



Issue 1, Summer 2008

Welcome to the e-newsletter from the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education. This first issue, with its announcements and reports from The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, arrives with our promise to include news from you, the members, in the future. We'd like to feature the work of at least one member and institution in each issue, and are open to suggestions for other topics worthy of the membership's attention. You're invited to submit your contributions and suggestions for our consideration to [beth@contemplativemind.org](mailto:beth@contemplativemind.org) or [gerdlu@aol.com](mailto:gerdlu@aol.com).

Beth Wadham & Geri DeLuca, Editors

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**Retreat for Academics**

November 13-16, 2008  
Menla Mountain Center,  
Phoenicia, NY

Financial assistance is available; you may apply for assistance when you register for the retreat.



**2009 Contemplative Practice Fellowships**

Applications are now being accepted. The application deadline is November 15, 2008.

## **Association Launches May 1, 2008**

After years of talking about having an association to connect the network that had grown out of the Center for Contemplative Mind's Academic Program, and months of direct preparation, the hour had finally arrived to go live with the website and send the email blast to the Center's academic list inviting members to join. The invitation must have found many at their screens, poised and ready. As they sent their immediate responses, we had to hang on to our seats: six in the first few minutes, 22 in the first few hours. At the day's end, I left my desk reluctantly, eager to respond to

all the new applications.

After years of funding fellowships and running conferences, summer sessions and academic retreats, the structure was in place and all the wiring was there. We just needed to plug in and flip the switch.

So who are these pioneers in the first professional association for contemplation in higher education?

Of 150 members, 24 are Contemplative Practice or Program Fellows (from among the 140 who received funding over the last 10 years), and 14 are fellowship applicants. Forty-two members have attended at least one summer session, academic retreat or other CMind academic event. These are the contacts the association was designed to serve, and we are affirmed by their early presence. And as we proceed with additional events and fellowships, this number will grow out of that expanding pool.

The surprise has been that we have also, in this short time, made 37 new contacts—nearly a quarter of our total members—who have found us through web searches and by way of colleagues and other loose affiliations. We extend a special welcome to all those who've discovered us from these more remote regions.

Now that the power is on, we look forward to what this new association of contemplative educators, scholars, and activists will generate. Our plans for the near future include forum discussions on the leading questions that arose from our recent Summer Curriculum Development Session at Smith College, an interactive Webinar led by Arthur Zajonc and Mirabai Bush in October, and a West Coast conference and retreat in Fall 2009. We warmly invite your participation.

**What shape waits in the seed of you  
to grow and spread its branches  
against a future sky?**

~ David Whyte

## **Introducing Philip Snyder, our next Executive Director**



After almost two years of searching for our next Executive Director and interviewing many fine candidates, we are delighted to announce that we have selected Philip Snyder to succeed founding director Mirabai Bush.

Philip's experience in directing organizations combined with his deep interest and experience in contemplative practice make him an ideal director of the Center. With a doctorate from Cornell in anthropology, he has been the executive director of several complex non-profits, including a large, multifaceted center at Cornell (the Center for Religion, Ethics and Social Policy) and the International Office of the Global Ecovillage Network. He also taught anthropology and received a Senior Fulbright Fellowship in 1997 to coordinate the citizen conflict resolution program of the Fulbright Commission, in the divided island of Cyprus. Philip has had rich experience in all facets of organizational and program development.

His inner journey includes Zen Buddhism, a year in a Christian retreat and education center, and study with a Cypriot teacher and healer. Many other approaches also inform his ongoing inquiry and exploration.

Philip will join the Center on September 1, 2008, and will work together with Mirabai for a few months, during which he will be getting to know staff, board, advisors, supporters, and participants in our programs. Thereafter, Mirabai will be affiliated with the Center as a Senior Fellow, guiding special projects, and reflecting and writing about the work of the Center.

All transitions from founding directors to those who build organizations to their next stage need care and support from everyone in the network, and we are happy you are part of the Center's wide-reaching web of contemplative friends. We will be reaching out to you in various ways during this important time, and we value your ideas on how to make this change most effective. We would love to hear from you.

Warm regards,



Charlie Halpern  
Chairman, Board of Directors

## An Interview with Philip Snyder

**Beth:** Philip, I appreciate your willingness to field a few questions, as you're still coming toward us and haven't yet arrived to assume your new position. Charlie Halpern's letter gives us a sense, but I wanted to introduce you more specifically to the academic community.

You've worked in an academic environment, as an adjunct professor of Anthropology and as the director of the Center for Religion, Ethics and Social Policy at Cornell. Do you view the academy as an arena for positive change? Where do you see the challenges and opportunities?

**Philip:** When I think about the possibilities in the academy today, I find it inspiring to recall the Neo-Platonic Academies in Renaissance Italy—Marsilio Ficino and others—where there was an integrated approach to body, mind and spirit, where the inner quest and transformation were linked to the exploration and search for knowledge in all spheres. The basic ideals of a liberal arts education encompass a vision of education as more holistic. The key values of academic freedom: open inquiry, tolerance and the examination and questioning of absolutist points of view, make it an excellent context for something new and more holistic to arise. Higher education is a natural meeting place for the confluence of the many streams that are converging and contributing to an evolving vision of human development. Although it's been increasingly subverted by the technocratic needs of society, it has harbored, and continues to be a strong, supportive environment for many who pursue education as a transformative endeavor.

Over the past thirty and more years, there has been a great seeding of the field from so many different wisdom traditions, including indigenous spiritualities, Buddhism and

other religions of the East, Sufism, the mystical sides of Judaism and Christianity, as well as the human potential movement, new mind/body approaches in medicine and healing and many others. We are in the midst, I think we can say, of a remarkable spiritual revolution. And the academy may serve as a kind of crucible, an alchemical retort, for this transformation.

There is a hunger for wisdom and depth among college students that is brought about in part by the fragmented and superficial nature of our culture. Teaching and mentoring offer the opportunity to work closely and consciously with students to deepen their inner journeys. Is it too much to say that in teaching and advising we can develop relationships that nurture souls?

**Beth:** What is the relationship between your academic training and your cultivation of an inner life?

**Philip:** I'll start by describing the courses I taught at Wells. I was so busy at the Center at Cornell that I taught seminars at Wells that met just once a week. One seminar was Myth, Ritual and Meaning, which explored shamanic and traditional spiritual practices and worldviews partly within the framework of Jungian Psychology as an interpretive tool for the symbolism. Another was on North American Indian Traditions, which explored indigenous world views and sacred practices. I also taught Human Evolution, which used, in addition to the typical academic texts, Teilhard de Chardin's *Phenomenon of Man* and even books such as William Irwin Thompson's *The Time Falling Bodies Take to Light*. I taught this course from the point of view that we are like all other peoples in the world who seek to explain their place through origin stories and "myths." This approach of seeing human evolution as stories worked against the tendency to absolutize the current scientific versions. In my introductory course, it was my hope to transmit how culture fundamentally shapes our sense of self, our vision of the world, and our response to it. I wanted them to recognize the pervasive power of "the envelope of culture" and begin to move outside it, to see the world from another culture's view. This juxtaposition of two distinct worlds can help create a kind of tension and momentum in which one begins to see that "reality" can be very different indeed. For me, anthropology can help us awaken from the "cultural trance" in which we are inevitably embedded.

That awakening has been essential to my inner journey. I found anthropology to be the perfect vehicle, a rich, diverse field to work within, very supportive of developing an inner life and moving towards the greater freedom that can come when we are not so mechanically caught in the cultural confines of our upbringing and surroundings. In a sense, I've never stopped doing field work.

**Beth:** Your experience of different spiritual traditions is unusually diverse; Charlie mentions Christianity, Buddhism and study with a Cypriot teacher, and alludes to others. Can you say something about this mobility? We're you seeking something that eluded you or did one exploration lead to another in some way?

**Philip:** A bit of both. I have an omnivorous appetite for exploring spiritual traditions, and I've pursued many with passion. Currently, I'm not taking on much in the way of new territory; rather I am mining the depth of what I have encountered. I think I was seeking to find something that felt like "this is it," and I was driven by an inner need to find a spiritual teacher. But it hasn't been a process of choosing one and rejecting others. I would call it more of a process of absorption, moving forward and carrying all.

**Beth:** From what you know of the Center's Academic Program, is there something that stands out as particularly interesting for you?

**Philip:** The new Association is particularly exciting. There's great potential for cross-fertilization and the mutual support of peers. These are people with an inner quest that is central to their lives and they're looking to develop, carefully and in an appropriate way, their contributions to scholarship, teaching and learning. I'm interested in how the Center can nourish this work. I know that when there are enough key people engaged in sustained work in a given institution, it can yield fundamental shifts.

Then, when appropriate, I hope there will be consideration to turn the conversation outward. It could be very important if those for whom the "practice of wisdom" is key to their lives can open outward, into law, business, government. Society needs this wisdom. I'm looking at the role The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society can play in catalyzing this process. The ferment and riches developed in the academic program and the new association are important for society as a whole.

## Mirabai      A letter from Mirabai

Dear Friends,



There are big changes at the Center. As Obama says, change you can believe in. Our new Executive Director Philip Snyder will arrive in September, bringing with him a remarkable set of skills and experience as well as the desire to make wisdom accessible within the existing culture, create spaciousness in busy lives, and help people and organizations contribute to solving ecological and planetary problems.

After a time of passing on the inner secrets of the organization, I will become a Senior Fellow in December. Still affiliated with the Center, I will work on special projects and take time to reflect and write about what we have learned. The "special projects" will include a pilot retreat for Army caregivers (chaplains and medical teams who are suffering from burnout) and a handbook on contemplative practices in higher education, drawing from the amazing work of our Contemplative Fellows and others. It will be the beginning of what Norman Fischer and Jon Kabat-Zinn are calling the "post-institutional life." Is there *actually* life beyond budgets and conference calls and board meetings? I'll let you know.

Contemplative wisdom teaches us that everything is changing all the time, and our work is to let go while being totally present, holding no expectations of what will come. Last week on Martha's Vineyard I was at the bedside of a dear friend who was dying, and that was just what was called for: letting go, being there, and expecting nothing, being ready for anything. I am entering my next phase in this spirit, inspired by my dear dying friend and by those of you who are revealing the path by walking it.

All blessings,

Mirabai Bush

"I put a dollar in one of those change machines. Nothing changed."



- George Carlin, 1937-2008

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## Listening with the Ear of the Heart: a report on the spring retreat for academics

Beth Wadham, Academic Associate



“Somebody pinch me,” said Arthur Zajonc as he surveyed the circle of professors sitting on chairs, zafus, and zabutons in Nalanda conference room overlooking the March monochrome of the Catskill Mountains. It was a moment of awakening to the realization that what were once the solitary efforts of few educators in isolated colleges and universities

had become an emerging movement to bring the contemplative dimension (back) into the enterprise of teaching and learning.

The thirty-five of us had spent the last three days in each other’s company, and thirty-six of those hours we had shared in silence. In closing, we were reviewing the goals of the retreat and our personal intentions and reflecting on whether they had been met. The goal, from the point of view of the Center for Contemplative Mind, was to offer an opportunity for educators to deepen their own contemplative practice and be with others with a similar interest. While some participants were looking also for techniques to use in classroom with students, and those were offered during practice sessions throughout the weekend, nearly everyone present was primarily seeking retreat conditions that allowed for a deep experience of stillness and silence.

At Menla Mountain, a retreat center operated by Tibet House of New York City, we were well looked-after, with simple, elegant accommodations and flavorful, abundant vegetarian meals. The soaring spaces for our movement, sitting and walking practices provided a supportive setting, although the prevalence of Buddhist art and artifacts—including an astonishingly elaborate butter mandala—called out for some remark. As an organizer of secular retreats for academics, it’s not the intention of The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society to immerse participants in traditional religious environments, so in our introductory meeting Mirabai expressed her understanding that these images could be unfamiliar and even disturbing in some way. But from the general response, I think everyone was respectful and appreciative, and certainly undisturbed, by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas surrounding our practice.

A silent retreat for academics—is this what it takes to enforce such a vocal profession to refrain from speech? And, of course, it wasn’t that we would continue to try to communicate using other means (although that could be rather amusing). While instruction would be given in yoga sessions and to guide the contemplative practices, the group would observe silence, even outside the formal parts of the program, during meals and breaks. We were also encouraged to refrain from phone conversations, checking email, and even reading and writing, all with the goal of

settling more deeply into the silence.

As we settled into a sequence of yoga, sitting in quiet breathing, mindful walking and taking meals together in silence, the hours took on the calm rhythm of established practice. We traveled the distance between the conference center and the dining room open to the sounds of the rushing streams and attentive to changing sky and the thawing earth. In the absence of speech, interactions with one another were minimal, and we received the gift of experiencing inward focus in community. We were together, and felt supported by one another, but liberated, as it were, from the more superficial social requirements of conversation.

Toward the end of Saturday morning, we made the transition from silence to speaking gradually, first by writing to the prompt, "I learned something while I was on this retreat..." That "something," Mirabai noted, could be anything, including learning that one would never again want to participate in a silent retreat. But the flow of writing and the feeling of discovery that was present in the room suggested that for many, the time had been well spent. We wrote freely on the topic for ten minutes, and then turned to a partner to share our reflections. I think this was a powerful moment for most of us. The level of expressiveness and responsiveness was very clear, very strong, and one felt the quality of listening and speaking had been transformed by the deep silence it stood apart from. We had cultivated the capacity to "listen with the ear of the heart."

Something tender between us had grown in the silence, and there was hesitation to move too abruptly into the habits of typical social interaction. A silent table at lunch was available as an alternative to moving into the general tumult of mealtime conversation. But soon enough, the interest and warmth we felt for the others present drew out the lively music of speech and laughter.

There was a great deal to share as colleagues and practitioners, and suddenly the time we had remaining seemed too short. After dinner, when the circle broke out into small groups to discuss the relationship between contemplative practice, teaching, learning and knowing, the floodgates of language opened as the enthusiasm for, and obstacles to, bringing moments of silence and stillness into campus life were shared.

Remarks at closing circle expressed appreciation for this kind of alternative to the traditional academic conference, where the highly developed powers of articulation, conversation and pontification are displayed to great effect, but don't often provide the occasion for real connection. And while educators returned to their classes from the weekend with new approaches and new practices to introduce, the real value of the retreat was in how in silence it developed the qualities of the contemplative teacher, which is the foundation for bringing these practices to students.

We still have a few places in our upcoming Retreat for Academics, November 13 - 16, 2008 at Menla Mountain, Phoenicia, NY. Visit [www.contemplativemind.org](http://www.contemplativemind.org) for more information and to register.

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# Georgetown University: Caring for the Whole Person

Of the 40 participants attending the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society's February 3-day silent retreat for academics, seven were from Georgetown University. This may seem like a lot from one campus, but for those of us from Georgetown, the fact that we were so heavily represented was not surprising.



As a Jesuit institution, Georgetown is distinguished by a foundational interest in student life experiences as carried into the academic classroom environment. The Jesuit principle of *cura personalis* (caring for the whole person) is an integral component of Georgetown's undergraduate educational mission. To care for and educate the whole person means preparing students for lives of compassion for others and a sense of wholeness and health for themselves. This preparation calls for a level of self-awareness that is often brought forth through mindfulness meditation practices.

photo: Phil Humnicky/Georgetown University

In order to connect with students as whole persons, educators need to teach from the perspective of whole persons themselves. Realizing the importance of the cognitive-affective connection for faculty and students alike has become increasingly part of the fabric of Georgetown. The following three campus-wide initiatives are examples of Georgetown's commitment to caring for the whole person – both within and outside of the classroom.

## The Engelhard Project

Georgetown is one of seven colleges and universities across the country to receive a grant from the Engelhard Foundation and the American Association of Colleges and Universities to participate in the project, *Bringing Theory to Practice*. Other institutional demonstration sites include: Barnard College, Dickinson College, Emory University, Morgan State University and St. Lawrence University.

Now in its third year at Georgetown, this national effort addresses student mental health and wellness through diverse models of engaged learning. Georgetown's project, entitled "Connecting Life and Learning: Engaging the Whole Person through the Integration of Academics and Student Affairs," (commonly and affectionately referred to as *The Engelhard Project*) advances a "curriculum infusion" model of engaged pedagogy, blending real life issues into the academic content of courses. In particular, it involves integrating the exploration of student mental health and wellness challenges and themes (e.g., alcohol and substance abuse, depression, anxiety, isolation, friendship and self-care, sexuality and intimacy) into the intellectual substance of lower division courses. In conjunction with curriculum infusion, the project also supports the optional addition of a community-based learning component.

Key aims of Georgetown's curriculum infusion model are to de-stigmatize student health issues, to inform students about campus support resources, and to engage faculty and students in intellectually serious and meaningful reflection about student wellness challenges. Faculty teaching Engelhard courses receive *safety net* training that shows them how to identify students who are struggling or in crisis and

introduces them to campus health professionals who can help.

Daryl Nardick at Georgetown

Curriculum development is a team effort. Working in collaboration with the Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (CNDLS) and campus health professionals, Engelhard Faculty Fellows create week-long “modules” that integrate mental and personal health issues into the intellectual content of their courses.



The program is unique in many ways not the least of which is its ability to cross traditional university lines and divisions. Georgetown’s positive and productive collaborative work among faculty, health staff and administrators is at the core of the project.

The Engelhard Project is also Georgetown’s first systemic effort to make explicit the cognitive-affective connection in the classroom and to

make it visible to the campus community. Recognizing that many students are unaware of this link, participating Faculty Fellows require their students to write reflection papers. Here are two creative examples of how our faculty have infused the Engelhard philosophy into their courses.

Associate Professor of Philosophy Alisa Carse teaches *The Ethics of Responsibility and Respect*. An Engelhard Faculty Fellow since the project’s inception and a two-time participant in the Center for Contemplative Mins in Society’s silent meditation retreats, her course highlights the intimate connection between mental health and wellness issues and the qualities of responsibility, respect and self-respect. Her curriculum enables students to explore this connection throughout the semester through close reflection on the real-life implications of philosophical ethics. In addition, she devotes modules of her course to the direct and concentrated exploration of mental health and wellness issues as they intersect with course content by inviting campus health professionals to engage in her classroom. “We are all invested in a process that dignifies personal reflection without forsaking academic standards,” says Carse. “We are able to touch upon factors affecting students’ flourishing in ways that go much deeper than their grades or other ‘performance’ indicators.”

James Sandefur, another Engelhard Faculty Fellow, is a professor and chair of the Mathematics Department. In his *Introduction to Math Modeling*, he teaches students how to calculate their metabolic rates based on their food intake. He also teaches students what effect multiple drinks have on their blood alcohol levels. “Students have been inundated with information like this through high school and have learned to tune it out. This is a way of getting their attention,” Sandefur says. “Some students have subsequently changed their eating and drinking habits.”

The project started as a modest but ambitious teaching/learning initiative and has grown into a firmly institutionalized, flagship program aimed at reaching every incoming student by the end of her or his second year at Georgetown. As of this spring, 34 Engelhard Faculty Fellows representing over 15 departments and employing a rich array of curriculum infusion approaches have reached over 3,000 students in academic disciplines as diverse as mathematics, philosophy, sociology, biology, theology, psychology, demography, and the performing arts. Both formal

evaluations and the “word on the street” indicate clear benefits for faculty, staff, and especially students, including especially the forging of rewarding relationships between faculty and students.

While contemplative practice has not been an integral component in Engelhard classrooms, Professor Carse and John Rakestraw, a Theology Engelhard Faculty Fellow and Academic Program Retreat alum, might very well change this. They are now exploring ways to incorporate the practice into their Engelhard classes as well as working with the other Georgetown Academic Retreat participants to encourage others on campus to incorporate contemplative practices into their lives and classrooms.

For more information on Georgetown’s Engelhard Project, visit <http://cndls.georgetown.edu/view/about/engelhard.html>.

## **Mind-Body Medicine: An Experiential Introduction**

Designed to support and shape the new integrative model of healthcare – one in which treatment is balanced with teaching, and prevention and self-care are given as much respect as procedures and pharmacological interventions – Georgetown’s School of Medicine offers an elective course in Mind-Body Medicine to first and second year medical students. Launched in January 2002, the course is part of Georgetown’s Educational Initiative in Integrative Medicine and is directed by Nancy Harazduk, one of Georgetown’s Academic Retreat alums.

Mind-Body approaches—including self-awareness, relaxation, meditation, nutrition, art, music, and movement—are among the best known and most widely used of the complementary, alternative, or integrative approaches to healthcare. Georgetown’s program is based on the fundamental belief that students need to experience the approaches themselves as opposed to simply reading about them and the scientific basis for their efficacy. For students to appreciate their patients’ capacities for self-awareness and self-care, students should experience and realize their own abilities.

The program is a collaborative shared experience for the students. In small groups, students have the opportunity to learn the skills, practice them, and discuss their experiences with their student colleagues.

Although the program has its roots in healthcare, other departments are beginning to realize the transferable benefits of the skills, approaches, and sensibilities presented, as evidenced by Georgetown Law School’s recent pilot effort.

For more information about the program, please contact Nancy Harazduk [nph4@georgetown.edu](mailto:nph4@georgetown.edu).

## **GUWellness: Mind, Body and Soul**

Georgetown students and faculty are not the only ones to benefit from our ethos of *cura personalis*. Our commitment extends to the entire Georgetown community.

In the spring of 2007, Charles DeSantis, Associate Vice President and Chief Benefits Officer, convened representatives from across the university to consider how to create a culture of wellness at Georgetown University. The resulting initiative was GUWellness: Mind, Body, and Soul, a university-wide initiative to provide Georgetown University faculty, administrators, and staff with tools, resources, and support to achieve their own wellness goals.

The program runs the gamut from tai-chi classes during the day to health assessments and depression screening open to all. Contemplative practice is an integral part of the overall effort. Both guided imagery and silent meditation sessions are offered at least once a day on campus.

GUWellness is a unique collaborative leadership effort backed by President Jack DeGioia, and supported by such diverse campus groups as:

- School of Nursing and Health Studies
- Student Health
- Faculty and Staff Assistance Program
- Human Resources
- Chaplain to the Staff
- Campus Ministry
- Mission & Ministry
- GUWellness Committee Members
- University Information Systems
- Yates Field Center (Georgetown's athletic center)

For more information about GUWellness, visit <http://www1.georgetown.edu/benefits/wellness/about/>

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## 2008 Contemplative Practice Fellows

This past year, The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society took over the complete selection process and administration of the contemplative practice fellowship program, after ten years of working closely with ACLS (the American Council of Learned Societies). The competition was promoted widely, to include proposals from the sciences and from Canada, and resulted in the greatest number of applications ever, almost twice as many as in previous years.

The increase in applications attests to the growing interest in integrating contemplative practice into the classroom and the field of contemplative studies, but made the selection process very difficult. Among very many applications worthy of recognition, these were the strongest. We extend a warm welcome to the 2008 Fellows.

## 1. LAW: Love in Action with Wisdom (a Wisdom that contains Compassion)



Arias, Maria  
Adjunct Professor,  
Law  
CUNY School of  
Law



Goode, Victor M.  
Associate  
Professor, Law  
CUNY School of  
Law

This course for law students explores the benefits of contemplative practices for lawyers doing social justice work. Students will practice a variety of meditation and contemplative practices to develop inner wisdom, awareness, and insight to inform work and decisions in lawyering for social justice. Students will explore developing compassion for themselves and the people being served. These practices will be used to open up the possibility of how to solve problems using one's most creative selves and greatest wisdom. Students will explore how through social justice work one can transform themselves and the communities being served.

## 2. Buddhist Economics: Skillful Means and the Marketplace



Barbezat, Daniel P.  
Professor, Economics  
Amherst College

This course will examine the relationship between Buddhism and Economics to engender a means to understand individual market interactions and their connection to global economic issues. Students will be introduced to Buddhist scriptures and writings pertaining to economic matters and shown Buddhist practices and their relationship to economics and markets both in microeconomics and macroeconomics, and to businesses that have implemented Buddhist practices in their operations. In recent years, there has been much interest between cognitive sciences and economics. This course will enable students through their own contemplative practices to examine closely the local and global impacts of their market activity.

## 3. Contemplative Arts and Society



Beffel, Anne E.  
Associate Professor, Art  
Syracuse University

Can art engender empathy amidst a sea of reality shows and You Tube? "Contemplative Arts and Society" engages college and high school students in contemplative video art projects and facilitated conversations in order to engender empathetic communication. Additionally, students share cultural

resources across the town/campus divide in Syracuse, N.Y. In support of these interactions, students will read and discuss articles on public art, Buddhist meditation practices in the West, and social psychology. Creativity and compassion building activities include: reading; sitting meditation; creation and exchange of contemplative videos and writings; and facilitated conversations with contemplative video screenings. Contemplative videos are created from a non-aggressive state of mind for periods of five minutes. Each student uses a video camera, motionless and affixed to one object, or scene, as a tool for focusing attention more carefully upon events as they unfold at a range of paces. Facilitated conversations utilize conflict resolution techniques to engender empathetic conversations. The course will culminate in exhibition at the Everson Museum of Art and Art Museum of the University of Memphis.

#### **4. Urban Climate Vulnerability, Adaptation, and Justice Practicum**

Carmin, JoAnn  
Associate Professor, Environmental Policy and  
Planning  
MIT



Students enrolled in this course will develop guidebooks and toolkits for planners and public officials working to prepare their cities and towns for the impacts of global climate change. A particular emphasis will be placed on preparing for the impacts of climate change on the urban poor and achieving just outcomes for these and other vulnerable populations. While in the classroom, as well as while working in the field in cities throughout the world, students will engage in a series of reflective and contemplative exercises. These experiences will be used as a basis for creating materials for integrating reflective and contemplative practice into practicum and professional field-training courses that focus on social, environmental, and climate justice.

#### **5. Contemplating Race, Knowledge and Power: Towards Healing Forms of Critical Inquiry**

Carruyo, Light  
Assistant Professor, Sociology  
Vassar College



Can learning feminist anti-racist praxis and social transformation be conceptualized as healing? In the classroom, the feelings that emerge when discussing issues of race, power and justice – be they anger, guilt, shame, denial – often make it difficult to have compassionate, honest and productive conversations. This course will use meditation in the classroom to explore how the parameters for conversations change when instead of suppressing emotions and or letting them drive responses in an unreflective way, meditation is used as a tool for acceptance. The project explores how meditation may open up possibilities for what can be taught and learned about structural

inequalities and healing forms of inquiry.

## **6. Quantum States of Being: Incorporating Contemplative Practices Into the Chemistry Curriculum**

Francl, Michelle M.  
Professor, Chemistry  
Bryn Mawr College



By embedding a set of contemplative practices into the teaching of introductory quantum chemistry, this course will demonstrate for students and colleagues the value of these approaches in learning and doing science and produce materials specific to the sciences that others can use to bring contemplative practices into teaching. In the longer term, the hope is to provide nascent scientists with another set of ways to reflect on their work in relationship to the larger world. Fundamentally, a curriculum that includes contemplative practices has the potential not to merely produce scientists, but to form scientists. Science touches nearly everything; the world therefore deserves scientists who do not see themselves as masters of nature, able to trick the natural world into their will, but as those who can listen attentively enough to the world to hear its will for them. Embedding contemplative practices in a course that is perceived as rigorous and fundamental to the discipline by its practitioners lets students grow as scientists in a culture that acknowledges that such ways of seeing and relating to the world are useful for their work and congruent with what a scientist should be.

## **7. Citizenship for Democracy: Bringing Contemplation and Compassion into Community Service Learning**

Kahane, David J.  
Associate Professor, Political Science  
University of Alberta



This course will introduce students to theories and practices of democratic deliberation and dialogue, using a range of contemplative practices to help them explore habitual modes of engaging with injustice and suffering, and develop compassion for self and other. Contemplative practices will include meditation, conscious embodiment work, lovingkindness meditation, and free writing. These practices will orient a collective exploration of our understandings of political conflict and injustice, as these play out in different modes of structured dialogue and decision making around controversial issues.

The course will culminate with group projects, in which students work with community organizations or convene campus dialogues; these projects will provide a context in which students can mindfully notice and work with their

tendencies and reactions as citizens and activists. Students will come away from the course with experience in a range of contemplative practices, new skills in compassionate speaking and listening, adeptness with different models of group dialogue, problem-solving, and decision making, and with a large space of choice when it comes to relating to their experiences of personal, social, and political suffering, as well as to fellow citizens.

## **8. The Psychology of Empathy and Compassion: Contemplative and Scientific Perspectives**

Kaszniak, Alfred W.  
Professor, Psychology  
University of Arizona



This upper-division undergraduate honors course will combine contemplative practices and reading/seminar discussion of recent research on empathy and on compassion drawn from neuroscience, affective science, and social psychology. Each class session will begin with a period of sitting meditation to reinforce a contemplative context, and students will be encouraged to practice meditation exercises outside of class. The foci of readings, seminar discussions, and council circle will include: (1) What difference might exist in the world if more compassion were manifest?; (2) How does compassion specifically manifest in the students' various cultures of origin?; (3) How do factors such as health/illness, sleep, diet, exercise, and physical environment/architecture affect compassionate expression?; (4) How do emotional and cognitive factors such as fear, anger, aversion, desire, stereotyping, and "judging mind" impact the ability to manifest compassion?; (5) How can discerning and skillful decisions be made in social situations without putting others "out of our hearts"?; (6) How does research in social neuroscience and affective science inform our understanding of compassion and factors that facilitate or inhibit it? How do observational and neuroscientific studies of long-term contemplative practitioners inform our understanding of the cultivation of compassion?

## **9. The Practice of Environmentalism: Cultivating and Sustaining Meaningful Environmental Engagement**

Wapner, Paul  
Associate Professor, International Relations  
American University



Global environmental problems compromise the quality of life for many on earth and, in the extreme, threaten the planet's life-support system. How can we best educate students to feel confident in their ability to personally and politically respond to such monumental dangers? This course involves students in practical, environmental projects and introduces them to contemplative practices through which they can appreciate the spiritual dimensions of their work. Its aim

is to make environmental engagement more meaningful by experiencing environmental efforts as a practice which can both make a difference in the world and internally nourish practitioners. The course integrates vipassana meditation, dharma discussions and journaling with traditional academic study to help students understand their political motivations, the level at which their own inner, consumptive cravings are related to environmental harm, their capacity to generate compassion toward political opponents and nonhuman creatures, and their ability to develop a sense of calm and balance in their political efforts.

## **10. Cultivating Ecological, Cross-Cultural, and Interdisciplinary Contemplations of Water: a Proposed Humanities Course**

Wong, Rita K.  
Assistant Professor, Critical and Cultural Studies  
Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design



Taught at the Emily Carr institute of Art and Design in Vancouver, which has strong interests in collaborating with local First Nations and increasing environmental sustainability, this course will explore cultural and ecological perspectives on water. In light of the anxiety caused by industrial pollution of public water sources and fears of increasing water scarcity, it is important to holistically consider what can be learned from historical, environmental, philosophical, literary, scientific, political, artistic, and spiritual texts regarding human relationships to water. The first part of the course will consider local indigenous perspectives on water, and raise questions of how to respectfully learn from First Nations knowledges. This interdisciplinary contemplation of water will also be integrated with an embodied practice. Students will take walking meditations that trace where salmon streams have been diverted or drained from their original paths. Vancouver was once home to approximately 57 salmon streams, most of which have been destroyed with urban settlement, yet small residues remain. In walking these paths, students will meditate on how contemporary urban life is a palimpsest upon an earlier landscape, and interrelations within the rapidly changing ecosystem. Students' experiences will be written and translated into art projects, and compiled into a document that offers contemplative responses to the growing water crisis.

## **11. Integrating Mindfulness Theory & Practice into Trial Advocacy**

Zlotnick, David M.  
Professor, Law  
Roger Williams University School of Law



Trial lawyers notoriously suffer from burnout and substance abuse and often adopt cynical attitudes towards their clients and themselves. Law students

hoping to become trial lawyers frequently succumb to public speaking anxiety and hold self defeating conceptions of what they hope to become. This course seeks to address these issues by making the learning and practice of trial advocacy more mindful and more humane for everyone involved. This integration takes place on four levels. First, meditation and relaxation techniques will be integrated into every class to help students reconnect to their bodies and hearts. Second, students will use mindfulness to connect with their clients and witnesses on a deeper emotional and spiritual level. Third, the course will integrate Buddhist teaching about illusions of control and about connectedness to cut through the chaotic and adversarial veneer of trial work. Fourth, western notions of duality in the trial process such as right and wrong, guilty and not guilty, will be contested and students will explore more nuanced ideas about truth and justice to encourage these future trial lawyers not to discard possible alternative notions of dispute resolution such as restorative justice and mediation.

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## **Report on the Meeting on Contemplative Pedagogy in the Disciplines: Philosophy, Religious Studies, Psychology**

Meeting on Contemplative Pedagogy in the Disciplines:  
Philosophy, Religious Studies, Psychology  
Amherst College, Amherst, MA  
March 28-30, 2008  
by Piper Murray



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