Contemplative Education MA (low-residency)

The MA in Contemplative Education is a two-year professional-development degree for practicing teachers from all levels of instruction. This 36-credit program is also open to non-teachers interested in a nonsectarian contemplative approach to teaching and learning.

This low-residency degree program is offered by way of summer compassion programs and online courses. It joins the wisdom and skillful means of Eastern meditative traditions with Western holistic educational methods and insights. Based on the principles and practices of mindfulness and awareness, primarily from the Tibetan contemplative traditions, the curriculum offers a path of personal nourishment and effective pedagogy.

The summer residential program is followed by two online courses in each of the fall and spring semesters. The second year repeats this sequence. The program is completed during the third summer with a weekend for presentation of masters’ projects and degree completion. Summer programs focus on the contemplative transformation of the teacher. Online semesters apply contemplative approaches to each student’s classroom teaching, as well as extending academic studies of spiritual approaches to teaching, learning, and human emotional development.

Education Beyond the Classroom

Education Beyond the Classroom (EBC) welcomes non-teachers to apply to the MA Contemplative Education program. This option is open to those interested in directing their study beyond the program’s existing central emphasis on pedagogy and curriculum design. While EBC students are required to take all the existing courses in the MA Contemplative Education program, they can tailor selected course assignments to meet their individual interests. Education Beyond the Classroom students are required, as are all program students, to integrate contemplative personal experience, daily life applications, and relationship skills into their course work.

Degree Requirements

First year, summer
• EDU600 Presence in Teaching (2)
• EDU605 The Mindful Teacher (4)

First year, fall (online)
• EDU530e Emotional Roots of Development (3)
• EDU635e Contemplative Teaching and Learning (3)

First year, spring (online)
• EDU615e Perspectives in Sacred Learning (3)
• EDU665e Compassionate Teaching and Learning (3)

Second year, summer
• EDU700 Cultivating Authentic Knowledge (2)
• EDU705 Embodied Wisdom (4)

Second year, fall (online)
• EDU735e Transforming Instruction & Curriculum (3)
• EDU775e The Science of Contemplative Teaching and Learning (3)

Second year, spring (online)
• EDU720e Spiritual Roots of Development (2)
• EDU880e Master’s Project (4)

Third year, summer weekend
Masters’ project presentation & graduation (part of EDU880e)

Course Credits 36

Course Listings

EDU530E
Emotional Roots of Development (3.0)
A study of emotional development from Western and Eastern sources, as an access point to engaging one’s spirituality. Course material encourages teachers to cultivate an empathic appreciation of emotional challenges inherent in humanity across the lifespan. The course covers three aspects: (1) emotion; (2) meaning making; and (3) self-reflection. The approach is to explore these topics across development, appreciating how changes in the physical body and the cognitive mind influence core features of development and vice versa. Observation practices are used to expand awareness and apply understanding. Prerequisites: A teaching practice and experience with meditation. Students who are not matriculated in the MA program must receive permission of the instructor to register.

EDU600
Presence in Teaching (2.0)
An exploration of the building blocks of form and space as the basis of the art of teaching. Since teachers are improvisational artists, we examine the ingredients for performance: actor and audience. The study includes the topics of presence, projection, intention, ego territories, gesture, emotion, language, story, and other forms of communication. We explore contemplative teaching within the laboratory of body, speech, and mind. The goal is to learn how we as teachers can use space awareness and acting training to refine our presence in the classroom and to improvise more freely with our world. Students who are not matriculated in the MA program must receive permission of the instructor to register.

EDU605
The Mindful Teacher (4.0)
At the heart of contemplative education is the wakefulness of the teacher. This course explores contemplative concepts, skills, and practices in preparation for the journey of mindful teaching. The basic approach comes from Tibetan meditative traditions, but other Buddhist and contemplative teachers are studied. Observations, perceptual exercises, and emotional awareness skills complement readings and discussions. Mindfulness-awareness development is experienced both personally and as a component of community...
EDU615E Perspectives in Sacred Learning (3.0)
Students study theories and approaches from a variety of traditions in holistic education, as well as current trends. The course focuses on “sacred learning” and how various traditions, educators, and theorists have attempted to educate in sacred ways. Students learn about the historical roots and evolution of the holistic education movement, which is connected to sacred learning. The purpose of this course is to help students distinguish the main tenets of these different stances and to identify how they converge on the sacred. Students who are not matriculated in the MA program must receive permission of the instructor to register.

EDU635E Contemplative Teaching and Learning (3.0)
An exploration of contemplative concepts, skills, and practices introduced in the summer module. As preparation for the journey of mindful teaching, the Tibetan Buddhist meditative traditions (drawn from Naropa University’s heritage) form the basis, or ground, of the course. Practices and perspectives of master teachers and current educators of various contemplative traditions are examined and put to the test. Audio lectures, observation techniques, meditation, and experiential exercises complement written lectures, readings, and discussions. Mindfulness-awareness development is experienced both personally and as a component of community learning. Students who are not matriculated in the MA program must receive permission of the instructor to register.

EDU665E Compassionate Teaching (3.0)
An exploration of compassionate teaching in the classroom. This nonsectarian approach to teaching as a personal spiritual journey brings the teacher’s inner life to the art of teaching. Students investigate the traditional compassionate qualities of generosity, patience, discipline, exertion, and knowledge in teaching and learning and also explore the dynamics of transitions and compassionate relationships in learning communities. Readings come from leaders in the field as well as from relevant Buddhist and other spiritual teachers. The course includes mindfulness-awareness meditation and loving-kindness practice. Students who are not matriculated in the MA program must receive permission of the instructor to register.

EDU700 Cultivating Authentic Knowledge (2.0)
Preparation for the sacred transformation of curriculum within nonsectarian contexts. Students experience curricular activities and principles derived from a spiritually based educational tradition, Ten Aspects of Knowledge of the ancient Indian University, Nalanda. The essence of the Ten Aspects is cultivating both subject content and spiritual depth as the basis for authentic curriculum development. Prerequisite: Completion of Summer Session I.

Students who are not matriculated in the MA program must receive permission of the instructor to register.

EDU705 Embodied Wisdom (4.0)
A deepening of contemplative teaching and learning through the practices of meditation, loving-kindness, and Maitri Space Awareness. Methods that develop facility with emotions, expression, and relationships, in the exploration of personal, experiential, and traditional knowledge of the five elemental energies of Tibetan Buddhism are utilized. Students lay the foundation for tailoring their teaching methods and styles to their own and their students’ authentic expressions. The practices of aesthetics, presence, and contemplative movement further deepen facility with these energies. Prerequisite: Completion of Summer Session I. Students who are not matriculated in the MA program must receive permission of the instructor to register. Course fee.

EDU720E Spiritual Roots of Development (2.0)
This course investigates theories of the spiritual roots of human development, with a focus on the validity and implications of stage theories. It examines contemporary theories of development in light of current and historical theories of spiritual development, with particular attention to Wilber, Washburn, Steiner, Aurobindo, and Khan. Implications of these theories for educational theory and practice are drawn. Students have an opportunity to investigate a theorist of their choice. Students who are not matriculated in the MA program must receive permission of the instructor to register.

EDU735E Transforming Instruction and Curriculum (3.0)
This course examines two Buddhist-inspired approaches to transforming instruction and curriculum: the Five Qualities of contemplative teaching and learning; and the Ten Aspects of Knowledge. The Five Qualities offer holistic practices and approaches to instruction derived from the traditional Tibetan Buddhist Families. The Ten aspects from Nalanda, the ancient Indian university, suggest methods for contemporary curriculum development. We study contemplative pedagogies and how to deepen academic content areas in students’ own classrooms. An essential element is the personal transformation of the teacher from the practices of mindfulness, loving-kindness, and space awareness. Prerequisites: EDU700 and EDU705.

EDU775E The Science of Contemplative Teaching and Learning (3.0)
This course provides an overview of contemplative education from a scientifically informed perspective. Students personally encounter science as a way of knowing, and learn some of the methods used in researching contemplative teaching and learning. We review recent findings on training teachers in contemplative practice, training teachers in contemplative pedagogy, and training K-12 students directly. Scientifically informed theories of contemplative education are examined to explore relationships between key concepts such as attention, awareness, learning, mindfulness, self-
regulation, and resilience. The relevance of this research for teacher training, pedagogy, and educational policy is discussed. Gaining proficiency regarding current research in the field of contemplative education empowers students with the knowledge needed for implementing and advocating for contemplative curriculum within a school, and also for planning new empirical studies. Students who are not matriculated in the MA program must receive permission of the instructor to register. Prerequisite: EDU 700.

**EDU880E**  
*Master's Project (4.0)*  
Master's Project provides both individualized and group support for students in the capstone course of the Contemplative Education program. The project may be a substantial expansion of a previous paper, or a new endeavor related to a personally meaningful aspect of contemplative education. Students study, inquire about, and then articulate their project focus, writing a document that will include other creative genres. The project culminates in the master’s project presentation during the following summer. Prerequisites: All previous MA ED program courses, except EDU720e.

**EDU881E**  
*Extended Thesis (0.5)*  
Contemplative education extended thesis.