



COST 0100: INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPLATIVE STUDIES

**Semester II, 2016-17 Seminar: W 3PM
Solomon 202**

**LABS: MW, 9AM
Ashamu Dance Studio**

Instructor: Harold D. Roth, Professor and Director of the Contemplative Studies Concentration (Ph.D. U Toronto, East Asian Studies)

Office: Department of Religious Studies; 59 George Street, Room 204

Office Hours: Mondays, 10:30AM-12:30 PM: ONLY by appointment (Anne_Heyrman-Hart@Brown.edu)

Teaching Assistant: Larson DiFiori (Brown RELS, ABD in Classical Chinese Religions)

Office Hours:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this 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, health and well-being. We will also be careful to study the *cultural and historical contexts* from which these experiences emerge. 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, neuroscience, and comparative religious thought; they will be presented and discussed through lectures. 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 Daoism and Buddhism. These will be pursued in the twice-weekly Meditation Lab, as well as in weekly readings.

- Daoist meditation will be based on the reconstructions developed by Professor Roth. Buddhist meditation will be historically accurate but also informed by modern versions of these practices.
- Course readings include primary texts presenting 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.

- Meditation Labs are an integral part of the course. They provide the opportunity to develop direct experiential knowledge to complement the readings and to give new perspectives on the subjective experience of the participants.
- As it is a writing designated course, in this course we will also discuss how to write a clear, well-supported argumentative essay with properly formatted citations.

PRE-REQUISITES

None

Enrollment limited to Semester 01-04 students, others by permission of instructor. Enrollment limit is 40.

Preference given to current or intended Contemplative Studies Concentrators.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Regular attendance and participation in Seminar and Lab; this will be an important factor
- Recording brief comments to post 4X6 notecards after every lab session.
- At least one presentation based on the readings
- A well-thought out question or response to the readings that you will post on Canvas and bring to each week's discussion section.
- Attendance at All COST Events and Monday Movies this semester
- One 5-Page Midterm
- **One 8-10 page final paper** on a topic to be decided upon with the professor; This will be developed over the course of the semester, with an abstract and working bibliography (**due April 21st**). **The final paper will be due on May 5th**

READINGS

BOOKS

- Austin, James. *Meditating Selflessly: Practical Neural Zen*. MIT Press, 2011.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihalyi. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*.
- Graham, A.C. *Chuang Tzu: The Inner Chapters*. Allen+Unwin, 1981. REPR Hackett.
- Lau, D.C. *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching*. Penguin 1963. **THIS EDITION ONLY**
- Rosenberg, Larry, *Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation*. Shambhala, 2004. **(BB)**
- Roth, Harold D. *Original Tao: Inward Training and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism*. Columbia, 1999. **(OT)**
- Sekida, Katsuki, *Zen Training: Methods and Philosophy*. Weatherhill, 1976. REPR. Wisdom. **(ZT)**
- Varela, Francisco, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch. *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991. **(EM)**
NEW EDITION 2016

- Wallace, B. Allan. *The Taboo of Subjectivity: Towards a New Science of Consciousness*. Oxford University Press, 2000. (TS)

ONLINE SOURCES

- *Contemporary Buddhism: An Interdisciplinary Journal*: Special issue on Mindfulness. Edited by J. Mark G. Williams and Jon Kabat-Zinn. Volume 12 Number 1, May 2011. Published by Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group. <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rcbh20/12/1>
- Singer, T. and M. Bolz. *Compassion: Bridging Practice and Science*. <http://www.compassion-training.org/> (Free eBook)
- Nanamoli Thera, “The Practice of Lovingkindness as Taught by the Buddha in the Pali Canon”. Access to Insight: <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/nanamoli/wheel007.html>
- Nyanaponika, Thera. “The Four Sublime States.” Vipassana Fellowship. http://www.vipassana.com/meditation/four_sublime_states.php
- Roth, Harold D. “Against Cognitive Imperialism; A Call for a Non-Ethnocentric Approach to Cognitive Science and Religious Studies.” *Religion East and West*, 8 (2008), 1-26. <http://www.drbu.org/iwr/rew/2008/rew-article-1>
- Roth, Harold D. “Bimodal Mystical Experience in the “Qi wulun” of Zhuangzi. In Scott Cook (ed.) *Hiding the World in the World*. SUNY Press, 2003; <http://www.sunypress.edu/pdf/60818.pdf>
- Young, Shinzen. “How Meditation Works.” <http://shinzen.org/Articles/artHow.pdf>
- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G Colomb, and Joseph M Williams. *The Craft of Research*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. <http://brown.ebib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=432155>

ARTICLES ON CANVAS

- Brown, Kirk Warren, and Richard M. Ryan and J. David Creswell. “Mindfulness: Theoretical Foundations and Evidence for its Salutary Effects.” *Psychological Inquiry* (2007) Vol. 18, No. 4, 211–237.
- Cahn, B. Rael, and John Polich. “Meditation States and Traits: EEG, ERP, and Neurophysiology Studies.” *Psychological Bulletin* 2006 (132 no. 2): 180-211.
- De Prycker, Valérie. “Unself-Conscious Control: Broadening the Notion of Control Through Experiences of Flow and Wu-Wei.” *Zygon* (46, no. 1, March 1, 2011): 5–25.

COURSE OUTLINE

JANUARY 25: INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS “CONTEMPLATIVE STUDIES”

READING: Roth, “Against Cognitive Imperialism?”

<http://www.drbu.org/iwr/rew/2008/rew-article-1>

CLASSICAL DAOIST CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE IN CHINA

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p>2/01: “Scientific Materialism,” the Disappearance of Introspection and the Rise of Contemplative Studies</p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Early Daoist Wisdom Poetry on Meditation: Roth, <i>Original Tao</i> 35-118 <u>Secondary Works:</u> Wallace, 3-56</p>	<p>Reconstructed Daoist Meditations from Guanzi’s “Inward Training:”</p> <p>1/30: Setting up “the container,” Unfocused Awareness of Breathing: Coiling and Uncoiling</p> <p>2/01: Coiling and Uncoiling</p> <p>2/06: Revolving the Breath</p> <p>5:30 PM COST EVENT: Viewing of new Film on Chan Buddhist Monasteries in China: Filmmaker Edward Berger</p> <p>2/08: The One Word As Mantra: Dao</p>
<p>2/08: Combining Third and First Person Perspectives in A New Science of Consciousness</p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Roth, <i>Original Tao</i>, 125-71 <u>Secondary Works:</u> Wallace 57-122; 177-88</p>	<p>Reconstructed Daoist Meditations from Laozi</p> <p>2/13: Bellows Breathing 2/15: Centered Observation</p>
<p>2/15: The Anatomy of Consciousness and the Nature of “Flow”</p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Early Daoist Wisdom Poetry: Lau, Chapters 1-56 <u>Secondary Works:</u> Csikszentmihályi: 1-116</p>	<p>Reconstructed Daoist Meditations from Zhuangzi</p> <p>2/20: Free and Easy Wandering</p> <p>2/22: Fasting of the Mind</p> <p>Due: 2/27 by 6:00 PM</p>
<p>2/22: Spontaneous Attunement</p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Graham, 43-99 <u>Secondary:</u> Roth, “Bimodal Mystical Experience”; De Prycker, “Unself-Conscious Control: Broadening the Notion of Control Through Experiences of Flow and Wu-Wei.”</p>	
<p>Mid-Term Take Home Exam Handed Out</p>	

SOUTH ASIAN BUDDHIST MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p>3/01: Experience and the Cognitivist Hypothesis</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Theravada Buddhist Meditation: <i>The Four Foundations of Mindfulness Sutta</i>: Rosenberg, pp. 198-208. <u>Secondary:</u> Varela, Thompson and Rosch: 1-36; 59-81; Saron in Singer, pp. 345-61</p> <p>3/08: The Embodied Mind and Middle Way</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Young, “How Meditation Works”; Rosenberg, pp. 1-50; <u>Secondary:</u> Varela, Thompson and Rosch: 105-30; Handgartner in Singer, pp. 481-91</p> <p>3/15: An Ethic of the Groundless Self: The “Four Immeasurables”</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Nyaponika; Handgartner in Singer, pp. 153-64; <u>Secondary:</u> Varela, Thompson and Rosch: 133-84; Klimecki, Ricard, Singer in Singer, pp. 273-87 SPECIAL Jon Kabat-Zinn reading: <i>Contemporary Buddhism</i>: 281-306</p> <p>3/22: An Ethic of the Groundless Self: The “Four Immeasurables”</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Nanamoli Thera, “The Practice of Lovingkindness:” <u>Texts 1,3,10,13,16</u> <u>Secondary:</u> Varela, Thompson and Rosch: 217-254; <u>Thompson+Rosch Intros to New Edition:</u> pp, XVII-LII Singer+Bornemann in Singer, pp. 231-45; Jinpa+Weiss in Singer, 441-49.</p>	<p>Theravada Buddhist Mindfulness</p> <p><u>2/27: MONDAY MOVIE: The Footprint of the Buddha (5:30 PM Smith-Buanano 201)</u></p> <p>2/27: <i>Mindfulness of Breath in diaphragm:</i> Count in-breaths to 5</p> <p>3/01: <i>Mindfulness of breath at the tip of the nose;</i> Count out-breaths to 5</p> <p>3/06: COST EVENT: 5:30 Lecture by Rhonda Magee on Mindfulness+ Diversity</p> <p>3/06: Noting and Labeling: thought, feeling, image</p> <p>3/08: Noting and Labeling: thought, feeling, image</p> <p>3/13: Slow Walking Meditation</p> <p><u>3:13 Monday Movie: MONDAY MOVIE: Monte Grande: What is Life? (5:30 PM Location Smith-Buanano 201)</u></p> <p>3/15: <i>Metta:</i> Lovingkindness meditation</p> <p>3/16: COST EVENT: 5:30 Lecture by Jon Kabat-Zinn</p> <p>3/17: Student Forum with JKZ 1:30</p> <p>3/18: COST EVENT: 19AM-4:30PM: Introduction to Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction by JKZ</p> <p><u>3/20: COST EVENT: 5:45 Lecture by the Ven. Yifa, Ph.D.</u></p> <p>3/20: <i>Metta</i></p> <p>3/22: <i>Metta</i></p>

SPRING BREAK

ZEN IN EAST ASIA

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p>4/05: The Neuroscience of Contemplative Practice</p>	<p>Japanese Zen Meditation</p>
<p><u>Primary:</u> Sekida, 29-90 <u>Secondary:</u> Austin, 1-60.</p>	<p>4/03: Sekida’s “Bamboo Breathing” (exhalation in stages); eyes closed</p>
<p>4/12: Zen Meditation and Neuroscience</p>	<p><u>4/03: MONDAY MOVIE: Land of the Disappearing Buddha(5:30 PM Location TBD)</u></p>
<p><u>Primary:</u> Sekida, 91-159. <u>Secondary:</u> Austin, 61-124</p>	<p>4/05: Bamboo Breathing: eyes open</p>
	<p>4/10 Rinzai Zen Style: Kôan 1; eyes open</p>
<p>4/19: Meditation and The Neuroscience of Exceptional Experiences</p>	<p>4/12: Rinzai Zen Style: Kôan 2; indoor walking meditation</p>
<p><u>Primary:</u> Sekida, 160-237. <u>Secondary:</u> Austin 127-96; Cahn and Polich, “Meditation States and Traits”</p>	<p>4/17:Open Awareness Sôtô Zen Style: Shikan Taza: Just Sitting</p>
	<p>4/18: COST EVENT: 5:30 Lecture by Carolyn Jacobs on Contemplative Education and Diversity</p>
	<p>4/19: Shikan Taza: Just Sitting; facing window or wall</p>

4/21 SUBMIT PAPER ABSTRACT AND WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY

CLINICAL AND NEUROSCIENTIFIC APPLICATIONS OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p>4/26: Mindfulness and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction</p> <p><u>Primary and Secondary Works:</u> <i>Contemporary Buddhism</i>: 19-40; 71-88; 263-80; 219-35; Brown, Ryan, and Creswell, "Mindfulness Meditation..."</p>	<p>4/24: MBSR : Body Sweep</p> <p>4/24 Monday Movie: "Enlightenment Guaranteed") 5:30-7 PM</p> <p>4/26: MBSR : Body Sweep</p>

5/05 FINAL PAPERS DUE

ADVICE FOR CLASS PRESENTATIONS

Each student will be asked to do at least one class presentation, with three students presenting each week. Please prepare a 10 minute presentation in which you speak about the parts of the reading that you felt were most compelling. Some questions you may ask yourself when preparing your presentation are:

- What is the argument or main idea of the reading? Do you agree with it? Why or why not?
- How do you interpret the reading? Can you provide metaphors, stories, or personal experiences that help you explain the reading?
- How does this reading compare with one or more of our other readings up until this point?

Do not just try to summarize the reading, but instead incorporate your own viewpoint about it. References to specific passages in the text will be helpful.

AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RELIGION

I. Descriptive-Prescriptive Axis (after Clifford Geertz)

A. *Descriptive*

How the universe functions and how humans fit into it

1. *Mythology*: the pre-philosophical expression of the human understanding of the universe
2. *Cosmology*: theories of the various forces and elements that construe the cosmos and how they interact
3. *Cosmogony*: theories about the origins of the cosmos
4. *Ontology*: theories about the nature and activity of Being, or the reality that underlies the cosmos, both in its essence and its manifestations
5. *Epistemology*: theories about what we know about the cosmos and how we know it
6. *Anthropology*: theories of the nature and essence of human beings

B. *Prescriptive*

How the understanding of the nature of the universe is applied to the concrete problems of how we are to lead our lives

1. Ethics: principles of how human beings should relate to each other
2. Sacrifice, devotion, faith: how human beings should relate to the power or powers that underlie the universe
3. Prayer, yoga, meditation: how human beings can transform themselves and attain the ultimate goals envisioned in their religious tradition

II. Institutional-Personal [Experiential] Axis (after William James)

A. *Institutional*

1. *Sacred space*: churches, temples, monasteries, etc.
2. *Clergy*
3. *Religious rituals*
4. *Sacred texts*

B. *Personal*

1. *Numinous experience*: experiencing the Absolute as “Wholly Other” (most often in theistic religions)
2. *Mystical experience*: attaining union with, or unitive experience of, the Absolute (most often in monistic religions)
3. *Mundane experience*: daily practice of religious prescriptions