Buddhism and Psychotherapy

EMP 2015HS Summer 2019

Room TBA

Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:00 to 9:00 PM
May 21 to June 27

Instructor: Tony Toneatto, Ph.D. C.Psych
tony.toneatto@utoronto.ca

Course Description:
In recent years a voluminous literature has appeared that has examined the numerous commonalities between western psychotherapy and counselling and Buddhism. This has been possible because Buddhism, despite its religious aspects, can also be profitably described as a philosophy and psychology of transformation. The Buddhist teachings are replete with analyses of human behavior, emotion, cognition, interpersonal and psychological functioning that closely resemble the models of human behavior and mental illness that have emerged in western culture. The greatest emphasis has been placed on mindfulness meditation and the alleviation of mental suffering. However the potential of Buddhist psychology extends well beyond mindfulness meditation. In this comparative course the convergence between Buddhism and the major systems of psychotherapy will be surveyed. Specifically, psychoanalytic, behavioral, cognitive, and the emerging study of positive psychology will be discussed within the context of Buddhist psychology.

Course Outcomes:
The course prepares provides students interested in the mental health implications of Buddhism with an understanding of how the major systems of psychotherapy found in western cultures compare and contrast with Buddhist psychology. An emphasis will be placed on identifying the view of human nature common in psychotherapy and Buddhist philosophy and psychology indicative of a perennial wisdom that transcends geography, culture and time.

Course Evaluation:
Term Essay: 40% - Analysis of any aspect of Buddhist psychology and western psychotherapy (Guidelines to be posted on Quercus in the very near future; due July 8)

Attendance 10%- 1% per class beginning May 23

Article Summary 20% (2% @ 10 classes)- one-page, single-spaced summary of the week’s readings OR summary of the lecture - must be submitted either in class or via Quercus. Summaries submitted later than 4 pm but by the end of day (11:59 pm) of the day of the class will earn 0.5%.

Open Book Test 30% - June 27 based on powerpoint slides
Lecture Schedule

May 21  Review of basic Buddhist psychology; Limitations of Secular Mindfulness  


May 23  Survey of Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Meditative and Mystical Practices  

May 28  The Unconscious and the Pursuit of Spiritual-Meditative Practices  
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279529386_Chapter_7_Students_Teachers_and_Their_Relationships/download

May 30  Conceptions of Self in Buddhism and Psychotherapy: Part I  


June 4  Conceptions of Self in Buddhism and Psychotherapy: Part II  

June 6  Buddhism, Psychotherapy and the Transformation of Narcissism  

June 11  Bionian Psychoanalysis, Reverie, Buddhism, ‘O’ and Mindfulness Meditation  

June 13  Cognitive, Behavioral and Buddhist Psychology  
Reading: TBA

June 18  Self-Schema Therapy: A cognitive-behavioral Buddhist psychotherapy  
June 20  Positive Psychology and Buddhist Psychology

June 25  Psychotherapy and Buddhist Psychology: Future Directions


June 27  Open Book Test