

Semester at Sea Course Syllabus

Discipline: Psychology/Education (Human Services)

Summer 2009

EDHS 289-2: Beliefs, Perceptions and Behaviors

Lower Division

Faculty Name: M. Scott Ferrell

Course Description:

Students will explore (a) the nature and formation of beliefs as an aspect of consciousness, (b) the relationship between feelings, emotions, and beliefs (c) the biology of beliefs, (d) limiting beliefs and how to change them, and (e) how an individual's beliefs shape their relationships with others and the individual's actions in the world. A fundamental principle of this course is that the better individuals understand themselves, the better they can understand other people and the various cultures of the world. This course is experiential and therefore, students will explore their individual beliefs, the origins of their beliefs and how their beliefs affect their choices and subsequent behaviors. From a better understanding of their own beliefs, students will develop a deeper comprehension of how personal intrapsychic dynamics and issues affect such global concerns as human rights and social justice. To facilitate this learning, there will be a field component whereby students have several direct opportunities to explore their own and other people's underlying beliefs, perceptions and subsequent behaviors through observing their own as well as their peers' interactions and through interacting with local residents in port. This course will involve readings from various authors in several disciplines and deep intrapersonal exploration.

Course Objectives:

- To gain a theoretical understanding of how beliefs are formed and the factors that influence them
- To understand beliefs as an aspect of consciousness
- To understand how unexamined beliefs affect an individual's life and subsequently, the world at large through his/her choices and behaviors
- To learn experiential techniques for effectively examining and changing an individual's own beliefs
- To gain a cross-cultural understanding of beliefs and their subsequent behaviors
- To become more self-aware as an individual and as a member of the global society

Methods of Evaluation:

Class Participation. The level of participation of all class members will greatly influence the success of this class. Therefore, every student should come to each class having thoroughly read the assigned material and prepared to discuss at length the readings, any insights, and subsequent implications as well as to participate in experiential exercises. Students are strongly encouraged to keep notes on the readings

and to write down questions that come up while reading the material to discuss in class. This is an extremely important part of the class, as it will allow the student to go deeper into the material through an interactive process instead of a passive process in which the instructor provides the student information through lecture. Students will be graded on the quantity and quality of their discussion participation as well as on completing and turning in the assigned exercises.

Reading Summary: Since class discussion and participation are major components of this class, students are required to hand in a brief one-page summary of the key points from the reading material prior to each class. This will ensure that students are prepared to actively participate in the class discussions.

Online Reflections. Students are to reflect on any readings, exercises, or class discussions that resonate with them and write their thoughts and insights in a weekly online reflection. Students are encouraged to also post their personal thoughts from class discussions or respond to other students' entries. Online reflections should be posted at least once a week. Students will be graded on weekly participation *and* the quality of their reflections.

Field Component. To facilitate a better understanding of the class material, students will pick an aspect of the material to explore more fully through conversations and interviews with local residents. Students may focus on one culture or geographic area or explore similarities and differences between cultures or geographic areas depending on their interests. While in port, students could learn about the particular beliefs of a culture or cultures around human rights and social justice and how these beliefs shape individual and group behaviors. They could compare and contrast the cultures to each other or to their own beliefs and behaviors around this subject. Students could write about their own beliefs about human rights and social justice prior to the course, how their beliefs contributed to their behaviors in this area, and how their beliefs around human rights and social justice have changed as a result of this course and their interactions with local residents. There are numerous cross-cultural variations on this theme that could be explored. Students are encouraged, but not required, to integrate the theme for the semester of "Human Rights and Social Justice in the Mediterranean World." The instructor will provide a list of other possible topics, but this list will not be exhaustive, and students are encouraged to develop their own topic of interest. Students will work closely with the instructor to develop, organize and present the field component. Creativity is highly valued and will carry added weight in grading. Students will be divided into small groups, depending on class size, to complete the project and present their findings in a 20 to 30-minute class presentation. Students will need approval from the instructor for their chosen field component prior to interviewing local residents. Grades will be based on the class presentation and submission of the field notes.

SUGGESTED PRACTICA:

GREECE: Delphi (FDP)
TURKEY: Sufi Dervish Ceremony (FDP)

Final Paper (at least 10 pp.). For the final paper of the course, students will write a paper going into depth about any new understandings or insights they have gained from the class, and/or the field component, about themselves, others, or the world. For instance, students could write about beliefs they had about themselves, others or the world prior to the course and how they have changed as a result of the course. There are many other possibilities for the paper topic. Students are encouraged to work with the instructor as they develop and write their paper. Students could draw on material from the class questions and exercises, their online reflections, or their field component experience. The paper is primarily self-exploratory and therefore creative but will still need to be supported by at least 5 references from either the class readings or outside sources to demonstrate an understanding and application of the class material. (All papers must be typed and double-spaced with 1-inch margins, size 12 font. Papers must follow stylistic guidelines recommended by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.*)

Grading:

Class participation	30 points
Reading summary	10 points
Online Reflections	10 points
Field Component	20 points
<u>Final paper</u>	<u>30 points</u>
TOTAL	100 points

Required Books:

Tolle, Eckhart. (2005). *A New Earth*. New York, New York. Penguin Group, Inc.

Tolle, Eckhart. (1999). *The Power of Now*. Novato, CA: New World Library Publishing

Kabat-Zinn, Jon. (1990). *Full Catastrophe Living*. New York, New York: Dell Publishing

Suggested Books:

Astin, Alexander. (2007). *Mindworks: Becoming More Conscious in an Unconscious World*. Charlotte, N.C.: Information Age Publishing.

Lipton, Bruce. (2005). *The Biology of Belief*. Santa Rosa, CA: Elite Books

Katie, Byron. (2002). *Loving What Is*. New York, New York. Harmony Books.

Class Schedule:

INTRODUCTION

Class 1: Thursday June 18 **Orientation and Overview of the Course**

SECTION 1: ORIGIN, NATURE, AND FORMATION OF BELIEFS

Class 2: Friday, June 19 **Consciousness: The Womb of Beliefs**

Astin, Preface and Ch. 1 “The Conscious and Nonconscious Minds” (pp. 1-32).

Class 3: Saturday, June 20 **The Nature of Beliefs**

Astin, Ch. 2 “The Nature of Beliefs” ” (pp. 33-58).

Class 4: Sunday, June 21 **The Formation of Beliefs in Early Childhood**

Ruiz, Don Miguel. (1997). The Four Agreements. San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing, Inc. Introduction and Ch. 1 “Domestication and the Dream of the Planet” (pp. xiii-23).

SECTION 2: THE BIOLOGY OF BELIEFS

Class 5: Monday, June 22 **The Biology of Beliefs: How Genes, Biology, Environment and Beliefs Affect Each Other**

Lipton, (VIDEO 1)

Lipton, Prologue, Introduction, Ch. 1 “Lessons From The Petri Dish: In Praise of Smart Cells and Smart Students,” and Ch. 2 “It’s The Environment, Stupid” (pp. 15-73).

(OPTIONAL)

Class 6: Tuesday, June 23 **The Biology of Beliefs: How Genes, Biology, Environment and Beliefs Affect Each Other**

Lipton, (VIDEO 2)

Lipton, Ch. 3 “ The Magical Membrane” and Ch. 4 “ The New Physics: Planting Both Feet Firmly On Thin Air,” (pp. 75-121). **(OPTIONAL)**

(Arrive Cadiz, Spain on June 24)

Class 7: Sunday, June 28

The Biology of Beliefs: How Genes, Biology, Environment and Beliefs Affect Each Other

Lipton, (VIDEO 3)

Lipton, Ch. 5 “Biology of Belief,” Ch. 6 “Growth and Protection,” and Ch. 7 “Conscious Parenting: Parents as Genetic Engineers” (pp. 123-181). **(OPTIONAL)**

Class 8: Monday, June 29

Stress: How Beliefs and Emotions Can Affect Your Body

Kabat-Zinn, Ch. 15 “Mind and Body: Evidence That Beliefs, Attitudes, Thoughts, and Emotions Can Harm or Heal” and Ch. 16 “Connectedness” (pp. 199-231).

Class 9: Tuesday, June 30

Stress: How Beliefs and Emotions Can Affect Your Body

Kabat-Zinn, Ch. 17 “Stress,” Ch. 18 “Change: One Thing You Can Be Sure Of,” Ch. 19 “Stuck in Reactivity,” and Ch. 20 “Responding to Stress Instead of Reacting” (pp. 235-273).

(Arrive Naples, Italy on July 1)

SECTION 3: TOOLS TO KNOW YOURSELF

Class 10: Monday, July 6

Changing Limiting Beliefs 1: “Mindfulness”

Kabat-Zinn, Ch. 1 “You Have Only Moments to Live,” Ch. 2 “The Foundations of Mindfulness Practice: Attitudes and Commitment,” Ch. 3 “The Power of Breathing: Your Unsuspected Ally in the Healing Process” (pp. 17-58).

(Arrive Dubrovnik, Croatia on July 7)

Class 11: Saturday, July 11

Changing Limiting Beliefs 2: “Mindfulness Applied”

Katie, Byron. (2002). Loving What Is. New York, New York. Harmony Books. Introduction, Ch. 1 “A Few Basic Principles,” Ch. 2 “The Great Undoing,” and Ch. 5 “Deepening Inquiry” (pp. ix-22 & 65-84).

(Arrive Piraeus/Athens, Greece on July 13)

SECTION 4: GETTING TO KNOW YOURSELF (You're Not Who You Think You Are)

Class 12: Friday, July 17 Consciousness: You are Not Your Mind

Tolle, Eckhart. (1999). *The Power of Now*. Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Namaste Publishing. Introduction, Ch. 1 "You Are Not Your Mind," and Ch. 2 "Consciousness: The Way Out of Pain" (pp. 1-38).

Tolle, Ch.1 "The Flowering of Human Consciousness" (pp. 1-23).

(Arrive Istanbul, Turkey on July 18)

Class 13: Thursday, July 23 Ego (Conditioned Mind): Limiting Beliefs as Identity

Tolle, Ch.2 "Ego: The Current State of Humanity" (pp. 25-58).

(Arrive Varna, Bulgaria on July 24)

Class 14: Tuesday, July 28 Ego (Conditioned Mind): Limiting Beliefs as Identity

Tolle, Ch. 3 "The Core of Ego" (pp. 59-84).

Class 15: Wednesday, July 29 Ego (Conditioned Mind): Limiting Beliefs as Identity

Tolle, Ch. 4 "Role-playing: The Many Faces of the Ego" (pp. 85-128).

(Arrive Alexandria, Egypt on July 30)

Class 16: Tuesday, August 4 The Relationship Between Feelings, Emotions, and Beliefs

Tolle, Ch. 5 "The Pain Body" (129-160).

Class 17: Wednesday, August 5 Beliefs in Relationships

Tolle, *The Power of Now*. Ch. 8 "Enlightened Relationships" (pp.121-146).

Class 18: Friday, August 7 Beliefs in Relationships

Walsch, Neale Donald. (1996). Conversations with God: An Uncommon dialog (Book 1). New York, New York. Penguin Putnam, Inc. Ch. 8 (pp. 121-147).

Class 19: Saturday, August 8 Freedom From Limiting Beliefs

Tolle, Ch. 6 “Breaking Free” (pp. 161-184).

(Arrive Casablanca, Morocco on August 09)

Class 20: Thursday, August 13 Freedom From Limiting Beliefs

Tolle, Ch. 7 “Finding Who You Truly Are” (pp. 185-221).

Class 21: Friday, August 14 Freedom From Limiting Beliefs

Tolle, Ch. 8 “The Discovery of Inner Space” (pp. 223-256).

Class 22: Saturday, August 15 Consciousness: Beyond Belief

Tolle, Ch. 9 “Your Inner Purpose” (pp. 257-278).

Astin, Postscript: “The Outer Reaches of Consciousness” (pp. 239-249). **(OPTIONAL)**

Class 23: Sunday, August 16 Consciousness: Beyond Belief

Tolle, Ch. 10 “A New Earth” (pp. 279-309).

Lipton, Epilogue: “Spirit and Science” (pp. 183-202). **(OPTIONAL)**

Monday, August 17 Journals Due

Monday-Thursday, August 17-20 Field Component Class Presentations

Wednesday, August 19 Final Paper Due

Special Notes:

*** Students are expected to arrive to class on time.

*** Submission of the final paper after the beginning of class on Wednesday, August 19 will lower the paper’s grade by a half letter grade each day, including the first day, until it is received by the instructor.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: Tolle, Eckhart
TITLE: A New Earth
PUBLISHER: Penguin Group, Inc.
ISBN #: 0-452-28758-8
DATE/EDITION: 2005
COST: \$14.00

AUTHOR: Tolle, Eckhart
TITLE: The Power of Now
PUBLISHER: Namaste Publishing
ISBN #: 1-57731-480-8
DATE/EDITION: 2004
COST:

AUTHOR: Kabat-Zinn, Jon
TITLE: Full Catastrophe Living
PUBLISHER: Dell Publishing
ISBN #: 0385303122
DATE/EDITION: 1990
COST: \$20.00