

**COURSE TITLE: BRINGING PEACE IN MOMENTS & TIMES OF STRESS**

**WA CLOCK HRS: 60**  
**OREGON PDUs: 60**  
**PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48: 60**

**NO. OF CREDITS: 6 QUARTER CREDITS**  
**[semester equivalent = 4.00 credits]**

**INSTRUCTOR: Brenda McKinney**  
**bbbrain@comcast.net**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The pressure to keep up with global events leads to feeling defeated and anxious. Over 77% of people experience stress, anxiety, and loneliness. Our minds begin to spin while coping with underlying anxiety and tension. This course will teach gratitude, mindfulness, stress reduction, and visualization strategies. You will be invited to leave behind your overthinking mind as you explore the reason behind the incessant chatter of our overcharged brain. Join me in embracing the renewal your soul longs for to feel more aware, focused, relaxed, and discerning. Learn how to slow down your pace and focus on the present moment while spending time listening to your inner voice. Join me and learn about stress and why we are addicted to the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs we hold.

This course is appropriate for teachers K-12, counselors, and school administrators.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

- Experienced relaxation practices that lead to slowing down and awareness
- Met your 'Monkey Mind' thinking
- Learned the levels of stress through assessments and analysis
- Practiced mindfulness activities that help soothe the body's stress response
- Built new rhythms and calming practices for daily living
- Experienced the power of visualization and positive affirmations
- Learned about the Vagal Nerve and how it soothes the body's stress response

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

---

**HOURS EARNED:**

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

---

---

**UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION**

**REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
  2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
  3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%
- 
- 

**CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)**

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering, determine with your district personnel, department head, or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

## **ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION**

### **REQUIRED TEXT**

Singer, Michael. 2007. *The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself*. New Harbinger Publications, Inc. ISBN: 978-1-57224-537-2  
Used on Amazon from \$12

### **OPTIONAL TEXT for 500 Level Assignment**

May, Katherine. 2020. *Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times*. New York: Riverhead Books. ISBN: 978-0-593189-481

None. All reading is online.

### **MATERIALS FEE**

REQUIRED TEXT: Singer, Michael. 2007. *The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself*. New Harbinger Publications, Inc. ISBN: 978-1-57224-537-2 Used on Amazon from \$12  
OPTIONAL TEXT for 500 Level Assignment May, Katherine. 2020. *Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times*. New York: Riverhead Books. ISBN: 978-0-593189-481

## **ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

### **A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION**

Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.

Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

#### **Assignment #1: Introduction**

For those participating in Group Collaboration, you must read and follow the instructions outlined in the Group Collaboration Guidelines. Click here for Guidelines. <https://www.hol.edu/about/group-collaboration>

- In Assignment #1, each participant must complete this assignment independently.
- There should be a minimum of (4) four group meetings during which the course content is discussed.
- Teleconferences or live meetings are acceptable. A good videoconference option is Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>).
- Each participant must attend at least 75% of the group meetings (a minimum of 3 of 4 meetings).

Reflect, take inventory, think about opening doors into a new way of thinking and being.  
In 250+ words share your motivation for being in this course and what has led you here.

#### **Assignment #2: Learning to be Present**

The journey begins with your intention and your willingness to proceed. You will have to set your intent to achieve extraordinary outcomes that only come through practice and repetition of what you are learning.

Opportunities will be provided to practice mindfulness and meditation to slow down and experience heightened awareness allowing you to observe and calm your Monkey Mind Thinking.

Read in your text, Chapter 1 & 2, *The Voice Inside your Head and Your Inner Roommate*, pgs. 7-29. View the following videos:

- ?Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche, *The Monkey Mind*  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/yCBalovT9U>
- ?How to Remove Negative Thoughts? Sadhguru

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/JCUC0mRkPo>

View these videos on awakening your consciousness

The videos invite you to expand your level of consciousness and the deep wisdom within you. They also invite you to see truths that lead you to see beyond everyday realities, a chance to move away from the brain that never stops thinking, the incessant chatter.

- Mike Seymour, First Video: In the Present Moment  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/699770189?h=45a696f6d6>
- Mike Seymour, Second Video: How to Be In The Present Moment 2nd video  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/699772666?h=5aa936cd25>
- Mike Seymour: Third Video: Mindful Moment  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/699877549?h=47e23a872b>

Breathing activity. Practice the 4-7-8 breathing technique for 3-5 days.

- [The 10 Best Yoga Breathing Exercises | Awaken – Chose 4-7-8](#)

In 500+ words, share your learning from the videos, your experience of being centered through the breathing practice, and the exploration of your overactive thinking brain, the Monkey Brain. What new goals do you have for yourself in this course?

### Assignment #3: Slowing Down

Read in your text, Chapter Three, Who Are You? Pgs. 23-30.

Watch the following videos:

- I AM THAT  
[https://www.youtube.com/embed/05bA9gX\\_Qgg](https://www.youtube.com/embed/05bA9gX_Qgg)
- Return from the Adventure of Experience to Yourself <https://www.youtube.com/embed/2LyHMle8cfw>
- The Silence That Is Listening  
[https://embed.ted.com/talks/lang/en/sister\\_true\\_dedication\\_3\\_questions\\_to\\_build\\_resilience\\_and\\_change\\_the\\_world](https://embed.ted.com/talks/lang/en/sister_true_dedication_3_questions_to_build_resilience_and_change_the_world)

Breathing activity.

Choose mindful walking to relax, get centered, and create space around your monkey brain.

View One (1) of the guided meditations on slow walking

- Walking meditation, Thich Nhat Hanh  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/90Pzn6NK4VQ>
- Walking meditation, Thich Nhat Hanh  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/QdO1vZJgUu0>

Repeat the slow walking 3-5 days. Bring your Monkey Mind Thinking back to the breath.

- Create a visual, graph, or artistic project showing the concept, I AM THAT on Canva. <https://www.canva.com/education>
- ?If you would like to create a different project, check this website for ideas.  
[23 Project Ideas to Stimulate Your Creativity.](#)

In 250+ words, respond to the deeper meaning that spoke to you through the assignment, videos, slow walking.

### Assignment #4: Identifying Stressors

Read in your text, Chapter 5, Infinite Energy, pgs. 41-47.

Take this online Stress Survey. Available to download.

- [STRESS QUESTIONNAIRE \(hcei.org\)](#)  
Determine your stress level with the simple scoring key at the end of the survey

Then do the following worksheet to identify your external and internal stressors. Identify your stress MO which is available at the end of

the worksheet.

- [WWS 1-46, p1-110 \(healthplan.org\)](#)

Read the following article: [Is My Stress Level Too High How Stress Levels Are Measured \(webmd.com\)](#)

For 3-5 days, practice one of the visualization techniques from the website below.

[How to Reduce Stress With Breathing Exercises.](#)

1. Give yourself five to ten minutes each day to sit in one place and focus on your senses.
2. Sit in different environments to see how it changes your experience.
3. Practice bringing your attention back to awareness on your breath when you notice the Monkey Mind thinking

Create a visual slide show to demonstrate your understanding of the following using one of the following apps.

1. Google slides: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1CtMkAFv>
2. Prezi: <https://prezi.com>
3. Adobe Spark: <https://www.adobe.com/express>

Consider the following:

- Your results on the stress questionnaire, including your stress MO
- New goals for identifying and relieving stressors
- Goals to create and embrace your energy flow
- The open or closed heart and what it means to be "blocked."

### Assignment #5: Overcoming Stressors

Watch the following videos:

- How to End Stress, Unhappiness, and Anxiety to Live in a Beautiful State  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/TqxxCYnAxo8>
- Triaging your crazy busy life Darria Long  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/nLjchFPvcQo>
- Read the following article, The Breath Project
  - [Mindfulness and the Breath | The Breath Project](#)  
Under the heading "Awareness," in the article "The Breath Project," choose 4-5 items to reduce stress.
  - Complete them for 3-5 days while noting your response or changes in how you feel.

Create a poster or a set of Google slides to discuss the following:

1. Ways to triage your crazy busy life. Also include how your chart includes the learning from the video and the reading.

Your audience may vary, but this assignment is directed to the students at the grade level you teach or intended for colleagues who are also struggling with stress. You can use one of the following free tools.

- Canva: <https://www.canva.com/create/infographics/>
- Venngage: <https://venngage.com/>
- PiktoChart: <https://piktochart.com/blog/using-infographics-classroom>

### Assignment #6: Embracing Moments in Life

In your text, read Chapters 6-7, Secrets of the Spiritual Heart and Transcending the Tendency to Close, pgs. 49-67.

View the following videos:

- You Are Life Itself  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/8vMEoPgg-PE>
- A GOOD DAY with Brother David Steindl-Rast  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/3Zl9puhwiyw>
- Happiness is All in Your Mind, Gen Kelsang Nyema



- GAME CHANGING VAGUS NERVE EXERCISE  
<https://youtu.be/qGFTpUkdHWA?t=98>  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/qGFTpUkdHWA>

Read the following article:

- Practice Deep Breathing for Deep Healing 3-5 days to experience the benefits:  
[The Benefits of Deep Breathing \(verywellmind.com\)](http://verywellmind.com)

Based on the above reading and videos:

- Implement two (2) to three (3) of the Vagus Nerve breathing exercises into your day or as often as possible
- Repeat for at least three to five days

In 250+ words, summarize your learning experience with the Vagus Nerve and its role in self-compassion. Also, discuss your learning about how not to fight with life but to live in awareness and the present moment. Include your reading, the videos, and the guided meditation in your response.

### Assignment #9: Measure Your Happiness

Read in your text, Chapter 10, Stealing Freedom for Your Soul, pgs. 89-98.

Read the following article: The New Science of Happiness. Available to download. Add the end of the article, complete the Measure of Your Happiness Questionnaire.

- [05011M2411.21....80L1R1 \(illinois.edu\)](http://05011M2411.21....80L1R1)

View the following video, Happiness is All in Your Mind, Gen Kelsang Nyema

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/xnLoToJVQH4>

In a 500+ word response, describe the significance of this article in terms of your own life.

1. Address the issues of importance to you and how you can apply them.
2. Were there any life-changing moments in reading your text?
3. How did the questionnaire and reading alter your own perception of happiness?

## ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

### B. LEARNING APPLICATION

In this section, you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. ?Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.



### Assignment #10: LESSON PLAN - Developing Community

Create a lesson or series of activities you would do with students conveying some aspect of what you gained from this course on becoming you. Identify the main themes and the subjects: e.g., reading, writing, arts, history, and media studies.

- The link for the new Lesson Plan.
- <https://www.hol.edu/about/lesson-template>
- What would you want students to come away with, and how would you evaluate your outcome?
- The lesson plan must be detailed, show creativity, and offer something I have not seen before. It must directly relate to learning in this course.

### Assignment #11: Personal Took Kit

Complete **two (2)** of the following:

#### OPTION A)

Create a personal tool kit while addressing each of the following. I would suggest pictures, drawings, doodling, and journaling. Be creative and choose a format that will serve as a reminder of your journey and how to keep centered moving forward.

Include the

1. Practices that you have learned that help you feel centered.
2. Things to be aware of that trigger your stress.
3. Ways to manage the stress that feel helpful.
4. Your favorite happy distractions.
5. Comfort objects past and present.
6. Ways you will be more mindful of technology.
7. Your indoor/outdoor calm space.
8. Your favorite physical activities.
9. Personal calming mantras.
10. Your own option-Feel free to change one or more if they do not fit in your journey to center yourself and become grounded.

**AND/OR**

#### OPTION B)

Find five (5) YouTube videos that could be shared with kids in the classroom appropriate to your grade level. Explain how you will include each clip into your curriculum while focusing on mindfulness and renewal.

Descriptions must be inclusive with credible reasons for use in the classroom. Send me a list of at least ten (10) that you watched, and then describe the five (5) and why you chose them for this project.

**AND/OR**

#### OPTION C)

Choose three favorite mindfulness quotes about renewal, peace, and moving away from the "mindstream," the non-stop busyness in the world.

Create a piece of art inspired by your learning as a reminder of the calm you seek to cultivate. The creativity and the inspiration are up to you. This project should be noteworthy and show effort appropriate to a 400-level assignment. You can choose the medium or ask permission from the instructor.

**AND/OR**

#### OPTION D)

Taking one little step in a new direction will lead you, one step at a time, from the negative of the past into the positive of the days ahead. You are your own guide and have the capacity to initiate a creative change for yourself. I AM THAT.

Be your own guide. This option is to help you initiate and do small changes that will create change just for you.

Choose **ONE (1)** of the following:

1. Create a soothing bowl for your home or classroom. Use a small bag of sand, then fill a bowl with it. Add in any little objects that feel good in your hand. It can be just a small collection of things you like to hold. You can include a small rake or any object that will help make this a calming place.
2. Create a calming glitter jar that can be used at home or in the classroom.
3. Calming tool of your own choice.
4. What are some things you can do this week to help gain space from your repetitive thoughts so you can rest in pure consciousness? List your top 5 places outside and inside and the positive feelings you associate with each.

### Assignment #12: Love Letter to Self

Watch the following video:

Mindfulness, Skillfulness, and a Love Letter, Thich Nhat Hanh, as inspiration for your love letter to self.

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/Bfd\\_a7Oz\\_eo](https://www.youtube.com/embed/Bfd_a7Oz_eo)

Write a love letter to yourself. If you have never done this before, follow the guidelines listed below:

Carve out ten + minutes of your day (A minimum of 2 pages).

- Find a comfortable position and grab a pen and paper.
- Set your timer for ten minutes and start writing yourself a letter.
- Kick it off with Dear {your name} and don't stop writing until the timer goes off. Then sign it Love, {your name}.

- You can write whatever you want. Just make sure it comes from a place of love. Just as you would do for others, tell yourself how amazing you are and why you're so incredible. Keep praising yourself for a full ten minutes.

The next day carve out time for another 10+ minutes but address this to your future self. (A minimum of 2 pages)  
Follow the same setup as writing a love letter to yourself.

- Write a letter to your future self
- Think of yourself a year from now.
- Give your future self-praise for all you've accomplished
- Tell your future self how proud you are.
- Keep the love going until the timer goes off.
- Continue with both letters until you feel you have included your learning from this course and your personal assessment of where you are.
- Once you get going on the letter, you will not need the 10-minute timer.

Also include a 250+ word reflection on the writing process and whether you could continue. Include the letter in your response.????

### **Assignment #13: (500 LEVEL) The Daily Journey**

1. Choose one research topic from the areas for study.
2. Create a plan for change based on what you have learned.
3. Be very specific about how you plan to incorporate these into your daily living in your response.
4. Research must include at least three (3) to five (5) substantial resources.
5. Your response to the research and your plan must be 500+ words.

#### **Areas for Study:**

1. Tech detox
2. Mindfulness other routines for sleep
3. Neuroscience of stress
4. Making stress your friend
5. Relaxation response and homeostasis
6. Neuroscience of mindfulness
7. Mindfulness and raising children

### **Assignment #14: (500 Level ONLY) Making Connections**

Complete one (1) of the following options:

#### **Option A)**

Read the following and be ready to respond:

- May, Katherine. 2020. Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times. Riverhead Books. ISBN: 978-0-593-18498-1. (256 pages)

Available from \$8.20 used from Amazon Prime Books.

In a 500+ word essay, describe the significance of this book in terms of your own life.

Address the issues of importance and your thoughts on wintering.

- Share your moments of wintering.
- What was most significant for you?
- Were there any life-changing moments in the read?

**OR**

#### **Option B)**

Journaling: You can research prompts and create your own journal OR you can purchase Mindful Minutes: A Journal, by Goldie Hawn, 2015. (137 pages)

#### **Ideas for prompts**

- Complete sections of the journal or create prompts for 2 weeks.
- Choose to write at the same time of day to establish the habit.



- Items you are grateful for can be inanimate or animate, material or abstract, as general or specific as you want. The point is finding things you are grateful for by looking, listening, watching, and allowing your senses to be on high alert.
- Although not typically considered a form of journaling, doodling and mindfulness coloring are useful techniques that can easily be done in a journal or incorporated with the writing. You could consider both methods. While doodling, you can reflect on the same gratitude instruction used above or focus on the doodles and making the lines connect. Self-reflection and gratitude are the themes of the journal, along with a mindful do-over.

Read:

- [Journaling for Mindfulness: 44 Prompts, Examples and Exercises \(positivepsychology.com\)](https://www.positivepsychology.com/journaling-for-mindfulness-44-prompts-examples-and-exercises/)
- [25 Mindfulness Journal Prompts For Present Moment Awareness \(mindfulzen.co\)](https://www.mindfulzen.co/25-mindfulness-journal-prompts-for-present-moment-awareness/)

In 500+ words, discuss your journaling experience. What did you discover? What were the surprises?  
 ???????How did this day-to-day analysis assist you in becoming more of who you are and how you teach?

**C. INTEGRATION PAPER**

Assignment #15: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

**SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER**

**(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)**

Write a 400-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

**INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:**

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:**

Brenda McKinney, CEO of Vancouver, WA based BrainVolution, is a developer and dynamic facilitator of workshops that teach practical thinking and learning tools for raising student achievement with the brain in mind. She has trained educators throughout the Pacific Northwest and is a popular presenter because of her ability to motivate, make things fun, and teach practical techniques for the classroom that can be used immediately. Brenda continues to read hundreds of books and articles on the subject of neuroscience and searches for the answer to success for every student. Her work with at-risk students and those with reading problems have made her a popular speaker at the state, regional and national level.

Brenda is able to synthesize the new research and continues to address the role of how to use the latest findings to create high achievement classroom. She brings 30+ years of experience at the elementary, middle school, high school and university level as a mentor teacher, consultant, motivational speaker, university instructor, and reading specialist. Brenda has her Master's in Education from Washington State University and is nationally certified in Brain Based Learning through the renowned Jensen Corporation, led by Eric Jensen, a noted international spokesperson for neuroscience and education.

Brenda will inspire and motivate you with her energy, enthusiasm and knowledge. Her wisdom, techniques, and brain based approach to education will inspire you and challenge you to meet the demands of this ever changing world.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**BRINGING PEACE IN MOMENTS & TIMES OF STRESS**

- Bostock, Richie. 2020. Exhale: 40 Breathwork Exercises to Help You Find Your Calm, Supercharge your Health, and Perform at Your Best. Penguin Random House. ISBN: 978-0-14-313532-6.
- Brooks, Arthur C. 2022. From Strength to Strength: Finding Success, Happiness, and Deep Purpose in The Second Half of Life.

- Portfolio/Penguin. ISBN: 978-0-593-19148-4.
- Hayden, Wendy. 2021. The Vagus Nerve Gut Brain Connection: Heal Your Vagus Nerve and Improve Gut Health.
  - May, Katherine. 2020. Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times. Riverhead Books. ISBN: 978-0-593-18498-1.
  - Misher, Peter. 2021. For All You Do: Self Care and Encouragement for Teachers. Andrew McNeel Publishing ISBN: 978-1-5248-6780-0.
  - Lyons, Rebekah. 2019. Rhythms of Renewal: Trading Stress and Anxiety for a Life of Peace and Purpose. ISBN: 978-0-310-35614-1.
  - Singer, Michael A. 2007. The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself. Harbinger Publications. ISBN: 978-1-57224-537-2.
  - Tsilimparis, John MFT & Daylle Deanna Schwartz. 2014. Retrain Your Anxious Brain: Practical and Effective Tools to Conquer Anxiety. Hanover Square Press. ISBN: 978-1-335-42569-0.
  - Tudor, Una L. 2019. The Little Book of Breathing. Simple Practices for Connecting with Your Breath. Hachette Book Group. ISBN: 978-1-85675-396-8.

## Videos

- The 10 Best TED Talks on Mindfulness: Inspirational Ideas to Find Inner Peace - The Joy Within  
[https://thejoywithin.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/best\\_ted\\_talks\\_mindfulness.jpg](https://thejoywithin.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/best_ted_talks_mindfulness.jpg)
- Top 10 Talks on Buddhist Lifestyle  
<https://blog.sivanaspirit.com/top-10-ted-talks-on-buddhist-lifestyle/>
- The Top 10 TED Talks On Buddhist Lifestyle: Mindfulness, Happiness, And Compassion (sivanaspirit.com)  
<https://www.theurbanlist.com/a-list/best-ted-talks-midfulness>
- How Mindfulness Changes the Emotional Life of the Brain  
<https://youtu.be/7CBfCW67xT8?t=2>
- How Meditation Redefines Pain, Happiness, and Satisfaction  
<https://youtu.be/JVwLjC5etEQ?t=3>