Course Title: Playful Mindfulness  
Course Code: PDV 103  
Instructor: Ted DesMaisons

Course Summary:
Especially when infused with the playful benefits of improvisation and spontaneity, mindfulness helps us slow down and connect with our own inner resources. This course offers an opportunity to develop a beginning mindfulness practice in a supportive, joyous community of learners.

Students can expect to:
- change your relationship to so-called “failure” to allow a freer creative flow
- train the “puppy mind” with patient, kind, and firm repetition to enhance focus
- develop an “ANIMA Attitude” of kindness, curiosity, and engagement that opens up possibility and loosens judgment of self and others
- refine observation skills for greater body awareness
- turn off autopilot to open a fuller range of experience and expression
- transform thoughts and feelings—from hardened facts to ever-changing events
- unhitch from self-sabotaging “snowball stories,” reducing anxiety and rumination
- choose from a range of nuanced responses rather than relying on hair-trigger reactions, increasing a sense of personal freedom.

We will use multiple modes to strengthen your learning, including:

- **Formal practice** which strengthen the awareness “muscle,” helping us notice how experience changes in the mind, body, and emotions from moment to moment.
- **Informal practice** that brings that awareness to daily life: when we’re eating, driving, arguing—whenever!
- **Shared inquiry** which uses safe, small and large discussions to draw wisdom from the whole group.
- **Playful exercises** that let you *experience* the skills we’re exploring—and laugh in the process.

Please note: often when people think of “improv,” they imagine high-stakes comedy or public performance situations where they would need to be quick-thinking or particularly funny. This is not that. We will use improvisation to help us develop confidence and spontaneity but we will do so in a safe, supportive, friendly manner.

This course is designed for improv and mindfulness beginners or for those with more developed improv or meditation chops who want to explore new avenues and tap deeper levels. No religious or spiritual beliefs are required to gain the full benefit from the course nor will any be promoted. That said, those with an inquiring heart and open mind will gain the most from—and contribute the most to—the experience.
Grade Options and Requirements:

Though this course is not graded, students are strongly encouraged to commit to at least twenty minutes of daily practice at home for the duration of the course. You will also be invited to complete one chapter of reading per week. Both commitments strengthen the group learning.

- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - Students must participate in at least 8 of 10 course sessions.
- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. No credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.

*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose the Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.

Tentative Weekly Outline:

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<td>Lesson Ten</td>
<td>The Guest House: Exploring Difficulty and Building Resilience</td>
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Course Materials and Reference List:

- **Playful Mindfulness**: a joyful journey to everyday confidence, calm, and connection, by Ted DesMaisons
- **Mindfulness**: Finding Peace in a Frantic World, by Mark Williams
- **Improv Wisdom**: Don’t Prepare, Just Show Up, by Patricia Ryan Madson (optional)

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions
365 Lasuen St., Stanford, CA 94305
continuingstudies@stanford.edu
650-725-2650
Note About Live Attendance and Recording:

The large-group portions of these class sessions will be recorded for the benefit of classmates who cannot attend on a given night. Individual conversations and dialogues in break-out rooms will not be recorded.

Even though we will have the option to watch (or re-watch) a given night’s session on video, students are *strongly* encouraged to make the commitment to join class live each week. We will build a bit of supportive community and each person’s presence makes a difference for keeping that container strong and whole.

On a more formal level, live attendance is required in at least eight of the ten evening sessions is required to earn credit.

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