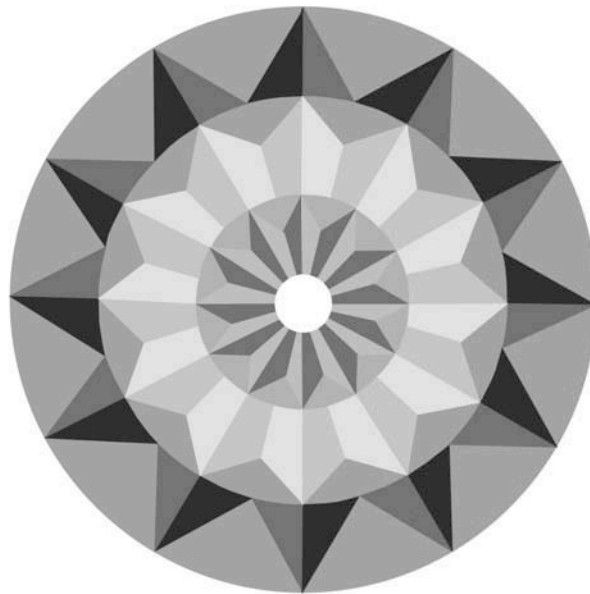


SPIRITUAL PATHS INSTITUTE

Certificate & Advanced Program in

INTERSPIRITUAL WISDOM



INSTITUTE CATALOGUE

WINTER 2009

The Spiritual Paths Institute is a division of the Spiritual Paths Foundation located in Aspen, Colorado and Santa Barbara, Ca. Our Mailing Address is 6 Harbor Way, Santa Barbara, Ca. 93109. We hold semester intensives and related programs in a variety of locations throughout the US including Colorado, California, and New York.

This booklet is intended to provide general information about the Spiritual Paths Institute Auditor, Certificate, and Advanced Degrees in InterSpiritual Wisdom .Our website contains the most up-to-date information on courses, faculty, fees, and procedures. Spiritual Paths reserves the right to alter its content at any time and to implement new policies and procedures to address emerging needs.

To request additional information, an application, or enrollment information, please go to www.spiritualpaths.net/institute, email us at info@spiritualpaths.net, or call 805 695-0104.

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Mission, Purpose & Objectives

As human beings, we naturally endeavor to create an understanding and practice of spirituality that can bring peace, happiness, and meaning to our lives. The healthy future of humanity and our planet will require the holistic integration of the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and ethical dimensions of humanity into our public and private lives. Our community of teachers, learners, and practitioners are dedicated to these goals.

The Spiritual Paths Institute Program in InterSpiritual Wisdom has been designed by a multi-faith team of scholars, practitioners, and teachers. Each semester students attend a six-day intensive session and complete their research, course work, dissertation, and projects from their respective home bases. Our students also come from partnering credit-giving institutions to participate in a unique academic and experiential curriculum on InterSpirituality that is not offered at their home institutions.

The Graduate Institute fulfills the need for non-biased, educational programs on the world's major spiritual traditions. The thirty-six credit Advanced Degree and Certificate Program cover the core teachings, values, rituals, prayers, arts, intellectual disciplines, and contemplative practices of five major traditions. This unique academic and experiential curriculum helps students fulfill their professional and personal needs.

The Spiritual Paths Institute enables our students to understand the world's spiritual traditions, to help remove barriers caused by inaccurate knowledge and misunderstanding, to develop their own personal spiritual paths, and to become wise and compassionate participants in our pluralistic society and interdependent world.

Introduction to InterSpirituality

“Humanity stands at a crossroads between horror and hope. In choosing hope, we must seed a new consciousness, a radically fresh approach to life drawing its inspiration from perennial spiritual and moral insights, intuition and experience. We call this new awareness InterSpiritual, implying not the homogenization of religion, but the recovering of the shared mystic hear in the center of the world’s deepest spiritual traditions.” -Wayne Teasdale, “Mystic Heart”

The religious landscape of the world is changing. No longer solely dominated by separate and securely entrenched religious institutions, the religious lives of people, especially people in the United States, Canada and other postindustrial nations, are increasingly defined by a sense of individual freedom, universality and association with more than one religious or spiritual tradition.

By encouraging interspirituality we do not intend the blending of religions or the ending of religious diversity. On the contrary, by interspirituality we mean the increasing spiritual creativity emerging from the meeting of, and dialogue between, the world's major religious traditions. This meeting acknowledges differences between religions and affirms the greater unity they all share. This unity provides the common ground from which religious diversity

flowers. People are discovering that their respect for and love of the religion of their birth need not preclude a similar respect for the full range of human spiritual creativity.

This discovery is fueling the growing interest in interspiritual study, practice, and lifestyle. We aim, therefore, to encourage “the recovery of the shared mystic heart beating in the center of the world’s deepest spiritual traditions.” Interspirituality is a profound way of working toward the goal of global understanding, respect, and peace by elucidating the common themes, methodologies, meanings and truths of the world’s religions while respecting the unique gifts and particularities of each tradition. As interspirituality grows and becomes the norm for greater numbers of people, the need arises for serious scholarship and practical guidance that explores the nature of this emerging reality and helps people navigate the waters of Interspiritual awakening. We support students in the deepening of their spiritual paths without constricting their perspective to one particular theological mind-set.

To meet these needs, and to further define and shape the emerging field of Interspirituality, the Spiritual Paths Institute Program offers a two-year Certificate and Advanced Programs in Interspiritual Studies.

Pedagogy

“Twenty-five hundred years ago it took an exceptional man like Diogenes to exclaim, ‘I am not an Athenian or a Greek but a citizen of the world.’ Today we must all be struggling to make those words our own. We have come to the point in history when anyone who is only Japanese or American, only Oriental or Occidental, is only half human. The other half that beats with the pulse of humanity has yet to be born.” Huston Smith

The educational philosophy underlying this program rests on a convergence of academic rigor and personal spiritual exploration. Our task as educators is not simply to guide students toward a historical understanding of what was, but to help them master the tools to learn about and possibly awake to what is – The Absolute Reality (e.g., Allah, Brahma, *Dharmakaya*, God, Wakantanka, Higher Power, Great Spirit, *Sunyata*, Tao). To achieve this end, our faculty is comprised of scholar/practitioners who have been authenticated by their respective traditions, and who have learned to speak from that tradition rather than for that tradition. The importance of this quality of speaking from rather than for a given tradition cannot be overestimated, and is central to making this program unique and uniquely interspiritual.

To speak for a tradition is to speak to what is fixed, formal, and normative within that tradition. It is to speak for the past. To speak from a tradition is to engage the past as a catalyst for addressing the present. Speaking from is at the heart of interspirituality, and fosters an open and intellectually adventurous learning environment. Understanding the teachings and practices of the world’s great wisdom traditions is the starting point of inter-spirituality, not its end point. We excavate the past to uncover common themes as well as uncommon ways of articulating the themes unique to each tradition. Our goal is not simply to master the past, but to engage the present. We explore how the universal themes of the human spiritual quest manifest in our own time, and discover how the confluence of ancient wisdom and culture can spark a new stage in human spiritual evolution based on collaboration rather than competition for economic and

geopolitical power.

Given this, the Spiritual Paths Institute Program in InterSpiritual Studies asks of its students academic rigor and a serious commitment to personal spiritual practice. We encourage each student to discover and honor her or his own spiritual style and questions as they engage in the process of inquiry, insight, and integration.

Purpose

Academically, the purposes of the Program in InterSpiritual Studies are as follows:

- To establish InterSpiritual Studies as an academically rigorous field of study;
- To establish academic criteria for excellence in the field;
- To provide those called to this work with the best means of mastering it;
- To promote the applicability of InterSpiritual methodologies to a variety of fields including but not limited to teaching, social work, ministry, chaplaincy, psychology, psychiatry, law enforcement, law, politics, economics, business, and the military, and
- To enable students to complete a program with a scholarly/experiential emphasis on a major spiritual tradition such as Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Christianity or Judaism.

On a personal and professional level the purposes of this program are:

- To enable students to become more knowledgeable, effective, empathic participants in our increasingly culturally and spiritually pluralistic society;
- To help students deepen their own personal lives through an understanding of the world's spiritual traditions and to develop their own spiritual paths rooted in these traditions;
- To equip professionals in a variety of fields with the knowledge and skills they may need to better engage clients whose religious backgrounds differ from their own, and
- To prepare students to take up positions as educators and practitioners in the emerging field of InterSpiritual Studies.

Program Objectives

Interdisciplinary

The emerging field of InterSpiritual Studies is highly interdisciplinary. Thus our intensives and courses draw from a variety of fields including music, art, architecture, history, sociology, transpersonal psychology, comparative literature, comparative religion, and feminist, and post-modern thought.

Social Meaning

Ample attention throughout the program is given to the extraction of the social meaning of interspirituality through the analysis of social and ethical implications of the material under discussion. While rigorous in its academics, The Spiritual Paths Institute is also concerned with the potential for interspiritual perspectives to enhance human life, culture, and global