

Alternative Philosophies
PHM 4051, Ref.# 1585 (3 CC)
T-TR 12:30-1:50, J313

PURPOSE: To explore the nature of fringe or countercultural philosophies and the impact that they had and have on conventional Western values and ways of thinking. Topics will include feminism; environmentalism; minority philosophies such as Afrocentricity; Eastern thought; contemporary art; health; politics; religion; psychology; physics; and other arenas of thought that reflect and shape issues and relationships involving race, class, gender, nationality, and species.

READINGS: *Constructing a Life Philosophy*, *Voices and Visions*, *Uncommon Wisdom*, and handouts/websites from Andrew Weil, Black Elk, Sarah Conn, Molefi Asante, Alan Watts, Matthew Fox, June Singer, Charlene Spretnak, Noam Chomsky, and Theodore Roszak. All additional course materials must be returned to professor at semester's end.

REQUIREMENTS: Attendance (10% and no more than one unexcused absence); two exams (50%); one paper (35%); and two presentations (5%). This class meets the Multicultural requirement.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students will develop an understanding of the multicultural philosophical perspectives that question and help reconsider traditional knowledge and ways of being. They will be required to express their own perspectives through a formal paper and presentation regarding those perspectives, and by discussing passionately and tolerantly many of the issues that concern race, gender, environmental relations, alternative traditions, aesthetic and political expressions, and personality development. Besides gaining familiarity with major names and concepts involved in the area of study, students will become versed in the great variety of ideas regarding nontraditional worldviews.

Topics Schedule:

Week One-Introductions and overview of course material and goals. Essays and presentations on alternative philosophies. The source material of topics can range from a particular philosopher or school of philosophy to works of art to personal statements. The focus will be on what constitutes an alternative philosophy.

Week Two-Scott Peck and Plato from *Constructing*; Norman O. Brown and Herbert Marcuse from *Voices*; handout from Asante's *Afrocentricity*. We will discuss the "importance of choosing a life philosophy" from Plato's, Peck's, and our own personal perspectives; the creation of a "radically new human" based on the vision of the psychology-philosophy of Brown and Marcuse, and the role of the Sixties in creating that alternative vision; and also how civil-rights slogans such as black power and black consciousness have led to the articulation of Afrocentricity as both a philosophy and way of life.

Week Three-Joseph Campbell from *Voices*; Dunbar's "Eranos and Esalen" handout; and "The Big Sur Diaogues" from *Wisdom*. We will discuss the need for and role of mythmaking for individual and social psychic health; the variety of archetypes and the philosophy behind the ideal stages of a lifetime; the ways in which alternative visions of reality have been formulated

by colleagues—such as Jung, Neumann, Eliade, and Suzuki—at the Eranos proceedings and how those visions were culminated by a host of thinkers at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California.

Week Four- John Lilly from *Constructing*; Werner Heisenberg and J. Krishnamurti from *Wisdom*; film on Eastern philosophy; handout from Alan Watts. We will discuss the links between science and mysticism from three unique perspectives—namely, Lilly’s, Heisenberg’s, and Krishnamurti’s; some of the ecumenical tenets of Eastern philosophy and ways in which the tenets—particularly those of Taoism—are being incorporated into Western thought, values, and culture.

Week Five- Nancy Wilson Ross from *Constructing*, Geoffrey Chew and Gregory Bateson from *Wisdom*; handout from Sarah Conn. We will discuss Ross’s view regarding how Hinduism provides the penultimate ecumenical view of the divine; Chew’s understanding of the relationship between bootstrap theory and Buddhism as overlapping metaphors of cosmic connectedness; and Bateson’s notion of an Ecology of Mind as well as his systems theory discovery of “the pattern which connects”; and Conn’s notions of the holon and earth-healing.

Week Six- Gill Farrer-Halls from *Constructing*; Stanislav Grof and R.D. Laing from *Wisdom*; We will discuss Farrer-Halls’ conviction that the Buddhist search for ultimate reality gives life its ultimate meaning; the “cartography of consciousness” of Grof’s and Laing’s attempt to redefine sanity and insanity; and unique theories of mind and consciousness as they relate to how we view our daily affairs and place in the cosmos.

Week Seven- Review and presentations. **Paper topics and outline due.**

Week Eight- Midterm exam. Discussion of midterm exam.

Week Nine- Donald Miller and C.S. Lewis from *Constructing*; Stanley Keleman and Ernst Becker from *Voices*; handouts from Fox and Chomsky. We will discuss alternative views of Christianity, including the unique dimensions of dogma and experience; Keleman’s conviction that “We Don’t Have Bodies, We Are Bodies”; and Becker’s existential position regarding life and the heroism in the face of death. The focus will be on how we in the West can cultivate religious perspectives that do not separate mind, body, and spirit.

Week Ten- Riane Eisler and Brooke Medicine Eagle from *Constructing*; handout from Black Elk; film on Mother Goddess traditions; and handout from June Singer’s *Androgyny*. We will discuss Eisler’s notion of the partnership model of Mother Goddess traditions versus the West’s traditional eulogy of the dominator model; the impact that Native-American earth wisdom traditions have had and could have on contemporary culture; and mythological archetypes of the androgyne and their potential relevance today.

Week Eleven- Sam Keen from *Constructing*; and handout from Spretnak. We discuss the fundamentals of a life map and how it relates to mythology and compare and contrast essential characteristics of aboriginal, traditional Western, and emerging contemporary myths and life

maps; we will examine Spretnak's vision regarding the spiritual dimension of Green politics; and the notions of the inseparability of spiritual and political concerns in today's world.

Week Twelve—"The Search for Balance" and "Alternative Futures" from *Wisdom* (E.F. Schumacher, and Carl Simonton, and Hazel Henderson); handout from Weil; and film on holistic health. We will discuss Simonton's description of the paradigm shift in medicine and lessons we could gain from Asian medicine; Weil's description of complementary medicine; and alternative scenarios in the future development of economics, politics, and ecology through the visions of Schumacher and Chomsky.

Week Thirteen-Arnold Toynbee from *Constructing*; Roberto Assagioli from *Voices*; and handout from Roszak. We will discuss Toynbee's conviction that love and creativity are the heart of being human and that such a realization could and must be shared to ensure further human evolutionary adventures; Assagioli's vision of psycho-synthesis and the transpersonal self; the nature of collusive madness and ways that it applies to our culture; what alternative philosophies have been proposed as potential remedies for what seems to be ailing urban, industrial cultures—including the findings and interpretations of the new physics, Asian and aboriginal perspectives, Gaia theory, holistic health, and ecopsychology.

Week Fourteen-Presentations.

Week Fifteen-Review and Presentations.

Week Sixteen-Exam, Paper due.

Dr. Dirk Dunbar
J122 Art Center
Phone: 729-6058
Office hours: M,W,TR 10-12; T 3:30-6:30; F 11-12

If you have special needs or a disability for which accommodations may be appropriate to assist you in this class, please contact the Office of Services to Students with Special Needs in Building C-1 on the Niceville Campus, or call 729-5372. The schedule, requirements, and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of unusual or extenuating circumstances; in such cases, students will be provided with written notice sufficient to plan for and accommodate the changes. If the college closes for inclement weather or other emergency, any exams, presentations or projects or papers due during the closure period will automatically be rescheduled for the first regular class meeting held once the college re-opens. College policies relating to students' rights and responsibilities are discussed in the catalog (pp. 23-27) and will, of course, apply in this class.

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READINGS: *Constructing a Life Philosophy* and handouts.

REQUIREMENTS: Attendance (10% and no more than 1 unexcused absence); two exams (50%); one paper (35%); and two presentations (5%).

Week One-Introductions and overview of course material and goals.

Week Two-Peck, Plato, Keen, and “Renewing the Balance.”

Week Three-Eisler, Eagle, and “Eranos and Esalen.”

Week Four-more “Eranos and Esalen.” Film.

Week Five-Ross, Farrer-Halls, and “Physics, Gaia, and Ch’i.”

Week Six-more “Physics, Gaia, and Ch’i.” Film.

Week Seven- Review and presentations. **Paper topics and outline due.**

Week Eight- **Midterm exam.**

Week Nine-Miller, Lewis, and “Re-visioning Jesus.”

Week Ten-“Hollywood’s Transformed Hero.”

Week Eleven-“The Ecology of Rock and Roll.”

Week Twelve-Fletcher, Jefferson, and Film.

Week Thirteen-Toynbe and “Children, Education, and Health Care.”

Week Fourteen-Presentations.

Week Fifteen-Review and Presentations.

Week Sixteen-**Exam, Paper due.**

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Midterm Exam

Alternative Philosophies

Fill in the blanks (two points each):

1. According to Scott Peck, many people suffer from _____, which occurs when one uses childhood experiences and perceptions as a means of interacting in the world as an adult.
2. Plato insists that “The _____ is chained to the _____.”
3. Sam Keen claims that _____ is the systematic, unconscious way of structuring reality in a way that governs a culture as a whole.
4. The _____ model is, according to Riane Eisler, a way of organizing human relations in a way that is not equated with inferiority or superiority.
5. Ecopsychology was initiated by _____.
6. According to Sara Conn, the _____ picture of reality depicts all things as wholes that are parts within larger wholes.
7. The _____ period of Ecocentric Psychology was initiated by thinkers such as Michael Murphy, Alan Watts, and Abraham Maslow.
8. According to Brook Medicine Eagle, “When we expand our attention to the _____, to the All That Is, . . . we are moving toward God realization.”
9. _____ is the nature god of the Dravidians that is considered by Hindus as the left hand of Brahman.
10. The _____ is considered the fourth Noble Truth of Buddhism.
11. The Hindu/Buddhist concept, _____, is often translated as duty, but means acting in accord with nature.
12. _____ is a Latin term that Eranos’ colleagues used to refer to nature’s inherent balance.
13. _____ is the force that Taoists regard as the focal point of acupuncture, feng shui, and herbal remedies.
14. _____ is regarded by ecopsychologists as the repository of mind that connects the intra-psychic experience of all planetary being.
15. _____ theory is based on the conviction that Earth is a living, self-regulating organism.

I. Minor Essay (30 points):

What is a life map and how does it relate to mythology? Briefly compare and contrast essential characteristics of aboriginal, traditional Western, and emerging contemporary myths and life maps.

II. Major Essay (40 points)

What is collusive madness and in what ways could that concept be applied to our culture. What alternative philosophies have been proposed as potential remedies for what seems to be ailing urban, industrial cultures. Include in your discussion the findings and interpretations of the new physics, Asian and aboriginal perspectives, Gaia theory, holistic health, and ecopsychology.

