

# The Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education

## April 2011 eNewsletter

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What a pleasure it is this season to share the extraordinary range of reports and announcements that follow. Contemplative initiatives are expanding into many new areas, and, it appears, at an accelerated pace. Yet we can still sense the intimate connection between them, as they reflect a set of shared aspirations to bring creative and compassionate approaches to all aspects of campus life.

At the [Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education](#), we want to meet the burgeoning interest in these approaches with an organization that can serve a growing network. We recently moved to a new membership management system that has the capacity to operate on a much larger scale. The new Member Center includes a directory of over 600 higher education professionals and offers opportunities for you to share information by submitting your own calendar listings and contributing to forums. If you haven't yet, [please visit](#), update your profile, and let us know if you have any questions about how things work.

Our webinar series continues this spring with "Integrating Trial Advocacy and Mindfulness Theory & Practice" with David M. Zlotnick, Professor of Law, Roger Williams University School of Law on May 25, 2011, 3:00-4:00 pm EDT. [Registration is now open](#), and your email invitation will arrive soon. Our webinars are open to all and free of charge. You may also [view past webinars](#), including the recent "Contemplative Spirituality of Toni Morrison" with Linda-Susan Beard, Associate Professor of English, Bryn Mawr College and "Contemplative Activism: Meditations Adapted From Tibet to Empower Service and Action" with John Makransky, Associate Professor of Buddhism and Comparative Theology, Boston College.

Sincerely,



Beth Wadham and Carrie Bergman

Program Associates

The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

& The Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education



## Experiencing Contemplative Environmental Education in the US

By Ajay Rastogi

Majkhali, Uttarakhand Himalaya, India

I travelled to the US from August to December 2010 as a Nehru-Fulbright Environmental Leadership Fellow from India. I would like to share a journey that begins with why I felt the need to explore contemplative environmental education and proceeds through my experience in the US.

I work in the area of nature conservation, sustainable agriculture, community-based enterprises and fair-trade in India and neighboring Himalayan countries. Over twenty years ago when many of my friends and I finished our university degrees in environmental sciences, we joined different organizations to contribute our efforts to saving the environment. Most of us and our colleagues at work carried a strong conviction that conservation could be achieved by improving knowledge and awareness. We worked with considerable passion and commitment, across different sectors of society, to try and bridge the gaps in people's understanding, providing information about "why" and "how" to protect the environment and conserve nature.

The result was that more books and films were produced, and more travel and workshops were planned, as these were considered the means toward our ends.

Some of these efforts may have contributed to a success story here and there, but it appeared to me that conservation education remained in the same domain as cognitive learning, and that it often failed to transform people to translate into action. To an extent, environmental education turned out to be part of the same educational riddle that lies at the root of the sustainability question. How can environmental education help not only make people aware, but motivate them to take the actual steps in their personal and community life that reflect their commitment as the stewards of natural ecosystems?

I began to realize that we need a paradigm shift in our approach to environmental education. I also began to feel that at deeper levels, environmental concerns are in many ways akin to other important societal concerns such as violence, hunger, drugs and corruption. None of these can be

addressed through scientific, technological and policy solutions alone or just by enhancing knowledge, awareness or income levels. To maintain ecosystems, conserve biodiversity and keep the earth elements healthy (soil, water, air), nothing less than a radical change in human behavior is required.

How does one bring about behavioral transformation? I began to search for approaches. I located a master's course in Applied Ethics and left my job in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to study. The ethical and moral theories presented in the courses made strong arguments that appealed to the rational mind, but still could not penetrate through to the deeper layers of beliefs and thought processes that affect changes in behavior. Appeals to value systems have limitations in promoting the attitudinal changes that would result in more sustainable living. Ethical discourse is often just a piece of good conversation. Most people will only make adjustments in their lifestyle for things that they really care about!

An approach to bring nature closer to people's hearts became the next thread in this maze of deeper inquiry. I had read about contemplation of nature in the aesthetics literature and decided to put together a practice around the concept. I prepared a 2-hour module with half an hour of contemplative practice in natural surroundings and the rest of the time for discussions on theoretical aspects and participant feedback. For over two years, I offered the contemplation of nature experience to many groups and majority of the participants could feel a tranquility that is part of a meditative practice. Encouraged by the experience, I wanted to venture deeper into the variety of contemplative practices being offered in educational institutions.



I learned about the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society from a search on the internet. I was enamored by the application of contemplative practices in almost all academic disciplines. I felt it would be great to travel to US to learn more, so I applied for the Nehru-Fulbright Environmental Leadership Fellowship. Contemplation was considered an appropriate subject by the experts on the selection committee and I got the award. I corresponded with Professor Arthur Zajonc and he connected me with several others working in the area of contemplative environmental education.

I spent about four months based at the University of Washington Seattle beginning fall 2010. During this period, I participated in the Contemplative Environmental Education workshop held at the Lama Foundation. It was attended by almost 20 faculty from different universities and besides mutual sharing of experiences among the participants, a host of resource persons were invited. We built a consensus that contemplative education a) enhances mindfulness which helps students to remain connected with the present lesson, b) helps students find their relationship to the lesson (hearing is not enough) c) enhances the capacity to read and reflect; and d) may encourage the students to engage in a regular practices leading to attitudinal change.

I also attended a "Sustainability and Contemplative Practice" retreat held at the Whidbey Institute at Chinook. This is a Puget Sound Bioregion Initiative for development of curriculum jointly by 36 schools, colleges and universities. The synergy of participants in this joint exercise displayed at great magnitude the diverse ways of applying contemplative methods. In India, we still follow a centralized syllabus with few contributions relating to the local land and people; I thought this kind of initiative needs to be emulated.



I also had an opportunity to offer the contemplation of nature practice I developed in different locations and settings. A session at American University in Washington, DC was held indoors and about 26 participants engaged with several types of foliage including wonderfully colored fall leaves. The participants at the University of Washington Medical School contemplated the waters of Lake Washington. At the "Work First" program, participants of Olympic College Bremerton contemplated natural objects including sea shells and conches. Students at the

National Outdoor Leadership School contemplated grassland lined with a row of trees in their campus at Mount Vernon.

In my visit to the US, I learned diverse ways of incorporating contemplative approaches in various subjects and themes and gathered many methods. Enthused by the experience and knowledge, I have returned to India with a mission to promote contemplative approaches in the areas of environmental and sustainability education. We are beginning with a network of people interested and planning to hold the first session. If possible, we plan to build to a critical mass of individuals and institutions over the next two years and become a sustainable movement. In the meantime, the network members can make use of resources available from institutions such as [the Center](#), [the Garrison Institute](#), and [the Mind and Life Institute](#). The recently established [Azim Premji University](#) at Bangalore has already taken preliminary steps to develop a Center for Mind and Society. This pioneering venture will certainly bring greater confidence in contemplative ways of inquiry among other institutions of higher education. At the lower school level, [Ahimsa Trust](#) has organized retreats for teachers over the last two years. So, thinking and action have joined towards transformative education. As it evolves with new partnerships and experience, the future awaits a revival of the long tradition of contemplation in Indian society.



## Thinking Like Einstein

By Arthur Zajonc

Published in the *Psychology Today* blog

"[The Meditative Life](#)," March 17, 2011

Einstein asked, "What would it be like to ride light?"

For perhaps the hundredth time, I try to think like Einstein. A burst of light is seen by two observers: one stationary on a platform, the other moving in a train. Assume the speed of light is the same for both observers. That's it, that's all you need to change forever our understanding of space, time, matter, and the universe. No Large Hadron Collider, no CERN, no Hubble Space Telescope, no footnotes, no academic appointment, just the clear light of one mind, and a friend or two to talk with while walking the Berner

Oberland breathing in the pristine mountain air. How did he do it? How could Einstein think so

clearly, so faithfully, when everyone else held fast to habits of mind that seemed so sensible and yet were ultimately so wrong.

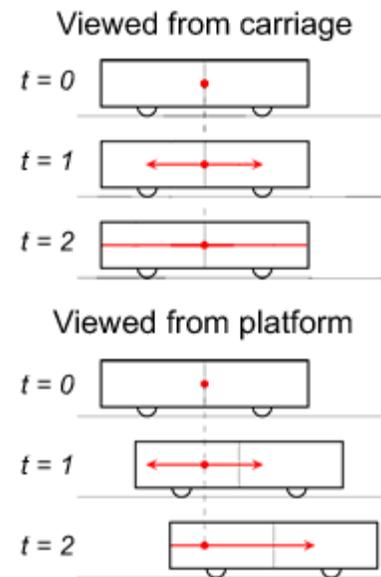
We think of [meditation](#) as following the breath, but for Einstein meditation was following thought. He had learned how to see the burst of light expanding, traveling at the same speed for the two observers. To the moving observer on the train, the circle of light expanded equally on all sides. To the stationary one on the platform, the light expanded also, but in addition Einstein saw the movement of the train caused one side to meet the wave earlier than the other side. I mimic his thoughts, one-by-one, I think with him and, in this moment, what Einstein thought I think. His insight becomes mine. Our conclusions: simultaneity is relative. Moving clocks run slow. Lengths are foreshortened along the direction of motion. No laboratory is needed, only the mind and the amazing power of pure thought.

The Dalai Lama writes often about “analytic meditation.” As he explained to Howard Cutler, “In analytic meditation, one brings about inner change through systematic investigation and analysis. In this way we can properly use our human [intelligence](#), our capacity for reason and analysis, to contribute to our [happiness](#) and satisfaction.” Einstein’s analytic meditation led to his theory of relativity; it has the possibility of changing our minds in ways that are truly profound.

As I work through each step inwardly from both points of view—stationary and moving—I encounter a paradox, a contraction. How can an object have different lengths? How can a clock (including the clock of my bodily processes) run differently when viewed from the two vantage points? How can my “now” be different than yours? All three are implied by Einstein’s relativity theory. Surely one set of observations must be the True set. No, each has equal justification, no vantage point is privileged. Then I remember that I am assuming the universe looks like something without me or anyone around. I presume that it looks like something unto itself. This is not so. All of its attributes, even the most fundamental ones like extension and duration, are attributes as noted by an observer, real or imagined. We and the world are knit together by Einstein’s thinking in ways that astonish me. It is so difficult not to reify the world, and instead to recognize that I am implicated everywhere and in every impression. The careful reasoning that leads us to this conclusion is Einstein’s gift, the fruit of his analytic meditation.

A second kind of meditation should then be joined to the first, says the Dalai Lama. Once we have, through analytic meditation, come to an insight or deeper understanding, then we should cease our analysis and begin the practice of “calm abiding.” In this practice we still our reasoning, quiet the mind, and allow the full significance of the insight to sink in. We calmly abide with the insight and the feelings it evokes, in this case, the feeling of our persistent relationship with the universe: our co-dependence. We realize that the deeper coherence of the universe requires that each of us inhabits a lawful world of our own that may seem inconsistent with the worlds inhabited by others. Only at another more subtle level are these individualized worlds harmonized: difference and unity.

Once we internalize this difficult insight, we begin to swim, ungrounded, in a multiplicity of possible worlds. But that is okay. In the language of Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch (*The Embodied Mind*), we learn to lay down the path beneath our feet by walking. Instead of looking for security in stasis, we realize the groundlessness of material reality and find our way to security through movement instead, through processes that generate meanings. In Robert Kegan’s classification of the stages of human epistemologies, he calls this final stage the “self-transforming



mind." Only a very, very few ever make it to this level of meaning making. Einstein's analytic meditation and calm abiding can be a help getting there.

And now I'll return to the burst of light for the 101st time. Care to join me?

## Upcoming Events

### Contemplative Studies Summer Intensive June 20-August 5, 2011 at Brown University, Providence, RI

Brown University's first Summer Session will offer four integrated courses in Contemplative Studies, representing sciences, humanities and creative arts. The courses are offered for credit and open to faculty, undergraduates, medical students and graduate students from other schools.

Courses listed are: An introduction to Contemplative Studies, taught by Hal Roth; Meditation and Brain: Applications in Basic and Clinical Science, Willoughby Britton and C. Kerr; A Comparative Phenomenology of Mystical Experience, Tom Coburn; and Contemplative Music of India, S. Reddy.

To learn more, [view the pdf](#).

### ACMHE Regional Conference July 1-3, 2011 at the Whidbey Institute, Clinton, WA



The Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education is going bi-coastal! In response to requests from conference participants who travel from afar, we will have a regional gathering this summer at the Whidbey Institute on Chinook Land in Clinton, Washington. The Whidbey Institute is located on 70+ acres of fields, forest and gardens on Whidbey Island, north of Seattle and within driving distance from British Columbia,

Eastern Washington and Oregon. The secluded setting will invite participants to connect deeply to the natural world as well as one another. Overnight accommodations are available at the Institute and nearby Aldermarsh.

We're delighted that **Laura Rendon**, Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Texas-San Antonio and author of [\*Sentipensante \(Sensing/Thinking\) Pedagogy: Educating for Wholeness, Social Justice and Liberation\*](#) will give the keynote address on Friday, July 1st after a welcome dinner for all. Saturday's program will include contributed presentations and contemplative practice sessions from members of the network and **Arthur Zajonc** will present "Contemplative Contributions to Integrative Education." On Sunday morning **David Levy**, Professor at the



Information School, University of Washington, will convene a panel presentation. The conference ends at 12 noon on Sunday, July 3.

We're now accepting proposals for the contributed sessions and will update the program with these inclusions later this spring. For additional information and registration visit [www.acmhe.org](http://www.acmhe.org).

**Call for Papers:** *Although the due date for proposals has passed, late papers will be reviewed on a rolling basis.* The ACMHE Regional Conference welcomes proposals concerning contemplative pedagogy, methodology and epistemology within and across disciplines and through co-curricular initiatives. Submissions of proposals for panel discussions and practice sessions are also invited. Please send a title and an abstract of not more than 200 words for a 30 minute paper or 90 minute panel or group presentation along with name, institutional affiliation and 50 - 100 word professional biography to [beth@contemplativemind.org](mailto:beth@contemplativemind.org). Notification of inclusion in the program will be made by May 15, 2011.



## Summer Contemplative Curriculum Development Session August 7-12, 2011 at Smith College, Northampton, MA

Are you interested in developing a course that makes use of contemplative methods? We are now accepting applications to join an interdisciplinary group of educators for a week of investigation, reflection, practice and conversation to learn the design principles of contemplative pedagogy and how to apply them. Led by experienced contemplative teachers, this weeklong session includes presentations on the rationale for a contemplative approach and how it affects teaching and learning. There will be an introduction to a variety of contemplative practices (meditations, yoga, contemplative arts) adapted for the classroom, and substantial practice time, during each day.

This year, faculty includes Daniel Barbezat, Professor of Economics at Amherst College; Linda-Susan Beard, Associate Professor of English at Bryn Mawr; Joel Upton, Professor of Art and the History of Art at Amherst College; Judith Simmer Brown, Professor of Religious Studies at Naropa University; Patricia Wallace, Professor of English at Vassar College; and Arthur Zajonc, Professor of Physics at Amherst College. Visit [www.acmhe.org](http://www.acmhe.org) for additional information and the application. The application due date is May 15, 2011.



## Annual Conference: The Contemplative Campus October 7-10, 2011 at Amherst College, Amherst, MA

The annual ACMHE conference focuses on contemplative approaches to teaching, learning and knowing taking place campus-wide. Contributed papers, a poster session, and artistic presentations as well as plenary speakers, panels and practice sessions will explore the ways that contemplative practices serve higher education. As educators and administrators integrate these practices into classrooms, studios, and co-curricular initiatives, they are learning how they develop greater mindfulness, open heartedness, and insight.

Submissions for panels, practice sessions and papers are invited. Please visit [www.acmhe.org](http://www.acmhe.org) for additional information including call for papers and registration.

**Call for Papers:** The 2011 ACMHE conference welcomes proposals concerning contemplative pedagogy, methodology and epistemology within and across disciplines and through co-curricular initiatives. Submissions of proposals for panel discussions and workshops are also invited. Please send a title and an abstract of not more than 200 words for a 30 minute paper or 90 minute panel or group presentation along with name, institutional affiliation and 50 - 100 word professional biography to [beth@contemplativemind.org](mailto:beth@contemplativemind.org) by May 15, 2011. Notification of inclusion in the program will be made by June 15, 2011. Late papers will be reviewed on a rolling basis.



## Retreat for Academics November 17-20, 2011 at Garrison Institute, Garrison, NY

Mirabai Bush and Arthur Zajonc will lead a retreat designed for those working in higher education. They offer instruction in a variety of contemplative practices, including contemplative methods adapted for the classroom. These practices cultivate capacities central to teaching and learning-- focused attention, kindness and compassion, and contemplative inquiry. Much of the time is spent in silence, including some silent meals. The retreat is open to participants with a wide range of experience in contemplative practice, from beginners to seasoned practitioners, and includes discussions about the relationship of the contemplative perspective to teaching, learning, and knowing. For registration, please visit [www.acmhe.org](http://www.acmhe.org).

## Fall 2011 360° Course Cluster Explores the History, Science and Practice of Meditation and Other Mindful Practices at Bryn Mawr



A group of faculty and students will contemplate contemplation in a 360° course cluster exploring the history, science and practice of meditation and other mindful practices.

"360°: Contemplative Traditions" comprises three classes plus an independent study (a fourth course) that share an interest in contemplative or mindfulness traditions and practice. The courses bring together historical, cultural, psychological, and religious perspectives. The three shared courses will twine together in significant and determined ways, but the unique perspective of each will offer a broad view of the topic.

The Contemplative Traditions 360 is designed to provide a unified, intensive learning experience that includes experiential components extending beyond the campus. This type of learning experience is often available to students only during a semester abroad. Teaching the 360° will be Haverford Associate Professor of East Asian Studies Hank Glassman, Bryn Mawr Professor of Chemistry Michelle Francl, and Bryn Mawr Professor of Psychology Marc Schulz.

For more information including course descriptions, visit <http://news.brynmawr.edu/?p=8543>

# Retrospectives

## Antioch College Symposium Explores Contemplation and Mindfulness in Higher Education April 9, 2011



Antioch College welcomed leading scholars from throughout the country on April 9 for “A Green Space for the Mind,” a daylong symposium exploring initiatives to incorporate contemplative practice into academic and social settings in higher education. The symposium was held in the Herndon Gallery, South Hall, One Morgan Place.

Presented with the [Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education](#) (SOCHE), A Green Space for the Mind investigated the premise that conventional instruction based on critical scholarship and the scientific method can be strengthened by incorporating reflective, contemplative and experiential methods.

A panel of leading academics in contemplative education presented on the theory and practice of contemplation in higher education. The panelists were:

- Linda-Susan Beard, associate professor of literature at Bryn Mawr College and a monk in the Emmaus Community in Vestaburg, Michigan
- John Makransky, professor of Buddhism and comparative theology at Boston College and the founding teacher for the Foundation for Active Compassion
- Harold Roth, professor of religious studies and East Asian studies and the director of the Contemplative Studies Initiative at Brown University
- Clifford Saron, associate research scientist at the UC Davis Center for Mind and Brain and M.I.N.D. Institute

The panel was moderated by Robert Pryor, founder and director of Antioch Education Abroad’s Buddhist Studies Program in Bodh Gaya, India. [View a .pdf of the event flyer.](#)

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## Throughout the Curriculum: Contemplative Practices in Higher Education, March 25-27, 2011 at Amherst College

*By Beth Wadham, with many thanks to Mirabai Bush for session notes.*

Amherst College and The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society hosted this series of presentations featuring professors across many disciplines—Physics, Economics, English, Environmental Science, Chemistry, Law, Religious Studies, Music and Psychology—to explore the relevance of a contemplative approach to each and all. The presentations were intended to open conversation between the speakers across disciplines and consider what commonalities could be found within their differences.

The presentations and conversations, held in the Red Room at Converse Hall, were open to the public. Several sessions offered panels with open discussion.

Patricia Wallace, Professor of English at Vassar College, led off the weekend with an investigation of “lightness,” in verse. Drawing from lines from Ovid, Italo Calvino and Robert Frost’s “Star in a Stone Boat,” Wallace displayed how, as a counterforce to weight, lightness can show up as agility and flexibility in leaping lines of poetry. And as illumination, lightness can reveal a way through the opacity of the world, as when Mary Oliver’s *Egrets*

“opened their wings  
softly and stepped  
over every dark thing.”

Wallace invites her listeners, and her students, to adopt an attitude of “patient and loving regard” when reading poetry, and finds that their quality of attention is often rewarded with unexpected perceptions and apprehensions of reality.

Ed Sarath, Professor of Music and Director of the Program in Creativity and Consciousness Studies at the University of Michigan, has been bringing his “tale of two epistemologies” to the academy for the past ten years, developing jazz improvisation and contemplative ways of knowing. As he relates it, similar questions arise for both: Can you take jazz out of the “university of the street?” Can you abstract



contemplative practices from their spiritual roots?

He hasn't resolved these questions, but manages their tensions by strengthening the firm grounding of his own anchor—a sitting practice—to allow for lightness of movement, and posing big questions.

Sarath's passion and idealism is activated by considering, "What is a human being?" and, "What is the purpose of education?" He's interested in developing his students' creativity as an integrated state of consciousness that rewards them not just with artistic success, but as a means for making their unique contribution to the world. He finds that the methodologies of both jazz and contemplative practice serve these expansive goals.



**Al Kaszniak**, Professor and Head of Psychology at the University of Arizona, investigated the longstanding question of whether or not compassion is natural in his course on "Psychology of Empathy and Compassion: Contemplative and Scientific Perspectives." The question can now be informed by recent neuroscience research on "mirror neurons" and the effects of meditation on the brain. The course made use of journaling, mindfulness, council circle, metta, "dyadic nonjudgmental listening," and self- vs. -other-focused perspective taking, and ended with a contemplative garden gathering. Kaszniak loved teaching in this way, and both he and the students found the course logic rewarding, as it offered the opportunity for "being that which one is speaking," to quote Gregory Bateson's concept of "metalogue."



**Daniel Barbezat**, Professor of Economics at Amherst College, is interested in how to "engage students as human beings, as teachers." While they will be evaluated and graded, he recognizes that students have "sovereignty over their own experience" and he looks for ways for them to engage introspectively with the course content so that they can relate the theories and models presented in economics to their own lives.

One example from his field is the how the idea of "utility," or satisfaction as determined by the interaction between want and supply, is based on subjective measures of well-being. To investigate, Barbezat brings in Tibor Scitovsky's [\*The Joyless Economy\*](#) and asks whether our level of comfort (as members of the Amherst College community, anyway) makes our lives less fulfilling. We may cling to comfort levels because they're habitual, even when they don't optimize our pleasure, and we may need to navigate through some discomfort to move toward optimal states.

To test this, Barbezat designed some discomfort into his class. He asked his students—who habitually chose seats next to friends—to sit by an unfamiliar person and have a short introductory conversation. Then he asked them to notice: are you as well, better, or worse off than when you were sitting near your friend? Nearly every student reported being as well off, and some said better off, than before.

This kind of exercise may not appear on the surface to be "contemplative" in the way attending to one's breathing or a bell sound does, but as an invitation to greater self awareness it reveals to students the complexity of their wanting. They see, to their own perturbation, how they might

“overchoose” comfort, even as they return to sit with their friends the next time class begins.



**Judith Simmer-Brown**, chair of the Religious Studies department at Naropa University, looked at the relationship between contemplative education and traditional academic skills, specifically writing. While Naropa is not a traditional academy, neither is it a dharma center, and she finds that students are often not as engaged with their academic writing as they are with developing their inner wisdom. Their writing, typically in the third-person, passionless style, has not yet found a voice.

To address this, Simmer-Brown has developed a way of mindful reading: a sequence of reading, speaking, and sharing, interspersed with sitting, that concludes with writing “the meaning for them at that moment,” resulting in a fresh take.

To make appropriate use of personal material, students begin by making distinctions, asking, “How does it feel?” from multiple perspectives: physically, as sensation; emotionally, as mood and feeling; and cognitively, as thought. As students navigate from thought to senses they learn to attend to what is happening moment by moment, and can go beyond the habitual thinking that runs a story line in the past (reruns) or future (planning). She finds these techniques bring students’ own voices forward to inhabit their writing and bring greater personal integration to the topics they write about.

**Harold Roth**, Professor of Religious Studies and East Asian Studies and the Director of the Contemplative Studies Initiative at Brown University, is now teaching the 10th version of Introduction to Contemplative Studies, a course which focuses on methods human beings have discovered and developed to increase conscious awareness. He considers contemplative states on a spectrum that extends from ordinary to mystical experience.

He uses a combination of third-person study of texts and what he calls a “critical first-person approach” in which students engage directly with the practices they’re investigating and appraise their experience. They try out specific meditation techniques in “meditation labs” that meet 3 times a week and process the results through journal entries that monitor their development. When students are asked to apply the ideas they are exploring to their own experience, Roth finds that a new dimension emerges, yielding a deeper understanding of the subject of study.

**Michelle Francl**, Associate Professor of Chemistry at Bryn Mawr, finds that incorporating a contemplate approach to scientific studies has pragmatic rewards. Contemplative practices are useful tools for developing the patience, persistence and broad vision that result in scientific inquiry that is not reductionist. She offers her students “thresholds of writing” at the beginning and end of each class to collect themselves and their observations. Francl relates stories from Barbara McClintock and Gregor Mendel that demonstrate how science relies upon an “unforced pace” and “a long, loving look at the world.” This quality of attention can open students to “more marvelous things than the scientific method allows,” and trains capacities for real insight.

**Arthur Zajonc**, Professor of Physics at Amherst College, shared his reflections on the development of Einstein’s theories (see “Thinking Like Einstein” article above and at <http://www.psychologytoday.com/>). Arthur joined Michelle for questions and discussion following their presentations.

**Rhonda Magee**, Professor at the University of San Francisco School of Law, related how contemplative practice is spreading through the law world, but is mindful of the challenges in trying to shift such a formidable profession. Certain values are reinforced through the resolution of a legal



case: that humans are by nature alienated, that we must have the right to sue, that if the law doesn't require it, we may not act well with each other at all. A contemplative approach can lead students to question these values, and consider what the law is, in all our lives.

In all her courses, Magee makes some use of contemplative techniques—a bell, some silence. She also introduces practices as methods for developing skills for effective lawyering: writing briefs in a contemplative way, using contemplative communication, and developing the capacity to deal with differences. Immigration and criminal law often involve clients who are very different from their lawyers, and practices support empathetic and compassionate interaction in stressful situations.

In the study and practice of law, decisions are often not clear, and their outcome is unknown. There are gut-wrenching challenges. Magee believes lawyers need contemplative practices to sustain themselves so they can help create a more just world for the rest of us.

**Paul Wapner** is Associate Professor and Director of the Global Environmental Politics Program at the School of International Service at American University in Washington, DC. As he and his colleagues are “experts in urgency,” contemplative practices are helpful. Wapner noted the subject of his recent book, [\*Living Through the End of Nature\*](#), and reflected on our immediate situation: meeting in a lecture hall, remote from nature, eating food grown we know not where. We haven't been outside all day.

And from a wider perspective, he noted, everything on the planet that is frozen is melting; 2010 was the hottest year on record, and conservation biologists say we are in the Sixth Great Extinction (dinosaurs were the fifth). Wapner wonders, “How do we respect this information, and hold it?” For years, he felt his job was to go into class and bum people out. They called his course “Introduction to Doom.” Then, in the last week, “like the credits to Al Gore's movie,” he would tell them how they could do something to make a difference.

A contemplative approach has given him a different way to teach: to present crisis as both danger and opportunity. True, the stakes are high, but a mindful perspective looks at what *is* while we are often looking away. Wapner is interested in turning discomfort into an inquiry that has the potential to develop new capacities. He considers climate change a path to inner growth, a way to know what is and what should be, and somehow love both.

As the last session came to a close, Wapner remarked, “I wish the weekend were starting now. We're beginning to identify the questions.” And Ed Sarath went on to pose a pointed one those gathered in the Red Room: “What might it mean to let this rip?”

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## Meditation for Academic Excellence and Beyond: An interactive talk and faculty workshop at Middlebury College, February 10-11, 2011

By Beth Wadham

Arthur Zajonc visited Middlebury College to speak with a group of about 70 students and faculty about the interior dimensions of education and the benefits of cultivating a healthy, balanced emotional life and a “contemplative mind.” Zajonc noted that college life, particularly for high-performing students like those at Middlebury, is stress-filled, and that is often the first barrier to achieving academic excellence. He suggested that the benefits of mindfulness practices such as MBSR, which has proved such an effective intervention in medical settings, can also apply in education to support inner resources that are the foundation for learning.

Zajonc reviewed the emerging evidence for meditation’s role in stabilizing attention and emotions and went on to look at three ways particular practices are used in classrooms: observing or beholding art or other phenomena, engaging in deep listening, and reading using *lectio divina*. Zajonc also suggested that contemplative inquiry can be used as a research method to discover new material, and the capacities developed by sustained meditative techniques can bring about understandings that are not limited to logical inference.

The following day, Zajonc led a workshop for 25-30 faculty and staff as part of a series sponsored by the Middlebury [Center for Teaching, Learning and Research](#). Workshop participants expressed their interests in integrating practice to support time management and stress reduction; developing capacities for attention and empathy; and in helping students “sit without understanding” when confronted with complexity and contradictions. Zajonc responded with examples and exercises from his courses and led a practice to demonstrate how to engage students with course material by using personal experience as a basis for understanding.

Following the workshop, participants remarked that it helped them “to solidify and identify a group of people for further study,” “to be more effective in articulating these methods and key concepts to students and colleagues,” and “reminded them of the importance of presence.”

## Contemplative Leadership Education Meetings at Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Sackler Museum, January 11 & March 24, 2011

By Richard Sclove, Consultant to The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society



Meeting attendees: *Front row seated:* Daniel Goleman, Metta McGarvey, Jerome Murphy, Saki Santorelli. *Back row seated:* Otto Scharmer, Grady McGonagill, William Torbert, Deborah Ancona, Rebecca Henderson. *Standing, left to right:* Ronald Heifetz, Ray Williams, Arthur Zajonc, Janice Marturano, Tamar Miller, Jon Kabat Zinn, Mirabai Bush, Elinor Pierce. *Implicit:* Richard Sclove (photographer).

The Center convened a small group of Boston-area leadership educators to explore the role of contemplative practice within the education of leaders. Those attending included, among others, professors from Harvard University's Business School, Graduate School of Education, and John F. Kennedy School of Government and from MIT's Sloan School of Management. Harvard Professor of Education Jerome Murphy co-hosted the meeting along with Center Director and Amherst College Physics Professor Arthur Zajonc.

The goals for the gathering were:

- To understand **the current situation concerning contemplative leadership**, including its place in leadership education. What is taking place? Is there a theoretical understanding of leadership that includes the contemplative dimension? Do we have the theory and practices necessary for fruitful innovation?
- To discuss **the future place of contemplative theory and practice in leadership formation**. What steps are needed to bring the contemplative more fully into leadership education and research?

The Center is reaching out to partner with Harvard and MIT professional schools because they train leaders in all fields of human endeavor, while setting standards by which other universities guide and measure themselves. This collaboration promises to extend the Center's work in contemplative pedagogy to educational trendsetters and beyond.

Themes that emerged from the group's engaged conversation in January include:

- **Opportunity:** Mainstream institutions, including universities, corporations, and even the military, are becoming increasingly receptive to contemplative practice. Leadership educators at Harvard and MIT who have incorporated meditation or other contemplative practices within their graduate teaching for a decade or more have found their work quietly gaining in esteem and appreciation among students, other professors and administrators. While there is still resistance and pushback, the noticeable shift from fringe toward the center indicates that the possibilities for introducing contemplative practice into leadership education are expanding.
- **Individual Benefits:** Graduate students in training for leadership who have taken courses that include contemplative practice have reported various benefits, including reduced stress, enhanced empathy, less defensiveness when confronted with conflict, and greater attentiveness to their deepest aspirations. It is important to become more systematic in identifying and documenting such benefits, as well as in identifying prevalent deficits in leaders' capacities that contemplative practice might redress.
- **Concepts of Leadership:** A contemplative perspective on human potential can suggest that all people harbor latent capacities for leadership and greatness. In that respect, integrating contemplative practice could conceivably broaden the conceptualization and institutionalization of leadership education.
- **Macro Societal Benefits:** The human capacity for destruction, as reflected in such societal and planetary threats as global warming, war and mass terrorism, can plausibly be interpreted as being, at least in part, symptomatic of impaired human awareness and self-understanding. On the other hand, at their core contemplative practices are techniques that build awareness and self-understanding. It was accordingly conjectured—qualified by a concern to appear neither grandiose nor self-righteous—that if such practices become more widely utilized, they have the potential to contribute vitally to addressing, or even averting, major societal crises. By enhancing moral development and creativity, contemplative practices can also conceivably unleash latent human potential, resulting in broad societal uplift.
- **Rationales and Research:** To build contemplative practice more systematically and effectively into leadership training, we need better articulated rationales or theory, supported by research.
- **Experience and Framework:** Effective contemplative pedagogy requires experiential methods as well as (a) supporting conceptual frameworks, articulated to students in accessible language, and/or (b) pedagogical settings that ensure that the experience is both effective and safe.
- **Context-Specific Best Practices:** It is important to identify best practices in contemplative pedagogy with respect to diverse teaching and leadership contexts.
- **Leadership-Specific Contemplative Pedagogies:** There is a need to distinguish contemplative pedagogies that are applicable within any educational setting from those specifically adapted to the training of leaders.
- **Complementary Approaches:** Books about contemplative practice often dwell on individual practice and experience. However partnered and group contemplative practices issue in their own distinctive benefits. Group practice can, for example, build trust, commonality of purpose, and nourish shared creativity.

Enthusiastic about their discussion, the group agreed that they would like to continue to meet, and that the next few meetings be structured as faculty seminars, led by a group member or invited guest.

Ray Williams, Director of Education at the Harvard University Art Museums co-hosted the next gathering the afternoon of March 24th at Harvard's Sackler Art Museum, where he led the group in contemplative practices involving observation of works of art. Janice Marturano, a General Mills vice

president from corporate headquarters in Minneapolis, led the second half of the meeting, on contemplative leadership training in a corporate setting.



*Professor Jerome Murphy, center, describing his contemplative engagement with a statue of Abraham Lincoln.*

In the past five years Janice Marturano and Saki Santorelli (Center for Mindfulness at UMass Medical School) have developed a series of retreats, workshops and on-site courses in mindful corporate leadership. Several hundred General Mills leaders have participated, as have roughly 100 leaders from 30 other organizations and corporations around the world.

Among the reported benefits of these trainings: Corporate meetings have leveled out, so that more people speak and more ideas are generated. There is less reactivity and greater openness to suggestions. Leaders say that they now operate less on auto-pilot, and make time to be more reflective.

Reflecting on this experience, Janice has distilled a number of lessons, including:

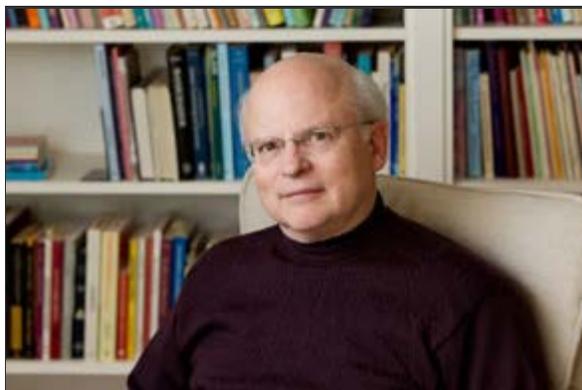
- Mindfulness training and excellence in leadership share four qualities: focus, creativity, clarity and compassion.
- It is crucial to present contemplative practice in a language that leaders find comfortable and accessible.
- Mindfulness training cannot be rushed. It requires adequate time and follow-up support to integrate the practices and results into daily life.
- Participation must spread virally and be voluntary, it cannot be mandated.

Saki added that, while not necessarily using this language, these corporate trainings incorporate the four pillars of mindfulness: attention to sensations in the body, to feelings, to thoughts, and to choiceless awareness.

An additional meeting is planned for the afternoon of May 23rd and there was interest in organizing a half-day contemplative retreat.

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## Arthur Zajonc on *To the Best of Our Knowledge*



Arthur Zajonc (Director of the ACMHE and the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society and Professor of Physics at Amherst College) was featured on Wisconsin Public Radio's "To the Best of Our Knowledge" on December 10, 2010 during the segment: "Can Science be Sacred," part 5 of the series "Science and the Search for Meaning." To listen, visit:

<http://www.wpr.org/book/101219a.cfm>

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## The Mindful Lawyer: Practices and Prospects for Law School, Bench and Bar at Berkeley School of Law, October 29-31, 2010

Nearly 200 lawyers, law students, judges and professors of law attended the first ever national conference on meditation and the law last October. Led by Charles Halpern, Berkeley Law scholar-in-residence and former chair of the Board of Directors of The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, the proceedings included presentations on "Alleviating Lawyers' Stress, Depression and Substance Abuse: Mindfulness and Health," "Sitting in Meditation, Sitting on the Bench," "Mindful Emotional Intelligence as a 21st Century Lawyering Skill" and "What Does a Mindful Lawyer's Practice Look Like?"



Video and audio from the conference are available at [www.mindfullawyerconference.org](http://www.mindfullawyerconference.org).

The January 2011 issue of the *California Bar Journal* includes a review of the conference and interviews with Charles Halpern and Doug Chermak, conference organizers. Read it online at: <http://www.calbarjournal.com/January2011/TopHeadlines/TH2.aspx>

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## George Mason University's Center for Consciousness and Transformation hosts Michelle Francl as Visiting Scholar

The [Center for Consciousness and Transformation \(CCT\)](http://www.gmu.edu/center-for-consciousness-and-transformation) at George Mason University hosted Michelle Francl, Associate Professor in chemistry at Bryn Mawr College as a visiting scholar during the fall semester 2010.

While at Mason, she gave several presentations on building contemplative practices into academics and scholarship from a variety of approaches.

- “Stealing Time to Teach: A Contemplative Approach to Teaching and Learning” with Daryl Nardick, the director of strategic project integration with the Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship at Georgetown University.
- “Experiments in Patience and Attention: Bringing Contemplative Practices into the Lab and Classroom” was geared specifically toward those in the science.
- “Creativity and Contemplative Practices,” was designed for those involved in the arts and humanities, and explored how can mindfulness practices support fundamental elements of the creative process.

Francl has been on the faculty at Bryn Mawr for more than two decades. She is a quantum chemist whose research interests include development of methods for computational chemistry and the structures of topologically intriguing molecules. She is also a writer whose essays on science, culture and policy have appeared in *Nature* and *Chemistry*.

## Announcements from Members



**Elizabeth Bader** recently won the Margaret Mahler Literature Prize for 2011 for her article “[The Psychology of Mediation: Issues of Self and Identity in Mediation and the IDR Cycle](#)” 10 Pepperdine Dispute Resolution Law Journal 183 (2010), and a version of the article for the psychoanalytic community has been accepted by publication by an international peer-reviewed journal, the Journal for Applied Psychoanalytic Studies.

As a result of interest the article has generated, Elizabeth Bader has started a TeleForum on Self & Identity at:

[www.elizabethbader.com/self-and-identity-forum.html](http://www.elizabethbader.com/self-and-identity-forum.html)

**Robin Greene**, member and participant of last summer’s 6th Annual Summer Session on Contemplative Curriculum Development, is pleased to announce that her historical novel [Augustus: Narrative of a Slave Woman](#) is forthcoming this April (Plainview Press 2011). The novel deals with issues of black feminism, race-specific reactions to historical inquiry, sexuality and rape, and the quest for identity. Additionally, in early March, Greene led the meditation and writing portions of a Women’s Writing Retreat in Oaxaca, Mexico.



**Contemplative Studies Consultation of the American Academy of Religion**

From **Louis Komjathy**, Ph.D., Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of San Diego

We are pleased to announce the establishment of the Contemplative Studies Consultation within the American Academy of Religion. The Contemplative Studies Consultation (CSC) aims to strengthen and develop Contemplative Studies as an emerging, interdisciplinary

academic field of inquiry, especially in the context of Religious Studies and the American Academy of Religion. Our program unit provides a forum for the investigation of contemplative practice and experience, considered inclusively and comprehensively; for critical discussions on the field itself, including theoretical and interpretive issues; as well as for the application of contemplative practice to academic life and university culture. The latter includes the possible contribution of "contemplative pedagogy" to teaching and learning. The Contemplative Studies Consultation thus aims to gather together currently-diffused groups as well as dislocated, marginalized and under-represented individuals in the academy. To this end, we encourage research that is topical, tradition-specific, as well as comparative and cross-cultural. We also invite scholars to investigate contemplative practice and experience in ways that traverse and transcend the boundaries of traditions, disciplines, and research methodologies. As a consultation, a particular type of program unit within the American Academy of Religion, we are able to accept one independent and one co-sponsored panel at each AAR annual meeting. Panel and paper proposals are usually due in early March, and the annual meeting occurs in different cities in November. The Contemplative Studies Consultation is under the direction of our chairs and steering committee. At present, **Louis Komjathy** (University of San Diego) and **Anne Klein** (Rice University) serve as co-chairs. The steering committee consists of **Thomas Coburn** (Brown University), **Fran Grace** (University of Redlands), **Harold Roth** (Brown University), and **Judith Simmer-Brown** (Naropa University). We are also working to establish a Contemplative Studies website, which will be a collaborative, online resource hosted by the University of San Diego ([www.sandiego.edu/cas/contemplativestudies](http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/contemplativestudies)).



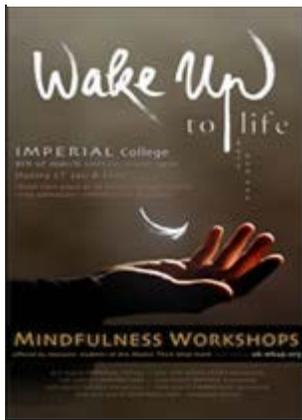
**Christian McEwan's** book, *World Enough & Time: Creativity & Slowing Down* is coming out with Bauhan Publishing (NH) in the fall of 2011. Excerpts have appeared in the "Mindfulness Bell," "Teachers & Writers magazine," and (online) in the "Community Works Journal" this past summer.

The book has to do with slowness and creativity, and the ways in which ordinary life can be a source of joy. It draws on poetry, Buddhism, & literary anecdote, plus some personal interviews, and there is a smattering of sociology as well. It is made up of twelve self contained chapters, each one broken into eight shorter sections.

Christian has received a grant from the Northampton Arts Council and read from the book on April 15, 2011 at the Smith College Poetry Center. A writing workshop followed the following day.

Additional information is available on her website:

<http://www.christianmcewen.com/>



Michèle Mendelssohn, a participant from the UK in the 6th Annual Summer Curriculum Development Session worked with those at her college to organize a series of mindfulness workshops this past March at Imperial and Mansfield Colleges and Leeds, Sussex, Oxford and Cambridge Universities. The series culminated in a weekend retreat at Kentwell Hall.

Over 100 participants attended the workshop at Mansfield. Additional photos can be viewed on the event's facebook page at <http://on.fb.me/fJOGnU>



Nancy K. Morrison, M.D. and Sally K. Severino, M.D., co-authors of *Sacred Desire: Growing in Compassionate Living* (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2009), gave a workshop on "Sacred Desire: Growing in Compassionate Living" at the meeting of the Association of Professional Chaplains, Dallas, on Sunday, 3/27/11. They offered a pre-conference workshop, "Pathways to Healing People: Escaping the Victim, Vengeance, Vindicator Triad" at the meeting of the National Association of Catholic

Chaplains in Milwaukee on Saturday, 3/21/11. They will offer an all day conference on "Intersubjectivity in Empathy and Shame: Neuroscience, Psychopathology, and Treatment" at the New Mexico Psychoanalytic Society in Albuquerque on Saturday, 10/22/11. At their website: [www.neurospirit.net](http://www.neurospirit.net) under "blog" you can find the keynote presentation, "Shame in Life, in Therapy and in St. Augustine's Version of Adam and Eve," they gave on February 17, 2011 for The American Institute of Medical Education Winter Conference.

Antony Palmer's third article on spirituality in music education has been published. It will be available online through Project Muse. "Spirituality in Music Education, Transcending Culture, Exploration III," *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, Vol. 18, No 2, Fall 2010. (<http://bit.ly/edekb5>) or through JSTOR (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/PME.2010.18.2.152>)

*Contemplative Education CenterStage:  
Training the Mindful Performer*

Linda Sanders successfully defended her Ph.D. dissertation, *Contemplative Education CenterStage: Training the Mindful Performer*, on January 20, 2011. The aim of her qualitative study was two-fold: (1) to describe, interpret, and appraise the impact of contemplative education on the curricula of an interdisciplinary conservatory level performing arts program, MFA in Theater: Contemporary Performance, at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado; and (2) to disclose,



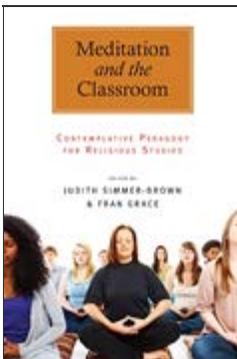
compare, and analyze MFA student perceptions of the influence of contemplative education on their personal and professional development.

In March 2011, Ms. Sanders graduated from the University of Denver with a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, with an emphasis in Curriculum Studies in Higher Education. Linda continues to serve as Adjunct Faculty for the Theatre Department, as well as for the Department of Teacher Education at Metropolitan State College of Denver.



Milton Schlosser initiated a noon-hour series, "Contemplative Music" for 2010-2011. Held at the University of Alberta's liberal arts Augustana Campus, the series features ten 40-minute contemplative events in which moments of quiet reflection are interspersed with Milton performing piano and organ works by classical composers as well as his own improvisations. Interest in the series is growing. The poster for the series reads as follows:

"There is a need in our university—indeed, in our community and world—for quiet, for slowing down, for deep knowledge that draws on a focused mind, relaxed body, and emotional awareness. To assist, the Fine Arts Department and Augustana Campus Ministry invite you to a series of contemplations structured on improvisations and compositions performed by keyboard artist Milton Schlosser. Sit, breathe, listen, and renew."



*Meditation and the Classroom: Contemplative Pedagogy for Religious Studies*, edited by Judith Simmer-Brown, Professor of Religious Studies, Naropa University, and Fran Grace, Professor of Religious Studies, University of Redlands (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011). Available August 2011. See <http://www.sunypress.edu/p-5251-meditation-and-the-classroom.aspx>

In the first of its kind, this book articulates how meditation practices enhance student learning by improving academic performance and overall well-being. With concrete examples from a variety of university classrooms, the education of the whole student is shown to increase capacities such as self-awareness, creativity, compassion, appreciation, and interpersonal skills. From the observations of twenty-five diverse professors, it is

clear that contemplative pedagogy is a vital complement to critical reasoning, rebalancing liberal education to include head and heart, mind and body.

This book articulates the view of why meditation in the classroom is beneficial to students' learning, while providing concrete examples of courses and classroom exercises that introduce meditation skillfully. While specializing in the concerns of Religious Studies departments, this book provides valuable guidance for the contemplative professor in every academic field.



Priscilla Stuckey's article "Being Known by a Birch Tree: Animist Refigurings of Western Epistemology," came out in fall 2010 from the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture*. It looks at a story of her relationship with a tree and how it was deepened through contemplative practices. One implication is how contemplative practices can enhance and deepen all human relationships with the more-than-human world and how such relationships may in fact depend on the silence and attention cultivated in meditation.

Here is the URL to the issue contents, but articles are subscription/paid only:

<http://www.equinoxjournals.com/index.php/JSRNC/issue/view/844>



### **Lesley University to Offer Masters Level Mindfulness Studies Concentration**

From Nancy Waring

Lesley University will launch a new, ongoing program in Mindfulness Studies for Masters level students beginning in the fall of 2011.

The program is open to graduate level students enrolled in graduate programs at Lesley or elsewhere, as well as to non-matriculated students seeking graduate credit.

The concentration includes four consecutive 3-credit courses: The first pair, Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Mindfulness, and Mindful Communication, will run fall 2011, and spring 2012, respectively. The other two courses are Mindful Leadership, and Intergroup Conflict Transformation. These two courses will be taught in an intensive weekend format. In addition, will complete a practicum: a 5-7 day silent retreat at a retreat center such as the Insight Meditation Center, or elsewhere.

Students interested in the Mindfulness Studies concentration may take it as part of Lesley's 36-credit Self-Designed Master's Degree program. Others may wish to enroll in the Mindfulness Studies concentration only, in which case they will receive a Certificate in Mindfulness Studies.

For further information and clarification, please contact Nancy at [nwaring@lesley.edu](mailto:nwaring@lesley.edu).



*dedicated to The Sea Around Us by Rachel Carson*

