

## [The Buddhism, Psychology & Mental Health Program: an undergraduate minor hosted at New College](#)

BPMH is an internationally recognized contemplative science program. Its courses engage rigorous interdisciplinary research interactions between scientists, academics, health practitioners and contemplative traditions. Students explore the discipline with a focus on global understandings of health and distress, and the impacts of ecological breakdown and systems of oppression on individual, communal, and planetary well-being.

### [Innovative pedagogical approaches](#)

Emerging from two decades of global research on interactions between Buddhist traditions and the sciences, BPMH research, curriculum, and pedagogies draw on contemplative, decolonial, and Indigenous approaches. Students use both “third person” and “first person” inquiry to explore big questions about meaning, truth and reality, or the nature of embodiment and experience, as well as “second person” experiential inquiry through relational practices like deep listening and public engagement.

### [Developing scientific literacy and meta-cognitive skills](#)

The program trains students in qualitative and quantitative research, scientific literacy, and writing skills. Drawing on critical mental health studies, courses also teach capacities for self-awareness through student-centered, trauma-aware, and universal design approaches emphasizing meta-cognitive and reflective learning. Program work is structured around the importance of community and relationship, characterized by respect, reciprocity, and attention to experience, affect, and embodiment.

### [Enhancing academic, social-emotional & professional skillsets](#)

Student surveys confirm that participation in BPMH significantly enhances well-being, academic success, and preparation for professional life. BPMH is a founding member of the Flourishing Academic Network (FAN), a group of faculty, student affairs professionals, and community partners in the US and Canada partnering to advance student flourishing. FAN recognizes that university classrooms are key sites for academic, social-emotional, and professional development for students.

## [Program Stats](#)

- founded in 2007, now has **327 enrolled minors**
- one of the largest college-hosted undergraduate programs at U of T
- 2023-24, **over 1,100 students** registered in 11 courses; all winter courses had waiting lists
- public events: in 2022-23 hosted **over 1,300 local and international participants**
- two active student groups, BPSU and PATH, provide peer support and mentoring through events and community wellness programming throughout the year
- YouTube channel content has **over 16,000 views**
- Engaging Education in Buddhist Studies project supports enhanced experiential learning opportunities
- new home of Contemplative Science Podcast
- units with whom we share the most students are Psychology, Philosophy, Environment, Human Biology, Cognitive Science, Equity & Solidarity, Sociology, Mathematics, Religion (in order of number of students, most to least); 56% of students come from the Sciences & Social Sciences
- tremendous fundraising potential, with comparable programs raising hundreds of millions of dollars working with philanthropists who see the importance of evidence-based work that benefits struggling students

References available on request.

## Active Core Program Courses

### **BPM100H1 – The Art & Science of Flourishing**

Explores perspectives from the sciences and the humanities about flourishing across diverse cultures and contexts, and how wellbeing and distress are social, cultural, political, spiritual, ecological, and historical phenomena.

### **BPM214H1: Socially Engaged Buddhism**

Explores how Socially Engaged Buddhism has developed in response to global conversations on systemic oppression, climate justice, equity, decolonization, and trauma.

### **BPM232H1: Buddhism and Psychology**

Overview of the encounter between Buddhism and psychology, exploring how scientists, psychologists, and Buddhist reformers reinterpret Buddhism as “science” and how Buddhist practices are transformed and promoted by modern psychology.

### **JNR301H1: The History of Buddhist Meditation**

Surveys historical, cultural, and textual contexts for Buddhist contemplative practices.

### **BPM330H1: Mindfulness-Informed Interventions for Mental Health**

Study of mindfulness from historical, societal, structural, cultural, professional, and personal perspectives, emphasizing Buddhist foundations and concepts of embodied mind.

### **BPM332H1: Buddhism and Psychotherapy**

Interdisciplinary study of cross-cultural therapies and theories of the mind.

### **BPM334H1: Science of Wisdom: Buddhist and Western Traditions**

Conceptual and contemplative interdisciplinary exploration of global “wisdom traditions.”

### **BPM335H1: Meditation and the Body**

Exploration of research on how mindfulness affects brain activity, brain structure, neurochemistry, and other psychobiological processes.

### **BPM338H1: Exploring Mindful Awareness**

Overview of mindfulness as a systematic investigation of subjective experience, with a survey of classic and contemporary literature.

### **BPM381H1: Buddhist Perspectives on Current Social Issues**

Explores Buddhist perspectives on issues such as climate justice, systemic racism, burnout, and mental health in sectors of society including healthcare, education, and business.

### **BPM339H1: Mind, Consciousness, and the Self**

Interdisciplinary study of mind, consciousness, and the self, placing Buddhist traditions in dialogue with theories of the mind in psychology.

### **BPM432H1: Advanced Research in Meditation, Psychology and Neuroscience**

Preparation for advanced research on meditation by studying theories, tools and techniques in the field.

### **BPM433H1: Advanced Exploration of Buddhist Psychology and Practice**

Exploration of how Buddhist teachings are set in conversation with contemporary scientific research on topics such as suffering, wellbeing, and compassion.

### **BPM438H1: Mindfulness Meditation: Science and Research**

Examines theoretical and empirical bases of mindfulness-based interventions and applications in healthcare settings and beyond. Students build scientific literacy skills through the assessment, critique, and discussion of scientific research.

**Additional courses required to fulfil minor are taken in cognate units:** Anthropology, Cognitive Science, East Asian Studies, Centre for Ethics, History, History of Philosophy, Science, and Technology, Human Biology, Health Studies, Centre for Indigenous Studies, School of the Environment, Sexual Diversity Studies, Philosophy, Psychology, Study of Religion, Sociology