

Spirituality and Evolution: Module Descriptions

Both modules will include experiential teaching elements.

Interspirituality: Deepening one's own faith through exploring other faiths

Overall Aims and Purpose

This module explores the ideas and influences of Brother Wayne Teasdale and the interspiritual movement. From inter-faith dialogues and multi-faith communities has come a theology and practical approach to religion and spirituality that recognises core ideas common to all world faiths. By concentration on the experience of worship (what it feels like), so a greater appreciation of the divinity underlying religion is perceived. The concept and practice of a 'Monk in the World' is explored, i.e. the attitudes, approach and practices of a modern day mystic living an otherwise ordinary life. Taken in conjunction with the values common to all faiths and a commitment to common personal and societal aims, these factors help us to develop our own faith in the context of a multi-faith society.

Course Content

- Brother Wayne Teasdale: 'The Mystic Heart' (1999) & 'A Monk in the World' (2002) : the essence of Interspirituality
- Ancient mystic/modern mystic: similarities and differences
- Interspiritual attitudes and practices: different paths, same goals
- Compassion and contemplation: the role of common (& shared) experience

The evolution of Spirituality in a secular world

Overall Aims and Purpose

To examine the growing quest for 'depth' and meaning in our lives and the associated development of holistic and integrated health. To introduce the idea of 'The Transcendence Movement' as a description for the individuals and groups actively working towards a higher level of consciousness; one that might be equitable to 'Christ Consciousness' or to 'Being' in a Heideggerian sense. To show how these developments can be seen as part of the evolution of consciousness as predicted by (for example) Teilhard de Chardin and Alister Hardy.

Course Content

- Our quest for meaning in life – what are we seeking? Comparison with 'seekers' in the Quaker movement and other faith communities.
- 'Spirituality and Health' – ways in which faith, religion and spiritual practices affect our wellbeing; integrated & holistic health – a spiritual dimension to life.
- Evolutionary consciousness: an introduction to 'transcendent thought' and how ideas from theology and evolutionary psychology might be seen as converging.

- How, at a personal level, our willingness to embrace both suffering and transcendent (religious/mystical) experiences assist our own spiritual growth and ability to cope with life

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