

NEW 333 BUDDHISM AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE

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UC F 307 Wednesday 11-1 office hours.

Course description and objectives: This course examines the growing confluence between Buddhist thought and practice and Western Cognitive Science. This course explores why this confluence is occurring; the main claim will be that this confluence is occurring as a way of addressing the Meaning Crisis that besets the West and threatens the whole planet. Students will investigate how the Cognitive Science of meaning, wisdom, and human spirituality, seen in relation to Buddhist practice and experience, may give us the means for addressing the meaning crisis.

Class 1 (June 29) Introduction. Course Syllabus. Themes of the course. The philosophical-historical background of Buddhism, Cognitive Science, and the Meaning Crisis, Part. From the Axial Age to the three orders of worldview meaning. Second order thought, the question/quest for meaning, and the change in the nature of wisdom.

Class 2 (July 6) The Meaning Crisis as the collapse of the three orders. The importance of the three senses of connection

Class 3 (July 8) The nature of cognitive science, plausibility, synoptic integration and the naturalistic imperative. Post-computational embodied cognitive science. The cognitive science of “meaning:” relevance realization, intelligence, the significance landscape, cognitive agency, and wisdom.

Class 4 (July 13) The cognitive science of meaning continued.

Class 5 (July 15th) The three levels of connection, *logos, religio, mythos*. The structure and nature of *mythos*.

Class 6 (July 20) **In Class Test**. First section short essay answer. Second section longer integrative essay. Choice for both. **Topic proposal due**. Two pages. First page is three paragraphs. The first paragraph describes and explains your topic. The second paragraph explains how it is relevant to the themes and constructs of the course. The third paragraph explains how your topic can be covered in 2500 words.

Class 7 (July 22) The three dimensions of connection, the three types of knowing, and the nature of self-transcendence and wisdom..

Class 8 (July 27) *Religio, Credo, and Ratio*. Shamanism and the origin of the psychotechnologies of *Religio*

Class 9 (July 29) Worldview attunement and domicide, The numinous and horror. The perennial problems of perspectival agency. A deeper understanding of the meaning crisis.

Class 10 (August 5) Perennial solutions to the pathologies of insignificance. Begin Reading Alone with Others. **Essay due**. 2500 words. Argumentative research essay. Using the themes of the course, and drawing upon the critical review and integration of the arguments and evidence of other researchers, create an argument that establishes a clear and challenging thesis. APA format, but no running head. Abstract of 100-200 words is mandatory. Proper citation and bibliography also mandatory.

Class 11 (August 10th). Buddhism and the meaning crisis. Buddhism and cognitive science.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EVALUATION

Test July 20th. worth 25%
Topic Proposal for essay July 20th worth 5%
Essay August 10th worth 30%
Final exam worth 40%

LATENESS PENALTY IS 10% PER DAY EXCEPT FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS

TEXTS

Recommended

Ethical Know-How by Varela

The Embodied Mind by Varela, Thomspson, and Rosch.

Alone with Others Batchelor

Science and the Sage Vervaeke and Mastropeitro available on course website on 5th week.

Recommended is the Home Page for the Spiritual Naturalist Society : <http://spiritualnaturalistsociety.org/>
Articles by Vervaeke there on the meaning crisis and the cognitive science of meaning. There are also other related useful articles. These articles **cannot** be used as academic sources, but they do provide valuable insight and information.

Deterring Plagiarism: Some strategies <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagiarism/html>

How not to plagiarize: <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html>