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. Body Awareness or Somatics, involves sensing the body from within and then acting upon bodily information for self regulation. 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 Objectives:

· To learn the history, philosophy and theory of the somatic 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 creative work and 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)
Bone, Breath & Gesture Practices of Embodiment, Don H. Johnson (North Atlantic Books)
NYU Book Store
Selected Reading Packet, University Copy, 27 Waverly Place

Required Supplies:

Purchase of soft rubber ball

Course Structure:

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

Course Expectations/Requirements:

You are expected to share your experience of class work and outside experience as well as your response to readings. You are required to practice daily body scans and the exercises learned weekly. 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 need 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. Daily body scans are required along with the practice of breathing, weekly exercises and observation of body use. 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 reflection on your daily practice, three written assignments and a final project. All work must be in hard copy and type written.
Suggested Weekly Time Requirement:

Daily Practice - Body Scans, Breathing, Awareness Exercise (20-40 min each day)
Weekly Reading (2 hrs +)
Work on Assignments (TBA)

Assignments: Writing About the Body

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. Go beyond description to analysis.

Breathing Assignment (4-5 pages)

1. Discuss (using sources), the physiology of breathing.
2. Practice daily breathing exercises (over the week) - discuss what noticed.
3. Document breathing during body scans, daily activity and exercise. During the week and prior.

Awareness Assignment (5-7 pages) (Midterm)

1. Define awareness/somatics using sources (Jones, Powell, Gindler, Hanna).
3. Discuss the use of tension in each technique, articulate differences in practice (use readings).
4. All methods such as yoga, dance and exercise require some form of awareness, what makes somatic methods different?

Body Image Assignment (3-4 pages)

1. How do Fisher, Feldenkrais and Knaster define and discuss body image?
2. Write about your body image
   a. Early influences
   b. Changes since class

Final Project (8-10 pages)

You will work on your project for 4 weeks. The written work you turn in will be 8-10 pages. Address each point in writing.

The Process: Write Out

1. Chose a body part, body issue, function you would like to work on/improve.
2. What does the literature say about this area, issue, function? Use sources.
3. Analyze in detail the (your) part/function/use in sitting, standing and walking.
4. How will you approach this in general? Why have you chosen this approach?

Application:

5. Apply weekly specific exercises for that part/function.
Describe what you did and your responses, write for each week.
What you are noticing?

Final Write Up:
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
- Discuss in class readings, key concepts and subtle analysis (25%)
- Demonstrate understanding of experiential work through in-class discussion (5%)
- Written Work (70% total)
  - Assignments (4) (35%)
  - Project (35%)
- Complete assignments on time (if two weeks late grade will be lowered)
- Incomplete grades must be arranged in advance with the instructor

Academic Integrity:

You will be asked to write about author's ideas for this class. You must give credit for your sources. As a Gallatin student you are expected to maintain academic integrity. The University takes this matter very seriously. Behaviors that compromise this integrity include plagiarism, and doubling or recycling course work. We will discuss in class how to document and note material and ideas to avoid any serious consequences. Understand that any ideas and information from readings must be cited in some form of endnote even if it is not a direct quote. Otherwise it is plagiarism.
Topical Outline

Tuesday September 6: Course Introduction
Introductions/Overview of Class/Expectations
Basic Body Awareness Concepts
Experiential:
   Body Scans
   Hang Out
   Warm Up Sequence
Required Reading for next class:
   J. Robin Powell, Body Therapies: Body Awareness
   Knaster, Introduction, Chapter 1 & 3
   Jones, The Organization of Awareness
Assignment:
   Practice Body Scans (lying, standing) Daily
   Practice Hang Out

Tuesday September 13: Principals of Body Awareness Techniques
Underlying Principals of Methods
Importance of Awareness
Discussion of Readings
Experiential:
   Body Awareness/Kinetic Awareness
   Head/Neck (with ball)
   Jaw
   Movement Sequence of head and neck
Reading for next class:
   Powell, Breathing
   Speads, Ways to Better Breathing (D. Johnson)
   Dowd, On Breathing
   Hanna, What is Somatics? (D. Johnson)

Tuesday September 20: Breathing
Anatomy and Function of Breathing
Experiential:
   Breathing Work
   Watching
   Counts
   10-1
Reading for next class:
   Elsa Gindler (D. Johnson)
   Charlotte Selver (D. Johnson)
   Carola Speads (D. Johnson)
   Knaster, pp. 226 - 228
Assignment: Breathing 4-5 Pages
   See instructions on Breathing Assignment
Tuesday September 27: Gindler Method: Arbeit am Menschen
Pioneers in Body Awareness

Experiential:
  Movement Re-education
  Sensory Awareness (arm exploration)
  Speads shoulder exercise

Discussion:
  Three Key Points of Gindler Method
  How Awareness Works

Reading for next class:
  Jill Green, Use of Balls in KA
  Ann-Sargent Wooster, Elaine Summers
  Frances Becker, Kinetic Awareness
  Knaster, pp. 263-266

Assignment:
  Write notes on how each article approaches KA differently
  Write up experience with body scans (2 pages)

Tuesday October 4: Elaine Summers: Kinetic Awareness
Principles of Kinetic Awareness
Discuss Projects
Discuss Midterm

Experiential:
  Kinetic Awareness
  Tension Exploration
  Ball Work TBA

Reading for October 18:
  Jones, Sensory Evidence
  Crow, The Alexander Technique
  Myers, The Alexander Technique

Assignment:
  Continue daily practice
  Reflect on Kinetic Awareness

Tuesday October 11: Kinetic Awareness/Alexander
Discuss Kinetic Awareness/Frozen Tension
Introduce Alexander

Experiential
  Kinetic Awareness
  Ball Work TBA

Reading for next class
  Knaster, pp.288-222
  YouTube.com
    Marjorie Barstow

Assignment:
  Identify Topic for Project - Write up and turn in
Tuesday October 18: The Alexander Technique  
Nina D'Abbracci Guest Instructor  
**Experiential:**  
The Alexander Technique  
Alexander Directions  
Sitting  
Standing/Walking  
**Reading for next class:**  
Myers, Moshe Feldenkrais  
Fox, The Feldenkrais Phenomenon  
Holmes, Bruce, Moshe’s Healing Touch  
YouTube.com  
Moshe Feldenkrais South Bend, Indiana  
**Assignment:** Midterm Awareness Assignment 5-6 pages  
See Instructions  
Turn In 10/25

Tuesday October 25: Feldenkrais Method: Awareness Through Movement  
Chris Griffin Guest Instructor  
**Experiential:**  
The Feldenkrais Method  
**Reading for next class:**  
Knaster, pp.232-238  
YouTube.com  
Feldenkrais Institute of NY  
David Zemach Bersins  
**Assignment:**  
Turn in Midterm Today  
Begin Project

Tuesday November 1: Semester Review  
Discuss Semester Progress and Evaluate Learning  
Feldenkrais Background  
Discuss Experience with Feldenkrais  
Differences between Feldenkrais, Alexander, Kinetic Awareness  
**Experiential:**  
Feldenkrais Exercises (Pelvic Clock, Shoulder Clock)  
**Reading for next class:**  
Knaster Chapters 2 & Chapter 6  
Fisher, Body Image  
Feldenkrais, The Self Image  
**Assignment:**  
This week: 
Do not use your cell phone when walking outdoors  
Notice your body and surroundings
Tuesday November 8: Body Image

Discussion: Aspects of Body Image

Experiential:
- Kinetic Awareness

Assignment: Body Image Essay 4-5 pages
- See Instructions

Readings for next class:
- Knaster Chapter 2 (Review)
- Re-read Powell

Tuesday November 15: Causes of Body Problems Interfering with Use

Discussion: Causes of Body Problems - Summers, Alexander, Feldenkrais

Experiential:
- Kinetic Awareness
- Alexander Directions

Reading for next class:
- Juhan, Job's Body (D. Johnson)

Assignment:
- Working on and documenting project

Tuesday November 22: Use of Touch

Therapeutic aspects of touch

What means to you?

Experiential:
- Individual touch/with partners
- Begin review of methods

Readings for next week:
- Vaughan, Levels of Healing Awareness
- Needleman, The Great Unknown

Tuesday November 29: Awareness and Healing

Where are you in your learning?

What does awareness mean to you now?

Experiential:
- Review Methods

Tuesday December 6: Summary/Review

Experiential:
- Warm Up and Review
- Present Projects
- Turn in written work on Project

Tuesday December 13: Conclusion

Discussion
Experiential
  Basic Warm up
  Finish Presenting Projects
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 is 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 anything 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 dancer's 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

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?