Course Description:
This course provides an introduction to critical thinking, academic writing, and research skills in the context of a spiritually oriented scholarship. We will discuss argumentative and dialogical models of discourse, the elements of critical thinking (argument analysis, evaluation of claims and assumptions, fallacies, etc.), and the foundations of scholarly research and writing (the structure of a paper, APA Publication Manual, library research skills, etc.). Students will apply the learned skills to the research, writing, and discussion of the following topics: (1) Critiques of transpersonal psychology; (2) critical thinking and religious faith; (3) spiritual inquiry and skepticism; (4) critical thinking and spiritual authority; and (5) spirituality, scholarship, and criticism.

Summary of Educational Purpose:
The main purpose of this course is to provide students with the basic skills needed to critically think, discuss, and carry out integral research. Learning to think, discuss, and write with logic, passion, and clarity is fundamental not only for academic excellence, but also for psychological and spiritual growth.

Learning Objectives:
After completing this course, students will be able to:
1. Think, discuss, and write critically about academic and everyday issues.
2. Carry out research and writing making use of library resources and scholarly standards of style.
3. Develop a critical, rigorous, and dialogical approach to spiritual inquiry.

Learning Activities:
1. Cognitive/didactic (lecture): 30%
2. Practical/applied (dialogue, class presentations): 60%
3. Experiential (meditation, group process): 10%

Criteria for Evaluation:

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1. Mid-term assignment (4-6 pages): 20%
2. Final research paper (8-12 pages): 40%
3. Class participation, dialogical skills: 40%

**Grading Options:**
Letter Grade, Pass/Fail, or as allowed by the department.

**Required Texts:**


NOTE: The *APA Publication Manual* serves as a reference text to be used throughout the course. The rest of readings will be assigned weekly as described in the Course Schedule.

**Recommended Readings:**


For students of religious studies:


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Course Schedule and Reading List
Critical Thinking and Writing in Integral Studies

1. September 15. Introduction: Inquiry and Transformation

Readings: • BCW, chapter 1: “Thinking in Print” (pp. 6-11).
• Paul, Richard, “Critical Thinking in North America” (pp. 18-43). (In reader).
• Sharp, Ann Margaret, “Self-Transformation in the Community of Inquiry” (pp. 36-47). (In reader).
• Ferrer, Jorge, “Dialogical Inquiry as Spiritual Practice.” (Handout provided in class).

2. September 22. Elements of Critical Thinking I: Arguing Well

• Wilber, Ken, “Eye to Eye. Integral Philosophy and the Quest for the Real” (pp. 80-95). (In reader).
• Heron, John, “Spiritual Inquiry: A Critique of Wilber” (pp. 1-8). (In reader).


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Readings:
• Rottenberg, Annette, “Induction, Deduction, and Logical Fallacies” (pp. 222-236) (In reader).
• Kahane, H., “Fallacious Reasoning,” “Impediments to Cogent Reasoning,” “Evaluating and Constructing Extended Arguments” (pp. 55-57; 75; 95-96; 108-127; 158-160) (In reader).
• Hinman, Lawrence M., “Are Appeals to the Emotions Necessarily Fallacious?” (pp. 53-62). (In reader).

4. October 6. Introduction to Research
Introduction to research. Research paradigms. Types of research and scholarship. Plagiarism. Overview of library and research resources. Survey of academic journals. Visit to the library and practice with PSYLIT, Philosopher’s Index, Melvyl, etc.

Readings:
• Braud, William & Rosemarie Anderson, “Conventional and Expanded Views of Research,” “Synopses of Transpersonal and Conventional Approaches to Research” (pp. 3-26; 257-283). (In reader).
• BCW, chapters 5-6: “From Questions to Sources,” “Using Sources” (pp. 64-84).
• Roth, Audrey, “Recording Information” (pp. 100-110). (In reader).

5. October 13. Scholarly Writing I
Theoretical, research, and review papers. The structure of a paper. Getting started. Feminist scholarship and embodied writing. Including body and heart in thinking and writing.

Readings:
• BCW, part four: “Prologue,” “Pre-Drafting and Drafting,” “Revising Your Organization and Argument,” “Revising Style,” “Introductions” (pp. 149-174; 201-254). (In reader).
• hooks, bell, “feminist theory: a radical agenda,” “feminist scholarship: ethical issues,” “towards a revolutionary feminist pedagogy” (pp. 35-54). (In reader).
• Lipman, Matthew, “Caring as Thinking” (pp. 1-13). (In reader).

6. October 20. Scholarly Writing II
Writing as spiritual practice. Thesis statement and outlines. The APA style. Dialogical inquiry on critiques of transpersonal psychology (May-Schneider’s articles): Are these critiques of transpersonal psychology justified? Are the authors employing any fallacious reasoning? Why? How would you back up or respond to these critiques?

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    • Metzger, Deena, “Writing as a Spiritual Practice” (pp. 183-244). (In reader).
    • May, Rollo, “Transpersonal or Transcendental?” (pp. 87-90). (In reader).
    • Schneider, Kirk J., “A ‘Centaur’ Response to Wilber and the Transpersonal Movement” (pp. 196-216). (In reader).

7. October 27. Applying Critical Thinking I: Critiques of Transpersonal Psychology
Dialogical inquiry on critiques of transpersonal psychology (Ellis-Wright’s articles): Are these critiques of transpersonal psychology justified? Are the authors employing any fallacious reasoning? Why? How would you back up or respond to these critiques?

    • Wright, Peggy. A., “Bringing Women’s Voices to Transpersonal Theory” (pp. 3-10). (In reader).

—MID-TERM ASSIGNMENT DUE!

Dialogical inquiry on critical thinking and religious faith: Is there any incompatibility between critical thinking and religious faith? Is critical thinking in spiritual inquiry an obstacle to be overcome or a tool to be refined? Do spiritual claims need to withstand the challenges of critical thinking? Is the underlying logic of critical thinking somehow transcended in the spiritual life? Is critical thinking merely “rational” while spirituality is “trans-rational,” i.e, beyond rationality?


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• Davidson, Bruce W., “Does Religious Faith Mean Uncritical Thinking?: Exploration of a False Dilemma” (pp. 55-66). (In reader).

9. **November 10. Applying Critical Thinking III: Spiritual Inquiry and Skepticism**

Dialogical inquiry on skepticism and spirituality. Can spiritual knowledge be rationally justified? Are beliefs in spiritual realities warranted? Is skepticism about spiritual matters justified or dogmatic? Do spiritual claims need to fulfill the validity standards of science? Can spiritual knowledge be verified or falsified? What constitutes genuine spiritual inquiry? What can be adequate criteria to establish the validity of spiritual knowledge claims?

**Readings:**
- Evans, Donald, “Two Dogmas of Skepticism Concerning Spiritual Reality,” “Positivism and the Genuinely Spiritual” (pp. 101-123; 147-167). (In reader).
- Rothberg, Donald, “Spiritual Inquiry” (pp. 2-12). (In reader).
- Ferrer, Jorge, “Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace” (pp. 53-67). (In reader).
- Wilber, Ken, “Response to Jorge Ferrer’s ‘Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace’” (pp. 1-3). (In reader).

10. **November 17. Applying Critical Thinking IV: Critical Thinking and Spiritual Authority**


**Readings:**
- Heron, John, “Spiritual Inquiry and Projected Authority,” “Spiritual Inquiry and the Authority Within” (In reader).
- Sharma, Arvind, “Feature Review of Accomplishing the Accomplished, by Anantanand Rambachan” (pp. 737-744). (In reader).

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Dialogical inquiry on spirituality, scholarship, and criticism. What does it mean to do a spiritually oriented scholarship? Does the transpersonal vision have implications for academic writing and argumentation? Do we need new metaphors for transpersonal scholarship? Can academic research become a transformative spiritual practice?

**Readings:**
- McDermott, Robert, “The Need for Philosophical and Spiritual Dialogue” (pp. 8-9). (In reader).
- Wilber, Ken, “Shaking the Spiritual Tree” (pp. 30-31). (In reader).
- McDermott, Robert, “Toward Transpersonal Philosophizing” (pp. 44-45). (In reader).

12. **December 1. Final Considerations**

Concluding remarks on spirituality and scholarship.

**Readings:**

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**FINAL PAPER DUE!**

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ASSIGNMENTS

All papers should be written according to the APA Publication Manual (4th ed.). Please remember to:
- Include a cover-page with the title of the paper, your name, and course title.
- Include references.
- Number the pages, use double-spacing, staple, and, if you are using a computer, write with the “Courier” or “Times New Roman” font.

1. MID-TERM PAPER (4-6 pages):

(1) Read one of the following critiques of transpersonal psychology: “Spiritual inquiry: A critique of Wilber,” by John Heron; “Transpersonal or transcendental?,” by Rollo May; “The deified self: A ‘centaur’ response to Wilber and the transpersonal movement,” by Kirk Schneider; “Fanaticism that may lead to a nuclear holocaust: The contributions of scientific counseling and psychotherapy,” by Albert Ellis; or “Bringing women’s voices to transpersonal theory,” by Peggy Wright.

(2) Following the APA style, write a brief report (4-6 pages):
(i) identifying the main argument, claims, supporting evidence, and assumptions of the paper (What assertions the author makes? What evidence the author offers to support his or her claims? Is there any hidden assumption upon which the argument is made?);
(ii) evaluating the validity of the argument, evidence, and warrants (Does the argument establish its conclusion? Is there any fallacious reasoning involved? Is the evidence relevant or sufficient? Are the premises well justified?); and
(iii) conclude by constructing a short argument stating why you think and feel the main thesis of the paper is right or wrong.

(3) These critiques (except Heron’s) have been responded to by different authors in the same journal in which they appeared. Go to the library and search for these rejoinders. At the end of your report, write the references of these articles according to the APA style.

2. FINAL PAPER (8-12 pages)

Select one of the topics discussed in class during weeks 7-11 (“critiques of transpersonal psychology,” “critical thinking and religious faith,” “spiritual inquiry and skepticism,” “critical thinking and spiritual authority,” or “spirituality, scholarship, and criticism”), and write a paper on a theme of your choice. The paper should:
(i) clearly state your thesis, your supporting evidence, and the warrants of your argument;
(ii) qualify your argument and address one or more possible objections;

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(iii) make use of some extra references (books or journal articles) relevant to your argument.

(If you want to write your final paper about a different topic or in a different style, please talk with the instructor.)

COURSE READER
“CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING IN INTEGRAL STUDIES”

Contents


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