



**MARTHA BRADLEY EVANS**  
**Center for Teaching Excellence**  

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH**

**HONOR 3418: Radical Quiet**  
Spring Semester 2025

**Course Description**

Through intensive experiential learning, *Radical Quiet* explores meaningful intersections between psychology, philosophy, ecology and the arts. With close personal attention to values, students in this course will actively study and discuss ethics, aesthetics, environmental awareness, psychological health and well-being.

Through integrated mindfulness practice students will develop focus, concentration and clarity. And students will empathetically apply what they learn and experience to their communities, families, fellow classmates and themselves.

As a counterbalance to the loud and fast modes so predominant in today's society, *Radical Quiet* proposes, explores and develops vital alternatives: quiet and slow ways of living, learning and appreciating our lives and the world around us. Students will dig down to the radical root—the fundamental quality, meaning and aesthetics—of quiet.

Building on a foundation of mindfulness practice, students will develop critical, creative and interpretive skills through deep listening (to sounds and music), slow looking (at art) and contemplative reading (of literature). We will listen to music that includes “the space between the notes” (Claude Debussy). Artistic concepts, structures and forms will be the architecture for our learning and experience.

Cross-cutting themes will include:

- The skill and practice of listening (to ourselves and others)
- The reclaiming of personal identity and agency by resisting the distractions of social media
- The cultivation of an authentic intelligence rather than an artificial one
- The quiet power of introversion and contemplation
- The ethical differences between a silence that is chosen vs. a silence that is imposed
- The environmental and social effects of noise

*Radical Quiet* cultivates a classroom that equally values speaking and listening, so that each student may know in deep, profound and valuable ways.

3 Credits – FF (Fine Art Exploration)

**Course Outcomes and Objectives**

*Radical Quiet* develops students' abilities to engage directly with new ideas as citizen scholars in their own right. The course is conducted as a seminar, with the strong expectation that all students participate in the class's ongoing conversation. There are multiple ways for them to do so, including large and small group discussions, an online forum, consistent written commentaries, presentations, etc.

These opportunities to engage in productive dialogue, while practicing speaking and listening skills, help develop openness to new perspectives, building confidence and collegiality.

Students who complete the *Radical Quiet* course will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a thorough and deep personal understanding of the multiple texts, artworks and music that they read, view and hear throughout the semester. They will be able to engage key concepts, develop their own insights and perspectives, meaningfully express their interpretation and application to their own lives and communities, and integrate their new insights and perspectives with their chosen areas of academic focus.
2. Apply personal expertise, experience, creative thinking, interdisciplinary perspective, self-understanding, and research and writing skills to framing and addressing significant societal issues and their own complex lives.
3. Authentically participate and collaborate as ethically and empathetically informed citizens who build and compose balanced, civil and compassionate communities.
4. Be exceptionally well-prepared for graduate school, professional study, and careers in the public, private, or non-profit sectors.

## Course Requirements

As a student, your performance in this course will be evaluated on the basis of:

- your completion of weekly readings and assigned homework in preparation for class meetings
- the depth and consistency of your regular written commentaries
- your active and informed contributions to in-class discussions, the online forum, workshops and collaborative activities
- your consistent and on-time attendance at all class sessions
- the depth and range of your personal insights and perspectives as articulated in your three papers

Class Participation & Engagement	33%
Two Think Pieces	33%
Final Paper	33%

## Grading Scale

Students will be graded on standards rather than a curve. Specific criteria will be given for each of the three papers. Every student will have the opportunity to successfully meet the criteria in their own way. Collaborative, oral, performed and PowerPoint presentations are welcome for the Think Pieces, and are also possible for the final paper, subject to my advance approval. Pre-discussion of formats and topics is encouraged. I am pleased to respond to outlines and early drafts. I will make the assignments as clear and far in advance as possible (they are already posted on Canvas).

Although specific criteria will be given for each paper, the following is the general grading rubric that applies to all assignments, class work and participation in this course:

**A**

Outstanding achievement. Student performance demonstrates full command of the course materials—including thorough reflection, thoughtful critique, insightful interpretation, and meaningful application of the substantive knowledge gained in the course to a variety of topics, disciplines or situations. Student superbly communicates her or his ideas and interpretations in multiple class sessions and online discussions, and comments on, counterpoints or develops the thoughts of other students. Student also evinces a high level of imagination, originality and/or creativity that far surpasses course expectations.

**A-**

Excellent achievement. Student performance demonstrates thorough knowledge of the course materials and exceeds course expectations by completing all requirements in a superior manner. Student effectively communicates his or her ideas and interpretations in multiple class sessions and online discussions, and comments on, counterpoints or develops the thoughts of other students.

**B+**

Very good work. Student performance demonstrates above-average comprehension of the course materials and exceeds course expectations in all areas as described in the course syllabus. Student clearly communicates his or her ideas and interpretations in multiple class sessions and online discussions.

**B**

Good work. Student performance meets designated course expectations and demonstrates understanding of the course materials at an acceptable level. Student participates adequately in class sessions and online discussions.

**B-**

Marginal work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete understanding of course materials. Student participation in class and online discussions is minimal, unengaged and unenlightening.

**C**

Unsatisfactory work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete and inadequate understanding of course materials. Student participation in class and online discussions is weak.

**D**

Unacceptable work.

All of the evaluations above are also affected by the student's demonstrated effort and investment, and by what the student both puts into and takes out of the course—as evidenced by their papers, think pieces and class participation. All higher grade levels also require that work be submitted on time.

## University Policies

Updated mandatory syllabus policies regarding the ADA Act, Safety at the U, Addressing Sexual Misconduct, and Academic Misconduct can be viewed at: <https://cte.utah.edu/instructor-education/syllabus/institutional-policies.php>

## Preliminary Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/Discussion</u>	<u>Due Dates:</u>
<b>Week 1:</b>	Course Introduction and Syllabus/Schedule Review Film: <i>In Pursuit of Silence</i> (90 minutes) Begin reading & discussing 3 core texts Introduction to mindfulness practice	Introductory sketch Due Jan 6 Commentaries Due Jan 8
<b>Week 2:</b>	Continue 3 ongoing core texts Begin reading 4 <sup>th</sup> core text Introduction to walking meditation Guided mindfulness practice	Commentaries due Jan 13 & 15
<b>Week 3:</b>	Continue reading/discussing 4 core texts Meet at UMFA (Utah Museum of Fine Arts) Guided mindfulness practice	Commentary due Jan 22
<b>Week 4:</b>	Continue reading/discussing 4 core texts View and discuss artwork Meet at UMFA (Utah Museum of Fine Arts) Guided mindfulness practice	Commentaries due Jan 27 & 29
<b>Week 5:</b>	Continue reading/discussing 4 core texts View and discuss artwork Listen to and critically analyze music Meet at UMFA (Utah Museum of Fine Arts) Guided mindfulness practice	Commentaries due Feb 3 & 5
<b>Week 6:</b>	Complete one major text, add new one Continue reading/discussing 4 core texts View and discuss artwork Listen to and critically analyze music Meet at UMFA (Utah Museum of Fine Arts) Guided mindfulness practice	Think Piece 1 due Feb 10 Commentary due Feb 12

<b>Week 7:</b>	Continue reading/discussing 4 core texts In-class guests: Live music performance & discussion Guided mindfulness practice	Commentary due Feb 19
<b>Week 8:</b>	Continue reading/discussing 4 core texts View and discuss artwork In-class guests: Live jazz demonstration & discussion Meet at UMFA (Utah Museum of Fine Arts) Guided mindfulness practice	Commentaries due Feb 24 & 26
<b>Week 9:</b>	Continue reading/discussing 4 core texts View and discuss artwork Listen to and critically analyze music In-class guest: Drawing art workshop Meet at UMFA (Utah Museum of Fine Arts) Guided mindfulness practice	Commentaries due Mar 3 & 5
<b>Week 10:</b>	SPRING BREAK (with continued reading and other light assignments)	
<b>Week 11:</b>	Continue reading/discussing 4 core texts View and discuss artwork Listen to and critically analyze music Walking meditation Meet at UMFA (Utah Museum of Fine Arts) Guided mindfulness practice	Commentaries due Mar 17 & 19
<b>Week 12:</b>	Complete one major text Continue reading/discussing 3 core texts Other readings/listenings/viewings In-class guest: Live music performance & discussion Meet at UMFA (Utah Museum of Fine Arts): Curator-guided tour of Himalayan Art Exhibit Guided mindfulness practice	Think Piece 2 due Mar 24 Commentary due Mar 26
<b>Week 13:</b>	Continue reading/discussing 3 core texts Film: Performance Art (90 minutes) Other readings/listenings/viewings View and discuss artwork Listen to and critically analyze music In-class guest: <i>yoga nidra</i> practice Guided mindfulness practice	Commentary due Mar 31/Apr 2

<b>Week 14:</b>	<p>Continue reading/discussing 3 core texts          Other readings/listenings/viewings          View and discuss artwork          Listen to and critically analyze music          Meet at UMFA (Utah Museum of Fine Arts):              In-class guest: the art and practice of <i>qigong</i>          Meet in Chapel Glen ravine (weather permitting)          Guided mindfulness practice</p>	Commentaries due April 7 & 9
<b>Week 15:</b>	<p>Continue reading/discussing 3 core texts          Other readings/listenings/viewings          View and discuss artwork          Listen to and critically analyze music          Meet in Chapel Glen ravine (weather permitting)          In-class guest:              Scott Black discussion of Ursula K. LeGuin          Guided mindfulness practice</p>	Commentaries due April 14/16
<b>Week 16:</b>	<p>In-class student presentations &amp; performances          Final Paper due</p>	Final Paper Due April 21