

Redlands Daily Facts

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Meditation room opens at University of Redlands

John Alden, For the Daily Facts

REDLANDS - Anybody looking for some peace of mind would benefit from a visit to the recently opened **meditation room** at the University of Redlands. Guided meditation classes, open to the community, are held weekly in the **meditation room**, on the first floor of Larsen Hall. The room is also open for independent use.

UR's **meditation room** is one of the first on a U.S. college campus, according to religious studies professor Fran Grace, who said the only other one she'd heard of is at Naropa University, a Buddhist college in Boulder, Colo.

Evening classes cover topics such as "Meditation 101," an introductory nonsectarian meditation course; "Intro to Zazen: Zen Meditation," an introductory course to Buddhist meditation; and "Intro to Christian Meditation," an introduction to the practice of Christian meditation. Courses are hosted by religious studies professors Fran Grace and Lorenzo Garbo.

Grace had two reasons for hosting meditation sessions.

"I started offering a class on meditation two years ago in the religious studies department, and then I started reading a lot of the research on the benefits of meditation for college students, how it improves their ability to learn," Grace said. "Also, my own life experience: I've been a meditative person since I was a child, and have always had an appreciation for silence and calmness. As I grew up, I started turning to meditation more and more. I'd say it's probably the most useful tool I have."

"Think of it this way," she suggested: "If your mind is an ocean, then the waves on the surface are the disturbances and distractions of everyday life. Most people just shift between happiness and unhappiness, based on external events, the waves. When you meditate, though, you can sink lower, and access the still waters underneath the surface. Your mind is a quiet, peaceful place under the surface."

UR government major Luis Prado attended the Meditation 101 class on Nov. 26.

"I heard about this through a university e-mail, and I thought I'd check it out," he said.

"I'd meditated before, but it wasn't really like this. I think meditation just makes life easier. It makes you feel more grounded, more self-assured."

Ashley Miller, a sophomore global business major who enrolled in a meditation class, said, "I think meditating just makes it easier for you to be alone with yourself. For example, if you had a long layover at an airport, you wouldn't stress as much. It makes you feel more centered."

She heard about the **meditation room** while taking one of Fran Grace's classes.

Miller is also the "monitor" for the room during the hours it is open to the public.

The room's hours of availability outside classes are: 8 to 9:30 a.m., 4 to 5 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays; 8 to 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fridays; and 2 to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

John Alden is a staff writer for the University of Redlands Bulldog Weekly.

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