

2021

Diploma of Meditation & Mindfulness

Course Information Handbook

Course Information

A guide to Meditation & Mindfulness
Teacher Training

Meditation is stillness of mind.

Mindfulness is meditative awareness while active.

AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF CLASSICAL YOGA

BLACKBURN MEDITATION AND MINDFULNESS

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INTRODUCTION

In the diploma course, you will study mind and self from many approaches to meditation, and its companion, mindfulness, and you will practice methods to help others to stillness and awareness. You will acquire the skill sets to do so.

For most people, most of the time, the state of stillness is quiet awareness of the activity of the mind and body - cognitive, sensory and emotional - without engaging in it. This is mindfulness and, with practice, it can become an every-moment state.

Profound stillness is sublime, a non-cognitive state of being. For all serious meditators, it will be experienced once in a while, though, for most the old mental view of self quickly reasserts itself; for some, it becomes a normal state that leads to enlightenment, self-realisation, liberation from the grip of the ego.

One thing that becomes obvious, in either state, is that our sense of self, and our sense of reality, are functions of the mind. A fundamental question then is, “does the mind give us an accurate experience of reality and self?” You must consider this before you go on to teach others.

You will be expected to become able to help your clients or students achieve a personal practice of meditation and mindfulness, without reference to any religion, philosophy, new age concepts, and with no escapist fantasies. However, there cannot be competence in helping others without first exploring some of the implications of the way we normally use the mind, and the outcomes and implications of practising emptiness of mind. One of the best ways to do that is to use the help of people who have gone before, and left help-manuals behind – for instance in Yoga, Zen, Taoism, Sufiism, even some of the Greek philosophers. Some aspects of Christian mysticism go there too; and modern cognitive theories may approach the question of mind and self, though few go so far as the mystical disciplines.

The diploma of meditation and mindfulness gives you a thorough understanding of the principles and outcomes of emptying the mind of thought and conceptualisation.

This program gives students the skills to teach meditation and mindfulness to others, from a traditional perspective and from the complementary medicine perspective.

As you undertake this program, you will find that your study and personal practice is life-changing. You will have a profound understanding of your deepest self and an ability to help your clients with a flexible approach using the skills you have acquired and the methods you most prefer.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

What you will achieve more specifically

- You will understand and apply numerous methods to help people into meditation and/or mindfulness
- You will experience leading and teaching meditation
- You will learn how to design a meditation and/or mindfulness course
- You will experience a variety of meditation group settings
- You will understand the difference between still-mind meditation and active mind methods and will be able to teach both
- You will understand the history and purpose of meditation over its evolution to modern times, including significant schools of traditional meditation and major figures in the modern era
- You will gain an ability to see the similarities and differences between meditation and mindfulness, between traditional and modern, and between goal-oriented meditation and empty-mind – what they have in common and where they differ, and their implications for living
- You will have a deeper experience of what one’s “self” is
- You will understand the biology of stress and how it can be moderated by various means, including meditation and mindfulness
- You will learn about issues in the mental states of meditation, the similarities and differences between a transcendent state and a psychotic state
- You will learn about cautions and referrals in teaching meditation and consider whether meditation is appropriate indiscriminately
- You will learn how to read research and keep up to date with scientific views of meditation and mindfulness

CURRICULUM

These are the core subjects of the course.

MIND AND REALITY

- The self-construct
- The mind gives you an experience of itself rather than of reality
- Implications of recognising that the mind constructs a model of reality

STRESS

- Biology of Stress and associations with illness
- Sympathetic and Parasympathetic nervous systems and their functions
- Cognitive aspects of stress
- Cognitive self-interventions to become more resilient to stress vs meditation

HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF MEDITATION

- Origins and world spread
- Traditional still-mind meditation, purpose
- Development towards modern meditation, purpose(s)
- Mindfulness in traditional meditation, purpose
- Mindfulness in modern times, purpose(s)

REPRESENTATIVE STUDIES - MANY TRADITIONS

- Zen
- Buddhism
- Taoism
- Sufiism
- Christian mysticism
- Greek mysticism
- Yoga

COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE MODEL OF MEDITATION AND MINDFULNESS

- Biometric approach to meditation
- Nervous system and the biology of meditation
- Meditation and Mindfulness as stress and illness amelioration
- Mindful Awareness as focus of self-help
- Two paradigms of meditation and mindfulness
- Two paradigms of health

COMPETENCY TO TEACH AND COMMUNICATE

LEARNING, PRACTISING, OBSERVING

- Learn meditation and mindfulness
- Observe interactions with learners
- Containing conversation to keep learning focused

TOOLS FOR TEACHING

- Tools and Methods teaching Meditation and Mindfulness
- Predictable issues that come up for beginners in a learner's program
- Analysing class processes

PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING

- Class Design
- Teaching Methodology
- Purposeful planning and assessment
- Practicum: design own class, implement, evaluate

CRITICAL ISSUES IN TEACHING MEDITATION

- Ethics in teaching meditation and mindfulness
- Gender issues in teaching meditation, mindfulness or spirituality
- Clinical issues in teaching meditation
- Screening potential clients
- Referring clients
- Accessing and reading scientific research

BUSINESS PRINCIPLES

- Estimating costs of the business - lease, advertising, ancillary costs
- Estimating required income, fee per class or client
- Cash flow
- Tax Obligations
- Insurance – public liability, personal indemnity

WEEKEND RETREAT

- Experience a communal environment
- Learn the issues of running a retreat
- Revision, practice, meditation leading, teaching
- Immersion in mindfulness
- Practice in relating to others in the “loving truthfulness” of a meditative approach rather than through social conventions

ABOUT THE TOPICS OF THE CURRICULUM

MIND AND REALITY

This is a major part of the program, requiring much contemplation and revision of outlook and notions of one's personal self. A benchmark for continuation is a capacity to understand the difference between "actual-self" and "illusory-self".

The simple reality of human experience is that the mind and I-self is a process of the mind and body. We have to stop imagining it as a substantial entity beyond the processes that give rise to it. No clear understanding of meditation or mindfulness is possible without this.

STRESS

Understanding the basic biological factors of stress per se and stress underlying illnesses

As meditation and mindfulness is often associated with stress management, a clear understanding of the biological and emotional factors that stress entail is necessary to inform your teaching, and to better understand your own stress response and the stresses of your clients. Within the topic are included a brief account of the biology of stress; Cognitive Behaviourist perspective on stress; cognitive self-interventions into habitual thought-patterns that perpetuate stress and anxiety; relaxation methods to calm the mind or release muscle tension.

Stress and its concomitants are the connection form the link between traditional meditation, mindfulness, and the Complementary Medical model.

HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF MEDITATION

Still Mind transcends the personal self; awareness (mindfulness) is a necessary skill.

Meditation and Mindfulness are ancient, not recently invented. What have its origins, far back in history, got in common with modern practice? We look into the origins of meditation and its spread across the world; its purpose as discussed in records and literature; and the move towards modern non-spiritually based meditation and mindfulness, to discover if there is an intrinsic difference of purpose between ancient and modern and what might be best suited to different clients.

REPRESENTATIVE STUDIES - MANY TRADITIONS

In this topic, we explore how different traditions have expressed a similar understanding in different ways - opening our minds to the reality of what we teach in our own era.

COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE MODEL OF MEDITATION AND MINDFULNESS

The development of meditation and mindfulness as Complementary medicine, when scientists led the movement away from spirituality and towards scientific method, and research-based practice and teaching. We look also to see if there are aspects of meditation or mindfulness that have been missed in the scientific evaluation of the discipline.

LEARNING, PRACTISING, OBSERVING

An essential aspect of teaching meditation is to be able to put into words information about a state that is empty of words and concepts. You must communicate rationally and analytically about a state which is neither rational nor irrational. This is confusing for many, but a rational communication can be achieved.

Learn Meditation and Mindfulness from a masterful teacher and observe class reactions and how they are handled. Observe skilful teaching of difficult issues of meditation and their outcomes, even to beginners and in a brief setting. While you must not plagiarise copyright material, you will learn much from analysing the way the teaching delivers what it does.

In the classroom, you will also have to learn to contain conversation rather than be led by aimless interjections – otherwise the time goes by, and your class goes over-time while your class plan goes out the window. Better to learn class control before you get out to teach!

There are many other opportunities to meditate and mingle amongst meditators, to enhance your meditative outlook. You will be offered opportunities to lead meditation or discussion and receive feedback.

Sitting in a weekly Mindful and Resilient group will extend your understanding of what mindfulness means in everyday interactions and busy-ness. You will also observe how frequently awareness is absent, and how awareness can be developed.

A daily practice of one hour of still-mind meditation must be established, and a structured journal will be undertaken. A solid practice of meditation is an intrinsic requirement for anyone who seeks to teach meditation to others!

TOOLS FOR TEACHING

The method is not the meditation – for instance, mantra is something that occupies the mind to keep it from wandering. But it is active mind, not still mind. So you might have to decide, do you want to teach activity of mind, or stillness? If stillness, the mantra is a tool to get the mind prepared for stillness yet must be relinquished sooner or later.

If active mind, what about visualisation? There is an element of fantasy in visualisation, is that what you want? If so, would you equate fantasy with meditation? What then?

For mindfulness, you might teach clients how to observe anger rather than engage with it. Very good! But what about the deeper mental processes that lead to the angry reaction in the first place? How can one become aware of those?

A rule of thumb might be that meditation – or true mindfulness – is the state when the method stops. The benefit of a method, or tool, is that it teaches the mind to maintain a concentrated state, and it is something to return to when concentration lapses; but is in no real sense any different from normal thinking.

PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING

Learning to focus your teaching plans. New teachers are usually eager to find clients and spill their excitement on to them! When the principles of teaching are better considered, perhaps you will think a bit more analytically about evaluating your plan... for instance, will you be able to say in a few words what the point of each lesson is, how you will help the client to understand it, and how you will know whether your teaching has been effective for the client. That would be a good start. And then to construct a well-designed 4-week learning program, implement it, and allow yourself to be assessed by your clients and your peers and your supervisor. Humbling but useful.

Clarifying and evaluating your goals ensures that you achieve your purpose. You must not make waffly irrational statements which rely on people trusting your word, as you have not helped them to see anything for themselves. Nor is it proper to make people dependent on you. Good meditation teachers ought to be able to help their students become self-sufficient in their own practice.

CRITICAL ISSUES IN TEACHING MEDITATION

A meditation teacher does not have to be a doctor, psychologist or a psychiatrist. Nevertheless, there are some issues that ought to be considered. Is meditation good for everyone? Are there potentially negative effects on some people? Are transcendent meditation states equivalent to psychotic states? How can you know if a person presenting as a client might be suffering from some mental affliction which mean you should refer the person rather than working with him or her yourself? Can you do anything to find out first?

BUSINESS PRINCIPLES

Eagerness ought to be tempered by the realistic issues of venue, publicising your offerings, ancillary costs like insurance, and working out how much you will have to bring in just to break even. But then, there is also the opportunity cost of not working at something else. Breaking even does not pay for your bread and butter.

These issues are enough to bring anyone down to earth!

WEEKEND RETREAT

The weekend retreat is a requirement for you, and it will be an enjoyment, too. However, there is work involved. You will interact with other meditators. You will learn about voluntary work in the kitchen and cleaning. You will lead and share meditation sessions. You will have the opportunity to for a quiet meeting with your supervisor.

You will also learn what is involved in running a retreat. This will be helpful to you after you settle in as a teacher.

The weekend will incur accommodation costs.

PREREQUISITES

- 2 years' meditation practice
- Willingness to practise still-mind meditation for at least 30 minutes per day - though one hour each day is recommended
- Internet access

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

- Attendance: Recommended 100%, acceptable 80%. Meditation Australia requires that 30% must be face to face. This is insufficient for on-campus students and arrangements must be made for absence by necessity.
- Attend meditation events as required
- Complete assignments as given

Assignments will be issued with binding submission times. As this is adult learning, the focus is not on graded work, pass marks or fail grades. Some of the work may entail simply reading some passages and contributing to an email conversation about it. Some will be written but will not be a burdensome load. Essential assignments relate to developing your own Learn Meditation program.

ASSESSMENT

ATTENDANCE

- Attendance at all curriculum classes is required
- Failure to attend less than 80% of classes will result in non-award of the diploma unless arrangements are made for absence by necessity.
- Attendance at non-core meditation events is required though somewhat negotiable
- For Distance Ed students (at least 100km from Blackburn) arrangements can be made for variable access to the content while still meeting Meditation Australia requirements)

ASSIGNMENTS

This is adult learning and you will get the development from your willingness to explore as we work through the year. Grades are not given. The requirement is Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

- Failure is entailed by non-submission of the required work.
- Success is your evolving understanding of yourself in a profound way, and your capacity to understand others and help them through meditation/mindfulness
- Further work must be undertaken if your work is marked Unsatisfactory

HOURS ENTAILED

COMPULSORY

ATTENDANCE: 150 HOURS; ASSIGNMENTS: approximately 20; DAILY MEDITATION 30 mins minimum, 1 hour recommended

- Sundays and Zoom contact: 120
- Learn and observe: 10 (in classes open to the public. Students will also practice within course hours)
- Learn to Meditate (covers skills and tools for your students, as well as you!): 6
- Retreat: residential 3.00 pm Friday – 3.00 pm Sunday: 20 working hours including mindfulness in daily activities

You will be given a timetable on the first day of the course

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

- Meditation journal x 6
- Documents, such as class plan, screening instrument, feedback form, report
- Assignments as required

TEACHERS

SWAMI SHANTANANDA (MATAJI)

Course Leader

Formal qualifications

BA (Melb)
Grad Dip Arts (Social Science) (Equiv Psychology degree)
Postgrad Dip Health Psychology (La Trobe)
Former Secretary Gawler Foundation
Former President Yoga Australia (then named YTAA)
Life Member Yoga Australia
Member Meditation Australia

Experience



Mataji is a very experienced meditator and teacher and her experience in meditation is deep and broad – hers is a unique background, one that is rare in anyone's capacity to teach and explain meditation in all its varieties.



Gawler Meditation Teachers ca 1988

- Her personal practice is over 35 years.
- Preferred method is still-mind, non-dualist meditation
- Additional training to teach meditation for health, well-being and stress-reduction (Gawler Foundation)
- Learnt scientific basis for meditation Postgrad Dip Health Psych (La Trobe Uni)
- Comfortable also with people from less formal and less academic groups – ashrams, spiritual groups and even spiritualist groups.

SARASVATI SALLY DAWSON

Practical Teaching, Cerebral Functioning and Meditation Research

Classroom practice
Understanding the brain in meditation
Research on Meditation and Cerebral Functioning

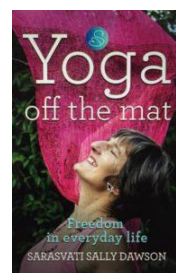
Formal Qualifications

Bachelor of Applied Science (Medical Technology) (Monash)
Graduate Diploma in Business Administration (Monash)
Diploma of Classical Yoga (Australian College of Classical Yoga)
Member of Meditation Australia
Senior Teacher, Yoga Australia



Experience

Sarasvati has a long personal practice in meditation and has been teaching meditation in the first place under licence from Swami Shantananda, and more recently in her Meditation Matters workshops. She is the author of *Yoga Off the Mat*, exploring a meditative approach to Yoga in everyday life



DANNI BROWN

Principles of Teaching

Teaching Methodology
Class Design
Student Coordinator, ACCY



Formal Qualifications

B Ed Deakin
Diploma of Classical Yoga
Diploma of Meditation and Mindfulness
Principal Australian College of Classical Yoga

Danni brings a professional understanding of curriculum and class design, as well as a wonderful insight into personal change. She is the Principal of the Australian College of Classical Yoga, teaches Mindful Flow Yoga and teaches the non-dualist philosophy of Yoga as well as Class Design in the ACCY Yoga Teacher Training program

ROBERT BAKER

Business Principles

Understanding the principles of Cash flow, ABN, Tax lodgement, insurance and other essentials of setting up your practice.

Formal Qualifications

B Sc (La Trobe)
MBA (Melbourne)



Experience

Rob has been the Administrator of ACCY for many years, and has run the Business Principles program for the Yoga Teacher trainees at ACCY.

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIANCE

The course more than meets the membership requirements for Meditation Australia, and is endorsed by Meditation Australia

Personal Practice:

Applicants will need to demonstrate their commitment to a personal meditation practice for at least two years prior to making their application for membership.

Areas of Competency	Description of competency	Provisional Membership	Full Membership
Theory and Guided Practice or Meditation Technique/s	This field of study aims to provide the student with a depth of experience of various meditative techniques and awareness of the effects and implications of different practices. Incorporates development of a vocabulary to enable the articulation of meditation techniques and practice both subjectively and objectively.	30 hours	30 hours
Teaching Methodology	Study and practice of teaching methodologies including how to present meditation in easily understood terms; how to guide meditation skilfully; how to recognise signs of altered states; how to structure group/individual sessions; how to adapt a teaching environment to meet specific needs.	30 hours	30 hours
Integrated Practice and Teaching (Practicum)	Teaching practice of students in various settings, under the supervision of a more senior teacher (including under a mentoring/peer review system).		30 hours
Student Management	Ethical responsibilities including confidentiality, legalities, insurance, membership with professional bodies, referral to and from health and mental health practitioners.	5 hours	5 hours
Physiology, Psychology and Neuroscience of meditation	Introductory understanding of brain functioning and the impact of meditation on behaviour and cognitive functions. Understanding of therapeutic aspects of meditation on stress, anxiety, pain and illness.	10 hours	10 hours
Philosophy, History and Complementary forms	Study of meditation history and philosophies from various texts. Investigation into use of meditation in complementary forms such as Yoga, Chi Gong, Tai Chi meditation.	5 hours	5 hours
Speciality areas	Specific areas of study, for example, teaching meditation to children. Learning hours in a specific competency may help demonstrate competency in some of the above areas.	As applicable	As applicable
Overall Contact Hours	30% minimum contact hours are required across all curriculum areas.		
Total Hours		80 hours	110 hours

FEES

Students must demonstrate their ability to meet the costs of the program: \$3750

Deposit required with application: \$500

Remainder paid in quarterly instalments, that is, in advance of each semester.

Residential weekend retreat: expect an amount in the region of \$400. Students will be offered the retreat at the least possible viable fee.

APPLYING FOR ENTRY TO THE COURSE

*Please print and submit the following.

APPLICATION FORM

The application form can be found over page (p15)

Return instructions can be found on P16.

Tell us a bit about yourself and why you want to teach meditation

** Please note that Word pagination of this document does not include the front cover and non-content pages. Your printer probably will. To print the Application Form, choose the PDF page number, which you will see if you look in the tool bar.*

*** the application form is also sent separately as a printable word document*

- a) A letter describing why you wish to undertake this course, including a description of how you feel about life and your place in the social environment
- b) A letter of reference from your meditation teacher. (if that is not possible, include instead a statutory declaration attesting to your background and practice.)
- c) A note from your Health Provider (if applicable)

Please post or email your application and supporting documents, to:

Australian College of Classical Yoga
2/6 The Highway
Mt Waverley Vic 3149

Email: meditate@blackburnmeditation.com.au

Blackburn Meditation and Mindfulness is a branch of the Australian College of Classical Yoga

Note also:

- i. A deposit of \$500 is required with this application.
- ii. A chat with one of our staff is required as part of the application process.



Swami Shantananda

<https://www.swamishantananda.com.au/>

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