

Syllabus: Modern Problems of Belief
Dr. Bennett Ramsey

Course Objectives

Through reading, discussion, and weekly response papers, students will gain an interdisciplinary understanding of the classical modern western worldview (objective, linear, mechanical, Cartesian, etc) and will become knowledgeable about contemporary reinterpretations of and alternatives to that classical worldview. Students also will have developed the analytical skills required to make informed comparative judgments about the sufficiency of these new paradigms and reinterpretations. Finally, students will have gained a facility in working interdisciplinarily, and in writing and discussing perspectives from a variety of academic disciplines.

Required Texts

David Bohm, *On Dialogue*, New York: Routledge, 1996
Annie Dillard, *For the Time Being*, New York: Vintage Books, 1999
Neil Evernden, *The Natural Alien*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985
James Hillman, *Revisioning Psychology*, New York: Harper and row, 1975
Sakyung Mipham, *Turning the Mind into an Ally*, New York: Riverhead Books, 2003
Caroline Myss, *The Anatomy of the Spirit*, Boston: Three Rivers Press, 1996

General Description of Course Activities

Web link bibliography

Over the course of the semester, students will develop as a group a bibliography of secondary sources and web links that support the primary text readings that we will be studying. Suggestions for secondary readings will be reviewed by the class. You should choose links that help to make the texts more useful to you and other students. By the end of the semester, the final bibliography will become part of the course web site.

Discussion Forums

Students will be required to post 2-3 page response papers each week and will be expected to review other students' papers. These response papers should address substantive problems that you are having with the readings, insights into the readings, and an evaluation of the meaning and significance of the perspectives presented by the authors. Response papers should be posted to the Discussion Forum.

Media

Brief introductions by the professor to each of the readings will be available on the course web site.

Final Exam

There will be a final examination for this course that will be designed to assess the success of the class in meeting the course objectives outlined above. The final exams will be posted.

Art Gallery

For each text in the course you are going to use an art gallery tool to create a visual representation based on concepts covered in the text. Be sure to view the brief video tutorial to learn how to use the tool. Each post will be in response to a specific prompt and consists of images plus an explanation of why you selected those particular images. You are then expected to visit the virtual gallery to view other students' posts and respond to them with comments and/or questions in the Discussion Forum.