

REL346 Wisdom and Compassion: The Buddhist Path

3 credit hours

Fall 2017

Dr. Judith Simmer-Brown

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Office: Second Floor of the Ginsberg Library, in the Religious Studies Suite. Office hour appointments can be made on sign-up sheets on the bulletin-board in the RS Hallway. Office hours for fall: Wednesday 1:30-3; Thursday 2-3:30; and by appointment on Fridays. Please email me for a time.

Day, Time and Location of Class: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:15-2:30, Lincoln 4130

Methods of Instruction: Classes will include contemplative meditation, lecture, discussion, text reading, films, class projects, term papers.

Course Description: Compassion Training is at the vanguard of the contemplative education movement nationally, and this course will investigate compassion from personal, societal and historical perspectives. What is compassion, and how can we become more compassionate? What has recent scientific research revealed about the cultivation of compassion? What contemplative practices and what activities deepen our empathy and compassion, and what are the results? What influence does Buddhism have on this burgeoning movement? These interdisciplinary studies will be threaded by ongoing compassion meditation training, drawing especially from the Buddhist practices of lovingkindness and compassion. **3 credit hours**

Supplementary Course Description: As the third year of a pilot course exploring what a Naropa University compassion training might look like, we will interweave compassion meditation training with applied perspectives. Tuesdays will be devoted to the actual meditation training, and traditional and contemporary perspectives on meditation. Thursdays will integrate science, comparative religions, Buddhism, and practical applications of compassion in real-life situations. The course requires that students practice compassion meditation for at least three half-hour sessions outside of class each week. Record of these sessions is included in the Journal.

Student Learning Outcomes: See the end of the syllabus.

Required Readings:

Thupten Jinpa, *A Fearless Heart: How the Courage to Be Compassionate Can Transform our Lives* (New York: Hudson Street Press (Penguin), 2015).

Dale S. Wright, *The Six Perfections: Buddhism and the Cultivation of Character* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Dacher Keltner, Jason Marsh, and Jeremy Adam Smith, eds., *The Compassionate Instinct: The Science of Human Goodness* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010).

Zenju Earthlyn Manuel, *The Way of Tenderness: Awakening through Race, Sexuality, and Gender* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2015).

Free Online Books with selected Required Readings:

Liz Shaw, ed. *Radical Compassion*. Boston: Shambhala Publications (eBook), 2014.
<http://www.shambhala.com/radical-compassion.html>

Tania Singer and Matthias Bolz, ed., *Compassion: Bridging Practice and Science*, Max Planck Society, Munich, Germany, eBook 2013. (Available at no charge.) ISBN: 978-3-9815612-0-3
<http://www.compassion-training.org>

Recommended:

Sakyong Mipham, *The Shambhala Principle*.

John Makransky, *Awakening Through Love*

Fehr, Sprecher, and Underwood, *The Science of Compassionate Love*

Davidson and Harrington, *Visions of Compassion*

Lobsang Gyatso, *Bodhicitta: Cultivating the Compassionate Mind of Enlightenment*

Course Requirements and Grading Policy:

1. **Preparation, attendance and participation in class.** Attendance policy defined below. Class preparation refers to the timely completion of assigned readings and of Journal entries. Participation also includes compassion practices done during class, as well as the practice requirements outside of class, at least three half-hour sessions each week. **Assigned readings.** The readings assigned for each unit are the basis for both class lectures and discussions. Make sure you have completed the assigned readings before each class. Recommended readings are not assigned, but listed for further study. **25 percent of final grade.**
2. **Journal.** Students will share Journal entries every three weeks with the instructor, including specific assignments as the course progresses. Journal entries include a record of compassion practice sessions outside of class, as well as responses to specific contemplation questions. Of course, students may keep a private journal as well that includes entries not shared with the instructor. **25 percent of final grade.**
3. **Midterm and Final exams.** The midterm will be given in class, while the final will be a take-home exam, due December 8, in class. Emphasis will be on detailed information about compassion, both as personal practice and as application, drawn from science, social science, and humanities perspectives explored in the readings and discussions in this course. **Midterm 20 percent, final exam 30 percent of final grade.**

Attendance Policy and Classroom Decorum:

Students are to arrive for class before the hour. Two tardies of 15 minutes or more constitute an unexcused absence. If a student is absent from class three times, unexcused, the final grade for the class will be lowered one-third grade per absence (i.e. B+ to a B). Four unexcused absences will result in failure of the class. Excused absences (medical or family emergencies) must be called in to the instructor's voicemail (303-546-3502) at least 30 minutes before the beginning of class to be considered excused. Two excused absences constitute one unexcused absence.

Please refrain from eating in class, or stepping out during class meetings. Cell phones are to be turned off before class begins; texting, emailing, or browsing the internet during class are not acceptable.

Written work is to be handed in on time--late work will be downgraded one-third of a letter grade per day. If there is a valid reason for late work, please discuss this with the instructor **well in advance** of the deadline, and an adjustment may be able to be made.

Course Outline: **Starred days indicate practice instruction days.*

August 29 Why have compassion, why be kind?
The Buddhist context, contemporary applications
Mindfulness as the foundation
(Orientation to Journal assignments)

August 31 Compassion Training—who is doing it and why?
Studying Ourselves—Introducing the Measures
Guest Compassion Researcher: Dr. Jordan Quaglia

Readings: Jinpa, *A Fearless Heart*, Chapter I, V;
 Simmer-Brown, *Creating Enlightened Society: Compassion in the Shambhala Tradition*, *The Arrow*, Fall 2014;

Recommended: Shaw, *Radical Compassion*—Chogyam Trungpa, “The Open Way”;
 and Ringu Tulku, “The Practices of the Bodhisattva”;

September 5* What the new science is telling us
Science, pragmatism and human nature
The Dalai Lama and Mind & Life Institute
Practice: Contemplating basic goodness

Readings: Keltner, “The Compassionate Instinct,” and deWaal, “The Evolution of Empathy,” and Sapolsky, “Peace Among Primates,” in Keltner, Marsh, and Smith, *The Compassionate Instinct*, 8-35;

Recommended: Bornemann and Singer, “What Do We (Not) Mean by Training,” *Compassion: Bridging Practice and Science*, Chapter 3:16;

 Lynn G. Underwood, “Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research,” *Science of Compassionate Love*, edited by Fehr, Sprecher, and Underwood, 3-26.

September 7 The History of Kindness
Interdependence and Interbeing
Developing our motivation—bodhicitta

“Idiot compassion” and the role of wisdom
Readings: Sakyong Mipham, “Feeling,” Part II, *The Shambhala Principle*,
65-113.
Shaw, *Radical Compassion*—Ponlop Rinpoche, “The Altruistic Heart,”;
Jinpa, *A Fearless Heart*, Chapter III.

September 12* Self-acceptance and lovingkindness
The Basic Practice
Practice: *Lovingkindness for ourselves*

Readings: Jinpa, *A Fearless Heart*, Chapters II and VI;
Recommended: Leonardo Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, Chapters I-III;

September 14 The Science of Loving Ourselves
Overcoming Barriers to Self-Love

Readings: Kristen Neff and Christopher Germer, “Being Kind to Yourself—The Science of
Self-Compassion,” and “The Mindful Self-Compassion Course,” *Compassion: Bridging
Practice and Science*, Chapter 3:16, 4.1;

Recommended: Shaw, *Radical Compassion*—Reginald Ray, “Connecting Compassion to
Practice in Mahayana Buddhism”

September 19* Lovingkindness for oneself
Rediscovering Basic Goodness
Tapping our core capacity
Practice: *Lovingkindness for ourselves, part II*

Readings: Trungpa, *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, 35-54;
Jinpa, *A Fearless Heart*, Chapters III and VII;

Recommended: Shaw, *Radical Compassion*—Diane Musho Hamilton, “Big Heart”

September 21 The Forgiveness Instinct
Forgiving ourselves, forgiving others
Abrahamic religions and forgiveness
Journals Due—I

JSB in Providence at Brown University, Guest Teacher

Readings: Michael E. McCullough, “The Forgiveness Instinct,” from Keltner, Marsh, and
Smith, *The Compassionate Instinct*, 51-61.

Everett L. Worthington, Jr., “The New Science of Forgiveness,” from Keltner,
Marsh, and Smith, *The Compassionate Instinct*, 62-71.

Recommended: Barry Kerzin, “Cultivating Alternative Paths to Compassion—Generosity,
Forgiveness, and Patience,” *Compassion: Bridging Practice and Science*, Chapter 1.4.

September 26* Lovingkindness for a benefactor
Learning to receive kindness from others
Perfection of generosity
Practice: *Lovingkindness for a benefactor*

Readings: Wright, *The Six Perfections*, Introduction & Chapter I;

Catherine Price, "Stumbling Toward Gratitude," *The Compassionate Instinct*, edited by Keltner, Marsh, and Smith, 118-125.

- September 28** Empathy versus Compassion—What's the Difference?
Psychology looks at Compassion
Emotional Intelligence
- Readings: Olga Klimecki, Matthieu Ricard, and Tania Singer, "Empathy versus Compassion—Lessons from 1st and 3rd Person Methods," and Paul Gilbert, "Compassion-Focused Therapy: Working with Arising Fears and Resistances," *Compassion: Bridging Practice and Science*, Chapter 3:15, 1.3.
- October 3*** Expanding the Circle of Concern
Working with "compassion traps"
Practice: Lovingkindness for someone dear
- Readings: Jinpa, *A Fearless Heart*, Chapter VIII, first half;
Shaw, *Radical Compassion*—Judith Lief, "The Path of Authentic Compassion"
- October 5** Compassionate Relationships
Friendship and Family
- Readings:** Simmer-Brown, "Practicing in Family Life: Distinguishing Attachment from Unconditional Love," in *Bodhi Magazine* (February 2003). Seattle: Nalandabodhi, 2003.
Jason Marsh, "Can I Trust You?" in *The Compassionate Instinct*, edited by Keltner, Marsh, and Smith, 161-171.
- Recommended: Bethany Kok, "The Science of Subjective Experience—Positive Emotions and Social Closeness Influence Autonomic Functioning," *Compassion: Bridging Practice and Science*, Chapter 3:17.
- October 10*** The cultivation of character
Perfection of discipline
Compassionate ethics
Practice: Lovingkindness toward an acquaintance or stranger
- Readings:** Wright, *The Six Perfections*, Chapter II;
- October 12** Romantic relationships
Compassion and romantic love
Journals Due—II
- Readings:** Judith Simmer-Brown, "Romantic Fantasy, Everyday Disappointment," *Buddhist Women on the Edge*,
Cowan, Cowan, and Mehta, "Feeling Like Partners," and
Alberts and Trethewey, "Love, Honor and Thank,"
in *The Compassionate Instinct*, edited by Keltner, Marsh, and Smith, 100-117.
- October 17** **Community Practice Day**
- October 19*** **Midterm Exam in Class**

- October 24*** Perfection of patience, tolerance
Working with aggression
Ninefold contemplation on anger
Practice: Lovingkindness toward someone threatening
- Readings: Wright, *The Six Perfections*, Chapter III;
Shaw, *Radical Compassion*—Pema Chodron, “Compassionate Action”
- October 26** War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning
Breaking the Addiction of War
Begin beeper instrument (2 weeks)
- Readings: Jason March, “In Search of the Moral Voice,” Keltner, Marsh, and Smith, *The Compassionate Instinct*, 239-245;
Aaron Lazare, “Making Peace through Apology,” and Desmond Tutu, “Truth + Reconciliation,” and Steven Pinker “Why Is There Peace,” in *The Compassionate Instinct*, edited by Keltner, Marsh, and Smith, 246-266.
- Recommended: Chris Hedges, *War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning*,
- October 31*** Perfection Joyous Exertion
Importance of the body
Practice: Compassionate Abiding meditation
- Readings: Wright, *The Six Perfections*, Chapter IV;
- November 2** Leaning into the sharp points
Not Turning Away
- Readings: Jinpa, *A Fearless Heart*, Chapter IX;
Zenju Earthlyn Manuel, *The Way of Tenderness*, ix-34;
- November 7*** The Perfection of Meditation
Levels of meditation
Practice: Compassionate Abiding meditation
End beeper instrument
- Readings: Wright, *The Six Perfections*, Chapter V;
Jinpa, *A Fearless Heart*, Chapter VIII, second half;
- November 9** Compassionate Inclusivity?
Tenderness and the body
- Readings: Zenju Earthlyn Manuel, *The Way of Tenderness*, 35-74;
Daniel Goleman, “Hot to Help,” and Keltner and March, “We Are All Bystanders,” and Marsh, “The Cost of Apathy,” and Maran, “The Activism Cure,” in *The Compassionate Instinct*, edited by Keltner, Marsh, and Smith, 171-202.
- November 14*** **Introduction to Tonglen**
Sending and taking practice, reversing samsara
Journals Due--III
Practice: Tonglen—sending and taking
- Readings: Jinpa, *A Fearless Heart*, Chapter X, XI;

Judith Simmer-Brown, "The Practice of Giving and Receiving," *Meditations for Interspiritual Practices*, 137-141.

November 16 Compassionate Inclusivity
Opening to the other
Compassionate Social Activism
Judith in Boston at American Academy of Religion, Guest Teacher

Readings: Zenju Earthlyn Manuel, *The Way of Tenderness*, 75-126;
Recommended: Rev. angel Kyodo Williams, Lama Rod Owens, with Jasmine Syedullah, *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love and Liberation*.

November 21* Perfection of Wisdom
Applications of compassion
Practice: Tonglen, part II

Readings: Wright, *The Six Perfections*, Chapter VI;

November 23 **Thanksgiving Break**

November 28* Everyday practice, Emergency Tonglen
(Tonglen workshop)
Practice: Tonglen practice, part III
Take-home Final Handed Out

Readings: Keltner, Marsh, and Smith, *The Compassionate Instinct*, 267-299;
Pema Chodron, "What to Do if You Get Stuck," *Tonglen*, 52-71.

November 30 Compassionate caregiving
Compassion in Death and Dying
Working with burnout

Reading: Shaw, ed., *Radical Compassion*--Ken Wilber, "A Support Person"
Shaw, *Radical Compassion*--Karen Kissel Wegela, "Coming Back Home"
Review, Judy Lief, "The Compassion Traps"

Recommended: Cheryl Giles and Willa Miller, eds., *The Arts of Contemplative Care*; Koshin Paley Ellison, ed., *Awake at the Bedside*;

December 5 Can society be compassionate?
Universal Declaration of Human Rights
How Can We Help?
Practice: Societal Meditation Practice

Readings: Smith and Paxton, "America's Trust Fall," and Keltner, "The Power Paradox,"
and Marsh, "Edible Ethics," in Keltner, Marsh, and Smith, *The Compassionate Instinct*,
203-238;
Shaw, ed., *Radical Compassion*--Gaylon Ferguson, "Awakening Communities of
Courage and Compassion"

December 7 Compassion in the Workplace
Journals Due--IV

Readings: Jill Suttle, "Compassion Across Cubicles," and Robert I. Sutton, "Are You a Jerk at Work?" *The Compassionate Instinct*, edited by Keltner, Marsh, and Smith, 133-149;

December 12 **Warriors' Exam in Class**

December 14 Make Up Day
Return to Measurement
Post-testing class day
Guest researcher: Dr. Jordan Quaglia
Take-home Final Exam due

Accommodations for Disabilities: Naropa University will provide accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To request an accommodation, or to discuss any learning needs you may have, contact the Coordinator of Accessibility Resources whose office is located in the Student Affairs Department in Wulsin Hall on the Arapahoe Campus. The phone number is 303-245-4749.

Other Needs: If you have any other needs that may require accommodations (special arrangements) or if you will miss a class because of a religious holiday, please contact the instructor by the third week of class

Statement of Inclusivity

In keeping with Naropa's mission, the instructor and class members in this course strive to support an inclusive learning community, respecting those of all backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be respectful to all people regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, age, veteran status, ability, immigration or economic status, gender or sexual orientation.

Gender Pronoun

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. Please let your instructor know the appropriate gender pronoun to use for you. Also, if you would like to be called a name other than what is on the class roster, please let your instructor know. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact your instructor.

Relevant Departmental Goals and Objectives for B.A. Religious Studies:

Goal 1: Students should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and appreciation for, religious phenomena, including the history and basic concepts of diverse traditions.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to identify and analyze major thematic issues across world religions, including paradigms of religious life and varieties of religious expression.

Goal 2: Students will explore at least one contemplative practice in context, and understand the integral part contemplative practice plays in its religious traditions.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to explicitly relate the contemplative practice they have studied to at least three other phenomena of the religious tradition in which it is practiced, such as doctrine, ritual, ethics, and community life.

Students will demonstrate knowledge of contemplative and ritual practices in several religious traditions.

Goal 3. The student should develop an awareness of his/her own spiritual journey in the context of different cultural and religious experiences. This awareness should include sensitivity to issues of plurality in religion and diversity in communities.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will cultivate a sense of personal identity within a context of a contemplative journey in light of their course of study.

Students will respect other religious traditions and cultures in their academic work.

Students will exhibit sensitivity to issues of race, class and gender and other diversity issues in their academic work.

Students will demonstrate an awareness of issues of cultural appropriation and cultural “othering” (for example, “orientalism”) in their academic work and contemplative practice.

Goal 4. Students should develop the ability to communicate effectively, integrating their understanding of religion with personal insight and experience.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to critically and appreciatively articulate their understanding verbally in the classroom in discussion and in presentation.

Students will be able to write effective academic term papers, with proper syntax, grammar, formatting and notation.

Student will express original reflection drawn from contemplative insight and/or personal experience in their term papers.

Students will understand and be able to articulate their work and thought in a way that takes into consideration religious studies methods and issues.
