



**UNIVERSITY COURSE 0540:  
INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPLATIVE STUDIES**

**Semester II, 2010  
Brown University**

**Seminar: Weds. 3:00 PM  
Smith-Buanano 101**

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

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

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

**Course Adjuncts:** Matthew Sacchet; Thomas Coburn, Ph.D., Visiting Scholar, Department of Religious Studies

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

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

***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 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
- 3 page write-up of seminar presentation
- 1 12-15 page Final Paper on a topic to be decided upon with the professor; **DUE May 17.**

### ***READINGS***

#### **BOOKS**

- Austin, James. *Selfless Insight*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihalyi. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper and Row, 1990.
- Hanson Rick. *Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love, and Wisdom*. New Harbinger, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-1-57224-695-9.
- Ivanhoe Phillip J. *The Daodejing of Laozi*. Hackett, 2003.
- 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, 1976.
- 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.
- Slingerland, Edward. *Effortless Action: Wu-Wei as Conceptual Metaphor and Spiritual Ideal in Early China*. Oxford, 2003. **RECOMMENDED**
- Gethin, Rupert. *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford, 1998 **RECOMMENDED**

#### **ARTICLES**

- 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, Shauna Shapiro, Linda Carlson, Zindel Segal, et. al "Mindfulness: A Proposed Operational Definition." *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.
- Cahn, B. Rael, and John Polich. "Meditation States and Traits: EEG, ERP, and Neurophysiology Studies." *Psychological Bulletin* 2006 (132 no. 2): 180-211.
- Kabat-Zinn, Jon. "Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Context: Past, Present, and Future." *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10#2 (Summer 2003): 144-56.
- Roth, H. D. "Laozi in the Context of Early Daoist Mystical Praxis." In M. Csikszentmihalyi and P.J. Ivanhoe, *Religious and Philosophical Aspects of Laozi*. SUNY, 1999, pp.58-96.
- William. James Reader: 1."Mysticism," from *The Varieties of Religious Experience*; 2. "Does Consciousness Exist?";3."A World of Pure Experience;"; 4."A Suggestion About Mysticism."
- Young, Shinzen, "How Meditation Works." Shinzen.org

**COURSE OUTLINE**

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

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

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

***PHILOSOPHICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACHES***

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p><b>2/17. Mysticism and the Contemplative</b></p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Early Daoist Wisdom Poetry: Ivanhoe, <i>Laozi</i>, Introduction, pp. 1-40.</p> <p><u>Secondary Works:</u> William James Reader; Roth, “<i>Laozi</i> in the Context”</p> <p><b>2/24. Interpreting Contemplative Experience Through Metaphor</b></p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Ivanhoe, <i>Laozi</i>, pp. 41-85</p> <p><u>Secondary Works:</u> Slingerland, <i>Effortless Action</i>, 3-42, 77-127, 265-73.</p>	<p><b>Daoist Reconstructive Meditations from <i>Laozi</i>:</b></p> <p>2/15: “Bellows Breathing”</p> <p>2/17: Bellows Breathing</p> <p>2/19: Bellows Breathing</p> <p>2/24: Observing consciousness while “Holding fast to the Center”</p> <p>2/26: Holding fast to the Center</p> <p><b>[2/26: Lecture: Sharon Salzberg]</b></p> <p><b>[2/27: Compassion Meditation Workshop led by Sharon Salzberg]</b></p>

**THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF CONTEMPLATION**

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p><b>3/03. Experience and the Cognitivist Hypothesis</b></p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Theravada Buddhist Meditation: <i>Anapanna sati sutta</i>; Rosenberg, pp. 198-208; Young, “How Meditation Works”</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Varela, Thompson and Rosch, <i>The Embodied Mind</i>: Introduction, pp. 3-130</p> <p><b>3/10. The Embodied Mind and the Groundless Self</b></p> <p><u>Primary:</u> <i>Anapanna sati sutta</i>: analysis: Rosenberg, pp. 1-50</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Varela, Thompson and Rosch, <i>The Embodied Mind</i> , pp. 133-255</p>	<p><b>Theravada Buddhist Mindfulness practice</b></p> <p>3/01: <i>Mindfulness of Breath in diaphragm</i>. Count in-breaths to 5</p> <p>3/03 Count out-breaths to 5</p> <p>3/05: <i>Mindfulness of breath at the tip of the nose</i></p> <p><b>3/06-7: Workshops on Buddhist Insight Meditation led by Shinzen Young</b></p> <p>3/08: Labeling: Body Space (Shinzen Young)</p> <p>3/10: Labeling: Body Space</p> <p>3/12: Labeling: Body Space</p>

**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CONTEMPLATION**

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p><b>3/17. The Anatomy of Consciousness and the Nature of “Flow”</b></p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Commentary on <i>Anapanna sati sutta</i>: Rosenberg, pp.51-111</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Csikszentmihalyi, <i>Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience</i>: pp. 1-142.</p> <p><b>3/24. Psychology and the Study of the Brain</b></p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Commentary on <i>Anapanna sati sutta</i>: Rosenberg pp. 112-97</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Hanson, <i>Buddha’s Brain</i>, pp. 5-225.</p>	<p><b>Theravada Buddhist Mindfulness practice</b></p> <p>3/15: Labeling: Mind Space</p> <p>3/17: Labeling: Mind Space</p> <p>3/19: Labeling: Mind Space</p> <p>3/22: Labeling: thought, feeling, sensation, perception</p> <p>3/24: Labeling: thought, feeling, sensation, perception</p> <p>3/26: Labeling: thought, feeling, sensation, perception</p> <p><b>[Lecture: Edward Slingerland]</b></p>

**SPRING BREAK**

**THE NEUROSCIENCE OF CONTEMPLATION**

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p><b>4/07. Zen Contemplation+the Neuro-physiology of Consciousness</b></p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Sekida, <i>Zen Training</i>, 29-90  <u>Secondary works:</u> Cahn and Polich, “Meditation States and Traits;” Austin, <i>Selfless Insight</i>, 1-48</p>	<p><b>Japanese Zen Meditation</b></p> <p>4/05: Sekida’s “Bamboo Breathing” (exhalation in stages); eyes closed            4/07: Bamboo Breathing, eyes closed            4/09: Bamboo Breathing: eyes just open</p>
<p><b>4/14. Neurological Transformations from Contemplative Practice</b></p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Sekida, <i>Zen Training</i>, 91-159.  <u>Secondary works:</u> Austin, <i>Selfless Insight</i>, 49-152</p>	<p>4/12: Rinzai Zen Style: Kôan: “Does this dog have Buddha-nature?” (Jôshu’s NO); eyes just open            4/14: 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            4/16: Jôshu’s NO; Indoor walking meditation (10’)</p>
<p><b>4/21: The Neuroscience of Insight</b></p> <p><u>Primary Texts:</u> Sekida, <i>Zen Training</i>, 160-237.  <u>Secondary works:</u> Austin, <i>Selfless Insight</i>, 153-270.</p>	<p>4/19: “Non-directed” compassion: Sôtô Zen Style: Shikan Taza: Just Sitting; facing window            4/21: Shikan Taza: Just Sitting; facing window or wall            4/23: Just Sitting; facing wall (10’); walking meditation (10’); sit (10’)</p>

**CLINICAL APPLICATIONS OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE**

WEEKLY SEMINAR	MEDITATION LAB
<p><b>4/28. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction</b></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>4/26: Vipassana : Body Sweep            4/28: Vipassana : Body Sweep</p> <p><b>[Lecture: Daniel Goleman]</b></p>
<p><b>5/05. Studies in Mindfulness</b></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>4/30: Vipassana: Mind Space: Thoughts and Feelings</p> <p>5/03: Vipassana: Mind and Body Space            5/05: Vipassana: Mind and Body Space            5/07: Open</p>

**FINAL PAPERS DUE ON MAY 17**