Course Description:
To what extent may certain spiritual views, dilemmas or systems be the fruit of disembodied states of knowing/being? Can a more embodied spiritual inquiry shed new light on perennial problems of spiritual discourse? This course offers a practical exploration of embodied spiritual inquiry in the context of participatory and co-operative research paradigms. In contrast to the mind-centered approach of conventional education, an integral participatory pedagogy incorporates all human dimensions—body, vital, heart, mind, and consciousness—into the learning and inquiry processes.

To this end, we will use “interactive embodied meditations”—which seek access to deep layers of our somatic, vital, emotional, and mental worlds—as tools to inquire into collaboratively formulated spiritual questions. Take, for example, a spiritual issue or question “X” of your choice. What we will be doing is not only asking our conscious minds what do they know, think, or believe about X, but also attempting to access the voice and wisdom of our bodies, instincts, and hearts to see what they have to say about X. In the spirit of co-operative inquiry, participants will go through cycles of experience and reflection on focused spiritual questions.

NOTE: This method of embodied inquiry involves respectful physical contact.

Summary of Educational Purpose:
The main purpose of this course is to introduce participants to the practice of embodied spiritual inquiry. A second objective is to offer the foundations of participatory and co-operative research in the context of spiritual studies and integral education.

Learning Objectives:
After completing the course, students will have acquired:

1. Familiarity with the method of embodied spiritual inquiry and the practice of “embodied interactive meditations.”
2. A basic understanding of the foundations of participatory and co-operative research in the context of integral education.
3. Basic skills for constructing knowledge from experience, both individually and collaboratively.
4. An appreciation of the importance of incorporating personal experience (somatic, vital, emotional, imaginal, etc.) and spiritual awareness in the human sciences.
Learning Activities:
1. Didactic (lecture): 20%
2. Dialogical Inquiry: 20%
3. Multidimensional Inquiry: 60%

Criteria for Evaluation:
1. Class presence and participation: 50%
2. Final paper (12-18 pages): 50%

Prerequisites:
1. Attendance to the Opening Session (Sep 3) is required to take the course. (If truly unfeasible, please contact instructor with enough advanced notice).
2. Background in any contemplative or embodied spiritual discipline (e.g., meditation, tai chi, qi gong, yoga, etc.) is not required but recommended.
3. Openness to engage in embodied practices and explore experiential ways of knowing will be assumed.

Grading Options:
Pass/Fail.

Level of Instruction:
M.A. and Ph.D.

Cup: 12 participants.

Schedule of Classes:
Thursday, Sep 3: Th. 3:00-6:00pm.
Weekend Sep 12-13: Sat. 10:00am-5:00pm and Sunday 10:00am-5:00pm.
Weekend Sep 26-27: Sat. 10:00am-5:00pm and Sunday 10:00am-5:00pm.
Weekend Oct 10-11: Sat. 10:00am-5:00pm and Sunday 10:00am-5:00pm.

Required Readings:
Handouts provided in class. (See Course Schedule below)

Highly Recommended Readings:

Recommended Readings:


**Assignments:**

1. **Final Paper:** (12-18 pages)
   Interweave personal experience and conceptual reflection in light of class readings, dialogues, and/or the fruits of the course’s individual and collective embodied spiritual inquiry. Participants can focus on one of the inquiry questions explored in class, write a personal narrative describing their entire inquiry process, or write a more theoretical essay on topics such as “embodied spiritual inquiry,” “participatory spirituality,” or “integral participatory education.” Collaborative papers are acceptable with the consent of the instructor.

2. **Journal:**
   Participants are asked to keep a personal journal. Although the journal is intended to facilitate deeper personal reflection and will not be collected in class, participants are encouraged to include a few selected journal entries in their final paper.
Course Schedule
EWP6205: Embodied Spiritual Inquiry

The following course structure may be modified according to the evolution of the group inquiry.

INTRODUCTION

Opening Session. Embodied Spiritual Inquiry: A Participatory Approach (Sep 3)

Readings:
• Almaas, A. H., “Openness in Inquiry.”
• Ray, Reginald, “Touhuing Enlightenment with the Body.”
• Ferrer, Jorge, “What Does It Mean to Live a Fully Embodied Spiritual Life?”
• Heron, John, “Spiritual Inquiry and the Authority Within,” “Participatory Research.”

ACQUIRING THE INQUIRY TOOLS: INTERACTIVE EMBODIED MEDITATIONS

Weekend Retreat I. Exploring Personal Reality: Body, Vital/Primary World, Heart, and Mind/Consciousness (Sep 12-13)
Unconditional acceptance as the foundation of participatory inquiry. Experiential practices: Enlightening and enlivening our bodies, vital/primary world, heart, and mind. Integrative work and verbal elaboration of the experience. Silence and contemplation. Collaborative decision-making process on our initial inquiry question.

Readings:
• Ferrer, Jorge, “Integral Transformative Practice: A Participatory Perspective.”
• Ferrer, Jorge, Marina Romero, and Ramon Albareda, “Integral Transformative Education: A Participatory Approach.”

EMBODIED SPIRITUAL INQUIRIES

Each embodied spiritual inquiry (I & II) consists of three experience/reflection cycles and a final module for conceptual clarification of inquiry outcomes. Each inquiry focuses on a specific spiritual question collaboratively formulated by group participants. To deepen the investigation, both cycles of inquiry can be focused on the same spiritual question if the group so decides it. Handouts may be provided in class to complement the experiential inquiry process, as necessary.
Weekend Retreat II, Embodied Spiritual Inquiry I (Sep 26-27)
1. First experience / reflection cycle: The body and somatic knowing
2. Second experience / reflection cycle: The primary world and vital knowing
3. Third experience / reflection cycle: The heart and emotional knowing
4. Clarification of inquiry outcomes: The mind and conceptual/intuitive knowing

Readings: • TBA

Weekend Retreat III. Embodied Spiritual Inquiry II (Oct 10-11)
1. First experience / reflection cycle: The body and somatic knowing
2. Second experience / reflection cycle: The primary world and vital knowing
3. Third experience / reflection cycle: The heart and emotional knowing
4. Clarification of inquiry outcomes: The mind and conceptual/intuitive knowing

Readings: • Osterhold, Helge O., Elizabeth Husserl, & David Nicol, “Rekindling the Fire of Transformative Education: A Participatory Case Study.”

Instructor:
Jorge N. Ferrer, Ph.D., is chair of the Department of East-West Psychology, where he teaches courses on transpersonal studies, comparative mysticism, embodied spiritual inquiry, and spiritual dimensions of sexuality and relationships. He is the author of Revisioning Transpersonal Theory: A Participatory Vision of Human Spirituality (SUNY Press, 2002), and co-editor of The Participatory Turn: Spirituality, Mysticism, Religious Studies (SUNY Press, 2008). A leading 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. Jorge offers workshops and presentations on embodied spirituality and integral education both nationally and internationally.

Teaching Assistant:
Zayin Neumann, M.A. is a guide, facilitator, and philosopher at heart. He is a Ph.D. student at CIIS, where he is working at the intersection of various contemporary wisdom traditions, a process-oriented philosophy of science, and a deep intuition into the gifts offered by an evolutionary theory of consciousness. Zayin is the editor of the shamanism section of AllThingsHealing.com, and works to enliven community through his regular newsletter, Shamanism around the Bay. He organizes and facilitates workshops on Integral Cosmology, Holistic Integration/Sexuality, and leads contemporary rites of passage. Zayin also has a private practice in the Bay Area, which he likes to think of as Integral Gardening.