

Susan Bauer-Wu, Ph.D., R.N.  
Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing

Course Name: *Exploration of Self, Place, and Community in American and Global Contexts: A Contemplative Approach to Health and Sustainability*

This interdisciplinary graduate course will be co-taught with Bobbi Patterson, Ph.D., from the Emory College Department of Religion. In this course we will explore notions of self, place, and community within American and global religious and societal contexts, with an emphasis on the cultivation of pro-social mental qualities through contemplative approaches, such as mindfulness and compassion. Woven throughout the course will be integral issues of sustainability, interconnectedness, and health and healing. Didactic, experiential, and interactive pedagogical methods will be used to elucidate the course's key concepts and to enhance students' emotional balance, personal wellbeing, and commitment to social and ecological responsibility.

**EMORY UNIVERSITY  
LANEY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**COURSE SYLLABUS -- DRAFT**

**COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE:**

RLHT 735 and/or GRAD 700r

Exploration of Self, Place, and Community in American and Global Contexts: A Contemplative Approach to Health and Sustainability

**CREDIT ALLOCATION AND STUDENTS**

3 credit hours, open to all Emory PhD students and, with faculty permission, to Master's and honors undergraduate students

**FACULTY:**

Bobbi Patterson, PhD, Department of Religion, Emory College

Susan Bauer-Wu, PhD, RN, Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This interdisciplinary course will explore notions of self, place, and community within American and global religious and societal contexts, with an emphasis on the cultivation of pro-social mental qualities through contemplative approaches, such as mindfulness and compassion. Woven throughout the course will be integral issues of sustainability, interconnectedness, and health and healing.

Some of the specific topics to be explored in the course include:

- Awakening the self to the fullness of the webs of life – What are the processes? How does it shape community?
- What is health and healing (on personal, communal, biosystem, and ecosystem levels)? How does awakening to self influence the different levels of healing?
- Exploration of the significance of “the breath” and how breath awareness practices are historically ubiquitous across cultures and religions.
- Exploration of “integration”, including self-integration from biological and psychoanalytic perspectives, and moving beyond self-integration into sense of relationship and integration with community.
- Exploration of “place”, including American and global religious traditions of place.
- How can contemplative approaches transform individuals and communities? How can they become integrated into one's way of life?

Didactic, experiential, and interactive pedagogical methods will be used to elucidate the course's key concepts and to enhance students' emotional balance, personal wellbeing, and commitment to social and ecological responsibility.

**READINGS**

There will be great breadth in the readings used for this course, ranging in discipline (e.g.

religion, social and biomedical sciences, environmental science, and literature) and type of writing (e.g. poetry and creative works, peer-reviewed research and review articles, and lay books and articles).

Examples of readings for this course are listed below:

Albanese, C. L. (1991). *Nature Religion in America: From the Algonkian Indians to the New Age*.

Brown, K.W., and Kasser T. (2005). Are psychological and ecological well-being compatible? The role of values, mindfulness, and lifestyle. *Social Indicators Research*, *74*, 349–368.

Gatta, J. (2004). *Making Nature Sacred: Literature, Religion, and Environment in America from the Puritans to the Present*.

Goldstein, J., and Kornfield, J. (2001). *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom: The Path of Insight Meditation*.

Goleman, D. (July 2009). How green is green? *Tricycle*, *18*(4). (reprint from *Ecological Intelligence*, 2009, Broadway Business publishing)

Highland, C. (Ed.) (2003). *Meditations of Henry David Thoreau: A Light in the Woods*.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness*.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2005). *Wherever You Go, There You Are*.

Kaza, S. (2008). *Mindfully Green: A Personal and Spiritual Guide to Whole Earth Thinking*.

Merton, T. (2005). *No Man Is an Island*.

Oliver, M. *New and Selected Poems: Volume One (2004) and Volume Two (2007)*.

Siegel, D. (2007). *The Mindful Brain: Reflection and Attunement in the Cultivation of Well-being*.

The Dalai Lama. (2002). *An Open Heart: Practicing Compassion in Everyday Life*.