

[Previous](#)

840: 424 – SEMINAR ON RELIGION AND SCIENCE
Spring 2007

Dr. James W. Jones

Office hours: M 1:30-3:00

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MEDITATION IN RELIGION AND SCIENCE

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Purpose: This seminar will explore some of the religious, psychological and psycho-physiological dimensions of meditation. Students will be exposed to the mediational practices and models of human selfhood from three different religious traditions — Hinduism, Christianity, and Buddhism — and several relevant and controversial areas in contemporary psychology and psycho-physiology.

Requirements

There are three main requirements for this seminar: (1) Readings, (2) Papers (3) Class Participation.

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1. Readings.

J. Shear, *The Experience of Meditation*, 2006, St. Paul: Paragon House,
M. Laird, *Into the Silent Land*. 2006, NY: Oxford University Press,
B. Alan Wallace, *Contemplative Science*, 2007, NY: Columbia University Press,
Newberg, E. D'Aquilli, V. Rause, 2001, *Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief*. NY: Ballantine Books.

All additional readings are on electronic reserve thru the Rutgers Library System under the instructor's name and many are also available from the Rutgers Library Data Base.

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2. Weekly Papers. To facilitate discussion, each week, starting with the second, each student is to bring a one page reaction paper to class. The first paragraph should summarize what you see as the most important points of the assigned reading and the second paragraph should offer a critical evaluation of the reading in a way that raises some questions or issues for discussion. Papers will be graded and returned to you. All the papers are to be saved and handed in together on the last day of class.

2. Term papers & presentations. Each student is required to write a 10 page paper on a topic relevant to this seminar. A list of possible topics is included at the end of this syllabus. Additional topics are acceptable but each paper must include elements of meditation relevant to both religion and science. Each paper must contain at least the following three elements: (1) it must start with a paragraph or two clearly stating the topic and thesis of your paper; (2) it must clearly describe the religious claims and neuropsychological findings you are focusing on; (3) it must then contain your own analysis and reflections comparing and contrasting the relevant religious and scientific claims. A brief (one paragraph) description of your proposed topic is due to the instructor no later than class on 3/26/07. A first draft of this essay is due the beginning of class on the

Monday after spring break (3/19). No extensions will be given. Papers with comments will be returned to you. During the final weeks of class each student will present his or her paper to the class. By noon on the Friday after the last day of class (5/4), students are to hand in both the final version of this essay taking account of the instructor's feedback on the first draft and the comments during the class presentation and the first draft with the instructor's comments. At this time they are also to hand in all of their weekly papers.

Note: No extensions will be given on any of the written assignments.

3. Class participation: Since this is a seminar, there will be a minimum of lectures after the first day and so class participation will be the major determinant of the final grade. No one will receive a passing grade who does not make a regular contribution to the class discussion.

Note: All cell phones, pagers, etc. must be turned off in class. Anyone whose device goes off during class will be asked to leave for the remainder of that period.

Course Outline

1/22/07. On the Boundary of Religion and Science

Students who have not previously had a course with Dr. Jones that discussed the issue of religious and scientific knowledge should look at J. W. Jones, *Waking From Newton's Sleep*, which is available in the bookstore under the course 840:222, Issues in Religious Thought.

1/29/07. Meditation in the Hindu Religion [guest lecture by Prof. Edwin Bryant]

[Note first reaction paper due today]

Reading: J. Shear, *The Experience of Meditation*, pp. 23-48, 87-118, 171-202.
"The Yoga Sutra" Handout.

2/5/07. Meditation in the Buddhist Religion [guest lecture by Prof. Tao Jiang]

Reading: Shear, *The Experience of Meditation*, pp. 1-23, 119-170

2/12/07. Meditation in the Christian Religion

Reading: J. Shear, *The Experience of Meditation*, pp. 245-257

M. Laird, *Into the Silent Land*, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4

J. W. Jones, *The Mirror of God*, Chapter 1 [E-Reserve]

2/19/07 The experience of Meditation in Buddhism and Christianity

Reading: M. Laird, *Into the Silent Land*, 5, 7

B. Alan Wallace, *Contemplative Science*, chapters 1, 6 & 7

2/26/97 Meditation, Psychology and Psychophysiology

[Note: seminar paper topics due by today]

Reading: Davidson, et.al., "Alterations in Brain and Immune Function Produced by Mindfulness Meditation" 2003, *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 65: 564-570

A. Lutz, et.al., "Long-term Meditators self-induce high-amplitude gamma synchrony during mental practice" *Proceed. Nat'l Acad. Of Sci.*, 2004, 101/46: 16369-16373

K. W. Brown & R. Ryan, "The Benefits of Being Present: Mindfulness and its Role in Psychological Well-Being," *Personality and Social Psychology*, 2003, 84/4:822-848

R. Walsh and S. Shapiro, "The Meeting of Meditative Disciplines and Western Psychology", *American Psychologist*, 2006, 61/3: 227-239.

J. Kabat-Zinn, "Mindfulness Based Interventions in Context," 2003, *Clinical Psychology*, 10: 144-156.

S. Dimidjian & M. Linehan, "Defining the Agenda for Future Research on...Mindfulness Practice" 2003, *Clinical Psychology*, 10: 166-171.

[Note: all articles are on E-Reserve]

3/5/07. Meditation and Neuro-imaging

Reading: Newberg, D'Aquilli, Rause, *Why God Won't Go Away*, chapters 1-3, 6-9.

S. Lazar, et. al, "Functioning Brain Mapping of the Relaxation Response and Meditation" *Neuroreport*, 2000, 11/7: 1581-1585 [E-Reserve]

[no class 3/12/07 — Spring Break]

3/19/06. Meditation, Psychotherapy, and Behavioral Medicine

[Note: first draft of seminar papers due today]

Reading: M. Laird, *Into the Silent Land*, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4

J. Andresen, "Meditation Meets Behavioural Medicine," *Consciousness Studies*, 2000, 7: 17-73.

J. Schwartz, "A Role for Volition and Attention in the Generation of New Brain Circuitry," *Consciousness Studies*, 1999, 6:115-142.

S. Shapiro, G. Schwartz, G. Bonner, "Effects of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction on Medical and pre-Medical Students," *Jr. of Behavioral Medicine*, 1998, 21/6: 581-599.

[Note: all articles are on E-Reserve]

3/26/07 & 4/2/07. Physicalism and its Trials

Reading: W. Brown, N. Murphy, H.. N. Malony, *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*

Chapters 4, 5, 6 & 10 [E-Reserve]

J. W. Jones, "Mind, Brain and Spirit – a Clinician's Perspective" [E-Reserve]

B. Alan Wallace, *Contemplative Science*, Chapter 2, 3

4/9/07 Meditation and Ultimate Reality in Buddhism and Christianity

[Last weekly paper today]

Reading: B. Alan Wallace, *Contemplative Science*, chapters 5, 7

J. W. Jones, *The Mirror of God*, chapters 2 & 3 [E-Reserve]

4/16/07 & 4/23/07 Student Presentations

4/30/07 Student Presentations & Conclusion

5/4/07 – Friday: Final Drafts of Papers and all other written work are due by noon in the Religion Dept. Office, Loree 140. No late papers will be accepted.