

BROWN UNIVERSITY COURSE SYLLABUS

UNIVERSITY COURSE 54: INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPLATIVE STUDIES

Semester II, 2007-08

Seminar: Weds. 3:00 PM

LABS: MWF, 9AM

Instructor: H.D. Roth Professor of Religious Studies and East Asian Studies

Teaching Assistant: Jeffrey Hutchison, Department of Cognitive Science

Associated Researcher: Willoughby Britton, Ph.D., Department of Psychiatry, Brown University School of Medicine

Professor's Office: Department of Religious Studies; 59 George Street, Room 305

Office Hours: Monday, 10:45 AM-12:30 PM

TA's Office Hours: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

- Throughout the course we will focus on identifying many of the methods that human beings have found, across cultures and across time, to concentrate, broaden and deepen conscious awareness.
- We will study what these methods and experiences entail, how to critically appraise them, how to experience them ourselves, and how they influence the development of compassion and empathy, and health and well-being.
- In doing this we will thus be adopting both *third-person* approaches, which study contemplative experience from a presumed objective position outside ourselves and *critical first-person* approaches, which study contemplative experiences from a presumed subjective position within them.
- The former approaches will be from the perspectives of the fields of philosophy, cognitive science, psychology, psychology of religion, neuroscience, and comparative religious thought, and they will be presented and discussed through lectures and seminars.
- The latter approaches will center on the well-developed techniques for the cultivation of attention and self-examination that are found in the Asian meditative traditions of Taoism and Buddhism. These will be pursued in the thrice weekly Meditation Lab as well as in weekly readings.
- Taoist meditation will be based on the reconstruction of the techniques of the classical tradition developed by Professor Roth. Buddhist meditation will be based on modern practices.
- Course readings will include primary texts that present the methods and results of contemplative practice and secondary works that discuss issues and critical methods in the philosophical and scientific understanding of the results and significance of contemplation.

PRE-REQUISITES

- This course is usually taken in the second semester of the sophomore year (although upperclassmen may be admitted in its initial offering) and necessitates a basic familiarity with some of the source material for the study of contemplative experiences. Therefore, the principal pre-requisites are three relevant courses at Brown to be drawn from the three basic areas of Contemplative Studies: Science (especially Cognitive Science, Psychology, and Neuroscience), the Humanities, and the Creative Arts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Regular attendance at Seminar and Lab; attendance will be an important factor
- Attending one meditation retreat of 1-2 days and short write-up of retreat
- Recording brief comments in a journal at the end of every lab session
- At least two seminar presentations based on the readings
- 3 page write-up of seminar presentation
- One 12-15 page Final Paper on a topic to be decided upon with the professor

READINGS

BOOKS

Required

- Austin, James. *Zen and the Brain*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihalyi. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. NY Harper, 1990.
- Kabat-Zinn, Jon. *Full Catastrophe Living*. Delta, 1990, 2005.
- Mair, Victor. *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching*. Reissue edition. Bantam, 1990.
- Proctor, James, *Science, Religion, and the Human Experience*. Oxford, 2005.
- Rosenberg, Larry, *Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation*. Shambala, 1999.
- Roth, Harold D. *Original Tao: Inward Training and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism*. Columbia, 1999.
- Sekida, Katsuki, *Zen Training: Methods and Philosophy*. Weatherhill, 1975.
- Varela, Francisco, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch. *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991.
- Wallace, B. Allan. *The Taboo of Subjectivity: Towards a New Science of Consciousness*. Oxford UPress, 2000.

Recommended

- Keown, Damien, *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, 2000.

ARTICLES (AVAILABLE ON OCRA)

- Baer, Ruth A. “Mindfulness Training as a Clinical Intervention: A Conceptual Review.” *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10#2 (Summer 2003): 125-43.
- Bishop, Scott, Mark Lau, Shauna Shapiro, Linda Carlson, Nicole Anderson, James Carmody, Zindel Segal, Susan Abbey, Michael Speca, Drew Velting, and Gerald Devins. “Mindfulness: A Proposed Operational Definition.” In *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 11#3 (Fall 2004): 230-41.
- Brown, Kirk Warren, and Richard M. Ryan. “The Benefits of Being Present: Mindfulness and Its Role in Psychological Well-Being.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84#4 (2003): 822-48.
- Kabat-Zinn, Jon. “Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Context: Past, Present, and Future.” *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10#2 (Summer 2003): 144-56.
- Lutz, Antoine, and Evan Thompson. “Neurophenomenology: Integrating Subjective Experience and Brain Dynamics in the Neuroscience of Consciousness.” *Journal of Consciousness Studies (JCS)*, 10(2003): 21-52.
- Lutz, Antoine, Laurence Greischar, Nancy Rawlings, Mattieu Riccard, and Richard Davidson, “Long-term Meditators self-induce high amplitude gamma synchrony during mental practice.” *Publications of the National Academy of Sciences* vol. 101 #46 (November 2004): 16360-16373.
- Shapiro, Shauna, Linda E. Carlson, John A. Astin, and Benedict Freedman, *The Mechanisms of Mindfulness.* *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 10 1002 (2006); 1-14.
- Young, Shinzen, “How Meditation Works.” Shinzen.org

COURSE OUTLINE

1/23: Introduction to the Course: “Religion for Scientists”

WEEKS 1 AND 2: IS THERE AN INTERFACE BETWEEN SCIENCE AND RELIGION?

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p>1/30: Rethinking Science and Religion</p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Theravada Buddhist Meditation: <i>Anapanna sati sutta</i>; Rosenberg, pp. 198-208; <u>Secondary Works:</u> Young; Keown (rec); Proctor, <i>Science, Religion, and the Human Experience</i>, 3-23, 49-162</p> <p>2/6: The Role of Human Experience</p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> <i>Anapanna sati sutta</i>: analysis: Rosenberg, pp. 1-50; <u>Secondary Works:</u> Keown (rec); Proctor, <i>Science, Religion, and the Human Experience</i>, 237-328.</p>	<p>Theravada Buddhist Mindfulness practice</p> <p>1/28: Mindfulness of Breath in diaphragm: Count in-breaths to 5 1/30: Count out-breaths to 5 2/01: Count in-breaths</p> <p>[2/4: Charles Halpern Lecture]</p> <p>2/4: Mindfulness of breath in the upper abdomen/diaphragm 2/6: Mindfulness of in the upper abdomen/diaphragm 2/8: Mindfulness of breath in the upper abdomen/diaphragm</p>

WEEKS 3 AND 4: METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES: TOWARDS A NEW SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p>2/13. “Scientific Materialism” and the Disappearance of Introspection</p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Commentary on <i>Anapanna sati sutta</i>: Rosenberg, pp.51-111 <u>Secondary Works:</u> Keown (rec); Wallace, <i>Taboo of Subjectivity</i>, pp. 3-96</p> <p>2/20. Combining Third and First Person Perspectives in A New Science of Consciousness</p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Commentary on <i>Anapanna sati sutta</i>: Rosenberg pp. 112-97 <u>Secondary Works:</u> Keown (rec); Wallace, <i>Taboo of Subjectivity</i>; pp. 97-188</p>	<p>Theravada Buddhist Mindfulness practice</p> <p>2/11: Mindfulness of Body: Body Sweep 2/13: Body Sweep 2/15: Body Sweep</p> <p>2/18: Labeling 2/20: Labeling 2/22: Labeling</p>

WEEKS 5 AND 6: THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF CONTEMPLATION

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p>2/27. Experience and the Cognitivist Hypothesis</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> : Early Taoist Wisdom Poetry on Meditation: Roth, <i>Original Tao</i>, pp. 35-118</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Varela, Thompson and Rosch, <i>The Embodied Mind</i>: Introduction, pp. 3-130</p> <p>3/5. The Embodied Mind and the Groundless Self</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Roth, <i>Original Tao</i>, 125-71</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Varela, Thompson and Rosch, <i>The Embodied Mind</i> , pp. 133-255; Lutz and Thompson, “Neurophenomenology”</p>	<p>Taoist Reconstructive Meditations from <i>Guanzi’s “Inward Training:”</i></p> <p>2/25: Unfocused Awareness of Breathing:”Coiling and Uncoiling”</p> <p>2/27: Coiling and Uncoiling</p> <p>2/29: Coiling and Uncoiling</p> <p>[2/28:Edward Burger Film and Talk]</p> <p>3/3: Focused Awareness of Breathing: “Revolving the Breath”</p> <p>3/5: Revolving the Breath</p> <p>3/7: Revolving the Breath</p> <p>[3/6: Sienna Craig Talk]</p>

WEEKS 7 AND 8: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CONTEMPLATION

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p>3/12. The Anatomy of Consciousness and the Nature of “Flow”</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Early Taoist Wisdom Poetry: Mair, <i>Tao Te Jing</i>, pp. 57-106; 119-30</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Csikszentmihalyi, <i>Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience</i>: pp. 1-116;</p> <p>3/19. Flow in Body, Thought and Work</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Mair, <i>Laozi</i>, pp. 1-56; 140-54</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Csikszentmihalyi, <i>Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience</i>: pp. 117-240</p>	<p>Taoist Reconstructive Meditations from <i>Laozi</i>:</p> <p>3/10: “Bellows Breathing”</p> <p>3/12: Bellows Breathing</p> <p>3/14: Bellows Breathing</p> <p>3/17: Observing consciousness while “Holding fast to the Center”</p> <p>3/19: Holding fast to the Center</p> <p>3/21: Holding fast to the Center</p>

SPRING RECESS MARCH 24-30
WEEKS 9-11: THE NEUROSCIENCE OF CONTEMPLATION

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p>4/2. Zen Contemplation+the Neuro-physiology of Consciousness I</p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Sekida, <i>Zen Training</i>, 29-90 <u>Secondary works:</u> Austin, <i>Zen and the Brain</i>; 3-145</p> <p>4/9. Zen Contemplation+the Neuro-physiology of Consciousness II</p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Sekida, <i>Zen Training</i>, 91-159 <u>Secondary works:</u> Austin, <i>Zen and the Brain</i>; 293-368; 469-518.</p> <p>4/16. Neurological Transformations from Contemplative Practice</p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Sekida, <i>Zen Training</i>, 160-237 <u>Secondary works:</u> Austin, <i>Zen and the Brain</i>, 521-696; Lutz, et.al., "Long Term Meditators Self-induce high amplitude gamma synchrony during mental practice"</p>	<p>Japanese Zen Meditation</p> <p>3/31: Sekida's "Bamboo Breathing" (exhalation in stages); eyes closed 4/2: Bamboo Breathing, eyes closed 4/4: Bamboo Breathing: eyes just open [4/4 Linda-Susan Beard Lecture] [4/5 Linda-Susan Beard Retreat] 4/7: Rinzai Zen Style: Kôan: "Does this dog have Buddha-nature?" (Jôshu's NO); eyes just open 4/9: Jôshu's NO with explanatory talk: this no is a VERB! Not an object but the core activity of your mind from moment to moment 4/11: Jôshu's NO; Indoor walking meditation (10") 4/14: Sôtô Zen Style: Shikan Taza: Just Sitting; facing window 4/16: Shikan Taza: Just Sitting; facing window or wall 4/18: Just Sitting; facing wall (10"); walking meditation (10"); sit (10") [4/17: James Austin Lecture]</p>

WEEKS 12-13: CLINICAL APPLICATIONS OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p>4/23. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction</p> <p><u>Primary Works:</u> Kabat-Zinn, <i>Full Catastrophe Living</i>, Sections I-III; <u>Secondary Works:</u> Bishop et.al., Baer.</p> <p>4/30. Studies in Mindfulness</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Kabat-Zinn, <i>Full Catastrophe Living</i>, Sections IV-V; <u>Secondary works:</u> Kabat-Zinn, "Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Context;" Brown and Ryan, Shapiro et. al.</p>	<p>4/21: MBSR Techniques 4/23: MBSR Techniques 4/25: MBSR Techniques</p> <p>[4/25: Harvey Aaronson Lecture] [4/27: Anne Klein Buddhism Retreat] [4/28: Anne Klein Lecture]</p> <p>4/28: Mindfulness Practice 4/30: Mindfulness Practice 5/02: Mindfulness Practice</p>

CLASS PRESENTATION

Each student will be asked to do at least two class presentations, working in a team of four on the readings for the week. This presentation will consists of:

A. The Lecture Period of Class

1. Each member of the team of 4 will present a summary one section of the weekly readings. This should concentrate on at least 5 key ideas in that section of the readings
2. The Team of 4 will work together to determine how to divide up responsibility for presenting the readings in an equitable fashion.

B. The Discussion Period of Class

1. The Team of 4 will develop a series of discussion questions and lead the discussion period of the class. The Team will divide in half, with two students from the Team leading each discussion period

C. The Presentation Write Up

1. Each student will be responsible for their own 2-3 page write up of major ideas in the material they presented and those discussion questions that interested them the most.
2. This Write Up may be in point form or in essay form.
3. The Write Up should be handed in the next weekly class. No penalties for the first month of the course will be assessed for turning in these Write Ups late as long as they are turned in **before** Spring Break.