

SPIRITUALITY AND EDUCATION

EDPL 788M, Summer II, 2001

Instructor: Prof. JING LIN

Tuesday, Wednesday, 3:40-7:00

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Spiritual practice cultivates inner strength, confidence, inspiration, commitment and sense of purpose. We should address spiritual as well as material poverty. Only if the scientific civilization can be integrated with the inner spiritual civilization can mutual harmony and an ideal global society be established in the world. Spirituality may nurture moral, ethical and spiritual transformation, which are the keys unlocking the door to our interconnectedness and interdependence (Chung Ok Lee, 2000, Vision for a New Civilization, Won Buddhism Publishing, p. 167).

This course intends for students to explore spirituality from multidimensional angles. The students are to reflect on their own lives as to how they have spiritually carved their life course and given meaning to their experiences. World traditions are to be discussed, which would involve the reading of famous texts in Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, and so on. Spiritual, meditation practices will be studied to bring oneself to a higher level of concentration, inner peace, and sense of purpose in life. In education, the problems schools are facing today will be critically discussed, and spirituality will be brought into the discussion for possible explanations and solutions.

The course will touch on these topics:

- Human spirit, soul, intuition, revelations, enlightenment, dreams, human consciousness and subconsciousness.

- Meaning and purpose of life; definition of happiness; spiritual growth from practicing virtues such as compassion, love, and forgiveness; the positive and negative effects of suffering on one's spiritual evolution and self-actualization
- The relationship of body, mind and spirit; the integration of oneself with a larger Self; humanity and divinity. Cultivation of wisdom, generosity and service.
- Inner peace, tranquility, equanimity and human-nature interconnectedness
- The quest for Truth and for a better society through respiritualizing our education

Textbooks

1. Walsh, Roger. (1999). *Essential Spirituality*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
2. Eadie, Betty J. *Embraced by the Light*. NY: Bantam Books
3. Capra, Fitjof. (2000). (5th ed). *The Tao of Physics*. Boston: Shambhala.
4. Mitchell, Stephen. (2000). *Bhagavad Gita*. New York: Harmony Books.
5. Conze, Edward. (2001). *Buddhist Wisdom: The Diamond Sutra and Heart Sutra*. Vintage Books.
6. Lao Zi. *Tao Teh Ching*. (I will copy from my own version)
7. *Koran*
8. Harvey, Andrew. (1999). *Son of Man: The Mystical Path to Christ*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.
9. Chung Ok Lee (ed.). (2000). *Vision for a New Civilization: Spiritual and Ethical Values in the New Millennium*. New York: Won Buddhism Publishing. Several chapters will be taken from the book.
10. Yan Xin. "The Meaning of Qigong." "Thoughts of Qi." "Virtues as the Essence." (I will provide copy)
11. Kessler, Rachael. (2000). *The soul of education*. Alexandria, VA: Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Assignments and Grading

1. Leading and Participating in Class Discussions: 20%

2.	Reflection Paper:	20%
2.	Abstract and Reflection on Readings:	30%
3.	Final Paper	30%

1. Participation: Students will take turns to sum up ideas in one textbook and lead discussions in class. It is expected that all other students would have also read the book and provide meaningful contribution to the class.

2. Students will **write a self-reflection paper (3-5 pages)** to reflect on:

What have happened in your life that enlighten you and elevate your sense of awareness and take you to a higher level of understanding about life and your self?

What have you done in your life to cultivate spiritual growth? What is your understanding of the meaning and purpose of life, and our relationship with nature?

2. Students will write a **2-page reflection paper on the readings of each class** and it is expected that you use the writing process to enhance your own spiritual understanding and growth. You are also encouraged to keep a diary entry on what you have learned everyday.

4. The **final paper** (10-12 pages) should be a reflection on the meaning of life, and a discussion of key issues in education and improvement of schools from a spiritual perspective. The paper should combine personal intuition, observations, cultivation and reflection on relevant research literature to analyze educational issues and search for solutions.

The final paper can also be personal reflections in which students detail their path of spiritual cultivation. The forms of writing are flexible.

COURSE OUTLINE

July 17 **Introduction**

What brings us to this class: Share about moments and events in our life that deeply touch us, transform us, challenge us, and enlighten us

July 18 **Dimensions and Cultivation of Spirituality**

Reading: *Essential Spirituality*

Discussion: Problems in modern life. Reorganizing our life and exploring ways to reach into our spirit. Meditation, solitude, reflection.

July 24 **Changing Our Life Through Cultivation, and Understanding the Power of Our Mind and Choice in Life**

Finish reading of *Essential Spirituality*

Suggested Reading: *Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*

Discussion: The power of our emotions, mind and subconscious mind; give and take relationship; choice in life. Cultivating ethical living and achieving wisdoms; Expanding ourselves through generosity and service.

July 25 **Reconstructing Our World Through an Expansive View of Life**

Reading: *Embraced by the Light*

Discussion: The higher realm of existence. Our life's mission and destiny; The reciprocal effect of our words and deeds. Love and giving as happiness; taking all life situations as opportunity to transcend our self and radiate light and hope toward the world.

July 31 **Hinduism and Islamic Religion**

Reading: *Bhagavad Gita; Koran*

Discussion: The highest form of virtues, freedom, Yoga of Life, embracing our greater Self, becoming a person of wisdom; Path to achieve happiness.

Faith and life in Islamic tradition. Teaching of Koran

August 1

Sharing of Personal Reflection/Cultivation Paper

Paper due

August 7 Suffering and Enlightenment in Buddhism

Reading: *Buddhist Wisdom: The Diamond Sutra and the Heart Sutra*

Discussion: Roots of human sufferings and its effect on spirituality; Training of our mind for detachment and end of suffering; Love and Compassion for All in Buddhism; Zen Buddhism

August 8 Taoism: Philosophy and Cultivation

Readings: *Tao Teaching; The Thoughts of Qi; Virtues as the Essence*

Discussion: Returning to a child's mind; Taoist cultivation for immortality. Theory of Nature/Human Correspondence and Synchronicity; Qi as Bioinformation and Biointelligence Energy. What Comprises the Collective Unconscious. Virtues as the foundation for the harmony of the universe. Chinese Qigong, Chinese Medicine, Special Abilities, Chinese language and I Ching.

August 14 Spiritual Cultivation in Christianity

Reading: *Son of Man*.

Discussion: Christian cultivation toward enlightenment. A reexamination of femininity; Freedom gained from repentance and forgiveness; unconditional love and the mystical path of Jesus; the Will of All

August 15 **Integration of Science and Religion, and Eastern and Western Understanding of the Universe**

Reading: *The Tao of Physics*;

Discussion: Science and Religion; Integration of body, mind and spirit; Integration of Eastern and Western philosophy; The universe as conscious.

August 21 Critical Issues in Modern Societies (e.g., peace and environmental protection) and Spirituality Education

Reading: *Vision for a New Civilization* and *The Soul of Education*
Research articles by Jing Lin and other authors

Discussion: Critical problems in today's education; Bringing soul back to education and reclaiming goodness.

August 22 Spirituality Education for a New World

Student share term papers