



**DOWNSTATE**  
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

The Student Center presents:

# **Mini-Course Program**

## **Spring 2026**



**STUDENT CENTER**  
**394 LENOX ROAD**  
**BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11203**  
**718-270-2487**

Sponsored by the Student Center Governing Board

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### **REGISTRATION: (the fine print!)**

**Register through Monday, March 2 (or first class per instructor.)  
at the Student Center Main Desk.**

**All payments must be made in full at time of registration.**

**NO SLOTS will be reserved without payment.**

### ***WHO'S ELIGIBLE TO ENROLL IN A MINI-COURSE?***

Each participant must have an active membership at the Student Center.

Please bring your current SUNY Downstate ID card and your  
Student Center membership card when you register.

**Payments may be made in cash, check (payable to SAF), Mastercard, Visa or ApplePay**

*Note: Retain your receipt which is required for the first session of each class.*

**CLASSES/TIME SLOTS MAY FILL!**

**REGISTER EARLY TO AVOID BEING CLOSED OUT OF THE CLASS OF YOUR CHOICE.**

**REFUND POLICY: Refunds will ONLY be given  
if a class is cancelled because it does not meet  
its minimum enrollment.**

***NO OTHER REFUNDS WILL BE PERMITTED.***

**Please choose courses carefully.**

**No refunds will be issued due to academic conflict  
or personal scheduling issues.**

**MONDAY**

## Self Defense with Carlos

This course will emphasize concepts and techniques that are applicable to a variety of self-defense scenarios. Whether you are in a closed space such as an elevator or open field, students will understand the foundations of body mechanics and strategies on how to escape and submit a larger opponent. We will focus on mastering three submissions (with a bonus class on submitting opponents using a hoodie, long sleeve, t-shirt and tank-top) and finding those opportunities in various situations, both standing and floor combat. In the final class, students will have the opportunity to test their abilities against the instructor in a simulated street-fight scenario. (Students can opt-out if they do not wish to participate.)

Objectives: as a result of this course, you will be able to:

- Understand concepts of body mechanics behind the technique.
- Learn to use gravity, leverage, and body structure rather than strength.
- Recognize when to attack versus escape.
- Understand what mindset to have and when to apply techniques
- Be confident in your ability to keep yourself safe.

I am Carlos, born and raised in Brooklyn, and recently certified as a Blue Belt Instructor of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

I have been practicing martial arts since 2019. Currently enrolled in COM. I wish to one day open my own martial arts school and teach self defense so that I can provide people with the confidence and sense of knowing that they have the capability to help themselves.

Questions? Contact:

[carlos.juca@Downstate.edu](mailto:carlos.juca@Downstate.edu)

Note: If cost is prohibitive, please email me.

See next page for syllabus



Monday	5:00-6:15	8 weeks: 3/2–4/20
\$40	Squash Court	Min: 2/Max: 8

Week	Agenda/Topic
1	Warm up techniques, mount escape, Americana, positional control
2	Back to attack/rear naked, sweeps from the bottom, punch block series
3	Arm bar, triangle, Kimura, side control/attacks
4	Judo and takedown concepts
5	Review of previous lessons
6	Using clothing to submit opponents
7	Putting it together
8	Practice/Exam

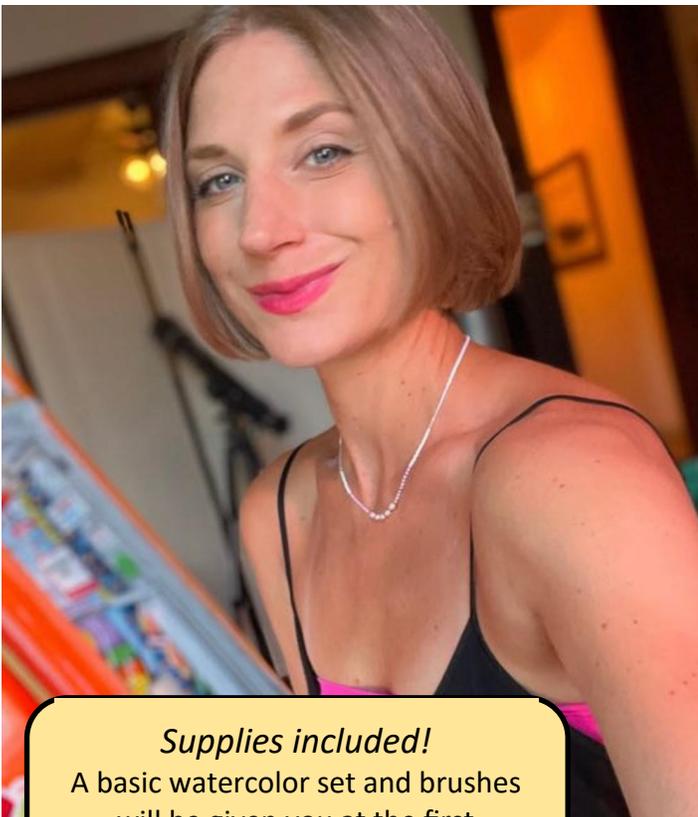


# MONDAY

## Still Life/Flower Painting with Carly

Escape the stress of school and winter blues with ART!

The practice of painting allows us to open a creative space for our brains to explore outside the heavy course load of medical classes. I'm not a certified teacher but want to explore the fundamentals of design and composition while socializing with students from different areas of study, and taking a break from computer screens and course work. And as a "frequent:" painter I can facilitate questions on how to approach painting a still life.. Students will create at least (4) different water color paintings throughout the duration of this course. Each 1- hour class is devoted to a flower bouquet and I think you'll come away from each class with a work of art that reflects who you are.



My name is **Carly Trunkwalter**. I'm a first year Occupational Therapy student, a fine arts painter and a long distance runner. I enjoy bringing people together for activities outside of school. I am originally from New Jersey and moved to NYC in 2010. I volunteer with the organizations, Dorot (socially engaging older New Yorkers living in isolation) and Team Achilles run club in Brooklyn (as a run-guide staying physically active with people living with mental and physical disabilities). I found my first year of OT school stressful and I know that is a very relatable feeling so I want to give people a space to unwind and reset by creating art.

Note: If cost is prohibitive, please email me.

### *Supplies included!*

A basic watercolor set and brushes will be given you at the first class...yours to keep!  
Paper will be provided weekly.

### Questions? Contact:

Carly.trunkwalter@[downstate.edu](mailto:Carly.trunkwalter@downstate.edu)

Mondays

5:45 - 7:15

classes 3/2—3/30

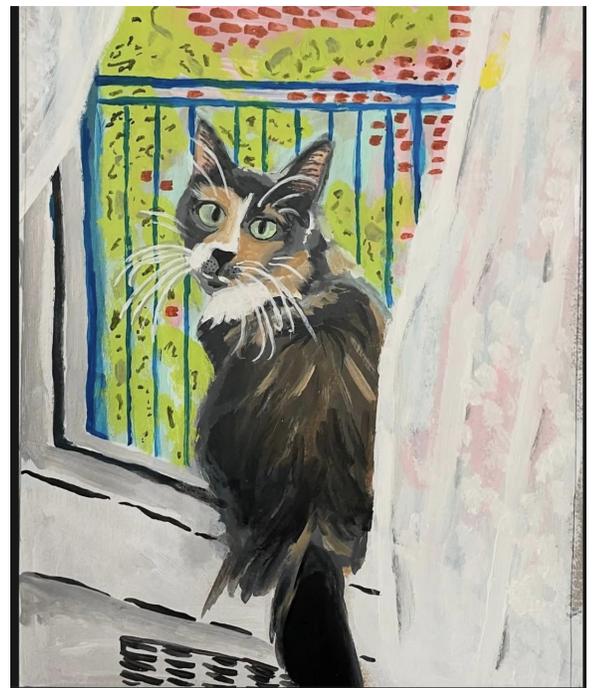
\$45

Card Room

Min: 2/Max: 8

There will be no class on 3-16

See next page for samples



**TUESDAY**

## Knitting with Sophia

Learn how to knit a scarf and a hat!

Are you sick of fast fashion? Would you love to make your mom hand-made gifts again? Join me for a fun-filled knitting class! Over five weeks you will learn the basics of knitting and how to handcraft a beautiful scarf and hat for festive late-Spring accessorizing. Students of all levels are welcome.

**All materials are included in cost of course!**



**Sophia Zweig** is a fifth-year medical student and artist has been knitting for 16 years and teaching knitting here for four!

She's made everything from scarves and hats to sweaters (for both humans and cats). She loves being able to make her own clothes and take a break from school stress while creating something beautiful and is excited to help you do the same.

Note: If cost is prohibitive, please email me.

**Questions? Contact:**

[Sophia.zweig@downstate.edu](mailto:Sophia.zweig@downstate.edu)

Tuesdays

6:00 - 7:15

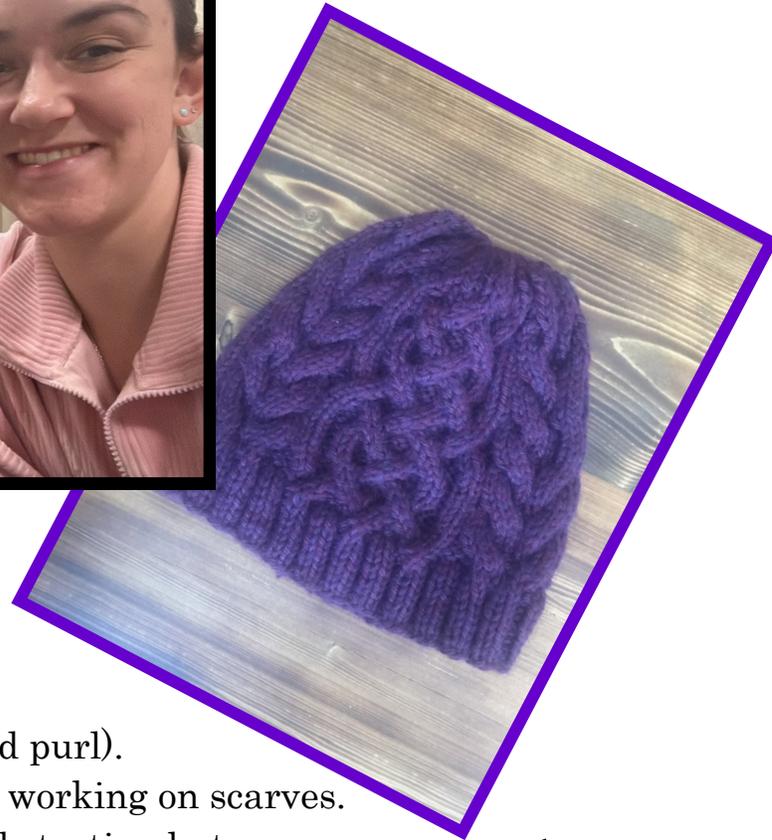
6 classes 3/3—4/7

\$35, \$25 for returning

Card Room

Min: 2/Max: 8

See next page for samples  
and course outline.



## Syllabus

**Week 1:** Introduction to the basics.

Learning the foundational stitches (knit and purl).

**Week 2-3:** Practicing the stitches and start working on scarves.

**Week 4:** Introduction to hat techniques and starting hats.

**Week 5-6:** Continue working on hats.



**TUESDAY**

# Hebrew Reading and Writing with Mark

Open to ALL levels!

This is a Hebrew Reading and Writing course for All Levels!

The goal of this class is, to go from zero knowledge to being able to read and write the alphabet, in six lectures. And maybe a bit more! All are welcome, and I will gladly work with those who are more advanced as well.

Below is an sample syllabus. Topics covered will depends on student's interest.

**Week 1: The First Steps.** Introduction to the Aleph-Bet. Focus on the first ten letters, phonetic sounds, and the "right-to-left" mechanics. Discuss the history of Hebrew and the differences among different communities.

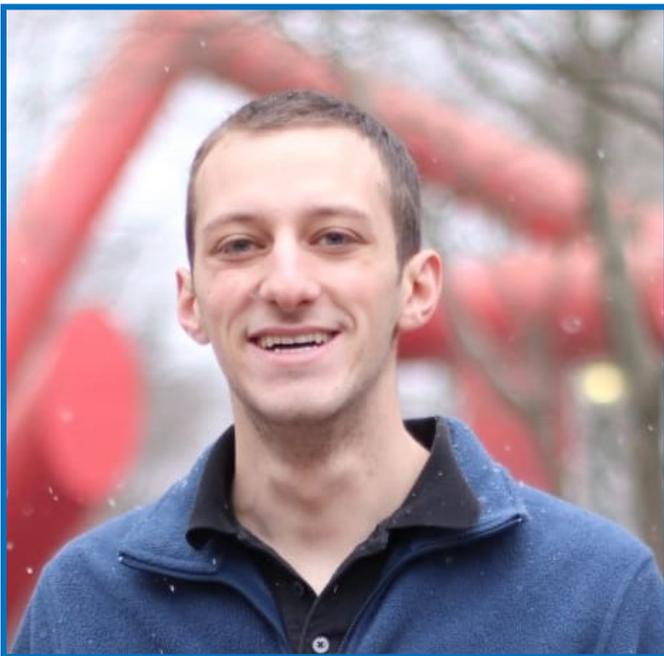
**Week 2: Completing the Alphabet.** Mastering the remaining consonants and the five "Sofit" (final) letterforms.

**Week 3: Vowels & Reading.** Introduction to the *Nikkud* (vowel system). Practice reading simple words and common roots.

**Week 4: Literacy & Vocabulary.** Phonetically reading short sentences. Introduction to the distinct "block" script used by scribes vs. modern cursive.

**Week 5: The Scribe's Craft.** Live demonstration of *Safrut* (scribal arts). Discussion on parchment (*Klaf*), quills (*Kulmus*), and soot-based ink.

**Week 6: Final Project.** Students practice calligraphy strokes and scribe their own names onto genuine parchment to take home.



Hi all! My name is **Mark Lis** and I learned to read and write in Hebrew and English simultaneously as a child. I also majored in Near Eastern Languages with a concentration in Arabic and Hebrew studies in college.

I have a deep love of languages and history in general. Especially Hebrew! Whether you read Hebrew all the time but are interested in going deeper or you've never looked at a Hebrew letter before, this class is for you!

Questions? Contact:  
[Mark.lis@downstate.edu](mailto:Mark.lis@downstate.edu)

Tuesdays 5:15 - 6:15

6 classes

3/3-4/7

\$10/all 6 classes

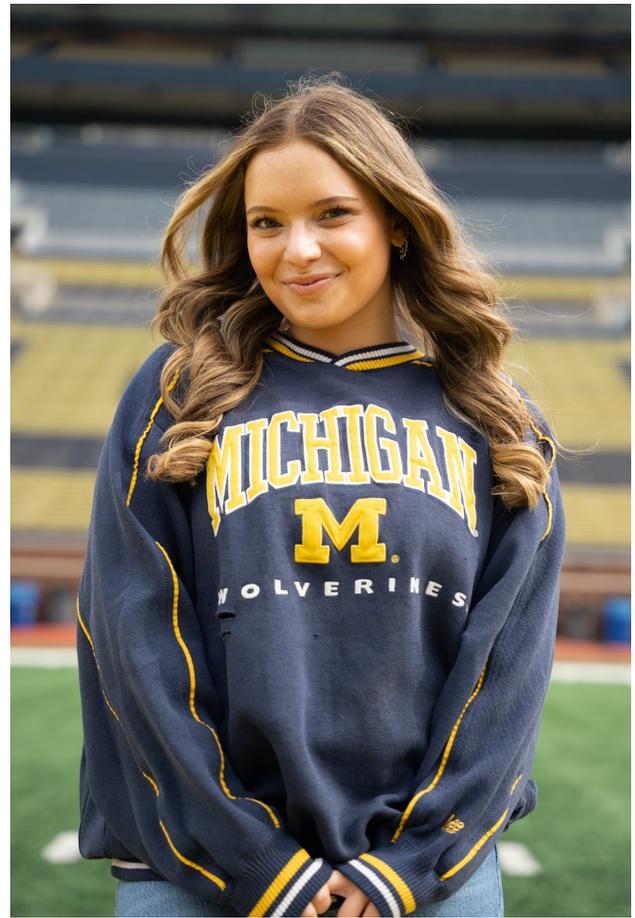
Card Room

Min: 3/Max:8

**WEDNESDAY**

## Hip-Hop Dance with Gracie

Join this beginner hip-hop class and learn a routine that we will work on through the Fall. At the end of the 8 weeks, participants will have learned a whole dance (hopefully culminating in a performance!) Class will start with 15-20 minutes of warm up (all to pop music): stretching, light exercise, and a Zumba like "follow-along" dance to loosen up. Then we dance! Learning a routine accommodating to the level of the class. Each week, we will build on the previous week's choreography to create an elaborate dance! **All levels are welcome.** This will be a very fun, chill, open environment. People can "drop-in" for single classes, but please be aware we will be building upon a dance each week.



Hello! My name is **Gracie Scramberg** and I am an MS1 at Downstate. Originally from the suburbs of Chicago, I have been living in NYC for two years, which I love! I have been a hip-hop dancer my whole life, and for many years I have choreographed dancers of all levels (from 6 year-olds to my undergrad dance troop at UMich!) This class will not only be a good aerobic workout, but an opportunity to work toward a goal that is not related to academics. I am eager to teach anyone who wants to dance or just move their bodies to shake off the week's stress. I look forward to meeting and dancing with you all!

Day-of-class drop-ins are welcome for \$5 fee. Must be a student or Student Center Member.

Questions? Contact: [Gracie.sclamberg@downstate.edu](mailto:Gracie.sclamberg@downstate.edu)

Every other Wednesday 5:00 - 6:00

5 classes 3/4-4/29

\$20

Gym Stage

Min: 5/Max:20

**WEDNESDAY**

## **Cooking at Home with William**

This is a live, virtual cooking mini-series designed to teach foundational kitchen skills and the core principles that allow home cooks to move beyond strict recipes. Each week will focus on one dish while reinforcing transferable skills such as knife work, heat control, seasoning, and timing. You'll be in your kitchen!

An Ingredient list will be sent out the Friday before each class to allow for shopping time, you'll then prepare our meal in real time!

**Week 1:** Knife skills, mise-en-place, and stovetop fundamentals using a sautéed vegetable and protein dish

**Week 2:** Building flavor through aromatics, spices, and pan sauces

**Week 3:** Cooking without a recipe by understanding ratios, texture, and doneness

**Optional Week 4:** If requested, an extra week with an additional dish will be added.



My name is **William Dennis** and I learned to cook from my mother and grandmother while growing up in a large Mexican family where cooking was a shared, daily ritual rather than a formal skill. Meals were loud, collaborative, and intuitive, with recipes rarely written down. That early exposure sparked a lifelong relationship with food.

In college, I became deeply interested in cooking and spent years teaching myself through trial and mostly error. Over time, I developed strong stove-top cooking skills and a practical understanding of how flavors, heat, and technique work together. I am now a confident home cook who relies more on foundational principles than written recipes.

I love teaching and am passionate about helping others feel comfortable and creative in the kitchen. My goal is to show students that anyone can cook well once they understand a few basic rules and learn how to trust their instincts rather than depend entirely on recipes.

Questions? Contact:  
[William Dennis@downstate.edu](mailto:William.Dennis@downstate.edu)

Wednesday 6:00 - 7:00

3 classes 3/11-3/25 (maybe 4/1)

\$60

Virtual

Min: 3/Max:none

**THURSDAY**

## **USING APPLE TOOLS FOR LEARNING WITH GEORGE**

This course helps students use Apple's ecosystem more effectively to support learning, focus, and real-world workflows. Through hands-on instruction, students learn core macOS utilities, navigation, and file management, then explore focus tools, accessibility features, continuity, and Apple Intelligence. Emphasis is placed on practical use: fewer clicks, faster actions, and building personalized systems that adapt to how you work, helping you do more with less effort. The course concludes with a hands-on workshop where participants apply what they've learned to their own day-to-day use of Apple devices: configuring focus states, testing ideas, troubleshooting challenges, and sharing approaches with others.

### Learning Outcomes

- Navigate macOS confidently and locate information efficiently
- Reduce cognitive load using focus, accessibility, and automation tools
- Use Apple devices together as a connected ecosystem
- Understand when and how Apple Intelligence tools can be applied
- Apply course concepts to everyday academic and personal tasks

Students can bring their current apple devices: iPhone, MacBook, iPad, and Apple Watch. Students are encouraged to bring multiple devices to demo ecosystem features. Note students should update all devices to the latest Operating System Available.



**George Ulloa** is a technologist and nursing student dedicated to making technology reduce stress rather than add to it. With a background in software and design for brands like **The New York Times** and **Harry's**, he applies a systems-thinking mindset to healthcare education. An advocate for Apple-driven accessibility and automation, George focuses on building tools that support real people with real needs.

See next page for syllabus.

**Questions? Contact:**

[George.ulloa@downstate.edu](mailto:George.ulloa@downstate.edu)

**Thursdays 6:00 - 8:00**

**4 classes**

**4/4-4/25**

**\$40**

**Recovery Room Min: 4/Max:16**

## Course Schedule & Topics

### Session 1: Core Utilities, Navigation & System Fluency

MacOS interface fundamentals, Finder navigation, file organization, search tools, Quick Look, Preview, screenshots, and keyboard shortcuts.

### Session 2: Focus, Accessibility & System Support

Focus modes, notification management, accessibility tools, Live Text, transcription, captions, and language tools.

### Session 3: Continuity, Apple Intelligence & Intelligent Tools

Cross-device continuity features, Apple Intelligence overview, intelligent writing tools, scanning, and capture workflows.

### Session 4: Active Workshop – Applying Tools to Real Life

Hands-on application of course concepts to everyday use, including configuration, experimentation, troubleshooting, and peer discussion.

### Outcome:

Participants leave with real changes in place and the confidence to keep refining their setup!

### Technology & Software Requirements

Students can bring their current apple devices: iPhone, MacBook, iPad, and Apple Watch. Student are encouraged to bring multiple devices to demo ecosystem features.

Note: students should update all devices to the latest Operating System Available.

1. To update a Mac: Click the Apple menu → System Settings → General → Software Update, then follow on-screen instructions.
2. To update an iPhone or iPad: Open Settings → General → Software Update, then follow on-screen instructions

### Apple Intelligence (Optional)

Some demonstrations in this course include Apple Intelligence features. These features are optional and are not required for full participation in the course. Apple Intelligence is supported on the following devices: Mac computers with Apple Silicon (M1 or newer) iPhone 15 Pro, iPhone 15 Pro Max, or newer model

BEFORE



AFTER



**From Chaos → Flow**

Using Apple Tools for Learning

**THURSDAY**

## **Meditation with Claudia**

I believe meditation is not about clearing the mind or achieving perfection, but about developing presence, self-awareness, and compassion. My goal is to offer simple tools that can be integrated into daily life, helping individuals navigate academic, professional, and personal challenges with greater clarity, calm, and confidence. Currently, I teach mindfulness, meditation, and yoga in elementary school settings and regularly facilitate wellness programs and workshops for students, educators, and community members. I strive to create inclusive, supportive environments where participants feel empowered to explore meditation in a way that feels practical and approachable.

The format of the 45 minute class each week will be

- 20 minutes: Theory / Education
- 20 minutes: Guided Practice
- 5 minutes: Q&A / Reflection

Participants will receive reading materials and resources to support their personal practice outside of class. These materials are designed to reinforce the concepts and techniques introduced during each session, providing guidance for integrating mindfulness, meditation, and breathing practices into daily life at their own pace.



I am **Claudia Preciado** and I am a wellness educator, meditation instructor, and the founder of Sandcherry Studio, where I support individuals in cultivating balance, resilience, and emotional well-being through accessible mindfulness practices. With over 15 years of teaching experience, I have worked with children, teens, and adults from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds in schools, libraries, and private settings. I am a Chopra Vedic Educator and hold certifications as a Meditation Instructor, Ayurvedic Health Instructor, and 200-Hour Yoga Teacher through the Chopra Center. I have also completed the Neuroscience & Meditation program at the Nirakara Institute, which allows me to integrate scientific understanding of the brain and nervous system with ancient contemplative practices. My teaching approach blends mindfulness, breathwork, meditation, gentle yoga, and nervous system education to help participants manage stress, improve focus, and develop emotional awareness.

See next page for syllabus.

**Questions? Contact:**  
[cmarcelap@gmail.com](mailto:cmarcelap@gmail.com)

**Thursdays 6:00 - 6:45**

**8 classes**

**3/5-4/23**

**\$100/8 classes**

**Virtual**

**Min: 8/Max:none**

## Week 1: Introduction to Mindfulness & Meditation

### Theory

- What mindfulness and meditation are (and what they are not)
- Differences between mindfulness and meditation
- Why meditation is relevant for college life
- Overview of the course

### Practice

- Short grounding practice
- Guided mindfulness of breath meditation

### Takeaway

- Simple daily awareness practice (2–5 minutes)

## Week 2: Benefits of Meditation & Stress Awareness

### Theory

- Mental, emotional, and physical benefits of meditation
- Understanding stress and common stressors in college students
- How meditation supports focus, emotional regulation, and sleep

### Practice

- Body awareness meditation
- Gentle body scan for relaxation

### Takeaway

- Stress check-in practice + mindful pauses during the day

## Week 3: Breathing Practices for Calm & Focus

### Theory

- The role of breath in meditation
- How breathing affects mood, focus, and energy
- Introduction to conscious breathing techniques

### Practice

- Diaphragmatic breathing
- Simple calming breath practice (e.g., extended exhale)

### Takeaway

- Breath practice for exams, anxiety, and overwhelm

## Week 4: Meditation and the Nervous System

### Theory

- Overview of the nervous system (sympathetic vs. parasympathetic)
- How meditation supports nervous system regulation
- Stress response vs. relaxation response

### Practice

- Guided relaxation meditation
- Breath + body awareness to activate the parasympathetic system

### Takeaway

- Nervous system reset practice for daily life

## Week 5: Types of Meditation

### Theory

- Overview of different meditation styles:
- Mindfulness meditation ○ Breath-focused meditation
- Loving-kindness (Metta) ○ Mantra-based meditation
- Choosing the right practice for individual needs

### Practice

- Loving-kindness (Metta) meditation

### Takeaway

- Reflection on which meditation style feels most supportive

## Week 6: Working with Thoughts & Emotions

### Theory

- Understanding the nature of thoughts (the thinking mind VS. awareness)
- Common emotional patterns in college life (anxiety, self-doubt, overwhelm)
- How meditation helps create space between thoughts, emotions, and reactions

### Practice

- Mindfulness of thoughts meditation
- Labeling thoughts with kindness and returning to the breath

### Takeaway

- Observing thoughts without judgment during daily activities

## Week 7: Building a Personal Meditation Practice

### Theory

- How to create a realistic and sustainable meditation routine
- Overcoming common challenges (lack of time, restlessness, distractions)
- Integrating meditation into academic and social life

### Practice

- Choice-based meditation (students select breath, body, or mantra focus)
- Silent meditation with gentle guidance

### Takeaway

- Personalized meditation plan (2–10 minutes per day)

## Week 8: Integration, Reflection & Stress-Relief Tools for the Future

### Theory

- Reviewing key concepts from the course
- Meditation as a lifelong self-care tool
- Using meditation during exams, transitions, and challenging moments

### Practice

- Guided relaxation or visualization meditation
- Closing grounding practice Q&A / Reflection
- Student reflections and questions
- Resources for continued practice

### Takeaway

- Confidence in using meditation independently