Course Description:
This course examines a number of theoretical research methods, assists students in developing their own, and provides the foundations for writing papers for academic publication. Emphasis is placed on approaching research and writing as transformative spiritual practices. Theoretical research is the systematic application of a standpoint or standpoints to a body of existing knowledge with the intention of uncovering, generating, critiquing, deconstructing, or integrating meanings, theories, models, paradigms, or fields of knowledge. Theoretical research is carried out with critical reflection based on a thorough knowledge of the relevant literature of that standpoint or standpoints, as well as of the material to which it is being applied. Theoretical approaches surveyed in the course include hermeneutics, comparative studies, integrative scholarship, critical theory, deconstruction, and feminist theory.

Summary of Educational Purpose:
The main purpose of this course is to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to develop a theoretical approach adequate to their research interests, write theoretical papers or dissertations, and submit them for publication.

Learning Objectives:
After completing this course, students will be able to:
1. Understand the logic(s) of theoretical inquiry.
2. Be familiar with a variety of theoretical methods in the human sciences.
3. Develop a theoretical approach appropriate to their research interests.
4. Write theoretical papers and submit them for publication.

Learning Activities:
1. Cognitive/didactic (lecture): 45%
2. Practical/applied (dialogue, class presentations): 45%
3. Experiential (meditation, group process): 10%

Criteria for Evaluation:
1. Mid-term assignment (1-4 pages): 20%
2. Final research paper (20-25 pages): 50%
3. Class presentations: 30%

Grading Options:
Letter Grade, Pass/Fail, or as allowed by the department.
Level of Instruction:
Ph.D. level / MA students with consent of instructor.

Required Texts:
- Course Reader, available at Copy Central (2336 Market Street, between Castro and Noe Streets. Tel. 415-431-6725).

The publication manual serves as a reference text to be used throughout the course. The rest of readings will be assigned weekly as outlined in the Course Schedule.

NOTE: Besides weekly required readings, the reader includes a number of sample papers illustrating the different theoretical approaches. The time for the reading and analysis of sample papers will be assigned in class. Extra handouts (such as additional samples or sections of dissertation proposals) may be also distributed and analyzed in class.

Recommended Readings:

Assignments:
All papers should be written according to the *APA Publication Manual* (6th ed.) or *The Chicago Manual of Style* (15th ed.). All papers should include a cover page with title, as well as be one-sided, double-spaced, and written with 12-point size Times New Roman font. *Papers not following these specifications may be returned to students without feedback.*

1. **Mid-Term Paper:** (1-4 pages)
This assignment can take the form of an outline of the final paper, a theoretical research proposal, or a preliminary literature review and/or other theoretical sections (e.g., background, thesis statement, research objectives, and/or theoretical tools) of the dissertation proposal.

2. **Final Paper:** (15-25 pages)
Write a theoretical research paper on a subject of your interest. This assignment can also take the form of a draft of your dissertation proposal, its literature review and/or other theoretical sections, or a paper you plan to submit for publication.

3. **Presentations:**
In addition to presenting sample papers throughout the course, during weeks 10-15 students option ally offer presentations of the theoretical research project they are working on. *Priority will be given to students working on their dissertation proposals.*
PART I. FOUNDATIONS

**Week 1. Introduction: What is Theoretical Research? (Sept 1)**
What is theoretical research? Varieties of theoretical approaches. “Productive fit” between research topic and standpoint. Theoretical approaches and personal dispositions. Becoming a scholar as a rite of passage. Overview of the course and students’ introductions of their research interests.

*Readings:*  
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg, “Praise of Theory.”
- hooks, bell, “Theory as Liberatory Practice.”
- Slife, Brent D. & Williams, Richard D., “Toward a Theoretical Psychology.”

**Week 2. Research and Writing as Spiritual Practices (Sept 8)**

*Readings:*  
- Ferrer, Jorge N., Marina T. & Albareda, Ramon V., “The Integral Creative Cycle.”
- Kripal, Jeffrey J., “Roads of Excess.”
- Romanyshyn, Robert D., “The Transference Field between Researcher and the Work,” “Alchemical Hermeneutics.”
- Metzger, Deena, “Writing as a Spiritual Practice.”

**Week 3. The Art of Literature Review + Dissertation Process (Sept 15)**
The literature review as starting point. Creativity in literature reviews. Basic strategies and potential pitfalls. Types of literature review: Thematic, chronological, and critical. Overview of the dissertation process.

*Readings:*  
- Patten, Mildred, “Writing Literature Reviews.”
- Pyrczak, Fred, “A Closer Look at Evaluating Literature Reviews.”
- Roth, Audrey, “Searching for Information,” “Recording Information” (pp. 57-61, 106-17).
PART II. THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Week 4. Theoretical Approaches I: Hermeneutic Studies (Sept 22)

Readings:
• Alvesson, Mats & Sköldberg, Kaj, “Hermeneutics: Interpretation and Insight.”
• Warnke, Georgia, “Understanding as Participation.”
• Tuck, Andrew P., “The Philosophy of Scholarship,” “Holists, Hermeneuticists, and Holy Men.”
• Madison, G. B., “Method in Interpretation.”

Samples:
• Leone, George, “Zen Meditation: A Psychoanalytic Conceptualization”
• Gold, Jeffrey, “Plato in the Light of Yoga”
• Kealey, Daniel A., sections of Revisioning Environmental Ethics
• Brooke, R., “Towards a Phenomenological Analytical Psychology”
• Whicher, Ian, “Yoga and Freedom: A Reconsideration of Patanjali’s Classical Yoga”
• Van Norden, Bryan W., “Competing Interpretations of the Inner Chapters of the Zhuangzi”

Week 5. Theoretical Approaches II: Comparative Studies (Sept 29)

Readings:
• Paden, William, “Comparative Perspective in the Study of Religion.”
• Bernstein, Richard J., “The Hermeneutics of Cross-Cultural Understanding.”
• Krieger, D. J., “Methodological Foundations for Interreligious Dialogue.”
• Holdrege, Barbara, A., “What’s Beyond the Post? Comparative Analysis as Critical Method.”

Samples:
• Levy, John, “Transpersonal Psychology and Jungian Psychology”
• Gross, Rita, “Meditation and Prayer: A Comparative Inquiry”
• Jennings, William H., “Agape and karuna: Some Comparisons”
• Smith, Michael C., “Introduction” to Jung and Shamanism
Week 6. Theoretical Approaches III: Integrative Scholarship (Oct 6)

Readings:  
- Scott, David, “The Scholarship of Integration.”  
- Chaudhuri, Haridas, “The Integral Method.”  
- Wilber, Ken, “Integral Methodological Pluralism.”

Samples:  
- Tigue, John, “Introduction,” in *The Transformation of Consciousness in Myth: Integrating the Thought of Jung and Campbell*  
- Wilber, Ken, “An Integral Theory of Consciousness”  
- Loy, David, “Introduction,” in *Nonduality: A Study in Comparative Philosophy*  
- Brown, Charles S. & Toadvine, Todd, “Eco-Phenomenology”  
- Goddard, Gerry, “Introduction,” in *Transpersonal Theory and the Astrological Mandala*

Week 7. Theoretical Approaches IV: Critical Theory (Oct 13)

Readings:  
- Alvesson, Mats & Sköldberg, Kaj, “Critical Theory: The Political and Ideological Dimension.”  
- Fay, Brian, “The Basic Scheme of Critical Social Science.”  
- Geuss, Raymond, “Critical Theory.”  
- Crotty, Michael, “Paolo Freire’s pedagogy of the oppressed.”

Samples:  
- Boff, Leonardo, “The Originality of the Theology of Liberation”  
- Santikaro Bhikkhu, “The Four Noble Truths of Dhammic Socialism”  
- Hakamaya, Noriaki, “Thoughts on the Ideological Background of Social Discrimination”  

Week 8. Theoretical Approaches V: Deconstruction (Oct 20)

Readings:  
- Griffin, David R., “Constructive Postmodern Thought.”
• Alvesson, Mats & Sköldberg, Kaj, “Poststructuralism and Postmodernism.”
• Adams, Michael V., “Deconstructive Philosophy and Imaginal Psychology: Comparative Perspectives on Jacques Derrida and James Hillman.”
• Ellis, John M., “The Logic of Deconstruction.”

Samples: • Burman, Erica, “Introduction” in Deconstructing Developmental Psychology • Taylor, Mark C., “…Prelude” in Earring: A Postmodern A/theology • Price, Robert, “Jesus Christ as the Effect of Christianity, Not the Cause” • Cuppet, Don, “The Mysticism of Secondariness”

**MID-TERM ASSIGNMENT DUE!**

Week 9. Theoretical Approaches VI: Feminist Theory (Oct 27)
(Guest Lecturer: Malgorzata [Margaret] Kruszewska)


Readings: • Gross, Elizabeth, “What is Feminist Theory?”
• Alvesson, Mats & Sköldberg, Kaj, “Feminism.”
• Handouts TBA.

Samples: • Chodorow, Nancy, “Introduction,” in Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory • Ruether, Rosemary R., “Introduction,” in Gaia & God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing • Lanzetta, Beverly J., “Contemplative Feminism: Transforming the Spiritual Journey” • Wright, Peggy, “Bringing Women’s Voices to Transpersonal Theory”

PART III: BECOMING AN SCHOLAR: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Week 10. Personal Experience in Scholarship (Nov 3)
The inclusion of personal experience in scholarship. Approaches and examples. Impact on academic style. Pitfalls and antidotes. Discussion of loose ends in relation to the various theoretical approaches examined in the first half of the course. Linking theoretical approaches to students’ research interests.

• Anderson, Rosemarie, “Embodied Writing and Reflections on Embodiment.”

Samples:
• Lanzetta, Beverly, “Introduction. The Days of Awe”  
• Bache, Christopher, “The Autobiographical Element in Transpersonal Philosophy”  
• Nelson, Peter, “Mystical Experience and Radical Deconstruction”  
• Kripal, Jeffrey J., “Secret Talks”  
• Shanon, Benny, “Theoretical Foundations. Methodology and General Structure.”

Week 11. Public Speaking: Exoteric and Esoteric Dimensions (Nov 10)

Readings:
• Pyrczak, Fred, “Evaluating Titles. Evaluating Introductions.”
• Fulwiler, Toby, “Openings and Closings.”

Week 12. On Writing I: Basic Elements (Nov 17)

Readings:
• Roth, Audrey, “Writing your Paper” (pp. 160-97).
• Pyrczak, Fred, “Evaluating Abstracts.”

Week 13. On Writing II: Style and Process (Nov 24)

Readings:
• Goldberg, Natalie, “What I Really Want to Say,” “Reading Aloud.” “Writing as a Practice,” “Fighting Tofu,” “Writing is a Communal Act,” “Rereading and Rewriting.”
• Sher, Gail. “Making Writing Periods Successful and Enjoyable,” “Writing Posture,” “Distractions,” “One Continuous Mistake,” “Writer’s Block.”

Week 14. The Publication Process (Dec 1)
Readings:  
• Wechsler, Harold S., “Publishing a Journal Article.”  
• Luey, Beth, “Journal Articles,” “Bibliography.”  
• Ferrer, Jorge, “Dossier Publication Process.”

PART IV: CONCLUSION

Week 15. Conclusion: The Spiritual Dimension of Contemporary Theoretical Approaches (Dec 8)

✉️ - FINAL PAPER DUE!
COURSE READER
Required Readings


Samples

**Literature Reviews**

**Hermeneutic Studies**

**Comparative Studies**

**Integrative Scholarship**


**Critical Theory**


**Deconstruction**


**Feminist Theory**


**Personal Experience and Scholarship**


**Research Bibliography:**

A. ON THEORETICAL RESEARCH APPROACHES

**General Overviews**

**Hermeneutics**

**Comparative Studies**

**Integrative Scholarship**

**Critical Theory**


**Post-structuralism & Deconstruction**


**Feminist Theory**


**B. ON WRITING**

**Research Papers**


**Literature Reviews**


**Style**


**Guides to Nonsexist Language**


**Scholarly Publishing**


**Instructor:**


A distinguished scholar on transformative practices and integral epistemology at the Esalen Center for Theory and Research, Big Sur, California, in 2000 he received the Fetzer Institute’s Presidential Award for his seminal work on consciousness studies. He is on the editorial board of *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, *ReVision, Spirituality and Health International*, *The International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, *Journal of Transpersonal Research*, and *Journal of Men: Masculinities and Spirituality*. Jorge offers workshops and presentations on integral spirituality and education both nationally and internationally.