

Spiritual Practices: A Sampler (Feb. 5-March 8)

Course Content

This 5-week course will focus on various spiritual practices from around the world (some religion-based; some not). There will be an introduction and overview of each practice, followed by class discussion. The goal is to cover two practices per week. Reading material and links will be emailed each week. No book is required for this course. Short videos will enhance the course.

Week 1: General introduction to concepts of spirituality - faith-based, cultural, and wellness oriented.

Discussion about well known practices that class members are familiar with, practice now, or would like to know more about.

Discuss poetry or journaling as spiritual practices.

Week 2: *Shinrin-Yoku* or *Forest Bathing* is a popular practice in Japan and around the world. It's goal is to enhance relaxation and to boost well being and health.

Tea Ceremony as an aid to mindfulness and reflection. Originated in China and Japan.

Week 3: *Taize* - rhythmic chanting/prayer – originated in Taize, France. Songs as a mantra are sung repetitively as a form of meditation and praise.

Yoga Meditation – originated in Northern India 500 years ago.

Week 4: The *Sun Dance* ritual in the indigenous North American communities. A 4-day ceremony of dancing, fasting, and prayer. We will discuss other Native American rituals, too.

Week 5: *Labyrinth Walking* as pilgrimage (such as in Chartres Cathedral, France)

One-time practices such as Apache “burden baskets”, Releasing of Souls (Thailand), etc.

Course Wrap-up.