

 <p>THE CENTER FOR JUSTICE & PEACEBUILDING</p> <p>A PROGRAM OF EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY</p>	<p>THE ART OF SLOW LEADERSHIP PAX 687</p> <p>SPI 2026 June 8-12</p> <p><i>Course meeting location and time to be announced</i></p>
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INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Art of Slow Leadership emerges from our shared experiences as higher education leaders in communication, restorative justice, and the visual arts. This course offers an alternative to forceful, autocratic, and anxiety-driven models of leadership. Grounded in Circle Process, Deep Listening, and Self-Compassion, it invites participants to explore how centering relationships in the workplace fosters more equitable and sustainable forms of leadership. Through a sequence of reflective processes, creative prompts, and interactive exercises, students will experiment with shifts in language and behavior and cultivate awareness of physical and emotional contexts. These practices help reduce stress, strengthen community, and open pathways to more inclusive, collaborative problem-solving across a range of settings.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

During our week of learning together, participants in this course will:

- Understand origins of the Slow Movement as it relates to Slow Leadership
- Develop awareness of how stress, urgency, and unexamined power dynamics can impact decision-making and workplace culture.
- Practice assessing conflict scenarios, with attention to one's own behaviors as well as to spoken and unspoken communication patterns exhibited by others
- Experiment with shifts in language and behavior that promote psychological safety and collective well-being.
- Build skills in collaborative problem-solving that honor diverse perspectives and lived experiences.
- Practice exercises in listening and mindfulness
- Develop a greater understanding of Circle Process as it relates to Slow Leadership
- Explore self-care and community-care strategies that sustain long-term engagement in leadership roles

REQUIRED TEXT AND OTHER RESOURCES

- Pranis, Kay. *The Little Book of Circle Processes : A New/Old Approach to Peacemaking (The Little Books of Justice and Peacebuilding)* (ISBN: 978-1561484614)
<https://www.skyhorsepublishing.com/9781561484614/little-book-of-circle-processes/>

You are not required to purchase additional textbooks for this course. Scholarly journal articles, book chapters, and other resources will be issued electronically via Moodle and/or in class.

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS

Daily Reflection Journal (2 pages per day). You will maintain a structured journal throughout the week, responding to prompts after each day's session. Prompts may ask you to identify moments of tension or ease in your own leadership contexts, notice shifts in your listening quality, or document experiments with new communication approaches. **DUE: Days 2, 3, 4, 5.**

Leadership Scenario Analysis (4 pages). You will analyze a workplace conflict or leadership challenge (either from your own experience or a provided case study) through the Slow Leadership lens. You will identify stress triggers, power dynamics, communication patterns, and you will propose alternative approaches using Circle Process, Self-Compassion, or Deep Listening principles. **DUE: Day 4.**

Experimental Practice Portfolio. You will document 3-5 concrete experiments with Slow Leadership practices during the week. These could be trying new language patterns, practicing mindfulness exercises, attempting to incorporate Self-Compassion breaks into your day, or implementing elements of Circle Process in your current context. For each experiment, you will describe what you tried, what happened, and what you learned. **Due: Day 5.** *Format: You may submit a well-organized and carefully prepared portfolio composed of written reflections, sketches, audio recordings, or other forms that honor your preferred mode/s of expression.*

Final Integration Project. You will create a personalized Slow Leadership plan for your unique context. This might include Self-Compassion strategies, communication commitments, or a framework for implementing Circle Process and Deep Listening in your workplace. This includes identifying potential obstacles and mitigation strategies, plus a brief literature review connecting course concepts to outside reading.

Grade Computation

Daily Reflection Journal	35%
Leadership Scenario Analysis	25%
Experimental Practice Portfolio	25%
Final Integration Project	15%
Class Participation/Engagement/ In-Class Presentations	Pass/Fail (all students must meaningfully participate)

Anticipated Outside Work

Approximately 2-3 hours per day

These are brief descriptions of required graded assignments for the course. More details for each assignment can be found on the “Guidance Notes” that will be provided in class.

DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE

List each class meeting time, the reading and or action that the student should do in preparation for the class, and the topic of the day. (Note: Daily schedule is not required for the draft syllabus)

JUNE 8	CONCEPTS:	ORIENTATION & UNDERSTANDING SLOW SELF-COMPASSION
JUNE 9	CONCEPT:	DEEP LISTENING
JUNE 10	CONCEPT:	CIRCLE PROCESS
JUNE 11	CONCEPT:	PROMPT DEVELOPMENT (SLOW THE DECK DOWN)
JUNE 12	CONCEPT:	PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

SPI ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is expected that individuals registering for an SPI session will attend the entire course (barring unforeseen travel delays or emergencies). Please contact SPI directly at spi@emu.edu before registering if you know you will have to miss any days of a course. SPI certificates are provided to participants only if they miss no more than one class day unless prior arrangements have been made with the SPI team and confirmed with the instructor. **For-credit participants are expected to attend all class sessions unless they are given permission from the instructor to miss a session.** SPI courses rely on active student participation in a learning community. If a participant misses class repeatedly and this disrupts the learning for others, they will be asked to leave the course and no money will be refunded for remaining course time.

GRADING CRITERIA AND OTHER POLICIES

SPI provides all students taking the course for graduate credit some supplemental information that will serve as a resource after SPI when students are working on course assignments. This includes information on library resources, EMU's academic integrity policy, and guidelines for writing graduate papers, information regarding the grading scale and course deadlines, and then some suggestions we have for you in order to make your experience of taking SPI courses for graduate credit as successful as possible! These [documents](#) are all available online.