



Course Purpose

Cultivating our empathy and compassion enhances our ability to make meaningful and valuable contributions in all facets of life. In this course, students will be inspired to not only embrace their existing capacity for empathy and compassion, but also to develop skills and abilities that will allow them to increase their empathic and compassionate responses to events in their own life.

This will lay the foundation for:

- Students' own well-being and success
- Developing and maintaining healthy relationships
- Social harmony



Learning Outcomes

Students' knowledge of empathy and compassion will be informed by scientific research, exposure to contemplative practices, and exploration of their own experiences of empathy and compassion.

Mindful engagement in this course prepares students to:

- Define and describe empathy and compassion
- Differentiating empathy and compassion from related concepts such as sympathy, altruism, and kindness
- Understand the role that the brain and nervous system play in empathy and compassion
- Gain experience with practices that nurture the development of empathy and compassion
- Examine challenges to acting with empathy and compassion and how to overcome them
- Identify the importance and benefits of empathy and compassion for individuals, relationships, organizations, and society



Grading

Activities (30% of course grade)

Students will engage in various experiential learning activities that provide opportunities to explore or apply concepts discussed throughout the course.

Reflections (30% of course grade)

Students will explore and evaluate their experiences, thought, feelings, and reactions to the course content and activities. These reflections will give students an opportunity to make connections with course content and consider the impact that this course is having on the development of their empathy and compassion.

Knowledge Checks (30% of course grade)

Students will complete knowledge checks assessing mastery of the course concepts that are presented in based on assigned readings, lectures, and videos.

Empathy and Compassion in Action (10% of course grade)

Students will engage in an activity that enables them to put into practice the knowledge and skills they have learned by identifying a situation that could benefit from their empathic and compassionate action.

Grade	Percentages
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
E	59% or less



Schedule

Module	Week	Topic
Introduction to Empathy and Compassion	1	Defining empathy and compassion Identifying different types of empathy Identifying components and flows of compassion
	2	Differentiating empathy and compassion from each other and from other constructs
Understanding the Brain and Nervous Systems' Role in Empathy and Compassion	3	Defining fight or flight and managing responses Explaining the role of brain neuroplasticity and mirror neurons on empathy and compassion
Nurturing Empathy and Compassion	4	Physiological aspects and psychological aspects
	5	Communicating and practicing empathy and compassion with others
Challenges and Overcoming Barriers to Empathy and Compassion	6	Discuss barriers to practicing empathy and compassion Identify strengths and techniques to avoid empathy and compassion fatigue
Importance of Empathy and Compassion	7	Define the benefits of acting with empathy and compassion Discuss the importance of empathy and compassion in various relationships