RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
First-Year Seminar
The Color of Silence

Course Information

Prerequisites and/or Co-requisites: First-time, first-year student status

Class Meeting Day(s), Time and Room Location: Mondays and Thursdays, 9:40-11:00, Spiritual Center Meditation Space and G-105

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name, Title: Shalom Gorewitz, Professor, Video Art and New Media

Office Location & Phone No.: BC 321
cell: 646 431-3260

Office Hours: by appointment on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays

E-mail: sgorewitz@ramapo.edu
Mailbox Location: Berrie Center

School Office Location: Berrie Center

School Office Phone No.: 201 684-7368 to leave message

Common Course Description

Designed for first-time, full-time, first-year students, First-Year Seminar (FYS) provides a comprehensive introduction to college-level learning. Seminar courses are developed around an academic theme or topic that is based on one of Ramapo College’s academic pillars. First-Year students will have the opportunity to select a seminar that best suits their interests while learning about Ramapo’s academic foundation. The First-Year Seminar course helps students in their transition from high school to college life both in and out of the classroom. The common learning outcomes of FYS are: critical and creative thinking, college-level writing, oral communication, information literacy, and technological competency. FYS classes are small to emphasize open discussion and experiential learning within the context of the theme of the seminar course. Peer facilitators play an essential role in each FYS class ensuring that first-year students have guidance from a more experienced student. FYS is also the home of the Ramapo Summer Reading Program; all first-year students read the same book and discuss and write about it in their seminars. FYS encourages new students to participate in a community of learners, to strengthen their critical thinking skills, and to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
Course Description of this Section

Contemplative Practice includes yoga, meditation, and mindfulness techniques that are scientifically proven to calm the mind, harmonize body and spirit, and support the learning process. This course provides an experiential, historical, and conceptual foundation for empirical investigation. That is, through actually using yoga and meditation techniques and then reflecting on them through research, writing, and discussions, the student experiences a holistic pedagogical approach while gaining some of the inherent benefits of the practice.

Meditation practice dates back at least 1500 BCE when it is mentioned as an attentional method in the Rig Veda. Patanjali, a second century mystic defined meditation in the Yoga Sutras as a strategy leading to the cessation of movements in the consciousness which allows the practitioner to dwell in “true splendor.” Patanjali taught that meditation has four phases, withdrawal of external sense awareness; concentration; unbroken concentration; and absorption. Meditation involves conscious intention that is absorbed over time leading to an integration of a liberated mind with empirical consciousness. The Vijnana Bhairava has 112 devices of attention through mindfulness, concentrated attention, and combined strategies. More recently, popular and widely known Transcendental Meditation is based on a mantra, absence of concentrative effort, development of a thought free transcendental awareness. Mindfulness approaches to meditation, including Zen encourage detached nonjudgmental witnessing of thoughts, feelings, and sensations.

Class sessions will include a variety of meditation and yoga techniques, sometimes taught by guests expert in specific approaches. Because Buddhism and Mindfulness Meditation are essentially non-deistic, they can be taught in secular and inclusive ways. The ancient sciences of the Vedic traditions are God oriented, but very practical and universalist in their approach to integration of mind/body/spirit. Through the scheduled meditations and guests, students will learn many techniques and approaches that can evolve over a lifetime of group and individual discipline.

Meditations will be followed by a creative experience including color studies, eco-art, poetry writing, and digital (smartphone) photography. Students will organize their work in multi-disciplinary portfolios while contributing examples and/or copies of creative projects. All the projects will focus on the question the title of the course raises: what is the color of silence? This serves as a semester-long koan for students to use as an object of contemplation, self reflection, and investigation. There is no right or wrong answer, but there is also no “final” or definitive answer either.

There will be several field trips to visit regional spiritual centers and museums, including the Ruben Museum in Manhattan, which has one of the best collections of Himalayan Art. During the semester several films will be screened during special evening sessions. Students are encouraged to practice a meditation or yoga technique of their own choice at least 3 times a week outside of class. If there is interest, there might be a leaderless sit in the dorm at some daily time for group meditation.
Course Goals

The seminar will support meditation practice, visual perception, art making, and understanding of natural phenomena through experiential and philosophical learning activities leading to deeper insights concerning sound, light, color, movement, and form.

Students will learn meditation and art techniques and principles derived from Vedic, Buddhist, African, and Secular traditions. They will gain knowledge and learn skills in the interpretation and use of color for art, advertisements, and fashion. They will read essays, poems, and stories that support the thematic knowledge students will gain in this course. Students will see several excerpts from a variety of films that examine topics.

Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Paper</th>
<th>Discussions</th>
<th>Art Projects</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will know several forms of meditation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in meditations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will understand the history of meditation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Assigned research paper; will also be assessed through art projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will develop creative skills in their selected media and disciplines.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Write about personal work and answer question: what is color of silence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to articulate about meditation and artmaking experiences.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>Report on how meditation effected art making and creative process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will learn how to integrate meditation skills into their lives.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Reflection on how practices has or can change behavior and support improvements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Peer Facilitators

As an added resource for first-year students, each section of First-Year Seminar (FYS) will have a peer facilitator. These upper-level students will attend FYS classes and assist the instructor with the academic topics covered in this seminar. They will serve as discussion leaders on issues that pertain to your personal and social development and
they will facilitate weekly discussions on the class readings. Your peer facilitator will be your mentor and will be available to you to provide guidance on navigating the different personal and social hurdles that you may encounter in your first year at Ramapo.

**First-Year Academic Advising**

Each First-Year Seminar course is assigned a professional Academic Advisor from the Center for Academic Advising and First-Year Experience (CAAFYE) who serves as your Academic Advisor during your first year. This advisor will attend your First-Year Seminar class for a group advisement session to review general academic advising policies and procedures. They will also be available to answer any general questions regarding college policies/practices. Students are encouraged to schedule individual appointments with their CAAFYE Advisor for assistance with course selection and the development of a personal academic plan. Prior to individual advising sessions, your peer facilitator will instruct you on printing your recommended academic four-year plan, major requirements, and degree evaluation. In October, all first-year students will be required to attend the annual Majors Fair, where representatives are available from each major to assist students in learning more about the academic programs at Ramapo. If you have any questions regarding Academic Advisement please call CAAFYE at (201) 684-7441 or via email at: caafye@ramapo.edu

**Texts, Readings, Materials- Specific to this Course**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer Reading</th>
<th>TBA</th>
<th>Rules for Writers</th>
<th>Bedford/St. Martin's</th>
<th>978-0-312-64795-7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diana Hacker</td>
<td></td>
<td>Finding the Still Point (Book and CD): A Beginner's Guide to Zen Meditation (Dharma Communications)</td>
<td>Shambhala</td>
<td>978-1590304792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Knapp</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tao Te Ching</td>
<td>Frances Lincoln</td>
<td>978-0711229648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao Tzu and Stephen Mitchell</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Dhammapada: A New Translation of the Buddhist Classic with Annotations</td>
<td>Shambhala</td>
<td>978-1590303801</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommended Books:


Course Requirements

**Classroom Participation** – If you are uncomfortable with the idea of meditation from traditions other than your own, please reconsider taking this FYS. In contrast to your other classes you will be evaluated on how well you can sit still and remain quiet. Meditation is simultaneously a group and an individual experience. Your participation involves deep self-study and possibly experiences of calmness and energy that will be conveyed through the intentions and merits of your sitting and art making practices.

**Writing Assignments** –

1. One page autobiographical report on your previous experiences with meditation, contemplation, religion, spirituality, and art. Three paragraphs including a summary of experiences; details of the practice; how the practice has been part of your day to day life. If you have no practice, write about your closest experiences, perhaps within sports, music, or other disciplines that require concentrated attention. Due Week 3

2. Research and write 2 pages about the contemplative and meditative experiences accessible through your own traditions. This does not have to be religious. Can you find ways from your family and heritage where a contemplative approach is significant. Going beyond your own personal, familial, or ancestral experiences, dig into the roots to see where these concepts are found. Due Week 5

3. Write 2 pages about how meditation, contemplation, and art-marking techniques changed your ideas about this approach to living? Even if we haven’t studied your traditions, has anything that you’ve tried, heard, or seen so far changed your search for the way silence and simple awareness plays a part? Due Week 8

4. Connect the three previous writing assignments through editing to present a 10 page DOUBLE SPACED essay that includes personal information, results of objective research, and observations based on practice. There will be one
opportunity to submit an edited version based on professor’s comments. You can use pictures and embed music, video excerpts or links, and other net based info. Due Week 11

The grade for the writing assignment is cumulative. All writing assignments will be submitted on PAPER. The final essay will also be submitted as an email attachment. Identify your post with your last name.project.title

Assignments 1-3 are each worth 10 points for a total of 30 possible points
Assignment 4 is worth 20 points total.

Examinations, Laboratory/Studio, Library Research – Many questions will be raised by our meditation and art making experiences that you should actively research in the Library, online, in off campus meditation spaces, and in bookstores. Some of the small art assignments will be created outside class time. You can have access to Ramapo College facilities as they are available, when necessary. You can also work at home.

The projects can be done in any medium, including, but not limited to photography, video, pen and paper, paint, sculpture, ceramics, fashion materials, crafts, pastels, computers, words.

To receive a passing grade, please bring materials to class for studio sessions and work quickly on a series of projects resulting in one final project that provides your answer to the question.

Course Enrichment Component –

“Each course will include a minimum of five (5) hours of unmonitored appropriate experience outside of the classroom.”

The CEC assignment is to attend a faith based religious service or ceremony and write about your observations of ways that meditation and contemplation are integrated into the rituals and prayers. For example, you can attend a service of your own religion or try a service of another denomination or religion. See if you can find meditation or contemplative services within the worship systems. Is silence part of the service? Are there opportunities to learn and practice mystical techniques within the mainstream or independent approaches?

General Education Program Course
This course fulfills the First-Year Seminar category of the general education curriculum at Ramapo College. Common to all First-Year Seminar (FYS) courses, you will develop critical thinking skills that are basic to college level study, regardless of your area of interest. You will be reading, writing, and participating in thoughtful group discussions with the aim of developing the skills of a scholar. You will learn to support your
arguments using a foundation of knowledge and facts rather than simply using personal opinions and experiences.

This course fulfills several FYS categories through experiential learning of art and meditation practices; interdisciplinary studies especially Consciousness Studies, Philosophy, and Art; and international education since the meditation techniques will come from Asian, African, European, and American cultures.

**Writing Intensive (WI) Course**
Writing will be integrated into the life of this course. You will receive comments, direction, and support as you work on strengthening your writing skills. Your writing will be evaluated and returned in a timely fashion, allowing you to incorporate my comments into your future work. For help outside the classroom, please see me during my office hours and/or work with a writing tutor in the Center for Reading and Writing (CRW), Room: L-211, x7557, crw@ramapo.edu.

**Weekly Class Schedule (Subject to Change)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class topic, reading assignment</th>
<th>Writing Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2, Time and Place tab</td>
<td>Opening Convocation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 September 4</td>
<td>What is Meditation? Why meditate? How to meditate. Read: STILL POINT, pages 1-70</td>
<td>Book and Convocation TWO Reaction Papers, each will be 1 page single spaced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3 September 15, 18</td>
<td>Monday- Meditation and Spontaneous Writing Thursday: Field Trip to Hindu Temple Read: Handout: Yoga Sutras</td>
<td>Spiritual Autobiography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 5  | Monday: Introduction to Zen Buddhism  
| September 29 and October 2 | Thursday: Chinese Art  
|  | Read: STILL POINT, pages 71-end |
| Week 6 | Monday: Visiting Artist/Practitioner  
| October 6, 9 | Read: The Dhammapada  
|  | Chapters of personal interest |
| Week 7 | Monday: Native American Spirituality  
| October 13, 16 | Read Handout:  
|  | 112 Meditations |
| Week 8 | Monday: Tibetan Buddhist Meditation with Guest  
| October 20, 23 | Thursday: Foundations of American Zen |
| Week 9 | Monday: Problem Solving Through Meditation  
| October 27, 30 | Thursday: Foundations of Crazy Wisdom  
|  | Self Reflection Paper |
| Week 10 | Monday: Practices for Health and Healing with Kathy?  
| November 3, 6 | Thursday: Foundations of TM and other secular systems |
| Week 11 | Monday: Technology and Meditation, Guest  
| November 17, 20 | Thursday: Cultivating Love and Compassion  
|  | Read: Native American Wisdom Handout |
| Week 12 | **Monday: Service Learning Project**  
| November 24 | **Thanksgiving recess** (Wednesday, November 27th to Saturday, November 30th) |
| Week 13 | Monday: Personal Practices  
| December 1, 4 | Thursday: Personal Practices  
|  | Synthesis of papers 1-3 |
| Week 14 | Monday: Western Faith Based Meditation  
| December 8, 11 | Thursday: Panel- Jewish, Moslem, Christian |
| Week 15 | Monday and Thursday: Reviews of portfolios, writing, and presentations. Final Exam TBA |
Grading Policy

Writing Assignments  50
Meditation Practice  10
Art Practice  10
CEC  10
Final Exam  20

Meditation practice will be assessed based on the teacher’s observation of a disciplined approach including straight spine, relaxed neck and shoulders, and silence. Students will be evaluated based on the quality of their questions and responses to various techniques.

Art practice will be evaluated based on student application of color, wave, light, and other elements of art in relationship to the specific assignment and the general question that underlies all of the work: What is the color of silence?

Writing will be assessed for clarity and focus of writing, formal presentation, and content.

The CEC will be evaluated based on descriptions of student experiences.

Attendance Policy

In order to learn the various techniques and participate in the different parts of the seminar, students are encouraged to attend every class on time. There are circumstances that can’t be avoided and I will be sympathetic to the realities of your lives.

“College policy states that students must notify faculty within the first three weeks of the semester if they anticipate missing any classes due to religious observance.”

Electronic Forms of Communication

In accordance with College policy, I will use your Ramapo College email address (@ramapo.edu) to communicate with you about all course-related matters.

Policy on Academic Integrity

Students are expected to read and understand Ramapo College’s academic integrity policy, which can be found in the Ramapo College Catalog. Members of the Ramapo College community are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. Students who violate this policy will be referred to the Office of the Provost. An abbreviated version of this policy is described below.

Policy

All members of the Ramapo community are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. Since violations of academic integrity erode community confidence and undermine the pursuit of truth and knowledge at the College, academic dishonesty must be avoided.
**Procedures**
The Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs has the responsibility for the oversight and enforcement of the academic integrity policy and for making the policy an institutional priority. The Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs is also responsible for publishing the policy and for educating both faculty and students about the policy.

Faculty members play a crucial role in the academic integrity policy. They are responsible for educating their students about the importance of academic integrity and for communicating to students their expectations with respect to academic integrity in course work.

Students have the responsibility to understand the College academic integrity policy and to comply with the policy in all their academic work.

**Criteria**
There are four broad forms of academic dishonesty:

1. **Cheating**

Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents his or her mastery of material on a test or other academic exercise. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to:

- copying from another student's work;
- allowing another student to copy his/her work;
- using unauthorized materials such as a textbook, notebook or electronic devices during an examination;
- using specifically prepared materials such as notes written on clothing or other unauthorized notes, formula lists, etc., during an examination;
- collaborating with another person during an examination by giving or receiving information without authority;
- taking a test for another person or asking or allowing another to take the student’s own test.

2. **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism occurs when a person represents someone else's words, ideas, phrases, sentences, or data as one's own work. When a student submits work that includes such material, the source of that information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific footnote references; additionally, verbatim statements must be acknowledged through quotation marks.

To avoid a charge of plagiarism, a student should be sure to include an acknowledgment of indebtedness:

- whenever he or she quotes another person's words directly;
• whenever he or she uses another person's ideas, opinions, or theories, even if they have been completely paraphrased in one's own words;
• whenever he or she allows another individual to contribute to the work in some significant fashion (for instance, through editing, or sharing of ideas);
• whenever he or she uses facts, statistics, or other illustrative material taken from a source, unless the information is common knowledge.

Examples of standard citation formats can be found on the Library Website: Citation Manuals and Style Guides.

3. Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct includes the alteration of grades, involvement in the acquisition or distribution of unadministered tests, and the unauthorized submission of student work in more than one class. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

• changing, altering, falsifying, or being the accessory to the changing, altering, or falsifying of a grade report or form or other academic record, or entering any computer system, College office or building for that purpose;
• stealing, buying, selling, giving way, or otherwise obtaining all or part of any unadministered test or entering any computer system, College office or building, for the purpose of obtaining an unadministered test;
• submitting written work (in whole or in significant part) to fulfill the requirements of more than one course without the explicit permission of both instructors;
• disregarding policies governing the use of human subjects or animals in research;
• sabotaging another student’s work through actions designed to prevent the student from successfully completing an assignment;
• knowingly facilitating a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy by another person.

4. Fabrication

Fabrication refers to the deliberate use of invented information or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive. Examples of fabrication include, but are not limited to:

• citation of information not taken from the source indicated;
• listing of sources in a “works cited” that were not used in that project;
• altering, stealing and/or falsifying research data used in research reports, theses, or dissertations;
Fall 2014 Course Syllabus

INTD 101-42 4 Credits

- submission as one's own of any academic work prepared in whole or in part by others, including the use of another’s identity;
- falsifying information or signatures on registration, withdrawal, or other academic forms and records.

More on academic integrity can be found here:
http://www.ramapo.edu/catalog_11_12/academic-policies.html?coll10=open#CollapsiblePanel10

Students with Disabilities

“If you need course adaptation or accommodations because of a disability that has been documented with the Office of Specialized Services, please make an appointment with me.”

Please note: Students must be registered with the Office of Specialized Services (OSS) to receive accommodations. As you develop or revise your course syllabus, consider ways to make your course material accessible to students with disabilities. For additional information, contact the Office of Specialized Services (OSS) at x7514 or email at oss@ramapo.edu. Please do not place a time limit on when students may request accommodation, as they may not be aware of their need until later in the semester.