**NYU Gallatin School of Individualized Study**

Integrating Mind and Body  
ARTS-UG 40.1105  
Fall 2013  
Tuesdays 6:20-9:00pm  
Studio Rm 430

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**Course Syllabus**

**Course Description:**

This workshop will examine the theory and practice of Body Awareness Techniques Kinetic Awareness (and its predecessor’s), the Alexander Technique, and the Feldenkrais Method. You will learn how each innovator developed their particular method and will practice the mind/body exercises from each technique. Body Awareness refers to the sensing of one's body through focused attention in order to function more fully in life and the creative process. These methods require a commitment and ability to notice sensations, feelings, differences, and changes within the body. Profound changes mentally and physically may be achieved, including enhanced consciousness.

"As you learn to concentrate and listen to all your voices, not only your physical one, but the creative consciousness and the psyche as well, you gain the power to use all your innate abilities."  
-Elaine Summers-

These methods honor your own innate bodily wisdom and teach you how to enhance it. In doing so you will gain a better understanding of the relationship of tension to posture and how it affects body use. You will learn to use your body more safely and efficiently in creative endeavors and daily tasks.
Course Structure:

Each class will be divided between lecture, discussion, and experiential learning. Observations from the week will be discussed. There are weekly required reading assignments that will be discussed that enhance your understanding of the material presented in class. The discussion will be student lead.

Course Expectations/Requirements:

You are encouraged to share your experience of class work and outside experience as well as your response to readings. You are expected to practice daily body scans and the exercises learned weekly and write about your experience. You are expected to attend every session and arrive on time. Material presented in class is unique and cannot be made up. There are no "excused" absences. You are required to wear clothing you can move in, this is important, you can change into comfortable clothes before class in the bathrooms. If you have any limitations or special needs please inform the instructor so she can accommodate you.

This is an experiential class. You will learn and practice methods on your own body. Yet, this experience can only be measured in terms of your reflection on this experience. This is achieved through written work. You will have a mid-term and final project as well as journaling and essays. Daily Body Scans are required along with the practice of breathing. All work must be in hard copy and type written.

Course Objectives:

- To learn the history, philosophy and theory of the somatics educators, Elsa Gindler, Elaine Summers, F.M. Alexander, and Moshe Feldenkrais.

- To learn and practice the methods of Kinetic Awareness, The Alexander Technique, and Awareness Through Movement.

- To increase your awareness of your body in daily use and if applicable, in performance.

- To document your experience and learning through written work.

- To develop a language to analyze and discuss bodily communication.

Required Texts:

*Discovering The Body's Wisdom*, Mirka Knaster (Bantam) NYU Book Store
Selected Reading Packet, University Copy, 27 Waverly Place
Assignments

Writing
To write about your bodily experiences pay attention to the wording in the articles and in Knaster as to how to describe body use and learning.

The Journal
When you are assigned a journal entry you will make four titled, dated, entries. The entries must include all of the following:

   First Entry: Reaction to Class
   · What did you notice/learn about your body specifically?
     "my breath was shallow when we started"
     "the sides of my body don't feel even"
   · What was your reaction to the exercises?
     "the small of my back was lower to the ground"
     "my breath deepened as we worked"

   Second Entry: Body Use
   · During the week what have you noticed about how you use your body?
   · If you are a performer what have you noticed?

   Third Entry: Practice
   · Practice one exercise you have learned in class and write about it
     (This is in addition to the Body Scans)

   Fourth Entry: Readings
   · What are the authors key points?
   · Does it relate to what you are learning in class, noticing in your own body?

Mid-Term
In this mid-term assignment you will demonstrate your understanding of the theory of Body Awareness Techniques as well as your application of them. This is based upon your readings, practice, and class discussion. Length minimum 6-8 pages.

1. Describe the theory and philosophy of mind/body awareness techniques. Use at least 3-4 sources.
   How are they practiced?
   What have you noticed in your own body?
2. How do these methods differ from other physical methods such as yoga, pilates, or physical therapy?

3. Pick three concepts such as breathing, tension, awareness, and discuss them using at least 2 different sources for each. You may bring in personal experiential learning as it relates to your choice of authors ideas.

**Final Project**

You will work on your project for 4 weeks. The work you turn in will be 7-10 pages.

1. Chose a body part, body issue, function you would like to work on/improve (write out).
2. What does the literature say about this area, issue, function?
3. Analyze in detail the (your) part/function/use in sitting, standing and walking.
4. Apply weekly specific exercises for that part.
5. Write up weekly descriptions of what you are noticing
6. Write up final findings
   - What have you learned?
   - How has that part evolved?
   - Has your body image changed?

**Grading Policy**

Grades are based upon the following:

- Maintain regular attendance (grade will be lowered a 1/2 point after two absences, arriving late more than 2x’s will lower the grade)
  - Read required weekly readings
  - Participation: Discuss, in class, reaction to class work, readings, observations as well as interest (20%)
  - Written Work (80% total)
    - Mid-Term (30%)
    - Final (40%)
    - Other written work (10%)
  - Complete assignments on time (if two weeks late grade will be lowered)
  - Incomplete grades must be arranged in advance with the instructor
Topical Outline

Tuesday, September 3

Course Introduction
- Introduction/Overview of Class/Expectations
- Experiential: Basic Body Awareness Methods
  - Body Scans
  - Hang Out
  - Flexibility Sequence

Required Reading for next class:
- J. Robin Powell, Body Therapies: Body Awareness
- Knaster, Introduction and Chapter 1

Assignment:
- Practice Body Scans (lying, standing) Daily

Tuesday, September 10

Principals of Body Awareness Techniques
- Underlying Principals of Methods
- Experiential: Body Awareness/Kinetic Awareness
  - Head/Neck (with ball)
  - Jaw
  - Movement Sequence of head and neck
- Discussion
  - Directed to Readings

Reading for next class:
- Elsa Ginder (D. Johnson)
- Charlotte Selver (D. Johnson)
- Carola Speads (D. Johnson)
- Knaster, pp. 226 - 228

Assignment:
- Journal Entry

Tuesday, September 17

Gindler Method: Arbeit am Menschen
- Pioneers in Body Awareness
- Experiential: Movement Re-education
  - Sensory Awareness (arm exploration)
- Speads shoulder exercise
- Discussion:
  - Key Points of Gindler Method
Tuesday September 24

**Elaine Summers: Kinetic Awareness**
- Principles of Kinetic Awareness
- Experiential: Kinetic Awareness
- Tension Exploration

**Reading for next class:**
- Crow, The Alexander Technique
- Bierman, The Alexander Technique
- Knaster, pp. 288-222
- YouTube.com
  - Marjorie Barstow

**Assignment:**
- Continue Daily Body Scans
- Practice one exercise learned each week
- Write about experience

Tuesday October 1

**The Alexander Technique** (Nina D'Abbracci)
- Experiential:
  - The Alexander Technique

**Reading for next class:**
- Powell, Breathing
- Speads, Ways to Better Breathing
- Knaster, Chapter 3

**Assignment:**
- Take notes for Mid-Term

Tuesday October 8

**Fall Break**

Tuesday October 15

**Breathing**
- Discuss response to Alexander
- Anatomy and Function of Breathing
- Experiential:
  - Breathing Work
  - Review Alexander Directions
Assignment:
Keep a journal of your breathing during the week
1. What notice
2. Practice daily breathing exercise

Reading for next class:
Review Readings for Mid-Term

Assignment:
Mid-Term (see instructions)

Tuesday October 22
Semester Summary
Discuss semester progress/evaluate learning
Experiential:
Kinetic Awareness

Reading for next class:
Myers, Moshe Feldenkrais
Knaster, pp.232-238
YouTube.com
Moshe Feldenkrais South Bend, Indiana

Tuesday October 29
Introduction to Feldenkrais
Background on Feldenkrais
Experiential:
Feldenkrais Exercises (Pelvic Clock)
Turning

Assignment:
Identify your Project -Discuss in Class

Reading for next class:
Fox, The Feldenkrais Phenomenon
Holmes, Bruce
YouTube.com
Feldenkrais Institute of NY
David Zemach Bersins
Tuesday November 5  
**Feldenkrais Method: Awareness Through Movement**  
(Chris Griffin Guest Instructor)  
Experiential: The Feldenkrais Method  
**Reading for next class:**  
Knaster Chapter 6  
Fisher, Body Image  
Feldenkrais, The Self Image  

**Assignment:**  
Begin your project

Tuesday November 12  
**Body Image**  
Discussion: Aspects of Body Image  
Experiential:  
Kinetic Awareness  

**Assignment: Essay 3-5 pages**  
Write about your body image  
· Early influences  
· Changes since class  
What do authors say about body image?  
Knaster, Fisher, Feldenkrais  

**Readings for next class:**  
Knaster Chapter 2  
Re-read Powell

Tuesday November 19  
**Causes of Body Problems Interfering with Use**  
Discussion: Causes of Body Problems  
- Summers, Alexander, Feldenkrais  
Experiential:  
Kinetic Awareness  

**Reading for next class:**  
Juhan, Job's Body

Tuesday November 26  
**Use of Touch**  
What means to you?  
Experiential:  
Individual touch  
Begin review of methods  

**Readings for next week:**  
Vaughan, Levels of Healing Awareness  
Jones, The Organization of Awareness  
Needleman, The Great Unknown
Tuesday December 3  

Awareness and Healing
- Where are you in your learning?
- What does awareness mean to you now?
  Experiential:
    - Review Methods
    - Present Projects

Turn in Project

Tuesday December 10  

Summary/Review
  Experiential:
    - Warm Up
    - Present Projects (con't)
Study Questions for Discussion

Class discussion is an integral part of your learning experience. Discussions should be lively, stimulating and thought provoking. It is your responsibility to make them so. They are based upon your reactions to the reading and class material and your experiential work in class and out of class. You will be expected to be prepared each week to contribute to class discussions. The readings for this class are not difficult but will take critical thinking about how each of the techniques are different and similar to each other. The following are guidelines to help you better prepare.

In General when reading answer these questions:

What is your reaction to the article?
What are the key points to the article?
What are the similarities of the technique to others you have read about?
What are the differences?

Powell, Knaster

How do body awareness techniques differ from traditional exercise?
List three aspects that body awareness techniques emphasize
Do you see differences between methods?
Think about Knaster's term Bodyways
How does Powell define body awareness techniques?

Gindler, Speads

What are Gindler's three key concepts in her article?
What was your reaction to the description of Sensory Awareness?
What impression do you have of Gindler after reading Speads article?

Green, Knaster Ch 2

Is there any thing in Knaster that relates to other course readings?
What do you know about Descartes?
Identify all of the uses of the balls in Kinetic Awareness
What are the five phases of Kinetic Awareness
What realization did Summers have about dancers use of their instrument?
Becker, Knaster Ch 3

How do you feel about the phrase mind over matter?
Do you use your mind to control your body?
What are the implications of your body having a "mind" of its own?
How is Becker's focus different than Greens?

Myers, Bierman

How did Alexander cure his problem?
What is Primary Control?
What does Alexander think causes the body to be so out of balance?

Myers, Fox, Knaster

Feldenkrais comes from a different background then Alexander and approached his explorations in a different manner. How so?
What are some of the ways Feldenkrais works?
What are some of the similarities to Kinetic Awareness? (Myers)

Juhan

What does Juhan say about Bodywork?
What does Juhan say about skin and touch?
What did you get out of this article?

Knaster Ch 6

How does psychology inform body awareness techniques?
What is character armor and how does it function?
What are the implications of storing trauma in the body?
How does awareness make changes in the physical/emotional?