

## **SYLLABUS 752: MYSTICISM – ANCIENT TO NEW THOUGHT**

### **Distance Learning**

**FACULTY: Teri Martin, MA and Katherine Hunter, PhD**

**Date Revised: March, 2017 for Spring/Fall 2017**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides a survey of Mysticism across the major religious traditions by investigating what is historically universal about the mystical experience across religious traditions as well as what is unique about the mystical experience within each. Faculty and students will explore the language and experience of “beloving” (as opposed to “believing”) as it has been expressed by mystics from days ancient to contemporary, with special emphasis given to the “practical mystics” who were able to marry vision to their daily lives of action. In addition, this course surveys some of what science has to say about mystical experience. A major goal of this class is to build spiritual community through didactic and experiential activities that deepen the personal and professional understanding of mysticism on the part of each participant and each professor.

### **FACULTY BIOGRAPHY**

Ms. Martin earned her Undergraduate Degree in Mathematics from Pepperdine University and her Master of Liberal Arts degree from St. John’s College, Santa Fe, NM. Ms. Martin has spent 30 years teaching and developing curriculum for a spectrum of subjects including mathematics, history, literature, art history, philosophy, and music. For 30 years, Ms. Martin has also been a student of Sacred Humanism under the late Dr. William Boast, founder of the Christuman Church and former Dean of Academic Studies and Humanities at Community College, Red Rocks. She is an ordained minister of the Christuman Church and is Rectrix and President of the Christuman Humanities Institute. Ms. Martin is author of numerous spiritual writings on Sacred Humanism and has been a student of those who have been models of the Sacred Human through the ages. .

### **FACULTY CONTACT INFORMATION**

Faculty Name: Teri Martin

E-mail Address: [terihmartin@gmail.com](mailto:terihmartin@gmail.com)

Phone Number: 303-819-4835 (cell), 720-242-8935 (home)

### **COURSE DELIVERY STYLE & PLAN OF ACTION**

Required readings, scholarly papers, journalistic responses, exploratory and synthesizing research assignments, as well as experiential assignments are designed to provide students with a deepened understanding of the history and nature of various mystical traditions as well as the literature and lives of particular mystics, ancient to contemporary. Students are introduced to instructor-led materials and exercises as well as the sharing of personal spiritual practices. Monthly conference calls will include discussions of readings, assignments and special topics.

Students may proceed as follows:

1. Contact the Instructor by e-mail and obtain a conference schedule;
2. Obtain the required textbooks and other materials;
3. Read the Syllabus, Outline of Assignments, and Assignment Schedule and clarify any questions you have on your individual plan of action for the course; and
4. Submit all of your assignments; prepare for and attend all telephone conferences according to the Assignment Schedule. Contact the instructor if there are scheduling problems.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

### Students will:

- Develop and discuss definitions of *mystic*, *mysticism*, *practical mysticism*, *beloving*.
- Discuss and write cogently about the value of a mystical way of life.
- Identify and describe examples of “practical mysticism” and “practical mystics.”
- Discuss and write cogently about what is ***universal and common*** in the mystical experience across all religious traditions.
- Discuss and write cogently about what is ***different*** in the mystical experience across religious traditions.
- Identify representative mystics from different eras and/or religious traditions.
- Identify, discuss, and write cogently regarding the language and experience of “beloving” from the literature of mystics.
- Design and describe a daily practice as an experiential connection to a particular mystic or to a lineage of mystics.
- Choose and experience one to three mystical practices and describe your experience.
- Describe current scientific studies of neurotheological experience.
- Identify and discuss questions raised by scientific studies regarding mystical experience.

### Required Materials and Texts:

1. Carmody, Denise and John. *HOLINESS EAST AND WEST*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996. (Available in print and Kindle)
2. Goleman, Daniel. *THE MEDITATIVE MIND: VARIETIES OF MEDITATIVE EXPERIENCE*, Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., Los Angeles, CA, 1988. (Available in print and Kindle)
3. Govinda, Lama Anagarika, *FOUNDATIONS OF TIBETAN MYSTICISM*, Weiser Books, Boston, 1969. (Available in print)
4. Hagerty, Barbara Bradley, *FINGERPRINTS OF GOD*, Riverhead Books, New York, 2009. (Available in print and Kindle)
5. Hooper, Richard, *HYMNS TO THE BELOVED*, Sanctuary Publications, Inc., Sedona, AZ, 2010. (Available in print and Kindle)
6. Underhill, Evelyn, *MYSTICISM: The Preeminent Study in the Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness*, Doubleday, New York, 1990. (Available in print, Kindle and can be downloaded from Christian Classics Ethereal Library: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/underhill/mysticism.html>)

7. Underhill, Evelyn, *PRACTICAL MYSTICISM*, Ariel Press, Ohio, 1942. (Available in print, Kindle and can be downloaded from Project Gutenberg, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/21774>) 8. Supplemental readings to be provided

### HOLOS FACULTY-STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Students and instructor communicate frequently via e-mail, and phone conferences create a collegial forum for sharing ideas among class participants. Assignments will be returned with comments, guidance, and/or suggestions for improvement. Some assignments may also be exchanged with other students in the class, and comments to each other are encouraged. These may be in writing, or during the conference calls. Telephone conferences and calls with instructors are at the participant's expense. Faculty should inform students of periods of time in which they will not be available for e-mail or phone communication. Students should inform instructors if they will not be available for scheduled phone conferences. Students should allow three days for a response after e-mailing an instructor. If you have not received any response after three days, re-send the email, call the instructor and leave a voice message. If you have still not received a response after two more days, forward your e-mail communications with the instructor to the Dean of Faculty. Further action will be determined by the Dean of Faculty.

### ASSIGNMENT FORMATS

- All written assignments must be **Microsoft Word** documents sent by e-mail as attached files.
- At times, papers may be exchanged with other students.
- All papers should be **double-spaced**.
- **FONT:** Times or Times New Roman.
- **E-MAIL SUBJECT LINE:** Always include your name and the Assignment number in the subject line of your E-mail and on the title page of your assigned papers.
- **END NOTES:** All referenced material must be cited using endnotes. Include the Author's name, the publication name, the publisher, the date of publication, and the page number.
- **FILE NAME: When you “save” your document, you MUST use the following format to name your Word file: Or your file will be returned so that you can add the proper file name and format: The document you attach to your e-mail should be in the following format:**

**SmithJ\_887#1.doc. (Last NameFirstInitial\_Course#,Assignment#.doc)** Use Times, Times New Roman, or Helvetica fonts, 12 pt. and cite all referenced material using *Chicago Manual of Style* endnotes.

### OUTLINE OF ASSIGNMENTS & PERCENTAGE OF COURSE

Assignment #1: Exploration Paper (6-10 pgs)	
Read, Write, <i>Happold, Hooper, Underhill</i>	10%
Assignment #2: Experiential and Scholarly Paper: “Walking with a Mystic I” (12-15 pgs)	
Read, Research, Write, <i>Carmody, Happold, Hooper, Underhill</i>	15%
Assignment #3: Experiential and Journal Response Paper: “Mystical Practice”	
Read, Research, Write, <i>Goleman, Govinda</i>	10%

Assignment #4: Experiential and Scholarly Paper: “Walking with a Mystic II” (12-15 pgs)	
Read, Research, Write, <i>Carmody, Happold, Hooper, Underhill</i>	15%
Assignment #5: Scholarly Paper: “Science and Mysticism” (6-10 pgs)	
Read, Research, Write, <i>Hagerty</i>	10%
Assignment# 6: Personal Mysticism Textbook: Read, Research, Write, <i>All texts</i>	40%

## DETAILS OF ASSIGNMENTS

**The Instructor will send Assignment Dates for written assignments at the beginning of the Semester.**

### LINK TO SEMESTER DATES

[http://www.holosuniversity.org/about/semester\\_dates](http://www.holosuniversity.org/about/semester_dates)

### ASSIGNMENT #1

**Percentage of Grade: 10%**

**Learning Outcomes of Assignment – students will:**

- Develop and discuss premises and beliefs regarding *mystics, mysticism*
- Discuss and write cogently about the ***universal and common*** aspects of the mystical experience across all religious traditions
- Identify representative mystics from different eras and/or religious traditions
- Identify and discuss the language and experience of “beloving” from the literature of mystics

**Required Texts and/or Materials:**

Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology*

Hooper: *Hymns to the Beloved*

Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, “Preface”, “What is Mysticism?”, “The World of Reality”

**Assignment Description:**

**IDENTIFY:** Before you begin the readings, give contemplative consideration to what *mystical* means to you. Identify for example, some of your current premises, beliefs, and experiences around *the nature of mysticism, the mystics, and a mystical way of life.*

**READ:** Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology*, Chapters 1-26  
 Hooper: *Hymns to the Beloved*, “Introduction”  
 Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, “Preface”, “What is Mysticism?”, “The World of Reality”

**WRITE:** In a 6-10 page journal-style paper:

- 1) Explore and describe some of your own current premises, beliefs, and experiences regarding mystics, the nature of mysticism and a mystical way of life.
- 2) Discuss how your current understandings seem to compare or contrast with those as described in the readings of Happold (Chapters 1-26), Underhill (“Preface”, “What is

Mysticism?”, “The World of Reality”) and Hooper (“Introduction”). Cite some examples from these readings that either *challenge or support, differ or agree with, expand or narrow* your current premises, beliefs, and experiences.

- 3) Looking over Hooper’s, “Poetry and Prose of the Ages,” and “Happold’s “Anthology” identify a particular theme that, or mystic who catches your interest in some way. Cite two examples from these collections of quotes and passages, and briefly discuss the nature of your interest and response to the mystic or theme. For example, is it that your ideas are supported or rather, are challenged by the passage? Does it surprise you, or perplex you, or perhaps, does it put into words something you’ve experienced? Or ???

## ASSIGNMENT #2

**Percentage of Grade: 15%**

**Learning Outcomes of Assignment – students will:**

- Develop definitions of *mystic, practical mysticism, beloved*.
- Identify and describe examples of “practical mysticism” and “practical mystics.”
- Identify representative mystics from different eras and/or religious traditions.
- Identify, discuss and write cogently regarding the language and experience of “beloved” from the literature of mystics.
- Design and describe a daily practice as an experiential connection to a particular mystic or to a lineage of mystics.

**Required Texts and/or Materials:**

Carmody and Carmody, *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*, selected chapter on particular religious tradition,

Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology*

Hooper, *Hymns to the Beloved*, “Lists” of Mystics and “Poetry and Prose of the Ages”

Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, Chapters III-X

Research resources

**Assignment Description:**

READ: 1) Using Underhill, Happold, Hooper, and Carmody as resources, select a mystic from a religious tradition whom you feel could serve as a guide to your own spiritual journey.

2) From Carmody, read the chapter associated with the religious tradition of your chosen mystic.

RESEARCH:

Research the life, religious tradition, mystical experience and creative outpourings of your mystic using at least three scholarly resources (book, film, scholarly website, or journal article) *in addition* to the required texts.

EXPERIENTIAL “WALK”:

For two weeks, “walk” with your mystic in a daily contemplative practice and keep a journal of your experiences, insights, and responses.

WRITE:

In a 15-20 page, scholarly paper that references the required texts, your research resources and includes highlights from your journal, discuss:

- 1) why you chose this mystic as your guide;
- 2) the life, mystical experience and the creative outpourings (writings, poetry, music, theology, art, healing, etc) of your mystic;
- 3) how your mystic's particular religious tradition with its unique theology and symbols influenced his/her mystical lineage, particular mystical experience and any creative outpourings;
- 4) whether the life of your mystic maps to the nature of mysticism or the way of the mystic as discussed in Happold, Carmody, Underhill, and;
- 5) any insights this "walk" with a mystic provided you: perhaps, for example, about the *nature of mysticism*, the possibilities and significance of the *way of the mysticism*", a *practical mysticism* or a way of *beloving*.

### ASSIGNMENT #3

**Percentage of Grade: 10%**

**Learning Outcomes of Assignment – students will:**

Choose and explore mystical practice(s) and describe their experience.

**Required Texts and/or Materials:**

Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*

Goleman, *The Meditative Mind*

Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*

**Assignment Description:**

READ:

Goleman, *The Meditative Mind*

Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, Part One "The Path of Universality", Part Two "The Path of Unification and of Inner Equality", and "Epilogue and Synthesis, The Path of Action"

Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, "Preparation of the Mystic", "Meditation and Recollection", "Self-Adjustment", "Love and Will"

RESEARCH: Choose and research a "Mystical" practice such as the use of sound, mantras, toning, chant, prayer, mandalas, yoga, Qigong, dance, Kabbalistic meditation, Tibetan bowls, etc. For your research, access and use at least three scholarly resources --book, film, scholarly website, or journal article.

EXPERIENCE: For a period of three weeks, set aside fifteen minutes or more per day to experience the use of your practice. During and after each session become aware of your body/mind/emotions and describe briefly, in writing, any thoughts, emotions, or sensations you notice. The amount of time you spend is not nearly as important as the regularity with which you do the practice.

COMPILE: A personal report describing the effects of the practice. Did you notice changes in your body, emotions, and mind that you would attribute to the practice? Referring to Govinda, Goleman, and Underhill, and any other resources from your research, discuss how this or any practice might help (or hinder?) "the preparation of the mystic", "what territory this practice maps

for you”, how this practice might serve as a Philosopher’s Stone or what elements of this practice allow for a “turning-about in the deepest seat of consciousness”?

## ASSIGNMENT #4

**Percentage of Grade: 15%**

**Learning Outcomes of Assignment—students will:**

- Develop definitions of *mystic, practical mysticism, loving*.
- Identify and describe examples of “practical mysticism” and “practical mystics.”
- Identify representative mystics from different eras and/or religious traditions.
- Identify, discuss and write cogently regarding the language and experience of “loving” from the literature of mystics.
- Design and describe a daily practice as an experiential connection to a particular mystic or to a lineage of mystics.

**Required Texts and/or Materials:**

Carmody and Carmody, *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*, selected chapter on particular religious tradition,

Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology*

Hooper, *Hymns to the Beloved*, Lists of Mystics and “Poetry and Prose of the Ages”

Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, Chapters III-X

Research resources

**Assignment Description:**

READ: 1) Using Underhill, Hooper, and Carmody as resources, select a mystic from a religious tradition different from that of the mystic chosen in Assignment #2 whom you feel could serve as a guide to your own spiritual journey.

2) From Carmody, read the chapter associated with the religious tradition of your chosen mystic.

RESEARCH:

Research the life, religious tradition, mystical experience and creative outpourings of your mystic using at least three scholarly resources (book, film, scholarly website, or journal article) other than the required texts.

EXPERIENTIAL “WALK”:

For two weeks, “walk” with your mystic in a daily contemplative practice and keep a journal of your experiences, insights, and responses.

WRITE:

In a 12-15 page, scholarly paper that references, the required texts, your research resources and includes highlights from your journal, discuss:

- 1) why you chose this mystic as your guide;
- 2) the life, mystical experience and the creative outpourings (writings, poetry, music, theology, art, healing, etc) of your mystic;

- 3) how your mystic’s particular religious tradition with its unique theology and symbols influenced his/her mystical lineage, particular mystical experience and any creative outpourings;
- 4) whether the life of your mystic maps to the nature of mysticism or the way of the mystic as discussed in Happold, Carmody, Underhill, and
- 5) any insights this “walk” with a mystic provided you: perhaps, for example, about the *nature of mysticism*, the possibilities and significance of the *way of the mysticism*”, a *practical mysticism* or a way of *beloving*.

## ASSIGNMENT #5

**Percentage of Grade:10%**

**Learning Outcomes of Assignment – students will:**

- Describe current scientific studies of neurotheological experience.
- Identify and discuss questions raised by scientific studies regarding mystical experience.

**Required Texts and/or Materials:** Hagerty,  
*Fingerprints of God* **Assignment**

**Description:**

**READ:** Hagerty, *Fingerprints of God* and choose some aspect of current scientific research that she discusses that interests you.

**RESEARCH:** some aspect of current scientific research discussed by Hagerty using at least three scholarly resources, one of which must be a scholarly journal article.

**WRITE:** In a 10-15 page scholarly paper, referencing Hagerty and your research resources (including one scholarly journal article), describe some aspect of current scientific research and discuss:

- 1) how this research is making an impact on the assumptions or beliefs regarding mystical experience and
- 2) how it influences your understanding of mystical experience.

## ASSIGNMENT#6

**Percentage of Grade: 40%**

**Required Texts and/or Materials:**

Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, Chapters VII - X

All required texts and resources from Assignments 1-5

Others to be determined by student

**Assignment Description:** PERSONAL TEXTBOOK ON MYSTICISM

**READ, WRITE, COMPILE, CREATE:**

Having been exposed to a number of books on Mysticism, introduced to mystics from a variety of religious traditions, and finally to Underhill’s conclusions regarding the

profoundly practical nature of “The Mystical Life”, this final assignment affords you the opportunity to integrate and extend your learnings into your own Personal Textbook on Mysticism.

Consider yourself a “class of one” and think of this as the textbook you would want to use as both teacher and/or student. There are no “absolute *quantitative* requirements” for this assignment in the sense of a set number of inclusions or pages, but rather keep in mind that there is a *qualitative* expectation that your textbook will reflect a semester’s worth of authentic learning that will be of profoundly practical value to you for a lifetime. To that end, your textbook should reflect a scholarly effort, well-researched and well-referenced and address what learning outcomes you might choose for such a course or address the ones as outlined in the syllabus:

- Develop definitions of *mystic, practical mysticism, loving*. ○ Discuss and write cogently about the value of a mystical way of life. ○ Identify and describe examples of “practical mysticism” and “practical mystics.” ○ Discuss and write cogently about what is universal and common in the mystic experience across all religious traditions.
- Discuss and write cogently about the differentiating characteristics of mystical experience across religious traditions.
- Identify representative mystics from different eras and/or religious traditions.
- Identify, discuss and write cogently regarding the language and experience of “loving” found in literature of mysticism.
- Design and describe a daily practice as an experiential connection to a particular mystic or to a lineage of mystics.
- Identify best reference resources for the lives of mystics.
- Critique reference resources and compile best mysticism and mystic reference bibliographies.

In terms of style and format, again you have a great deal of freedom. The only two requirements are:

- Table of Contents
- An introductory essay that provides some sort of overarching direction for your textbook.

Outside of that, you may include such things as: ○ Sections from, or assignments in their entirety

- Appendices for each paper to accommodate related information, links, and additional commentary, insights or discoveries.
- Lists of representative mystics from each major religious tradition along with best resources for each mystic.
- Compilation of passages from literature of mysticism or “favorite” words of wisdom from mystics.

- 3-5 page summary or “best of” of your journal insights.
- Annotated Bibliography (2-3 sentence annotations) of all resources you have used or uncovered during the semester including required readings, and references used in all papers and any other “best sources” (journal articles, links to websites, videos, or seminars.) on specific mystics or mystical traditions, science of mysticism, or mystical practices.
- Any creative original works (essays, art, music, poetry) that have been inspired by course readings or experience, collections of prayers, articles on mystical practices. etc.
- Guidelines for developing a mystical practice.

## PHONE CONFERENCES

### **Learning Outcomes of Conference: Listed in Assignments 1-5.**

**Description of Conference:** Students will be sent directions for joining each Conference Call which will take the form of a GoToMeeting. The calls will primarily include discussion focused on assignments and associated readings, but may also involve powerpoint presentations of special topics. Topics of discussion and any supplemental readings will be provided to students in time for preparation. **A mutually agreed upon schedule for the conference calls will be determined at the beginning of the semester.** If a conflict arises please notify the instructor as soon as possible regarding the conflict and provide 1) an alternative time that is available on the scheduled date and/or 2) a time you are available on the day before and the day after the scheduled date.

### **FINAL ASSIGNMENT:**

Complete and return the course evaluation form. At the end of the semester you will receive a course evaluation form. You will receive notification of your final course grades only after you have submitted an evaluation for all courses you completed this semester. Students who plan to take an Incomplete in a course must wait until finishing a course before returning the evaluation form for the course.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR THIS COURSE

**Assessment of Assignments:** Individual assignments will not receive grades, but rather the assessment of each will come in the form of comments, guidance, and suggestions for improvement and rewrites. A grade for this course will be based subjectively upon the clarity, quality, and demonstrated understanding of the subject matter, promptness of written assignments, and verbal participation. Final Course grades will be either A, B, H (Honors) or I (Incomplete).

### **References/Recommended Reading Lists**

1. Abhayananda, Swami, *HISTORY OF MYSTICISM*, ATMA Books, Olympia, 1996.
2. Arseniev, Nicholas. *MYSTICISM & THE EASTERN CHURCH*, St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 1979.

3. Barks, Coleman, *THE SOUL OF RUMI*, Harper, San Francisco, 1995.
4. Bouteneff, Vera. *FATHER ARSENY 1893-1973*, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 1998.
5. Haralick, Robert M., *God Consciousness: Living With Meaning and Purpose*, Torah Books, Pomona NY, 2014.
6. Horgan, John, *RATIONAL MYSTICISM*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 2003.
7. James, William. *THE VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE*, Modern Library, New York, 1936 (original 1902).
8. Mascaro, Juan. *THE UPANISHADS*, Penguin, New York, 1965.
9. McGinn, Bernard. *THE PRESENCE OF GOD: A HISTORY OF WESTERN CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM*, 4 vols., Crossroad, New York, 1991 -2005.
10. McGinn, Bernard. *THE ESSENTIAL WRITINGS OF CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM*, Image Books, Garden City, New York, 1941.
11. Merton, Thomas. *RAIDS ON THE UNSPEAKABLE*. New Directions, New York, 1964.
12. Nicholson, R. A. *THE MYSTICS OF ISLAM*, Routledge and Kegan, London, 1914.
13. Otto, Rudolf. *THE IDEA OF THE HOLY*, Oxford University Press, London, 1923.
14. Purce, Jill. *THE MYSTIC SPIRAL: JOURNEY OF THE SOUL*, Thames and Hudson, 1974.
15. Scholem, Gershom. *MAJOR TRENDS IN JEWISH MYSTICISM*, Weiser Books, Boston, 1969.
16. Smith, Huston, *THE ILLUSTRATED WORLD RELIGIONS: A GUIDE TO OUR WISDOM TRADITIONS*, Harper, San Francisco, 1994.
17. Underhill, Evelyn. *THE SPIRITUAL LIFE*, Penguin Books, New York, 1993.
18. Yogananda, Paramahansa, *AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI*, Self-Realization Fellowship, Los Angeles, CA, 1969.