

Graduate Course Number: 7303

Course Title: **Mastering Focus and Concentration in the Classroom**

Days/Times of Class Meetings: Asynchronous online

Number of Credits for the course: 3 Graduate Credits

Instructor: **Dr. Mariana Gariazzo**

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Office hours: Wednesdays at 8:00-9:00 PM CST or by appointment.

This Syllabus is a general outline of the course and is subject to change upon notification to the students during a regular class session.

Student Engagement Statement: Our class will take place asynchronously, meaning our course does not have a required synchronous (live) class session for you to attend. You will, however, be expected to devote an amount of time similar to what you would have spent in a lecture (up to three to four hours per week) viewing videos, reading assigned materials, and completing class assignments for this course. Throughout the course, you will be expected to meet deadlines reviewing weekly modules, reading assigned articles, completing quizzes, assignments, participating in board discussions, and completing one research project and a final project.

Course Description: In an era of technology-mediated relationships and overwhelming amounts of information at our fingertips, we are constantly exposed to attention-grabbing activities that can erode our ability to focus and function optimally in and outside the classroom. How can we regain a sense of control in our inter-connected and fast-moving world? How do we teach a reward-seeking generation of students and help them survive and thrive in the attention economy? This course offers practical and proven strategies to reclaim focus, cultivate brain fitness, and optimize productivity for students and teachers alike. The course addresses the most common focus-hindering factors of contemporary life and explores behavioral and cognitive tools to gain control over our brains and behaviors. We will explore building health-promoting habits by goal setting and mindfulness. At the end of this course, you will have acquired an essential toolkit of science-supported focus and concentration strategies that can be tailored to your performance needs, and that of your students, for any work environment or situation.

Student Learning Outcomes	Outcomes Assessments
<p>At the end of this course, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyze the impact of attention-grabbing and habit-forming behaviors on brain performance. ● Investigate and assess cognitive and behavioral strategies to cultivate attention. ● Differentiate attention-building protocols for diverse constituencies and learning environments. ● Create a tailored plan of science-supported focus and concentration strategies for the classroom. 	<p>The following assessments will be used in alignment to SLOs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A weekly journal assignment will be kept to encourage self-reflection on attention and brain performance. ● A research project will promote gathering a body of science-based strategies to cultivate attention in diverse contexts. ● Weekly multiple-choice quizzes at the end of each module. ● A recorded oral presentation with a detailed instructional design plan applied to diverse classroom experiences.

Program-Level Outcomes Addressed:

a. Professionalism in Teaching - Candidates will participate in group and character-building activities by working alone and with others to explore personal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to personal and professional growth. Students will demonstrate the ability to: Research best educational practices; Discern new uses for information from a variety of course work; Reflectively discuss their teaching and ways to enhance it.

b. Excellence in Music- Candidates will explore more deeply the culturally and historically important aspects of music, musicians, and composers throughout the world and across time. Students will demonstrate the ability to: Recognize style traits of various composers, genres, and periods; Identify major and transitional composers in a variety of styles, genres, and periods; Learn or review and apply new techniques to perform in a style appropriate to genre, style, period, and culture.

c. Strength in Character- Candidates will develop new approaches to the praxis of teaching by learning about, experiencing, and using best practice techniques as borne out in proven traditional practices and those demonstrated as effective through current research. Students will demonstrate the ability to: Discuss a variety of educational approaches; Describe why particular educational approaches are chosen for use; Choose and apply new approaches to the teaching praxis.

Course Requirements and Assessment:

Module Quizzes: After completion of particular sections within a module, you will be prompted to take a short multiple-choice quiz to assess your comprehension of the material included on each module. Questions will be based on material presented by the instructor during class and may be formulated in any of the following formats: short answer, multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank, or true/false questions.

Board Discussions: Board Discussions offer unique opportunities to reflect on the course content and engage with our community of learning. You can think carefully about what you want to say and look it over before you post it. You can analyze the contributions of your peers thoughtfully and offer comments or questions to clarify or to advance the discussion. To write engaging and effective discussions, consider both the quantity and quality of your contributions. The quality of your contribution is far more important than the length of your post.

Research Project: Your research project will consist of exploring assigned readings and recommended resources to gather and analyze a body of science-based strategies to cultivate attention in diverse contexts. You may have the choice of presenting your research topic in various formats, including infographics, e-Portfolio, 5-minute Lightning Talks, or a traditional 8-page long paper.

Final Project: Your final project will consist in the creation of an instructional plan tailored to a specific classroom environment and student constituency. You may have the choice of presenting this project as a voice-over PowerPoint presentation or video presentation.

You can view your progress and any feedback provided by visiting **My Grades** in the course menu.

Grading Breakdown	Points
Assignments	100
Quizzes (20 quizzes, 10 point each)	200
Board Discussions (10 discussions, 20 points each)	200
Research Project	200

Grading Breakdown	Points
Final Project	300
Total Points	1,000

Instructional Materials: All materials will be provided by the instructor during lectures and available in the Schoology course. No textbook is required for this course, but some books are recommended to build your personal library. Assigned readings, videos, module content, assignments, assessments, and presentation summaries are available on Schoology.

Course Bibliography:

Clear, James. *Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits and Break Bad Ones*. New York: Penguin Random House, 2018.

Ericson, Anders. Ed. *The Road to Excellence: The Acquisition of Expert Performance in the Arts and Sciences, Sports and Games*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996.

Fadel et al. *Mindfulness meditation improves cognition: Evidence of brief mental training*. In *Consciousness and Cognition*, Volume 19, Issue 2, June 2010, Pages 597-605.

Gendlin, Eugene. *Focusing*. New York: Bantam Books, 1982.

Goleman, Daniel. *Focus: The Hidden Driver of Excellence*. (New York: Harper Collings Publisher, 2013).

Lantieri, Linda. *Building Emotional Intelligence: Practices to Cultivate Inner Resilience in Children* (Sounds True, 2008, 2014).

Payne, Tina; Siegel, Daniel. *The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind*. (Mind Your Brain, 2011).

Lane, Sean, and Paul Atchley, eds. "Front Matter." In *Human Capacity in the Attention Economy*, i–iv. American Psychological Association, 2021.

Siegel, Daniel. *The Mindful Brain: Reflection and Attunement in the Cultivation of Well-Being*. New York: Norton, 2007.

Tan, Chase-Meng Tan. *Search Inside Yourself: The Unexpected Path to Achieving Success, Happiness (and World Peace)*. San Francisco: Harper One, 2012.

Course Calendar or Schedule	
Week 1	Overview Module 1: The Anatomy of Attention Quiz 1; Discussion Board
Week 2	Module 2: Recognizing Focus-Hindering Habits Quiz 2; Discussion Board
Week 3	Module 3: Developing Focus-Building Practices Quiz 3; Discussion Board; Assignment
Week 4	Module 4: Brain Fitness Quiz 4; Discussion Board
Week 5	Module 5: Creating New Habits Quiz 5; Discussion Board
Week 6	Module 6: Putting it all Together Quiz 6; Discussion Board; Research Project Due; Assignment
Week 7	Module 7: Cultivating Mindfulness Quiz 7; Discussion Board
Week 8	Module 8: Setting and Accomplishing Goals Quiz 8; Discussion Board
Week 9	Module 9: Mastering Attention and High Performance Quiz 9; Discussion Board; Assignment
Week 10	Module 10: Implementing Focus Practices in the Classroom Quiz 10; Discussion Board
Week 11	Module 11: On Well-Being and Self-Care Discussion Board
Week 12	Final Project Due

Attendance Policy

Class participation in board discussions, completion of all quizzes and assignments in the sequence they are presented is expected from every student in this course.

Candidate Conduct

“An important part of VanderCook’s Conceptual Framework and Candidate Dispositions and Outcomes is the focus on professionalism and character. Specific descriptors include participation as well as attendance, flexibility in the face of changing circumstances and institutional needs, the commitment to continual personal development, self-reflection and growth, respect for the academic community and the individuals and resources of that community, and behavior, speech and dress that is appropriate and respectful in the educational environment. Failure to observe standards of professional behavior may result in referral to the Standards Committee and/or the appropriate dean. Consistent concerns in this area will have an impact on successful completion of the program.”

Health and Safety

VanderCook College of Music is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Basic information regarding the maintenance of health and safety within the contexts of practice, performance, teaching and listening is provided throughout the academic year. Health and safety information specific to this course will be addressed. It is the responsibility of each individual musician to take an active role in making informed decisions to help maintain their own health and safety.

Academic Honesty

“Candidates are expected to maintain the highest standards of integrity in their academic work. Failure to do so will jeopardize a candidate’s success in the program. Examples of academic dishonesty include:

- Presenting another’s words, music, or concepts as your own by failing to acknowledge or properly cite the source.
- Communicating or receiving answers or information to/from another in a testing situation.
- Consulting notes or any other source of answers/information in a testing situation, unless the instructor authorizes such access.
- Making available or accessing tests or quizzes from current or previous classes unless explicitly authorized by the instructor.
- Bringing, by any means, answers or information into a testing situation except as explicitly authorized by the instructor.
- Collaborating or turning in jointly produced work on any test or assignment that is intended to reflect individual effort.”

Plagiarism

“Plagiarism means taking someone else’s words, ideas, data or work and presenting them as your own. This could mean an exact duplication of someone else’s work without proper citation of the source, or it could mean you present it with only small changes and do not cite the

source. Plagiarism can occur in art, music, literature, or technology – really in any area of intellectual work.

All work submitted should be properly credited to the original source of the information or idea whether the source is a book, Internet site, article, or any other medium. In written work, quotation marks or block indentations show direct quotations and the source must be cited. If information that is not common knowledge is paraphrased or summarized from a source, that source (including websites) must be cited. Failure to do so in academic assignments represents cheating and carries the appropriate penalties.

Copyright compliance is the goal of VanderCook College. Information to help with clarification of what constitutes fair use of copyrighted material, including photocopying, is on permanent reserve in the Ruppel Library.

No candidate should expect to receive a passing grade on any test or assignment that reflects dishonesty or academic irregularity. Cheating in any form may result in failure of the class and academic expulsion.”

Disability Statement

“If a student has a disability which might interfere with that student’s ability to function in this course it is the responsibility of that student to notify the instructor at the beginning of the course.”