0.0 Dis: 2.0	Mindful Communication; Graduate Academic Writing
12	Summary	(Not Required)	Ded: 0.5 Ind: 11.5 Exp: 0.0 Dis: 0.0	Graduate Academic Writing

Table 1. Course Structure