Fall 2016 Undergraduate Psychology Learning Community: The Meaningful Life

Introducing a new Learning Community for upper division psychology courses! A Learning Community is a group of 25 students who take the same classes together over the semester. The three classes of this Learning Community are joined together by a theme. Ours is, “What Is a Meaningful Life?”

What is the kind of life that is worth living? What is the nature of human happiness and joy? What factors are related to the meaningful life? Does material wealth help? Spiritual practice? Outward achievements? What role do other people play in the good life? If you are interested in questions like these, then this Learning Community is for you! Also, if you apply and we accept your application, you will be guaranteed a spot in these classes regardless of when you are scheduled to register for classes. But you have to take all three classes to be part of the community.

To apply to the LC, send a your name, 917#, and a paragraph of at least 75-100 words that explains your interest in the themes described above by February 26 11:59 p.m. to jdillon@westga.edu.

Courses in the Learning Community

PSYC 4085 (3 hours)—Socrates and Psychology/TR 9:30-10:45/Dillon
This course uses the ancient figure of Socrates to explore modern psychology. Socrates is among the world’s most engaging and effective teachers. He is particularly interested in the kind of life that is most worth living. For more than 2,400 years, teachers and students the world over have found their encounters with Socrates helped them explore the intricacies of the human mind and the universe around them. Socrates also taught them valuable critical thinking skills, how to clearly define basic terms, state premises, logically reason to conclusions, and communicate with each other in a persuasive and civil way.

PSYC 4085 (3 hours)—Spirituality and Psychology/MW 2:00-3:20/Hart
This course will consider these two domains that have mostly been radically segregated in the West for 400 years. Together their relationship seems odd and paradoxical: the psychological develops our will, the spiritual asks us to be willing; the psychological strengthens our self, the spiritual invites us toward selflessness. We will explore the interface and integration of spirituality and psychology through several themes including: the consideration of wisdom, love, and beauty and their implications for psycho-spiritual growth.

PSYC 4085 (3 hours)—Psychology and Holocaust/MW 12:30-1:45/Reber
A number of prominent philosophers have asserted that, "the Holocaust is that event in modern history before which all thought must stop and be rethought" (Manning, 1993, p. 154). They contend that this is the case because philosophers' best understandings of human being, human knowing, and ethics and morality simply failed to prevent Nazi atrocities, and in some cases, were used to justify them. Given psychology's obvious philosophical foundation, this course examines the extent to which psychological ideas also need to stop and be rethought in light of the Holocaust. Our rethinking of psychology will take place through careful reading and evaluation of autobiographical and academic texts, in-depth study of the psychology of the people who lived and died through the Holocaust, introspective examination of one's own experience with and capacity for good and evil, and active class discussion.