

**Mental Training for Peak Performance**  
**Course Numbers: 57457/ 57757**  
**Fall 2023 Syllabus**

<b>Time &amp; Location</b>	Tues/Thurs 11 -12:20 PM, Kresge Theater
<b>Platform:</b>	Canvas
<b>Faculty:</b>	Monique Mead, Director of Music Entrepreneurship <a href="mailto:mmead@andrew.cmu.edu">mmead@andrew.cmu.edu</a>
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<b>Office Hours:</b>	HoA 230 By appointment

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### **Description**

The purpose of this course is to help you perform your best under pressure by learning new skills for effective practicing, audition preparation, and managing performance anxiety. You will hear insights from elite performers, participate in discussions, practice mindfulness, perform from Kresge stage, and track your progress in a journal. There are no final exams, projects, or papers due.

### **Objectives**

By the end of the semester you'll be able to ...

- Calm and focus your mind using various mindfulness techniques and establish a routine for mind/body self-care.
- Apply these techniques during your practice as well as performance situations such as, masterclasses, public speaking, auditions, competitions, and concerts.
- Share what you have learned about performance psychology, practice strategies, and mind/body awareness.
- Feel more comfortable with public speaking and assuming leadership roles.
- Give and receive support from other musicians striving for peak performance.
- Refer to your class notes and journal entries; these are a treasure trove of resources that can benefit you as a performer and educator for years to come.

### **Final Grade**

Your final grade will appear as a letter grade according to the following scale:

90-100%	A	60-69%	D
80-89%	B	under 60%	R (failing grade)
70-79%	C		

### **Assessment**

There are no written exams, final projects, or papers due for this class.

Item	Percent
Attendance	20%
Reading and Discussions	20%
Performances & Presentations	30%
Reflection	30%

### **Assessment Details**

#### **ATTENDANCE 20%**

##### **Attendance & Participation**

The door closes at 11:01 AM for our mindfulness practice, so plan to arrive a few minutes to get settled in. Should you arrive late, please wait outside the door until it is opened so as not to disturb the focus of others. Plan to give your full attention to the speakers and your colleagues and avoid engaging with technology during guest talks and performances. Your active engagement (through asking questions and participating in discussions) is welcome, encouraged, and indeed essential to a rewarding experience for everyone. Your success in this class depends on consistently showing up on time and prepared.

Lateness: Arriving late gives you 80% credit for attendance for that day.

Absences: If you need to miss a class for any reason, send an e-mail informing me of your absence by the beginning of class. You can miss up to two classes for any reason (gigging, auditions, illness, mental health, fatigue, etc.) without it having an impact on your grade. Absences beyond that will affect your final grade.

##### **Participation**

This class was designed to support YOU, and the guest speakers are here to address YOUR needs. Please let your voice be heard. Your questions and comments energize the class and make it more interesting for everyone.

#### **READING AND DISCUSSIONS 20%**

##### **Book Club**

At the beginning of the semester, you will select a book from the reading list below and form a [book club](#) with other classmates who share similar interests. Each group will meet weekly for approx. 25 minutes during the end of our Thursday classes to discuss their book and share personal experiences. Each group will set their own pace and document the discussions, which will be graded as a group. You'll also submit peer reviews at the end of each semester.

## Reading List

The following books serve as your “Book Club” options for this course. You’ll purchase ONE before the first week of class and one before fall break. An additional list of recommended reading can be found at the end of this syllabus.

**\*\*[SIGN UP FOR A BOOK CLUB HERE](#)\*\***

### Choose ONE from the list for weeks 1-7

[Brene Brown: “Daring Greatly”](#)

[Timothy Gallwey: “The Inner Game of Tennis”](#)

[Elizabeth Gilbert: “Big Magic. Creative Living Beyond Fear”](#)

[Don Greene: “Fight Your Fear and Win”](#)

### Choose ONE from the list for weeks 7-14

[Don Greene: “Train Your Own Hero”](#)

[Steven Pressfield: “The War of Art”](#)

[Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: “Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience”](#)

[Eckhart Tolle: The Power of Now](#)

## PERFORMANCES & PRESENTATIONS 30%

You will have multiple opportunities to perform and speak under increasing degrees of pressure. If reading this sentence fills you with anxiety, you are in the right class, and you’re certainly not alone. Please remember: Everyone is here to learn, and no one is judging you. Grading is based on diligence, not outcome.

### Kresge Stage Performances (3x)

Every student receives three opportunities to perform on the Kresge stage in front of the class, and we raise the stakes at each performance: During Block 1 you’ll play solo repertoire or excerpts for peers and visiting musicians; for Block 2, you’ll combine performance with public speaking; and finally in Block 3 we bring in a “real audience” from the Osher Lifelong Learning Center in a masterclass setting with CMU faculty. You’ll have the opportunity to work with a collaborative pianist for Blocks 2 and 3, provided you follow the “pianist protocol” outlined below under “Policies.”

### Outside Performances (2x)

You are expected to perform twice outside of class for 10-30 minutes. This cannot be a masterclass, recital or other school-related performance. For a low-stakes performance, you could arrange a virtual performance for family members or a performance for friends. For a higher-stakes performance, you can count a performance at a church or retirement home, a solo or chamber gig, or a performance opportunity listed [HERE](#). This CAN be a paying gig or your required community outreach performance (for grad students).

### Public Speaking: Book Review & Pecha Kucha

Before midterm, your book club will present takeaways from your book, and everyone will integrate an element of performance into the presentation. At the end of the semester, your book club will offer a book review in Pecha Kucha format: a fun, fast-paced, slide-based presentation.

### **Public Speaking: Guest Speaker Hospitality**

Our classes provide a stage for you to practice essential public speaking skills by introducing one of our guest speakers to the class or thanking them afterwards on behalf of the entire class. You'll sign up to choose your speaker at the beginning of the semester.

### **REFLECTION 30%**

A highly effective way to become aware of what is happening in your mind is to keep a journal. It's also the best way that I will be able to track your progress throughout the semester.

### **Mindfulness**

A daily mindfulness practice is key to calming and focusing the mind under pressure. You are expected to practice mindfulness for 5-20 minutes each day and to track it using Headspace, Insight Timer or another tracking device of your choice. To support your practice, we will be experimenting with various techniques throughout the semester. You'll upload a record of your daily mindfulness practice with your journal summary, described below.

### **Speaker Notes, Journal Summary (weekly)**

Every week you'll keep a journal (preferably handwritten) that includes 1) speaker's notes from class, 2) weekly intentions, 3) mindfulness report, and 4) self-observations. This is YOUR journal, so feel free to write whatever you like without regard for language, spelling, or formality. At the end of the week, you'll submit a brief summary of your journal on Canvas, which will be graded for thoughtful completion, not content. You may skip two submissions with no impact to your grade.

### **POLICIES**

#### Late/Make-Up Work

Due dates for every assignment are posted in Canvas. Weekly assignments (journals, speaker notes, mindfulness, and performance workshops) share the following late policy: Late submissions lose 10% per day, and submission closes 3 days after the due date.

All other assignments (Kresge performances, presentations, and guest speaker hospitality) require you to present at the times you have selected, and no flexibility is possible with the due dates.

If you experience extenuating circumstances that prohibit you from submitting your assignments on time (e.g., you are hospitalized), please let me know. I will evaluate these instances on a case-by-case basis.

#### Pianist Protocol

You'll have the privilege of working with a collaborative pianist for your Kresge performances. Please bear in mind that collaborative pianists are busy people just like you who are juggling multiple things at once. Communication about your music is key to having a good working relationship with your pianist. Here are some guidelines for working with pianists for our course:

- Provide PDFs of your music at least two weeks prior to rehearsing/performing. You'll do this on the Kresge Performance Sign-up sheets.
  - In your PDF, include written instructions to specify where you will begin/end, your preferred tempo markings, and any helpful phrase markings. (You may send a YouTube video of your piece for reference.)
- Be aware of the complexity of the piano parts. If you are playing a sonata, concerto, or opera aria with a very difficult part, provide the music at least 3 weeks in advance.

### Respect for Diversity

It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

### Recording

Most classes will be recorded on Zoom and made available via Canvas. These are for personal use only and may not be shared with anyone outside of our class. No student may record any classroom activity without express written consent from me. If you have (or think you may have) a disability such that you need to record or tape classroom activities, you should contact the Office of Disability Resources to request an appropriate accommodation.

### Your Well-being

**Your personal well-being is of utmost importance. Please, take care of yourself.** Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep, and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful. If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is here to help: call 412-268-2922 and visit their website at <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty, or family member you trust for help getting connected to support that can help.

### **GETTING HELP**

I am here to help you with your course work or any other issues you would like to discuss. Catch me after class or email to schedule a chat in my office or via Zoom.

## ADDITIONAL READING RESOURCES

### Performance Anxiety

- Timothy Gallwey: *"The Inner Game of Tennis"*
- Timothy Gallwey: *"Inner Tennis. Playing the Game."*
- Barry Green with Timothy Gallwey: *"The Inner Game of Music"*
- Don Greene: *"Fight Your Fear and Win"*
- Livingston Taylor: *"Stage Performance"*
- William Westney: *"The Perfect Wrong Note"*

### Finding motivation, Strategies for excellence

- Elizabeth Gilbert: *"Big Magic. Creative Living Beyond Fear."*
- Steven Pressfield: *"The War of Art," "Turning Pro," and "Do The Work."*
- David McGill: ["Sound in Motion"](#) A performer's guide to greater musical expression.
- Bob Bowman: *"The Golden Rules. 10 Steps to World-Class excellence in Your Life and Work."* (Coach for Michael Phelps)
- Lance LaDuke: *"Music Practice Coach"*
- Seth Godin's Daily Blog: [www.sethgodin.typepad.com](http://www.sethgodin.typepad.com)

### Performance Psychology

- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: *"Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience"*
- Daniel Coyle: *"The Talent Code: Greatness isn't Born. It's Grown. Here's How."*
- The Bulletproof Musician with Noa Kageyama. [www.bulletproofmusician.com](http://www.bulletproofmusician.com)

### Purpose-driven Communication

- Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, and Switzler. *"Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking when Stakes are High."*
- Simon Sinek. *"Start With Why"*

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is subject to modification. Updates will appear on our Canvas homepage (that one will be the most updated schedule).

## 2023 Class Schedule

Week	Tues	Topic	Speaker	Thurs	Topic	Guest
1	8/29	Course Intro. <i>Cleansing breaths</i>	MM	8/31	Sound Meditation (Scotty's Sound Bath)	
2	9/5	The Terror of "My Turn" <i>Senses Meditation</i>	MM	9/7	BLOCK 1 Short solo performances/Stage Presence	Bill van der Sloot, CMU violin professor
3	9/12	Early Career Artist Management <i>4-5-8 Breathing</i>	Katie Backus (Zoom)	9/14	Performances/Speaking from the Stage	Dan Teadt, CMU voice professor
4	9/19	Programming for Engagement <i>Tapping</i>	MM	9/21	Performances/Small talk	Hakeem Bilal, bass trombone
5	9/26	Pack Your Own Parachute <i>Connecting Earth &amp; Sky</i>	Jeremy Branson	9/28	11 Thriving as a New York Freelancer 12pm Book Review Workshop	John Carroll, horn C Street Brass
6	10/3	Book Review (Brown)/Performance <i>Figure 8 visualization</i>	Students	10/5	Book Review (Gallwey)/Performance	Students
7	10/10	Book Review (Gilbert)/Performance <i>Atom visualization</i>	Students	10/12	Book Review (Greene)/Performance	Students
		FALL BREAK			FALL BREAK	
8	10/24	Performance, Vulnerability, and Shame +Osher <i>Owning the stage</i>	MM	10/26	Perform/present/engage +Osher Book Club	MM
9	10/31	Thoughts and Strategies to Build and Enhance Your Performance Abilities <i>JB performance video</i>  +Osher <i>Box Breathing</i>	Jeanne Baxtresser (Zoom)	11/2	Perform/present/engage +Osher Book Club	Andres Cardenes
10	11/7	Democracy Day NO		11/9	Perform/present/engage	

		CLASS			+Osher Book Club	
11	11/14	“Love Secrets from the Masters” Managing Personal Relationships <i>Alternate Nostril Breathing</i>	Linda Carroll 11:15 AM (Zoom)	11/16	Perform/present/engage Book Club	Schepkin?
12	11/21	Harmonizing the Mind & Body through Movement <i>Gratitude</i>	Intermission Sessions Elena Urioste & Melissa White (Zoom)	11/23	THANKSGIVING	
13	11/28	Audition Strategies <i>Owning the hall</i>		11/30	Pecha Kucha Workshop	Students
14	12/5	Pecha Kucha Presentations <i>Cylinder of Light</i>	Students	12/7	Pecha Kucha Party	Students