



## *Mindful Aging: Spirituality, Gratitude, and Resilience* GERO-509

**Instructor: Leah Marie Buturain, Ph.D.**  
**Spring 2019 GERO Room 115**  
**Thursday morning 9:00-11:50 p.m. (4 units)**

The course *Mindful Aging: Spirituality, Gratitude, and Resilience* offers those with a hunger for wisdom and understanding the opportunity to pursue questions that animate life's meaning. Students become aware of their own attitudes toward and feelings about their lives moving through time by cultivating a curiosity about the possibilities for growth and change at all stages of the life cycle. The humanities and arts, social sciences and cultural studies offer powerful lenses and pathways for a more empathic engagement with the aging process. We will be inquiring about the ways and means, artistic forms and cultural exchanges that nourish the imagination for growing in awareness of life as a gift and composing one's individual life as a work of art in process. The course content and class activities offer resources for developing awareness of being present in the moment, of mindfulness as a practice of active attention, and of gratitude as a behavior that can strengthen one's spiritual capacity to experience many kinds of connections.

*Mindful Aging: Spirituality, Gratitude, and Resilience* fosters vital imaginative connections to transform one's understanding and experience of the aging process from within, in order to re-envision the aging process as a spiritual journey. As students participate in creating their own mission statement, interviewing a wise elder, and initiating a creative project, they experience more clarity about their agency in service. Composing a mission statement helps students to become more aware of the choices they make for strengthening their own integrity and sense of agency in their lives. Moreover, this course challenges students to think critically about ageism, racism, sexism, and cultural constraints regarding discussing and preparing for dying as an integral part of the life cycle. Graduates of this course consider their experience 'transformational' and many continue to participate in ongoing exchange with each other: "It is the capstone gift one gives to oneself."

*Virtues are not the stuff of saints and heroes. They are tools for the art of living that neuroscience is now exploring with new words and images: what we practice, we become. Virtues are spiritual technologies.*

– Krista Tippett