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 Daoism and Buddhism. These will be pursued in the thrice weekly Meditation Lab as well as in weekly readings.

Daoist 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.
- Attendance at two weekend meditation retreats during the semester 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.
- A 3-page write-up of seminar presentation.
- A 12-15 page Final Paper on a topic to be decided upon with the professor; DUE May 17.

**READINGS**

**BOOKS**


**ARTICLES**

- Young, Shinzen, “How Meditation Works.” Shinzen.org
### COURSE OUTLINE

**JANUARY 27: INTRODUCTION: RELIGION AND CONTEMPLATION**

**METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES: TOWARDS A NEW SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEKLY SEMINAR</th>
<th>MEDITATION LAB</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/03: “Scientific Materialism” and the Disappearance of Introspection</td>
<td>Daoist Reconstructive Meditations from Guanzi’s “Inward Training:”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Texts:</strong> Early Daoist Wisdom Poetry on Meditation: Roth, <em>Original Dao</em>, pp. 35-118</td>
<td>2/01: Unfocused Awareness of Breathing: “Coiling and Uncoiling”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Works:</strong> Wallace, <em>Taboo of Subjectivity</em>, pp. 3-96</td>
<td>2/03: Coiling and Uncoiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2/10. Combining Third and First Person Perspectives in A New Science of Consciousness</strong></td>
<td>2/05: Focused Awareness of Breathing: “Revolving the Breath”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Texts:</strong> Roth, <em>Original Dao</em>, 125-71</td>
<td>2/08: Revolving the Breath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Works:</strong> Wallace, <em>Taboo of Subjectivity</em>, pp. 97-188</td>
<td>2/10: The One Word As Mantra: Dao</td>
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<td>2/12: The One Word As Mantra: Dao</td>
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**PHILOSOPHICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACHES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEKLY SEMINAR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/17. Mysticism and the Contemplative</td>
<td>Daoist Reconstructive Meditations from Laozi:</td>
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<td><strong>2/24. Interpreting Contemplative Experience Through Metaphor</strong></td>
<td>2/17: Bellows Breathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Texts:</strong> Ivanhoe, <em>Laozi</em>, pp. 41-85 <strong>Secondary Works:</strong> Slingerland, <em>Effortless Action</em>, 3-42, 77-127, 265-73.</td>
<td>2/19: Bellows Breathing</td>
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<td><strong>2/24: Observing consciousness while “Holding fast to the Center”</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2/26: Holding fast to the Center</strong></td>
<td>2/26: Lecture: Sharon Salzberg</td>
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<td>[2/26: Lecture: Sharon Salzberg]</td>
<td>[2/27: Compassion Meditation Workshop led by Sharon Salzberg]</td>
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</table>
THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF CONTEMPLATION

WEEKLY SEMINAR

3/03. Experience and the Cognitivist Hypothesis
Primary: Theravada Buddhist Meditation: *Anapanna sati sutta*, Rosenberg, pp. 198-208; Young, “How Meditation Works”
Secondary: Varela, Thompson and Rosch, *The Embodied Mind*: Introduction, pp. 3-130

3/10. The Embodied Mind and the Groundless Self
Primary: *Anapanna sati sutta*: analysis: Rosenberg, pp. 1-50
Secondary: Varela, Thompson and Rosch, *The Embodied Mind*, pp. 133-255

MEDITATION LAB

Theravada Buddhist Mindfulness practice
3/01: Mindfulness of Breath in diaphragm: Count in-breaths to 5
3/03 Count out-breaths to 5
3/05: Mindfulness of breath at the tip of the nose
3/06-7: Workshops on Buddhist Insight Meditation led by Shinzen Young
3/08: Labeling: Body Space (Shinzen Young)
3/10: Labeling: Body Space
3/12: Labeling: Body Space

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CONTEMPLATION

WEEKLY SEMINAR

Primary: Commentary on *Anapanna sati sutta*: Rosenberg, pp. 51-111

3/24. Psychology and the Study of the Brain
Primary: Commentary on *Anapanna sati sutta*: Rosenberg pp. 112-97
Secondary: Hanson, *Buddha’s Brain*, pp. 5-225.

MEDITATION LAB

Theravada Buddhist Mindfulness practice
3/15: Labeling: Mind Space
3/17: Labeling: Mind Space
3/19: Labeling: Mind Space
3/22: Labeling: thought, feeling, sensation, perception
3/24: Labeling: thought, feeling, sensation, perception
3/26: Labeling: thought, feeling, sensation, perception

[Lecture: Edward Slingerland]

SPRING BREAK
### THE NEUROSCIENCE OF CONTEMPLATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEKLY SEMINAR</th>
<th>MEDITATION LAB</th>
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</table>
| **4/07. Zen Contemplation + the Neurophysiology of Consciousness**
  Secondary works: Cahn and Polich, “Meditation States and Traits;” Austin, *Selfless Insight*, 1-48 |
| **4/07. Zen Contemplation + the Neurophysiology of Consciousness**
  Secondary works: Cahn and Polich, “Meditation States and Traits;” Austin, *Selfless Insight*, 1-48 |
| **4/14. Neurological Transformations from Contemplative Practice**
  Secondary works: Austin, *Selfless Insight*, 49-152 |
| **4/14. Neurological Transformations from Contemplative Practice**
  Secondary works: Austin, *Selfless Insight*, 49-152 |
| **4/21: The Neuroscience of Insight**
| **4/21: The Neuroscience of Insight**

### CLINICAL APPLICATIONS OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE

<table>
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<tr>
<th>WEEKLY SEMINAR</th>
<th>MEDITATION LAB</th>
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| **4/28. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction**
  Primary Works: Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living*, Sections I-III;
  Secondary Works: Bishop et.al., Baer. |
| **4/26: Vipassana: Body Sweep**
  **4/28: Vipassana: Body Sweep** |
| **4/30: Vipassana: Mind Space: Thoughts and Feelings** |
| **5/05. Studies in Mindfulness**
  Primary: Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living*, Sections IV-V;
| **5/03: Vipassana: Mind and Body Space**
  **5/05: Vipassana: Mind and Body Space**
  **5/07: Open** |

**FINAL PAPERS DUE ON MAY 17**