

## Justice Institute of British Columbia COURSE OUTLINE

**Course Code: SPE149**

**Course Title: Taming the Hungry Ghost: Combining Science, Mindfulness and Compassion in the Treatment of Addictions**

**Prerequisite Courses:**

**Sponsoring Division: Community and Social Justice Division, Centre for Counselling and Community Safety**

**Previous Course Code & Title:**

<b># of Credits:</b>	<b>1.0</b>
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### **Course Description:**

An addiction is a repetitive compulsion associated with craving, despite the negative consequences arising from that compulsion. Its hidden purpose is to fill an inner void or soothe a psychic pain through various behaviours or substances.

Contrary to received wisdom, addictions to substances do not represent genetically-based medical disorders but are at the extreme end of a continuum of addictive behaviours rife throughout our society. There is only one addiction process. Whatever its manifestations--drug taking, sexual roving, compulsive shopping, workaholism or internet addiction—it expresses the activity of the same malfunctioning brain circuits and the same psychological dynamics

The source of addictions is to be found in the early childhood environment where the neurobiology of the brain's reward pathways and incentive-motivation circuits develops. Stress in utero, in childhood and later in life, creates the predisposition for addictions, whether to drugs, alcohol, nicotine, or to behavioural addictions such as gambling or the compulsive need for status and power.

Helping the addicted individual requires that we appreciate the function of the addiction in his or her life. More than a disease, the addiction is a response to a distressing life history and life situation and, at the same time, a limitation of the addict's best possibilities. People attempting to help addicted individuals need to be fearless in examining their own compulsions, to be fully and self-compassionately aware of their judgments of others and to bring mindful awareness into their work.

On completing this course, you will have learned to identify the elements of the addiction process and to understand the addiction-prone personality; you will have reviewed and grasped the essentials of the neurobiology of addiction and the understood the individual, social and spiritual roots of addiction; and you will have learned how to practice self- knowledge and self-compassion while avoiding the deadening judgments of addicted clients, friends or relatives. You will be able to support their healing, as well as your own.

This course, based on Dr. Gabor Maté's bestselling book, *In The Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters With Addiction*, is for psychologists, social workers, counselors, medical professionals, social service workers, mediators, and others who work in the helping professions with an interest in the treatment and healing of addictions. It will benefit anyone concerned with helping addicted people.

**Course Goal(s):**

This course will give participants a multi-layered understanding of addiction in its neurobiological, psycho-emotional, social and spiritual aspects and provide a basis for an informed, science-based and compassionate approach to the healing of addiction.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course, the learner will be able to:

1. Identify the elements of the addiction process.
2. Recognize the “blessings” of addiction as experienced by the addict (e.g., as emotional anaesthetic, as personality booster, as social lubricant, and so on)
3. Understand the social, economic and political roots of addiction
4. Review and grasp the neurobiology of addiction: what happens chemically and physiologically in the brains of people with substance dependency or behaviour addiction;
5. Consider how much choice the addict really has and how much responsibility, and learn to help provide the conditions in which the freedom of choice has the best possibility to arise
6. Develop a therapeutic relationship in which healing is possible
7. Encourage the addict to take responsibility

**Course Topics/Content:**

- Conceptual Framework: addiction as a response to life experience
- Mindfulness: the importance of self-awareness in addiction work
- The phenomenology of addiction
- Addiction as a “different state of the brain:” the neurobiology of addiction
- How the addicted brain develops
- The addiction process and the addiction-prone personality
- The social roots of addiction: a historical perspective
- Compassionate approaches to working with addicts
- Fostering responsibility
- The Five-Step program
- Understanding the Twelve Steps
- Spirituality and addiction

**Text and Resource Materials:** Use APA style; specify chapters where applicable. ([APA Style Guidelines](#))

**Required:**

**Recommended:**

**Course Level:**

	First Year		Second Year		Third Year		Fourth Year
X	Other (describe):						

**Equivalent Course(s) within the JIBC:**

**Class Delivery Methods:**

Some courses are delivered using a range of methods within one class (course section) or alternative methods in different classes. Please outline the most common delivery options used for this course. The total class hours should be the same for each option.

Delivery Methods	Class Option A (Hours)	Class Option B (Hours)	Class Option C (Hours)	Class Option D (Hours)
Classroom/Lecture/Discussion	14.0			
Simulation/Lab	N/A			
Practicum/Fieldwork	N/A			
Online	N/A			
Correspondence	N/A			
<b>Total Class Hours</b>	14.0			

**Comments on Delivery Methods:**

**Related Program(s):** (where applicable)

**Credit Transfer exists at:** (List Institutions with official transfer agreements and name equivalent courses)

**Course Grading System:**

*Check the system that applies to this course:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Letter Grades	<input type="checkbox"/>	Percentage	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pass/Fail	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Credit/No Credit
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete/Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance Only	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Applicable		

<b>Passing Grade:</b>	Credit Granted
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*JIBC Standard Grading Scale for Letter, Grade Point and % Grades:*

Letter Grade	Grade Points	% Range	Letter Grade	Grade Points	% Range
A+	4.33	90-100	C+	2.33	64-67
A	4.00	85-89	C	2.00	60-63
A-	3.67	80-84			
B+	3.33	76-79	C-	1.67	56-59
B	3.00	72-75	D	1.00	50-55
B-	2.67	68-71	F	0.00	0-49

**Evaluation Activities and Weighing:** (complete the %'s which apply – total must equal 100%)

Final Exam	%	Assignments	%	Project	%	Capstone Project	%
Midterm Exam	%	Portfolio	%	Participation	100%	Other	%
Quizzes/Test	%	Simulations	%	Practicum	%	TOTAL	100%

**Comments on Evaluation:**

100% attendance in all classes.

Active contribution to small and large group discussions and activities

**Other Course Guidelines, Procedures and Comments:**

**View the Justice Institute of BC Policies listed below at:**

<http://www.jibc.bc.ca/studentServices/main/AcademicServices/policies.htm>

Access Policy  
Harassment Policy  
Prior Learning Assessment Policy  
Student Code of Conduct

Academic Appeals Policy  
Intellectual Property Rights Policy  
Research on Human Subjects: Ethics  
Student Records