

Student Story | Xiaoyi Wang | Fitness & Meditation

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See the video here: https://youtu.be/Ip_05kt928E

Students spoke and MIT Physical Education listened – beginning in Q2 of 2017, MIT PE began offering the course “Fitness and Meditation” for 2 PE points. The course introduced students to the practice of meditation and allowed students to cultivate mindfulness, or the state of awareness in which one is present with one’s experience without judgement, twice a week. Each class focused on one of a variety of meditation techniques, such as: mindfulness; body scans; labeling thoughts; Gatha meditation; Metta meditation; guided imagery; walking meditation; and eating meditation. Xiaoyi Wang, a class of 2020 student majoring in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (course 6-2), was one of the first students able to experience this exciting new course.

Xiaoyi, originally from Houston Texas, was inspired to take Fitness and Meditation after hearing about the positive experiences of past students. Her goal was to learn skills which she could use inside and outside the classroom – the course exceeded her expectations. A typical class consisted of a 5 minute warmup, a 10-15 minute workout, and a 5 minute cooldown followed by hands-on instruction on a meditation style. Uniquely, the fitness component varies based on instructor expertise (i.e. some teach yoga, others Tai Chi, and some teach a boot camp style workout), so there is a Fitness and Meditation class for everyone!

Xiaoyi enjoyed the meditation portion of the class each session. Her favorite meditation was “labeling thoughts,” a silent meditation in which you assign a generic label, such as “thinking,” to any thought which crosses your mind and then release it. The meditation style helped her relax when feeling stressed and become more-conscious of her thoughts.

For Xiaoyi, the meditations taught in the course helped her improve her ability to focus, subsequently improving her academic performance at MIT. Not only did the course improved her focus, she felt that just knowing there was an hour twice a week where she could relax and not worry about finishing a pset or tackling other problems was “wonderful in terms of relaxation and stress relief.”

After finishing the course, Xiaoyi planned to continue using the meditation techniques and skills she developed, carrying them through to other portions of her life, believing they will help her lead a more stress-free existence during future semesters.

To those contemplating taking Fitness and Meditation, Xiaoyi highly recommend it! She felt it was a great balance of completing a workout and relaxing through meditation.

For more information about Physical Education courses at MIT, mitpe.mit.edu