

## ① POINTS OF DEPARTURE

Session 1 begins, as all our meetings will, with a short, guided meditation and a fun ice-breaker. Then we will engage ideas and readings that justify and anchor this Workshop. The report, [Assessing the State of Contemplative Practices in the U.S.](#) (Duerr, 2011) details increasing rates of contemplative practice in non-religious settings and suggests a burgeoning “Contemplative Movement.” A complementary chapter from the book, *The Mindful Librarian* (Moniz, 2015), provides “[A Brief Introduction to Mindfulness: Origins, Science, the Brain, and Practice](#)” (Monitz & Slutzky, 2016). For this Workshop, we will use the wonderful [Tree of Contemplative Practices](#) from the [Center for Contemplative Mind in Society](#) as a roadmap to explore the wide variety of contemplative practices (the [webinar](#) by the Tree’s creator, Maia Duerr offers helpful background). As you prepare for Session 1, consider: *How should the field of Information Studies and its information professions be involved in these trends? Also reflect upon your own explorations, if any, with contemplative practice and mindfulness.*

## ⑥ COURSE CONCLUSION

Our last session together marks a beginning rather than an ending. A student team will lead us through a CREATIVE contemplative practice (e.g. journaling, music and singing, contemplative arts) focused upon this very course, with an eye to the future. We will reflect upon what we have learned and ways to integrate the ideas and techniques into the next stages our lives. The activities will specifically address contemplative approaches to the job search and careers within information institutions.

## ⑤ INFORMATION, CONTEMPLATION & LIBRARIES

In the past decade, universities and colleges have started to support the well-being of students via contemplative practice based in the academic library (Bamber & Schneider, 2016; Lynch et al., 2018), and scholars have cast the public library as a contemplative space (Pyati, 2019). Strategies have been articulated for “Applying Mindfulness to the Undergraduate Research Process” (Eshleman & Slutzky, 2016) and for “Mindful Reference Service” (Eshleman & Slutzky, 2016). Using the Faculty of Information’s Inforum as one such example, we will analyze the emergence, use, and impact of the iRelax space and Mindful Moments program. In class, Hugh Samson, an MI student who has taken iRelax and Mindful Moments as a topic for an ethnographic thesis, will share emergent themes from his research. We will discuss: *How should libraries relate to the idea of contemplation?* Near the end of Session 5, we will learn a fourth new contemplative practice that is RITUAL/CYCLICAL (e.g. establishing a sacred/spiritual space, retreats, ceremonies and rituals based in spiritual or cultural traditions).

## ② MINDFUL TECH

Professor [David Levy](#), of the University of Washington, is the contemporary pioneer who has drawn attention in Information Studies to contemplation and its relationship to information and technology. Levy’s work is inspired by the sharp contrast between his fast-paced, information-intensive career in Silicon Valley and his artful, contemplative hobby of calligraphy. In 2006, he designed and taught the course *Information and Contemplation* to iSchool students with the objectives to explore various contemplative practices and to focus these techniques and understandings specifically on problems of information overload, fragmented attention, busyness and the speedup of everyday life. Levy’s course served as the foundation for the book [Mindful Tech: How to Bring Balance to Our Digital Lives](#) (Levy, 2016), which teaches the reader to observe and then mindfully manage their relationship with personal technologies. While reading this book, try the *Mindful Check-In* activity on pages 188-189 and come to class prepared to discuss Levy’s ideas and your *Check-In* experiences. Our last hour will be spent in the first of five student-run sessions to learn about contemplative practice that entails MOVEMENT (e.g. Qui gong, yoga, labyrinth walking).

## INF1005/6 INFORMATION WORKSHOP: INFORMATION AND CONTEMPLATION

Contemplative practice is an umbrella term that encompasses various approaches, disciplines, and methods for developing attentiveness, awareness, compassion, concentration, presence, wisdom, transformation, and a deepened sense of meaning and purpose. This INF1005/1006 Workshop introduces students at the Faculty of Information to contemplative practice and explores its potential for sparking positive change in Information Studies and in information institutions. The goals of the course are as follows: To examine theoretical points of contact between Contemplative Studies and Information Studies; to imagine contemplative programs, services, and resources for the betterment of information institutions and their publics; and to give participants a structured opportunity to develop their own contemplative practice. Course design by Jenna Hartel.

## ③ CONTEMPLATIVE STUDIES

Next, we will reconnoiter the emerging interdiscipline of Contemplative Studies. As preparation for Session 3, watch [Contemplative Studies: An Overview and Current State of Our Field](#) by the firebrand, [Dr. Louis Komjathy](#) (alternatively, you may read Chapter 1 of his textbook, [Introducing Contemplative Studies](#)). From these sources, digest definitions for *contemplative studies*, *contemplative practice*, *contemplative experience*, *contemplative science*, and *contemplative pedagogy*. Along the way, note Komjathy’s model for the “holistic” understanding of contemplative practice and the diagram of academic disciplines that populate Contemplative Studies. Then, from our own literature, read the article by [Dr. Jarkko Kari](#) and [myself](#), [Information and the Higher Things in Life: Addressing the Pleasurable and the Profound in Information Science](#). Based upon these readings, in class we will discuss: *Is there a place for Information Studies at the Contemplative Studies table? What unique ideas or perspective can we contribute?* During the last hour of class we will learn a second contemplative practice that is ACTIVIST (e.g. pilgrimage, vigils, bearing witness).

## ④ CONTEMPLATIVE INQUIRY

Nearing the end of this course, we will be newly aware of contemplation as a way of knowing that is centered upon inner, subjective experience. As such, it contrasts with the scientific method, a dominant intellectual tradition based upon the observation and measurement of external phenomena. In Session 4 we will approach contemplative practice as a research process and epistemology in its own right and as an alternative and complement to the scientific method. [Dr. Valerie Janesick](#) has coined the term *contemplative inquiry*, that is, “...qualitative techniques that place a deep and serious emphasis on thought in every component of a study of the social world. From the first germ of an idea about a study, the design of the study is open to mindfulness... and it relies on intuition, creativity, and the imagination” (Janesick, 2014). We will probe this theme by reading a conversation between Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, and five world-renown quantum physicists (Zajonc, 2004). Consider: *As future researchers, how do you reconcile the scientific method and contemplative practice to create a holistic way of knowing?* To close Session 4 we learn another contemplative practice that is RELATIONAL (e.g. council circle, deep listening, storytelling).