Syllabus MIND BODY MOVEMENT: Yoga and Pilates

U31 221 Wednesdays 6-8pm

Instructor: Susan Volkan

Instructor contact: svolkan@wustl.edu cell: (314) 703-4264

DESCRIPTION

This course combines Hatha Yoga, Pilates Method mat exercises and some specialty forms of yoga with the goal of improving postural alignment, balance, strength and range of motion as well as motor respiratory coordination and psychological well being.

Students will be guided through beginning level yoga breathing practices (Pranayama), yoga postures (Asanas) and Pilates Method mat exercises. Intermediate level postures and exercises will be added as the class progresses.

An emphasis will be placed on practicing safely with optimal postural alignment, joint stabilization and breathing technique. The instructor will offer modifications that address specific issues relating to posture, range of motion, weakness and injury.

Reading material will address topics in yoga and Pilates, as well as related topics in exercise science and functional anatomy. Coursework will include a short written assignment and oral presentation on a research topic related to yoga, Pilates or another Somatic discipline.

MATERIALS:

Required Props: Yoga Mat
Optional Props: yoga blanket or towel, yoga strap, yoga block – a block is highly recommended if you have cannot comfortably fold forward with your hands on the ground. A strap is highly recommended. Please purchase a mat intended for yoga, a “sticky mat”. A thick, spongy Pilate’s mat is not appropriate for this class, as it will not provide support and traction during standing yoga postures. That said, a thicker yoga mat will offer more comfort during Pilates exercises, some people might even prefer to layer two yoga mats. Attire: Footless dancewear or fitted athletic-wear is preferred; please avoid overly baggy styles that obscure body alignment. Our exercises will be performed in bare feet.

RESEARCH PAPER

Write a short research paper (3-4 pages) on a Pilates or yoga related topic of your choice. Pick a topic that you find interesting and make it specific; this is too short a paper for broad topics like “Pilates and Postural Imbalances” or “The Health Effects of Yoga”, however, more focused topics such as "Pilates for Scoliosis" or “Cultural Appropriation and Yoga”, or “The Yoga Principle of Ahimsa” would be fine. If you pick a topic that addresses a topic in medicine or exercise science, please be aware that there is an abundance of both junk science and quality, peer reviewed studies related to mind-body exercise, please pick your sources carefully. The instructor will post a list of potential topics but feel free to use your creativity and explore other options. You will also present
your findings to the class in the form of a short oral presentation.

GRADING:

This class is offered as “Pass/Fail” or for a letter grade; grade option changes must be made through WEBSTAC. You must receive a grade of “C” or above to receive “PASS” or “CREDIT.” Students admitted to the Certificate in Somatic Studies must take this class for a letter grade.

Research Paper 25%

Class Participation 25%

Practical Evaluation 50%

Throughout the semester, your practice will be evaluated with an eye toward individual progress, attention to alignment, breath coordination and demonstration of body awareness (this includes an awareness of your own abilities and limitations, when to modify and when to increase the challenge).

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND CLASSROOM PROTOCOL:

You are allowed 2 free absences throughout the semester; I suggest you reserve them for real illness or emergency. Each absence beyond the initial two will reduce your grade by 10 points. A total of five absences (three beyond your two free absences) will result in failure of the course. You are responsible for keeping track of your absences. One make-up session will be offered at the end of the semester. You may also make up by attending my Pilates course that meets TTH 6-7:15 pm or another U College Somatics course. If you have a serious illness or injury or an unexpected major life event, I will work with you to make up for absences. Please be on your mat and ready to practice at the appointed start time. **University College classes begin promptly at the scheduled time; there is no 10-minute passing period as there is for day classes.** Deactivate cell phones and other devices before class. Late entrances, disruptive behaviors, texting or using devices during class will negatively affect the classroom participation portion of your grade. Eating is not allowed in class, water is fine.

INSTRUCTOR’S NOTE

Certain postures and exercises may not be appropriate for individuals with chronic physical conditions or injuries – please alert the instructor if you have such a condition or if you become injured.

INSTRUCTOR OFFICE HOURS

The instructor is available by appointment before or after class.