

2017 SUMMER INSTITUTE ON BUDDHISM & SCIENCE

Putting the
BUDDHISM / SCIENCE
DIALOGUE
on a
NEW FOOTING

JULY 17-26, 2017



MANGALAM RESEARCH CENTER
FOR BUDDHIST LANGUAGES

This project was made possible through the generous support of a grant from the John Templeton Foundation.

PUTTING THE BUDDHISM/SCIENCE DIALOGUE ON A NEW FOOTING

Summer Institute on Buddhism & Science

While the dialogue between Buddhism and science - especially mind sciences - continues to expand, its reigning assumptions narrow its potential for forging new ways to investigate questions of experience, meaning, and human values. This proposed Institute aims to develop this untapped potential. Transdisciplinary at its core, our Institute brings together scientists, Buddhist and Christian scholars, and phenomenologists to challenge conventional disciplinary boundaries. We expect this project will move the Buddhism/science dialogue beyond simple binary oppositions that either segregate science from religion *in toto* or ignore substantive differences between them, generating outcomes that balance scientific rigor with contemplative and self-critical reflection.

Institute Schedule

Monday, July 17 Day 1: Transdisciplinarity and Cultural Context

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: Laurence Kirmayer, MD

Embodiment, Enactment and the Cultural Neurophenomenology of Experience.

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: David Germano, PhD

Contemplation in Contexts: Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Across the Boundaries of the Humanities and Sciences.

7:30–9:00: Graduate Student/Post-doc Gathering and Intros – (Lower Level Reading Rm.)

Tuesday, July 18, Day 2: It's About Context

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: William S. Waldron, PhD

Yogācāra Buddhism: Waking up from our Collective Objectivist Slumber

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: Giovanna Colombetti, DPhil

Different levels of engagement with lived experience in contemplative neuroscience, and the problem of the “not said”

7:30 PM–9:00 PM: Poster Session I

Wednesday, July 19, Day 3: Buddhism and Neuroscience: Incommensurable?

9:00 AM–11:15 PM: Linda Heuman

The Importance of Keeping Differences in Sight in Buddhism's Dialogue with Science and Modernity

1:15 PM–3:30 PM: Gaëlle Desbordes, PhD

Integrating Buddhism and neuroscience: Perspectives from a contemplative neuroscientist/practitioner studying compassion and mind-body medicine, and field notes from the Emory-Tibet Science Initiative.

4:00 PM–6:15 PM: Amir Raz, PhD

Neuroscience Insights from Hypnosis and Meditation

Thursday, July 20, Day 4: Limits of Neuroscience in Theory and Practice

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: David McMahan, PhD

Implicit Anthropologies and Epistemologies of Mindfulness

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: Ken Paller, PhD

Neuroscience, Memory, Sleep, and Everything

Friday, July 21, Day 5: Rethinking the Relation between Science and Humanities

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: Francisca Cho, PhD

What Would a Buddhist Science Look Like?

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: Michael Sheehy, PhD

Inner Knowing and the Way of Being Human: On the Horizon of Epistemologies in the Buddhism/Science Dialogue

7:00 PM–9:00 PM: Public Panel Discussion

Buddhist Practice & Scientific Research: Ways of Knowing in Dialogue

Institute Schedule

Saturday, July 22, Day 6: Embodied First Personhood

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: Kalina Christoff, PhD

Theoretical views on the nature of spontaneous thought: neural bases and connections with phenomenology and meditation practice

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: Shaun Gallagher, PhD

Mindfulness and mindlessness: The phenomenology of performance

Sunday, July 23, Day 7: Toward a Detailed Phenomenology of Contemplative Practice

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: Claire Petitmengin, PhD

What is it like to meditate? Methods and issues for a micro-phenomenological description of meditative experience.

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: Martijn van Beek, PhD

Contemplative life: an anthropological perspective

7:30 PM–9:00 PM: Poster Session II

Monday, July 24, Day 8: Is Neurophenomenology Possible?

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: Elena Antonova, PhD

'Neuralism' and Contemplative Neuroscience

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: Cortland Dahl, PhD

Reconstructing and Deconstructing the Self: Psychological Mechanisms in Different Families of Meditation

Tuesday, July 25, Day 9: Contemplative Practice – Christian & Buddhist Perspectives

9:00 AM –12:00 PM: Andrew Dreitcer, PhD

Trans-religious perspectives on compassion: implications for ethics and virtue in real world behaviors.

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: David Presti, PhD

Physical and biological perspectives on expanded views of mind and consciousness: relevance to the contemporary Buddhism-science dialogue, and to conversation between scientific and religious worldviews more generally.

Wednesday, July 26, Day 10: Toward a New Contemplative Science

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: Catherine Shaddix, PsyD

The implicit and explicit worldviews (including those influenced by modern science) that underlie the contemporary presentation of Buddhism and their impact on the way that Buddhism is taught, researched, and experienced.

2:00 PM–3:30 PM: Clifford Saron, PhD

Toward contemplative science: further issues and models in the scientific investigation of contemplative practice.

3:30 PM–5:00 PM: Group Reflections – Content and Process

5:00 PM: Celebration, Closing reception

Day 1: Transdisciplinarity and Cultural Context

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: Laurence Kirmayer, MD

*Embodiment, Enactment and the Cultural
Neurophenomenology of Experience*

This presentation will examine the relevance of recent work in cognitive science, psychological anthropology, and cultural psychiatry for scientific engagement with Buddhist thought and practice. Theories of embodiment and enactment provide ways to elaborate an ecosocial view of mind that integrates neurobiology and sociocultural contexts. In this view, mental phenomena are produced by looping effects within and between the body/brain/person and the social world. These loops are mediated by psychophysiological and discursive processes involving metaphoric, narrative, and rhetorical practices. The built environment, circulating narratives, and social institutions together constitute forms of life, which offer individuals specific niches or positions, with corresponding modes of self-understanding or construal, as well as affordances for action. Meditative practices involve regimes of attention that change the dynamics of cognitive-social loops in ways that can yield ethical and pragmatic insights but that can also cause persistent dislocation and distress. Cultural psychiatry argues that the outcome of any practice depends on both its personal meaning and the responses of others in local social worlds. Systematic attention to culture and context can inform the design of research that allows us to see more clearly how Buddhist practices both reflect and challenge conventional constructions of reality.



Laurence J. Kirmayer, MD, FRCPC, FCAHS, FRSC is James McGill Professor and Director, Division of Social and Transcultural Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry, McGill University and Director of the McGill Global Mental Health Program. He is Editor-in-Chief of *Transcultural Psychiatry*, and Director of the Culture & Mental Health Research Unit at the Institute of Community and Family Psychiatry, Jewish General Hospital in Montreal, where he conducts research on culturally responsive mental health services, the mental health of Indigenous peoples, and the anthropology of psychiatry. He founded and directs the annual Summer Program and Advanced Study Institute in Cultural

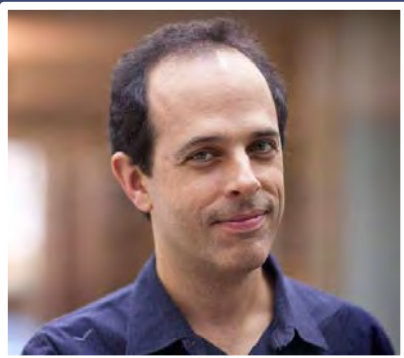
Psychiatry at McGill. He also founded the CIHR/IAPH Network for Aboriginal Mental Health Research. His current research includes studies on: culturally based, family centered mental health promotion for Indigenous youth; the use of cultural formulation in cultural consultation; and the place of culture in global mental health. He co-edited the volumes, *Understanding Trauma: Integrating Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives* (Cambridge University Press), *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (University of British Columbia Press), *Cultural Consultation: Encountering the Other in Mental Health Care* (Springer), *DSM-5 Handbook for the Cultural Formulation Interview* (APPI), and *Re-Visioning Psychiatry: Cultural Phenomenology, Critical Neuroscience and Global Mental Health* (Cambridge). He is a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences and of the Royal Society of Canada (Academy of Social Sciences).

Day 1: Transdisciplinarity and Cultural Context

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: David Germano, PhD

*Contemplation in Contexts: Tibetan Buddhist Meditation
Across the Boundaries of the Humanities and Sciences.*

We will explore Tibetan Buddhist meditation in the complexity of its forms in classical sources, the complexity of its relationship to diverse literary sources ranging from manuals to narratives, and the complexity of the role of contexts when understanding it. In doing so, we will take particular care to explore the divergences between humanistic and scientific perspectives on Buddhist meditation, and their possible consilience when we deeply explore their respective orientations toward the contexts of contemplation and their potentially constitutive character. One of the most widespread forms of literature on contemplation is procedural instructions, and yet it is quite clear that such accounts are deeply inadequate as a source for understanding the practices in question. What is the full range of contexts applicable to Tibetan Buddhist contemplative practices and experiences, how do we discern them, and how are they potentially centrally constitutive of the practices' central character and dynamics? In doing so, we will explore how changing roles of *nomothetic* and *idiographic* approaches in the sciences and humanities revolve around this issue of context, and may yet point to a more fruitful convergence or at least richer exchanges on the immediate horizons.



David Germano is a Professor of Tibetan and Buddhist Studies at the University of Virginia. UVA's Tibetan Studies and Buddhist Studies programs are amongst the largest in the West. In 2000, he founded the Tibetan and Himalayan Library (www.thlib.org), the world's major digital initiative building collaborative knowledge on the region. He is the founding director of the Tibet Center (www.uvatibetcenter.org), which runs extensive set academic operations in Tibet and Bhutan, and of SHANTI (Sciences, Humanities and the Arts Network of Technological Initiatives,

www.uvashanti.org), an initiative aimed at the mainstreaming of cutting edge digital technology for faculty, students, and staff across the University. Since 2011, Germano has directed UVA's Contemplative Sciences Center (www.uvacontemplation.org), and works with each of the eleven schools at UVA to explore learning, research, and engagement initiatives regarding contemplation in their own disciplinary and professional areas, as well as new partnerships across the schools.

Day 2: Engaging Buddhist Views: Philosophical and Phenomenological Perspectives

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: William S. Waldron, PhD

Yogācāra Buddhism: Waking up from our Collective Objectivist Slumber

This presentation will outline the Buddha's basic understanding of our cognitive processes. It will discuss the factors involved in the 'dependent arising' of cognitive awareness, the correlative co-arising of our 'world' (*loka*), and our ingrained sense of self. It will then show how these analyses were elaborated in the later Yogācāra tradition (3-4th c CE), which argued that most of these processes occur nonconsciously and are deeply influenced by language and concepts, imminently social phenomena. These inform our nonconscious sense of self (self-making) as well as our collective construction of a species-specific 'world' based on our innate sense of subject-object duality, i.e. the Cartesian Theater. These constructive processes are so deeply hidden that we falsely imagine the world consists of real substantial entities—such as selves, objects, etc.—in other words, objectivist, essentialist perspective, such as in enshrined in some views of modern science, is an unconscious collective construction. Yogācāra doctrines thus not merely critique this objectivist view, they also explain why we so readily, so naturally, see the world that way, and then suggest how, through analysis and insight, we might 'wake up' from our collective slumber. This process is articulated in the Yogācāra model of the Three Natures.



William Waldron, PhD, is the Chair of the Department of Religion at Middlebury College and has published extensively in Indian Buddhist philosophy of mind, focused on the relationship between the Yogācāra school of Indian Buddhism in relation to trends in cognitive science. He has been a fellow at Mind and Life since 2011. His publications on related topics include: *The Buddhist Unconscious* in 2003, 'Buddhist Steps to an Ecology of Mind' in 2002, and, most recently, 'Reflections on Indian Buddhist Thought and the Scientific Study of Meditation' in *Meditation, Buddhism and Science*, and 'Teaching Yogācāra Buddhism Using Cognitive Science' in *Teaching Buddhism: New Insights on Understanding and Presenting the Tradition(s)*, both in

2016. He was a Fulbright Senior Scholar in Nepal in 2007-08, and has lectured and taught on Buddhism and Science in Japan, Nepal, Hong Kong, India, Denmark and the United States. This academic year, he is further exploring issues related to the Institute in a course co-taught with Associate Professor Kim Cronise, a behavioral neuroscientist and psychopharmacologist.

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: Giovanna Colombetti, DPhil

Different levels of engagement with lived experience in contemplative neuroscience, and the problem of the “not said”

In my talk, I will advance some preliminary ideas on how to make progress in the field of contemplative neuroscience from a neurophenomenological perspective. Although much progress has already been made in this field, in various respects, little attention has been paid so far to what I call “the problem of the not said.” In a nutshell, this is the problem of how to investigate, both scientifically and phenomenologically, experiences that arguably are not, cannot be, or should not be, put into words. In order to address this problem, we need to adopt what I call a thick neurophenomenological approach that involves an in-depth exploration of meditators’ experiences via qualitative and quantitative methods. Importantly, this exploration would need not only to provide precise and detailed descriptions of the meditators’ lived experience, but also to take into account their attitudes toward the task of talking about their experience, how easy or difficult they find this task, the influence of the experimental setting and demands, and other. I will conclude by offering some tentative but concrete suggestions on how to integrate these considerations into experimental work in contemplative neuroscience.



Giovanna Colombetti is Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology, Philosophy, and Anthropology of the University of Exeter (UK). She works in the Philosophy of Cognitive and Affective Science, especially on the notions of “embodied”, “extended” and “enactive” cognition, including neurophenomenology and contemplative neuroscience. After getting a DPhil from the University of Sussex (UK), she was a Postdoc at York University (Canada), the University of Trento (Italy), and Harvard University. Since 2007, she has worked and lived in Exeter, temporarily visiting research centres in Europe, Australia, and Singapore. In 2010-2014 she led a project funded by the European Research Council on embodiment and affectivity, and wrote *The Feeling Body: Affective Science Meets the Enactive Mind* (MIT Press, 2014). Since then, she has worked on the notion of “situated affectivity”, and has also recently collaborated with social scientists on assessing neuroscientific and neurophenomenological approaches to Buddhist meditation.

Day 3: Buddhism and Neuroscience: Incommensurable?

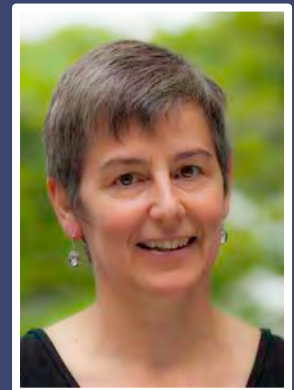
9:00 AM–11:15 AM: Linda Heuman

The Importance of Keeping Differences in Sight in Buddhism's Dialogue with Science and Modernity

In this talk, I reflect on the question of how to best communicate across difference in a way that fosters mutual respect. Exploring Buddhism's dialogues with science and with modernity, I explore how claims to sameness and difference of Buddhism and science function in these conversations. I challenge the notion that Buddhism and science are compatible. My main intent isn't to argue the contrary—though I do claim that Buddhism and science have important differences—but more importantly, to explore *the conditions of possibility that have given rise to their compatibility seeming self-evident*. The emphasis on common ground, I argue, is not a reflection of some objectively true state of affairs, as many who accept it assume; rather, it is a *dialogue strategy*, used to promote mutual respect toward the attainment of common goals. But this dialogue strategy, I argue, is wrongly employed in this context; it doesn't attain the collaborators' goal of non-hegemony. Further, it fosters an implicit power imbalance between the collaborators by which Buddhist "belief" is treated as less credible than scientific "knowledge." I then draw on French theorist Bruno Latour to investigate implicit assumptions that frame the modern notions of credible knowledge, and explore critiques of those assumptions from Latour and the field of science studies.

Linda Heuman is a journalist and a visiting scholar in the Department of Religious Studies at Brown University, where she is also affiliated with the Program in Science and Technology Studies and the Contemplative Studies Initiative. She recently finished a two-year John Templeton Foundation journalism fellowship in science, religion, and Buddhism. This project—a series of essays and interviews published in the Buddhist magazine *Tricycle*—brought Western Buddhist readers into new conversation with scholars of the humanities and social sciences who are critiquing background assumptions of science, secularism, and modernity.

Her articles, essays, and reviews have appeared in *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, *Penguin's Best Spiritual Writing*, *Buddhadharma*, *Stanford Magazine*, *Brown Alumni Magazine*, *Plenty*, and *The Industry Standard* and have been published in German in *Buddhismus aktuell*.



Day 3: Buddhism and Neuroscience: Incommensurable?

1:15 PM – 3:30 PM: Gaëlle Desbordes, PhD

Integrating Buddhism and neuroscience: Perspectives from a contemplative neuroscientist/practitioner studying compassion and mind-body medicine, and field notes from the Emory-Tibet Science Initiative.

I will begin by presenting the circumstances and choices that led me to become both a neuroscientist and a Buddhist practitioner. I will specifically share how my Buddhist practice has motivated and informed my neuroscientific research on meditation, compassion, and mind-body medicine. Then I will review what I have learned over the past 8 years from working with the Emory-Tibet Science Initiative, a program to teach science to Tibetan Buddhist monastics, as part of which I spent multiple months in India conducting surveys and interviews in Tibetan monasteries and chairing dozens of focused discussion groups between Western science/philosophy faculty and Tibetan Buddhist monastic scholars (Geshe) in those monasteries. This work gave me some insights into the issues we face in attempting to bring these two different worldviews (modern science and Buddhism) into dialogue and mutual understanding. I will finally discuss what I see are challenges and opportunities in a transdisciplinary approach that integrates ontologies and methods from both Buddhism and science.



I am a Principal Investigator at Harvard Medical School conducting research at the Athinoula A. Martinos Center for Biomedical Imaging within the Massachusetts General Hospital. As a neuroscientist (with a background in engineering and computer science), my research uses advanced methods in brain imaging (especially functional MRI) and physiological measurements of the autonomic nervous system to investigate meditative practices. I am particularly interested in contemplative methods for cultivating compassion and promoting behavior change. My research has been funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, the Mind and Life Institute, and other sources. I am an active contributor to the Emory-Tibet Science Initiative—an ongoing effort overseen by the Dalai Lama aimed at implementing a comprehensive and sustainable science curriculum for Tibetan monks and nuns. I have been studying and practicing Tibetan Buddhism under several teachers for about 10 years; this has greatly impacted my research and my life.

Day 3: Buddhism and Neuroscience: Incommensurable?

4:00 PM – 6:15 PM: Amir Raz, PhD

Neuroscience Insights from Hypnosis and Meditation

An integrative synthesis of hypnosis and meditation provides an especially interesting lens to view contemplative practices. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, ranging from science to religion, this talk sketches out applied aspects, linking latest research and scholarship with real world applications such as clinical treatments while touching on phenomenology, relating the science of consciousness to personal experience.

Professor Amir Raz, Canada Research Chair in the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University, Canada, is a world leader in unlocking the brain substrates of attention and consciousness. Dr. Raz is Professor of Psychiatry, Neurology & Neurosurgery, and Psychology; Senior Investigator in the Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research of the Jewish General Hospital; and a member of the Montreal Neurological Institute. He heads both the Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory at McGill University and the Clinical Neuroscience and Applied Cognition Laboratory at the Institute for Community and Family Psychiatry. Former member of the McGill Board of Governors and Editor-in-Chief of a specialty peer-reviewed journal, Professor Raz combines cutting-edge science and trailblazing research with community outreach, science teaching, and interdisciplinary education in the health and psychological sciences. With peer-reviewed publications in journals such as *Nature*, *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, *The Lancet*, and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Professor Raz has received multiple accolades, ranging from a Young Investigator Award from the National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Depression and the American Psychological Association's Early Career Award, to Fellow of the Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis and Honorary Fellow of the Golden Key Society. His research interests span the neural and psychological substrates of attention, suggestion, placebos, and self-regulation. A former magician and musician, he also conducts research into the cognitive neuroscience of deception, ownership, altered consciousness, and atypical cognition. Using imaging of the living human brain, genetics, and other techniques, his research brings together basic and clinical science.



Day 4: Limits of Neuroscience in Theory and Practice

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: David McMahan, PhD

Implicit Anthropologies and Epistemologies of Mindfulness

The scientific study of Buddhist and Buddhist-derived meditative practices often contains certain implicit views of the human being (anthropologies), along with associated views of what, exactly, meditation does or what the meditator comes to know (epistemologies). One view of the human being, derived from the European Enlightenment, is that of the free, autonomous subject who can be trained to neutralize his or her biases, presuppositions, and cultural conditioning to attain a kind of judgment-free access to the raw data of the mind. The second view is of the human being as essentially identical with the brain and its functions. Both of these perspectives tend to neglect the crucial role of context and social existence. Rather than seeing meditation primarily in terms of private interior mental states that can be mapped in neural imaging technologies, meditation might be better understood as an array of practices involving the cultivation of attitudes, ethical orientations, values, judgments, strategies, and behaviors grounded in particular cultures' repertoires of possible ways of being in the world.



David L. McMahan is the Charles A. Dana Professor of Religious Studies at Franklin & Marshall College in Pennsylvania. He is the co-editor of *Buddhism, Meditation and Science* (forthcoming, Oxford University Press), editor of *Buddhism in the Modern World* (Routledge 2012) and author of *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (Oxford University Press, 2008), *Empty Vision: Metaphor and Visionary Imagery in Mahāyāna Buddhism* (Routledge Curzon, 2002), and several articles on Mahāyāna Buddhism in South Asia and Buddhism in the modern world.

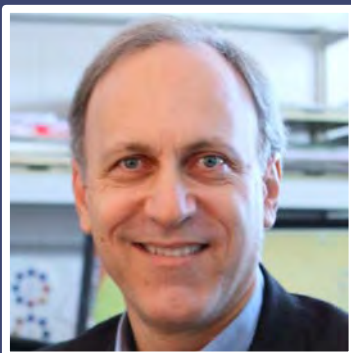
He has written on Indian Buddhist literature, visual metaphors and practice, and the early history of the Mahāyāna movement in India. More recently, his work has focused on the interface of Buddhism and modernity, including its interactions with science, psychology, modernist literature, romanticism, and transcendentalism. He is currently researching the various ways that Buddhist and Buddhist-derived meditation is understood and practiced in different cultural and historical contexts, ancient and modern.

Day 4: Limits of Neuroscience in Theory and Practice

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: Ken Paller, PhD

Neuroscience, Memory, Sleep, and Everything

Research on the cognitive neuroscience of human memory has gathered an empirical basis for the distinction between conscious and nonconscious memory. Recollecting an autobiographic episode can be contrasted with nonconscious memory phenomena such as certain types of skilled performance, perceptual implicit memory, intuitive decision-making, and implicit social bias. This conscious/nonconscious divide can also be scrutinized in the context of contemplative orientations. On another note, these various types of learning generally take hold gradually and require practice, which need not be intentional, or conscious. Recent evidence suggests that memory reactivation during sleep helps maintain enduring long-term memory storage. To investigate brain mechanisms of memory processing during sleep, we have used subtle sensory stimulation to modify neural activity while avoiding arousal from sleep. Sounds associated with learning presented again during sleep promote memory reactivation, and can systematically enhance learning of locations, skills/habits, and so on. Investigations of the relevant physiological mechanisms are helping to elucidate the hidden but critical contributions of sleep to our waking abilities. This method of hacking into sleep bears some similarities to dream yoga and opens up new opportunities for exploring sleep cognition. Furthermore, learning through a daily practice could perhaps be combined with nightly sleep-based practice.



Ken Paller is Professor of Psychology at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. His research has focused on human memory, consciousness, and related issues. He also directs Northwestern's Training Program in the Neuroscience of Human Cognition. His studies of memory disorders have demonstrated preserved implicit memory in amnesia, linked memory deficits with poor sleep in people with age-related memory decline, and shown that mindfulness training can be helpful for Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers. Other studies from his lab demonstrated that sensory processing during sleep can reinforce prior learning, providing novel evidence on sleep's role in memory. Publications are available on his lab website.

Day 5: Rethinking the Relation between Science and Humanities

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: Francisca Cho, PhD

What Would a Buddhist Science Look Like?

Western observers appreciate the way Buddhism's non-theism allows relatively more harmony with science, but they also insist that its supernatural parts—particularly the ideas of karma and rebirth—should be eliminated or rehabilitated into metaphorical ethical concepts. This limit point in the encounter between Buddhist and modern scientific modes of thought is an opportunity to make the dialogue much deeper than it has been so far. Buddhist traditions appreciate the power of the human imagination to project social and cosmological worlds. When rationalists try to “save” Buddhism from its mythological heritage, they overlook the fact that their own naturalist cosmology can be theorized from the perspective of Buddhist epistemologies. The elimination of supernatural and teleological language is one way modern science got distinguished from natural theology, but scientific naturalism needs to be critically examined as well. The effort of theologians to do this—usually by distinguishing methodological from ontological naturalism—have had limited results. Buddhist tradition, on the other hand, is accepted as a “mind science” with its own empirical and logical bases. In addition to partnering with neuro-scientific studies, this mind science enables self-reflexive considerations of the nature, limits, and possibilities of the reigning dualist, subject-object scientific cosmology.



Francisca Cho is Professor of Buddhist Studies at Georgetown University. Her recent books, *Religion and Science in the Mirror of Buddhism* (with Richard Squier, Routledge Press, 2016), and *Seeing Like the Buddha: Enlightenment through Film* (SUNY Press, 2017) are both concerned with Buddhist theories of the imagination in their application to contemporary phenomena. She also works on methods in the study of religion, and is currently interested in the application of systems thinking to Buddhism and religions generally.

Day 5: Rethinking the Relation between Science and Humanities

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: Michael Sheehy, PhD

Inner Knowing and the Way of Being Human: On the Horizon of Epistemologies in the Buddhism / Science Dialogue

Considering the interface of Buddhism/science, we begin with historical and semantic reflections on Tibetan Buddhist understandings of science (*tshan rig*) and inner knowing (*nang rig*) in contrast to “the way of being human” (*mi chos*), i.e. the humanities. Within this broad frame, we focus on the Tibetan cultural cognition of science through the looking glass of a recently compiled Tibetan language anthology of Indian and Tibetan canonical sources on Buddhist Science, and the introduction by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Having introduced Buddhist paradigms of science and being human, the discussion examines the possibility of science as a transcultural language that situates its users within a shared lifeworld. This introduces the concept of “dialogue zones,” discrete regulated spaces wherein a shared lifeworld of alternative modes of knowing probe and enact, and a discussion about what the operating principles of redaction in such zones might compose. It is here that we pause to consider the Mind & Life Dialogues as such zones for dynamic transcultural and transdisciplinary interaction between contemplatives and scientists. We conclude with thoughts about the horizon of cross-cultural enaction between indigenous and first-person epistemologies with objectivism, and such necessities within the broader field of the contemplative sciences.



Michael Sheehy, Ph.D. is the Director of Programs at the Mind & Life Institute where he leads interdisciplinary dialogues and educational programs in the contemplative sciences. Concurrently, he is faculty in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia where he is affiliated with the Contemplative Sciences Center and Tibet Center. Before joining Mind & Life in 2016, he was a Visiting Scholar at Harvard Divinity School. He has spent extensive periods conducting field research and working with contemplative communities inside Tibet, including three years training in a Buddhist monastery. His interests abide in Tibetan Buddhism

and its philosophical and literary contributions in dialogue with broad issues in the humanities about contemplative experience, consciousness and its transformations, and the Buddhism / science interface. He is a collaborator on a project that examines imagination and visualization in Tibetan first-person life writing and contemplative literatures.

Day 5: Public Panel Discussion

7:00PM–9:00PM Public Panel Discussion

Buddhist Practice and Scientific Research: Ways of Knowing in Dialogue

Elena Antonova, PhD, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London

Francisca Cho, PhD, Department of Theology, Georgetown University

Shaun Gallagher, PhD, Department of Philosophy, University of Memphis

Laurence Kirmayer, MD, Department of Psychiatry, McGill University

Claire Petitmengin, PhD, Institut Mines-Télécom and Archives Husserl, Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris

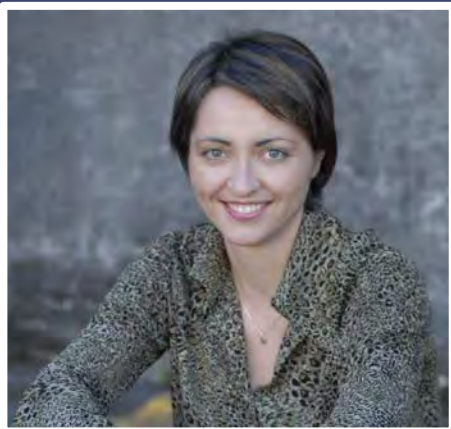
Martijn van Beek, PhD, Department of Anthropology and Interacting Minds Center, Aarhus University

Day 6: Embodied First Personhood

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: Kalina Christoff, PhD

Theoretical views on the nature of spontaneous thought: neural bases and connections with phenomenology and meditation practice

Mind-wandering has recently come to occupy a central position in psychology and neuroscience. Most theories and research so far have defined it as task-unrelated or stimulus-independent thought. As such, mind-wandering is often seen as the opposite of mindfulness or concentration. I will argue, however, that this view of mind-wandering is mistaken and that it limits our ability to understand this ubiquitous and, in my view, default mode of human thought. In contrast to the task-unrelated view of mind-wandering, I will argue that a defining feature of mind-wandering lies in its dynamics: i.e., the manner in which thoughts emerge and unfold over time. I will introduce our recent dynamic framework for understanding mind-wandering and its neural basis. Within this framework, mind-wandering can be understood as a member of a larger family of spontaneous thought processes – a family that also includes creative thought and dreaming. I will distinguish between two types of constraints on thought – deliberate and automatic – that can reduce thought’s spontaneity. This novel perspective on spontaneous thought and mind-wandering bears significant implications for phenomenology and meditation practice. Rather than viewing mind-wandering as antithetical and a hindrance to mindfulness practice, it becomes clear that thoughts that arise relatively freely are an essential component of practices such as open monitoring meditation. Indeed, meditation practices may have emerged in part to help us come to terms with our default mode of spontaneous thought production.



Kalina Christoff is a Professor of Psychology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. Her work focuses on understanding human thought, using a combination of functional neuroimaging (fMRI), behavioral testing, and theoretical work. Her research spans the full spectrum of thought processes: from spontaneous thought, including phenomena such as mind-wandering and daydreaming; to goal-directed thought, including deliberate reasoning and problem solving; to creative thought, which combines deliberate and spontaneous modes of thought in a dynamic and interactive fashion. She also does work on introspection, meta-cognition, boredom, meditation, dreams, and different forms of self-experience. Her research relates all these mental phenomena to their neural correlates, by constructing neuroscientific models grounded in current scientific understanding of the dynamic interactions between large-scale brain systems, including the default, salience, and frontoparietal control networks.

Day 6: Embodied First Personhood

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: Shaun Gallagher, PhD

Mindfulness and Mindlessness: The Phenomenology of Performance

We know about different practices of mindfulness involved in meditation and other contemplative practices. I'll focus on mindfulness in different types of performance. Specifically, I'll look at phenomenological studies of what it means, in regard to self-consciousness, to be in the flow (sometimes characterized as being mindless) during athletic, dance, and music performance. I'll frame the discussion around two different debates in recent philosophy of mind. First, to stake out the general parameters of the discussion, a recent debate between Hubert Dreyfus and John McDowell about the nature of mind and action. Second, to focus on the specifics of the nature of self-consciousness, a recent debate about deflationary accounts of minimal self-consciousness and whether such minimal self-consciousness survives in flow experiences, or in meditation. One of the issues at stake in these debates concerns how we would be able to answer questions about experiences that are sometimes characterized as selfless. Do phenomenological (or microphenomenological) interviews give us a way to access such selfless experiences, and do reports on selfless experience require (in some paradoxical way) that there be some form of pre-reflective self-awareness during selfless experience? I regard this as still an open question, but I tend to think that first-person reports on experience require a pre-reflective self-awareness during that experience. On this view, first-person reports on selfless experiences would mean that the experiences were not really selfless. But I'm open to being convinced otherwise.



Shaun Gallagher is the Lillian and Morrie Moss Professor of Excellence in Philosophy at the University of Memphis. His areas of research include phenomenology and the cognitive sciences, especially topics related to embodiment, self, agency and intersubjectivity, hermeneutics, and the philosophy of time. Dr. Gallagher has a secondary research appointment at the University of Wollongong, Australia. He is Honorary Professor at the University of Tromsø, Norway, and was Honorary Professor at the University of Copenhagen (2010-15) and the Durham University (2011-16). He has held visiting positions at the Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit,

Cambridge University; the Center for Subjectivity Research, University of Copenhagen; the Centre de Recherche en Epistémologie Appliquée (CREA), Paris; the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Lyon; the Humboldt University in Berlin, and most recently at Keble College, University of Oxford.

Professor Gallagher currently holds the Humboldt Foundation's Anneliese Maier Research Award [Anneliese Maier-Forschungspreis] (2012-18). Gallagher is a founding editor and a co-editor-in-chief of the journal *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*. His publications include *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (Oxford, 2005); *The Phenomenological Mind* (with Dan Zahavi, Routledge, 2008; 2nd ed. 2012); *Phenomenology* (Palgrave Macmillan 2011); and *Enactivist Interventions: Rethinking the Mind* (Oxford, August 2017).

Day 7: Toward a Detailed Phenomenology of Contemplative Practice

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: Claire Petitmengin, PhD

What is it like to meditate? Methods and issues for a micro-phenomenological description of meditative experience.

Numerous scientific studies are now conducted on the neurophysiological effects of meditation practices and on the neural correlates of meditative states. However, very few studies have been conducted on the experience associated with contemplative practice: what it is like to meditate – from moment to moment, at different stages of practice – remains almost invisible in contemporary contemplative science. Recently, "micro-phenomenological" methods have been developed to help us become aware of the micro-dynamics of lived experience and describe it with rigor and precision. The first part of this talk will present a pilot project aiming at applying these methods to the description of two processes of which meditation practice enables the practitioner to become aware: the process of losing contact with the current situation and generation of virtual ones in "mind-wandering" episodes, and the process of emergence of a thought. In a second part, I will present how the micro-phenomenological investigation of the early stages of processes such as the emergence of a perception or an idea highlights a dimension of experience where the separation usually perceived between the subjective and the objective poles vanishes, and micro-actions that instant after instant create and support the process of co-constitution of these poles.



After studies in Buddhist philosophy and ten years of experience in information system design, **Claire Petitmengin**, completed her PhD thesis under the supervision of Francisco Varela at the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris, and then obtained a Habilitation in Philosophy. She is presently Professor Emeritus at the Institut Mines-Télécom and member of the Archives Husserl (Ecole Normale Supérieure) in Paris. Her research focuses on the usually unrecognized dynamics of lived experience and new "micro-phenomenological" methods enabling us to become aware of these dynamics and to describe it very finely. She studies the epistemological conditions of these methods and notably the validity of their results, their philosophical consequences, as well as their contemplative, educational, therapeutic and artistic applications. Her research also addresses the process of mutual guidance of "first-person" and "third-person" analyses in the context of neurophenomenological projects.

Day 7: Toward a Detailed Phenomenology of Contemplative Practice

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: Martijn van Beek, PhD

Contemplative Life: An Anthropological Perspective

The scientific study of contemplative practices, their mechanisms and effects has generated significant insights into aspects of the human mind and behaviour. Concerns persist regarding what Thomas Merton called the “simple pharmacology of contemplation” and the prominence of the anthropological figure of the cerebral subject in contemplative science. To better understand what contemplative traditions have to offer and how their transformative potential may be realized today, research is needed that provides a more comprehensive account of the varieties of contemplative life, historically as well as contemporarily, in different settings around the world. Taking an anthropological perspective, this presentation suggests elements for the development of a more comprehensive and differentiated view of contemplative life. Broadening our attention from meditation techniques to contemplative lives, including intentional communities, relationships, institutions, experience, meaning, and practices, demands long-term research collaborations between sciences and humanities, between scholars and practitioners. It entails first, second and third person perspectives. This kind of research is likely to be slow, difficult, at times frustrating, but ultimately, hopefully, rewarding in helping to provide a more adequate understanding of contemplative life, practices, and their effects. It may also foster greater humility about what we claim science has shown about the workings and effects of contemplative practices.



Martijn van Beek (Ph.D., Cornell 1996) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology and the Interacting Minds Centre at Aarhus University in Denmark. He has lived and worked among Tibetan Buddhist communities for extended periods since the early 1980s, particularly in Ladakh. More recently, his research has focused on contemplative practices, lineages and communities in the contemporary world, in the West as well as in Asia. He has a particular academic and personal interest in the refiguring of contemplative life in the context of normative secularism and the scientific worldview. He is particularly interested in the methodological and conceptual challenges of experimental and experiential research on contemplative practices and contemplative life. In collaboration with colleagues in philosophy and cognitive science he is engaged in exploring the potential of “microphenomenological” elicitation interviews for contemplative research, teaching and practice. He lives at Vaekstcenteret, a contemplative community in Denmark.

Day 8: Is Neurophenomenology Possible?

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: Elena Antonova, PhD

'Neuralism' and Contemplative Neuroscience

Experimental psychology of behaviourist era explicitly denied ontological status of the mind. It assumed the mind to be a 'black box' and sought to replace mental terms with description or explanation of behaviour. Cognitive psychology advanced the exploration of the 'black box' of the mind by treating it in functionalist terms, whilst explicitly dodging the question of mind/brain relationship. With the advent of neuroimaging techniques, particularly functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging, which allowed to peer directly inside the 'black box' of the brain, experimental psychology and neuroscience proceeded from a tentative search of 'neural correlates' of this or that cognitive function or this or that affective response or social process to a definitive dominance of the language of 'neural substrates' or 'neural basis' of cognition, affect, and consciousness. Reductive materialism has become an unquestioned ontology of the mainstream neuroscience and thus dawned the era of 'neuralism' with its study of neural behaviour. This talk and subsequent discussion will explore whether contemplative neuroscience has to blindly follow the mainstream or whether it should, could, or even must proceed in an ontology-free way in line with the radical interpretation of Varela's neurophenomenology.



Dr Elena Antonova is a Lecturer at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London. Her main research interest is the neuroscience of mindfulness using psychophysiology and neuroimaging methods in long-term mindfulness practitioners from the Tibetan Buddhist traditions of Dzogchen and Mahamudra. She has been actively involved with the Mind and Life Institute (<https://www.mindandlife.org/>), an organization that aims to facilitate an inter-disciplinary research into the effects of contemplative practices.

Day 8: Is Neurophenomenology Possible?

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: Cortland Dahl, PhD

Reconstructing and Deconstructing the Self:

Psychological Mechanisms in Different Families of Meditation

Despite the great diversity of practices found in the world's contemplative traditions, scientific research has focused on a limited number of practices. This is partly due to a lack of theoretical models that describe different styles of meditation and their desired effects. According to traditional accounts, different styles of meditation involve unique psychological mechanisms and are designed to bolster different aspects of well-being. Some styles, for instance, emphasize the regulation of attention and the cultivation of meta-awareness, while others employ perspective taking and self-inquiry. Each style of practice is thus likely to be reflected in the body, mind, and behavior in unique ways. In this presentation, I will discuss a framework that groups traditional and contemporary meditation practices into attentional, constructive, and deconstructive families. This framework divides practices based on their psychological mechanisms and the manner in which they are thought to impact well-being. In presenting this framework, I will discuss the different families and sub-groups of meditation in this model and highlight the role it is playing in helping to guide scientific research on the nature and effects of contemplative practice.



Cortland Dahl is a research scientist at the Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. His work focuses on developing theoretical models of contemplative practice that draw on both scientific research and traditional phenomenological accounts of meditation. He is also involved in creating contemplative interventions that include a diverse range of practices so that these practices might be studied and better understood. Cortland's background is eclectic. Prior to his graduate work at UW-Madison, he received a Master's Degree in Buddhist Studies and spent eight years living in Tibetan refugee settlements in India and

Nepal. He is also an active author and translator. In addition to his scientific publications, he has published twelve volumes of translations of classic Tibetan works on Buddhist philosophy and meditation. He currently lives with his wife and son in Madison, Wisconsin.

Day 9: Contemplative Practice – Christian and Buddhist Perspectives

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: Andrew Dreitcer, PhD

“Trans-religious perspectives on compassion: implications for ethics and virtue in real world behaviors.”

Christian spiritual/contemplative practice traditions highlight a number of key perspectives (carried as beliefs and behaviors) on compassion, including (1) particular understandings of compassion, (2) certain notions of the relationship of compassion to ethics and virtue, (3) experience-based convictions about the kinds of practices that form compassion, and (4) wisdom concerning what dimensions of these practices are especially effective in the cultivation of compassionate lives. In this session, explorations of these four perspectives on compassion will include attending to historical-conceptual/theological contexts; explications of significant compassion-formation practice traditions (e.g., Ignatian, Jesus Prayer/Prayer of the Heart, Centering Prayer, the Compassion Practice); analyses of “basic contemplative capacities” (e.g., awareness, attention, grounding) and additional “compassion capacities” (e.g., imagination, emotions, relationality) that the practice traditions have embraced as crucial in the formation of compassionate lives; and an examination of the viability/desirability of possible goals, expectations, or purposes (e.g., happiness, Christ-likeness, imago Dei, ecstasy, union, ethics, virtue) embedded within the practices. Discussion possibilities: What do these Christian perspectives (beliefs/behaviors) have in common with (analogous?) Buddhist/other perspectives? What are the sources/shapes of differences between the perspectives? What light might science shed on these commonalities/differences? What adjustments might science need to make in view of these/other transreligious perspectives?



Andrew Dreitcer is Associate Professor of Spirituality, Co-Director of the Center for Engaged Compassion, Claremont School of Theology. He has directed a seminary program in spiritual direction, and served 15 years as a Presbyterian pastor. Studies with Henri Nouwen and a year spent at the monastic community of Taizé significantly shaped his own spiritual life. Andy’s current interests include exploring contemplative practices across religious traditions, neuroscientific understandings of contemplative practice, (<http://neurospirituality.blogspot.com/>), and the ways contemplative practices form lives of “engaged compassion” (<http://www.centerforengagedcompassion.com/>). He has co-led workshops on compassion, healing, and reconciliation for pastors, tribal chiefs, and government officials in Zimbabwe, and for church and political leaders in the United States and the UK. The father of two daughters, he lives with his wife in Oakland, CA. His studies include work at Wabash College, Oxford, Yale, and GTU/Berkeley. Andy’s latest book, *Living Compassion – Loving Like Jesus*, will be available in 2017.

Day 9: Contemplative Practice – Christian and Buddhist Perspectives

2:00 PM–5:00 PM: David Presti, PhD

Physical and Biological Perspectives on Expanded Views of Mind and Consciousness: relevance to the contemporary Buddhism-science dialogue, and to conversation between scientific and religious worldviews more generally.

Contemporary biophysical science assumes that the qualities of mental experience (mind, consciousness) are completely derivable from local physical processes within the body and brain. This belief follows from the metaphysical worldview posited by modern science – that of a reductive physical materialism, narrowly defined. I will trace the evolution and reification of this perspective, and the body of empirical evidence speaking to looking beyond the constraints of this worldview – arguing that such a looking beyond is necessary to take us to the next level of development in a science of mind and consciousness. The contemporary Buddhism-science dialogue is a valuable forum for such an exploration. Additionally, such an exploration is relevant to conversation between scientific and religious worldviews more generally, and takes seriously the possibility of investigating phenomena that are often considered off-limits to the methods of science. This is an exploration that gives due priority to the inextricable enfolding of our subjective awareness with what we call objective reality.



David E. Presti is Teaching Professor of Neurobiology, Psychology, and Cognitive Science in the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology at the University of California, Berkeley, where he has taught for 27 years. He also worked for more than a decade in the clinical treatment of addiction and post-traumatic stress at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in San Francisco. Since 2004, he has been teaching neuroscience to Tibetan monastics in India, as part of a program of science education (Science for Monks) initiated by the Dalai Lama in 2000. In 2016, he co-developed and conducted the first of its kind Buddhism-science workshop with assembled senior monastics in Bhutan. He has doctorates in molecular biology and

biophysics from Caltech, and in clinical psychology from the University of Oregon, and is author of *Foundational Concepts in Neuroscience: A Brain-Mind Odyssey* (W.W. Norton, 2016).

Day 10: Toward a New Contemplative Science

9:00 AM–12:00 PM: Catherine Shaddix, PsyD

The implicit and explicit worldviews (including those influenced by modern science) that underlie the contemporary presentation of Buddhism and their impact on the way that Buddhism is taught, researched, and experienced.

Hidden cultural assumptions and unacknowledged worldviews permeate the myriad forms of Buddhist practice that one might encounter in 2017, from what is represented in popular media to what one might practice at a local meditation center. These powerful underlying worldviews can influence why we take up contemplative practices, what is available to see and what we choose to see about ourselves and others in our communities, how we experience ourselves in the world “outside” of Buddhist practice, and what conclusions we draw about what is possible in human life. In the past 20 years, the findings of contemplative research have played an enormous role in the evolution of both secularized and religious forms of Buddhist practice, perhaps contributing to narcissistic tendencies reverberant in our modern culture and unwittingly limiting the scope of what we can imagine, in addition to fostering tremendous public interest in meditation. Through naming and examining some of the worldviews that have shaped the current landscape of Buddhist practice, we may free ourselves as practitioners and researchers to look critically at where we are, to ask the important questions that are still unaddressed, and to evaluate where we want to go.



Catherine Shaddix began her training in Buddhist meditation and hatha yoga in 1991. She has studied with Tsoknyi Rinpoche for the past 14 years, and has received teachings from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Trulshik Rinpoche, and Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche. She has also trained in the Rinzai Zen tradition under Sasaki Roshi. Her primary yoga teachers are Richard Freeman and Mary Taylor, with whom she has studied the Ashtanga Vinyasa system since 1998. Catherine is a graduate of the Wright Institute in Berkeley, CA, with an emphasis on the integration of contemplative practices into clinical treatments. In 2013, Catherine was invited to design and co-facilitate a mindfulness meditation and Ashtanga yoga program for the Baywell Psychiatry Group. She is also an intervention designer and instructor for the TARA study at the UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Medicine, examining the impact of body-based contemplative practices on adolescent depression and anxiety.

Day 10: Toward a New Contemplative Science

2:00 PM–3:30 PM: Clifford Saron, PhD

Toward contemplative science: further issues and models in the scientific investigation of contemplative practice.

Francisco Varela, in a 1984 interview stated that “science, in its core, its active living core, is pure contemplation. It has little or nothing to do with manipulation.” In 2017, the wisdom of engaging in contemplative practice is pervasively promoted as justified by scientific evidence of its benefits. Yet this evidence is often weak, taken out of context and interpreted in oversimple fashion beyond what the data actually show. This state of affairs is laden with implicit scientific hegemony that discourages rigorous methodological scrutiny and the relevance of personal understanding. One correction for this emerging instrumentalist narrative of better living through all things mindful may be to focus on what we cannot know using our current research tools that we can know through our lived experience. This includes integrating the concerns and methods of other disciplines within the sciences and humanities into our own professional identities and scholarship. I will use examples from our research on intensive meditation in retreat contexts and an initial foray into the building of a transdisciplinary model of aspects of cognition that may be impacted by styles of Buddhist meditation to explore the challenges in implementing research that begins to approach adequacy in light of the critiques aired throughout this Institute.



Clifford Saron, PhD, is recipient of the inaugural Templeton Prize Research Grant (2012), awarded in honor of H.H. Dalai Lama. Currently a Research Scientist at the UC Davis Center for Mind and Brain and MIND Institute, he has been centrally involved in the Buddhist/Science dialogue since 1990 as a participant in Mind and Life III (Saron & Davidson, 1997). He received his PhD in neuroscience from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in 1999. For the past 11 years, he has directed The Shamatha Project, funded in part by JTF, a multidisciplinary longitudinal study investigating the effects of intensive contemplative practice in the Buddhist tradition using qualitative and multiple quantitative measures assessing shifts in worldview, personal goals, attentional capacity, emotion regulation, and

biomarkers related to stress and cellular longevity. He summarized this work in a recent Master Lecture at the 2016 International Symposium on Contemplative Studies in San Diego. He has played a leadership role in setting programmatic priorities for the Mind and Life Institute (“MLI”), and has been faculty at the JTF funded MLI summer research Institutes in Garrison, New York and the MLI Europe Summer Research Institute. As chair of the Program Planning Committee for an upcoming Mind and Life Dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Botswana, he is actively involved in the cross-cultural and transdisciplinary exchange between science, Buddhism and indigenous knowledge systems.

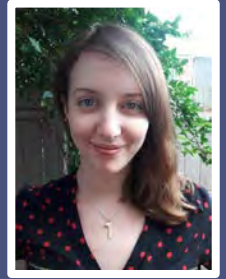
Additional Participants

Jennifer Baumgartner

Self-compassion predicts positive stress outcomes and feelings of connectedness towards others

Buddhist tenets suggest that well-being stems partially from self-compassion. We explored the role of self-compassion, as defined by self-patience and self-acceptance in times of personal suffering, on emotional states and feelings of connectedness toward others. We expected that self-compassion would predict higher positive affect and lower negative affect at baseline and in response to a laboratory stressor, and greater interpersonal connectedness. 128 participants provided self-reports and engaged with a validated laboratory stressor that included socioevaluative threat. Regression analyses revealed that self-compassion predicted higher positive affect at baseline and in response to the stressor. Self-compassion did not predict negative affect at baseline, but did predict lower negative affect in response to the stressor. Self-compassion also predicted greater feelings of connectedness toward others. Self-compassion influences intra- and interpersonal processes under normal conditions and conditions of threat, and may expand outwards toward enhancing prosocial outcomes.

Jennifer Baumgartner is a fourth-year Ph.D. student at Wright State University, working under the supervision of Dr. Tamera Schneider. Jennifer's research interests include examining moderators and mechanisms of stress resilience, focusing on behavioral and psychophysiological assessment. A second and related line of interest includes fostering stress resilience through contemplative practices and exploring mechanisms whereby contemplative practices produce positive outcomes. Jennifer received her B.A. in Philosophy and Psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Under the supervision of Dr. Linda Skitka, she studied the impact of mindfulness on the relationship between moral conviction and intolerance. Jennifer received her Master's degree in Human Factors Psychology from Wright State University. Her thesis examined the role of affect and flow on facilitating performance and adaptation. Jennifer is currently embarking on dissertation research where she will examine self expansion as a mechanism driving positive stress outcomes and prosociality in experienced Buddhist meditators.



Utkarsh Chawla

The Problem of Self and Identity

How does the ego or self arise? And how does it sustain throughout an individual's life to impart a stable sense of personal identity? These are questions that, through the pages of history, different contemplative traditions and systems of thought have sought to answer differently. In this paper, I shall be examining three systems of thought-Buddhist philosophy, phenomenology and modern cognitive science. Through a textual study of the seminal works of each tradition, I seek to understand how these traditions account for the self. Such a study would also shed light on the commonalities in theme and approach which exist between the answers supplied by these three fields as to issues of self and identity. Finally, I wish to ask if it is possible to synthesize a 'generalized' answer from these three stands, one which responds to the criticisms and flaws each individual solution suffers from.

Utkarsh Chawla is a final year master's student in Nalanda University (Bihar, India). He is doing his post-graduation in Buddhist Studies, specifically focusing on Tibetan Buddhism. Before this, he did his graduation in Physics and Astrophysics from Delhi University. As a science enthusiast he regularly blogs about science topics. Besides this he also plays the guitar and is interested in music, literature and improvisational comedy.



Additional Participants

Chelsea Hall

Gar's Five Sciences Buddhist Institute

I would like to focus on Science and the Buddhist Revival at Serta Larung Gar, the site of my ethnographic research. Why is a traditional Buddhist educational institution interested in importing "Western" science? Through this poster presentation, I hope to give the reader a sense of the scope and influence of Serta and its leaders by discussing the importation of scientific knowledge around consciousness theory, and including photography of Serta itself. What interplay of demand and circumstance generated a flourishing dialogue between influencers such as Khenpo Tsultrim Lodro from the biggest Tibetan Buddhist institution in the world and some of the West's greatest scientific minds? I hope to explore the importation of science through Buddhist logic discourse around consciousness as a way of projecting a modern ecumenical Tibetan Buddhist image to the domestic and international viewer, and how this demand for new scientific knowledge represents a desire to reinforce the versimilitude of Buddhist logic.

Chelsea E. Hall is currently working on her PhD in Religion, Gender, and Culture focusing on Tibetan Buddhism at Harvard University under the direction of Janet Gyatso. She focuses on the largest Tibetan Buddhist nunnery in the world, Serta Larung Gar, in Kham (Sichuan), where she has lived and conducted ethnographic research. She graduated with an MA in 2008 in the History of Religions from the University of Virginia under the supervision of David Germano, and did her undergraduate thesis at New College of Florida in Religion and Tibetan Buddhism with John Newman. Her research interests include present-day religious communities or "dharma encampments" in Tibet, gender and Buddhism, the Kham cultural area of Tibet, nomadic life, and comparative and interfaith dialogue. She currently focuses on the published works of a group of female Khenmos (cleric-scholars) at Serta Larung Gar.



Eun Young Hwang

Tiantai Meditation of Zhi Guan Seen from a Neuro-phenomenological Perspective.

My presentation shows how a neuro-phenomenological analysis would give a methodological frame, which enriches our reading of Tiantai Zhi Yi's idea of contemplation/cessation. Taking up a neuro-phenomenological model on meditation that focuses on meta-awareness of awareness as objectless awareness and links it to a phenomenological concept of reduction, I will show how the contemplation of Tiantai Zhi Yi entails a self-inspective moment of bracketing ordinary experience and reconfigures it. When introspectively seeing any moment of experience, self-introspection, first of all, reveals not only the meta-awareness of its intentional awareness of object in light of emptiness but also the meta-awareness of this empty, indefinite openness in a very specific moment of intentional experience.

I am Eunyong Hwang, a Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago Divinity School, focusing on intentionality, habituation, and moral agency in the context of comparative philosophical studies. Pursuing my B.A. and M.A. program in Philosophy at Yonsei University in Korea, I worked on German Romanticism for my thesis along with some studies on Huayan Buddhism and Zen Buddhism. My Ph.D. program here at the University of Chicago has really equipped me with various academic experiences covering Chinese Buddhism, religious ethics, cultural theories, and moral philosophy. I am particularly interested in incorporating into my research on moral agency some insights from neuro-science and phenomenology, when it comes to embodiment, habituation, some effects of contemplative practices. I am currently a dissertation research fellow in the Stevanovich Institute: Formation of Knowledge at the University of Chicago.



Additional Participants

Justin Kelly

Purification: an alternative heuristic for examining Buddhist praxis

Much of the contemporary dialogue between Buddhism and science focuses on specific techniques of meditation and often fails to sufficiently explicate how they are situated within interconnected presentations of the body, ethics, philosophy, ritual, and more. Due to this approach, much of the literature omits vital aspects of the Buddhist traditions being investigated. This poster proposes an alternative concept around which to conduct this dialogue—purification—which acts as a fulcrum for physiological, epistemological, ontological, and hermeneutical transformation to occur. Specifically, I examine how fourteenth-century Tibetan Buddhist master Longchen Rabjam (klong chen rab 'byams) employs the concept of purification throughout his *Precious Treasury of Philosophical Systems* (grub mtha' mdzod), uniting various aspects of his presentation. Based upon these findings, I propose prospective avenues for further interdisciplinary research into topics such as the mind-body connection, the effects of embodied practice, and the cultivation of well-being.

Raised on a farm in rural Massachusetts, Justin Kelley studied Environmental Economics as an undergraduate at Tufts University. He subsequently spent ten years living in and around Tibetan refugee communities in India and Nepal, studying Tibetan language, Buddhist philosophy, and meditative practices. In 2015, he began studying in Rice University's Department of Religion with Dr. Anne C. Klein, professor of Religious Studies. His general interests include meditative and philosophical systems in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, phenomenology, and contemplative studies. His research focuses on the psychophysical transformation that occurs within religious practice, and the associated epistemologies that are both utilized while approaching this goal and born from such transformation. This past year, he taught two undergraduate courses at Rice entitled Buddhist Art and Literature and Tibetan Language, Literature, and Culture. He currently serves as the Chair of the Department of Religion's mentorship program and is in his third year of coursework.

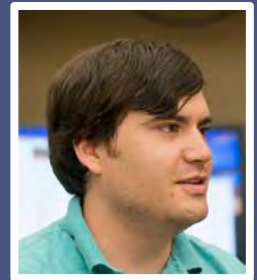


Brandon King

Intensive Meditation and Motivational Engagement with Human Suffering: Consequences for Cardiac Orienting and Emotional Memory

Recent years have seen a rise in research emphasizing compassion and altruism as salient outcomes of meditation training. While fruitful, this literature has yet to consider the broader implications of contemplative training for how individuals encode and derive meaning from observed human suffering. In a longitudinal study, participants viewed images of suffering before and after 3-months of training in a residential shamatha retreat. Physiological measures of cardiac orienting (heart rate) were recorded to assess attentional engagement and prosocially-oriented motivation. Approximately 7 years after retreat, participants completed a recognition memory test for these images. Although training did not influence overall levels of memory accuracy, reported confidence for correctly-remembered images was strongly associated with outward-oriented concern (cardiac deceleration) after training, but relative self-focused attention (cardiac acceleration) before training. These data provide initial evidence that intensive meditation promotes a qualitative shift in how human suffering is encoded and maintained in lasting memory.

As an advanced graduate student at the University of California, Davis, I research the immediate and long-term consequences of intensive meditation training on emotional responses to suffering. For 9 years, I have been an integral research member of the Shamatha Project, a longitudinal, wait-list controlled study of 3-months of meditation training in a residential retreat setting. My work—and that of our lab—is informed by a broad view of retreat practice as a holistic intervention that shapes multiple aspects of individuals' experience, from biological health, to attentional engagement, to purpose in life. I received my undergraduate training at the University of Memphis, where I was involved in research investigating how students' emotions serve to mediate learning gains in interpersonal contexts. This fostered my ongoing interest in understanding how profiles of emotional responding influence individuals' ability to enact meaningful behavioral change in their lives.



Additional Participants

Vincente Laliberté

The Use of Neuroscientific Metaphors by Meditation Practitioners

Buddhist meditation practices are being increasingly adapted to psychological and biomedical frameworks in the Western world and scholars have documented the historical process that made the alliance between these two epistemic communities possible. This study is a secondary analysis of interviews conducted in the context of the Varieties of Contemplative Experience study, examining the range of experience associated with meditation. We selected the 16 interviews with meditation practitioners and the 11 interviews with experts in which participants used neuroscientific metaphors in their narratives. Our preliminary data provide examples of the use of brain-based metaphors, and shows how participants attempt to negotiate potential differences or tensions between the two different epistemologies: either through integration or by rejecting one of them.

Vincent Laliberté, MD, MA, FRCPC is a psychiatrist trained at McGill University. He completed his medical training and a Master's degree in sociology at Université Laval. He is starting a research fellowship under the supervision of Professor Laurence Kirmayer that



includes a Ph.D. in anthropology. He is part of the Clinician-Investigator Program, and was recently awarded a CIHR Fellowship, a FQRS training award as well as the Healthy Brain for Healthy Mind Fellowship. His main area of research is the neuroscientific discourse as it applies to psychiatry and to other psychological and biomedical frameworks. Vincent Laliberté is also interested in social and community psychiatry and is currently collaborating with various actors to open a mental health clinic for homeless people in the Welcome Hall Mission in Montreal, where he will do clinical work as a psychiatrist.

Katie Lenger

Is Mindfulness Only for the Fortunate? The Development and Dissemination of a Brief-Home-Based Mindfulness Intervention to Low-Income Couples.

Low-income couples experience greater individual and relational stress compared to higher income couples. Since mindfulness reduces both individual and relationship stress, it may be particularly useful for underserved populations. Unfortunately, low-income populations experience greater barriers to engaging in typical approaches to therapy. Furthermore, many mindfulness interventions occur over an extended period causing greater attrition. In response to these barriers, briefer, home-based, interventions have been a successful solution to reaching and retaining these populations. The present study seeks to design a brief, home-based, mindfulness intervention to deliver to underserved couples. To tailor the intervention to be most palatable to low-income populations, we are conducting two focus groups, each with 4-8 low-income individuals, to discuss their attitudes on mindfulness and the intervention. Using qualitative research methods, we seek to identify common themes that emerge and will inform our intervention. These themes and implications for using mindfulness with low-income populations will be discussed.

My name is Katie Lenger and I am a clinical psychology graduate student at the University of Tennessee. I completed my undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, where I discovered my genuine love of research, particularly within the intersection of mindfulness and romantic relationships. Specifically, my research interests involve identifying mechanisms (e.g. mindfulness, gratitude, humility) related to achieving and maintaining individual and relationship health, among older and underserved populations. Currently, I am in the process of developing a brief-mindfulness intervention that will be delivered in the homes of 60 low-income couples. This intervention seeks to make this portable, low-cost, strategy more accessible to this population to help improve and maintain their individual and relationship health. Upon earning a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, I plan to be a professor at a university where I can continue to conduct intrinsically driven research and mentor students in the development of their own research passions.

Additional Participants

Michael Lifshitz

*Cultivating the inner senses through Ignatian prayer:
A neuro-anthropological research proposal*

This poster will present a proposal for a mixed-methods research project that I will soon be undertaking. We will investigate a set of systematic contemplative practices from the Christian tradition—the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises—which focus on cultivating mental imagery as a means of deepening spiritual connection. Our project will include an active-controlled, randomized trial examining the impact of one month of imagery-based prayer on visualization ability and associated brain markers. In parallel, we will conduct short-term ethnographic fieldwork tracking newcomers in a local church as they learn to pray in the Ignatian style. This mixed-methods approach will allow us to integrate our knowledge of neurocognitive mechanisms with the rich phenomenology afforded by socially-embedded ethnographic engagement. The aims of this poster will be (1) to inform the Buddhism/Science dialogue by offering an illustration of what interdisciplinary contemplative science might look like, and (2) to refine the proposed project through constructive criticism.

Michael is interested in the plasticity of human perception. He is currently wrapping up his PhD in neuroscience at McGill University in Montreal, and will soon be joining Tanya M. Luhrmann as a postdoctoral fellow in the anthropology department at Stanford. Michael's research investigates practices that aim to transform subjective experience—from meditation and hypnosis to placebos and prayer. He works from an interdisciplinary perspective, combining cognitive, neurobiological, and phenomenological approaches to shed light on consciousness and self-regulation. In this spirit, he recently co-edited an academic book entitled "Hypnosis and Meditation: Towards an Integrative Science of Conscious Planes" (Oxford University Press, 2016). Michael's work is supported by the NSERC, the Bial Foundation, and Mind & Life Institute. Before his doctorate, he completed a master's in neuroscience and an undergraduate with honors in psychology and minors in philosophy and world religions, all at McGill.



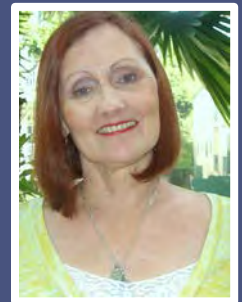
Janice Poss

Putting the Buddhism/Science Dialogue on a New Footing: Nature's Way

How does Buddhism 'go-green'? St. Hildegard's term '*veriditas*', 'greening', can be applied to a tripartite interdisciplinary, interreligious dialogue between Science's quantifiable data, Buddhist eco-Dharma and Catholic Stewardship as a partnership that examines science's technological ability to conserve and preserve resources, Buddhism's application of interconnected, interdependence with the earth and all sentient beings, and Catholicism's responsible stewarding of our planet.

How do they come together to build responsible awareness to our planet and to each other across disciplines and faith traditions? I believe, all three inform us in different ways, but together can begin to improve programs building sustainability into humanity's habits for a world to achieve better integration of science's ability to quantify with Buddhism's ability to level hurtful hierarchies within our compassionate Buddha nature and Catholicism's ability to sense our dependence on God as the Creator of all things, seeing God in everything.

First schooled in art at Chicago's Art Institute and after a long stretch as a lapsed Catholic, I returned through Buddhism to my root faith and began ministering at my parish where I now teach the Bible, sing in the choir and, recently began instructing on the Interreligious Vatican II document, *Nostra Aetate*. I have come to academia late, after working in fashion for over 30 years; however, ongoing education has always been of utmost significance in my life. In the last ten years, I have completed a Master's Degree in Pastoral Theology and am completing a Ph.D. in Women's studies and Religion at Claremont Graduate University. I am a member of the Hindu/Catholic Dialogue in LA/LMU, Women's Caucus and Buddhist Christian studies at AAR. I write about social justice issues for the blog, feminism and religion, and have worked full-time at the Getty Museum for the last fifteen years.



Additional Participants

Søren Buskov Poulsen

Buddhism and Science in Harmony and Conflict: an anthropological exploration into the hierarchy and dynamic relationship between values and contexts in the exchanges with science in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in exile.

On the basis of ethnographic fieldwork following the science education of Tibetan monk-scholars, I explore the hierarchy of values and contexts that influence the engagement with science in Tibetan monasteries in exile. The engagement with science takes place in different social contexts and with groups of monk-scholars guided by distinct values and dispositions for the engagement with science. I compare the context of everyday encounters with science and reflections on the relationship between Buddhism and science with a context where this is explored through intensive workshops, dialogues, summer programs and conferences. Inspired by an ongoing reinterpretation of Louis Dumont's work on hierarchies of value by the anthropologist Joel Robbins, I show some of the dynamics of harmony and conflicts that emerge in part through the relationship between the contexts where "Buddhism and science" is lived in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries.

I am a Danish PhD-student in Anthropology at the University of Aarhus, Denmark. Since 2011, I have collectively spent more than two years in Tibetan monastic communities in exile, using anthropological research methods in



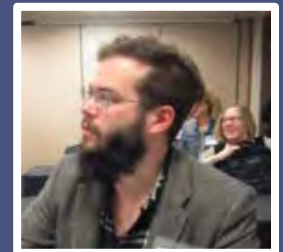
my social and academic work with different projects on modern education for Tibetan monastic scholars. I have been interested in contemplative practices and traditions before my formal studies in anthropology began, but my appreciation of Buddhist contemplative life and studies further developed when, from 2011 to 2013, I worked as a research assistant on a project funded by the University of Manitoba, Canada that worked with monk-scholars at the International Buddhist Academy, Kathmandu, Nepal to examine and develop an English language curriculum with the skills required to be a contemporary monastic leader. In 2014, I began a PhD-project focused on the science education of Tibetan monk-scholars underway in some major monastic universities in exile.

Tailer Ransom

Material Engagement Theory and The Mind Without Substance

Lambros Malafouris describes Material Engagement Theory as "[T]he synergistic process by which out of brains, bodies, and things, mind emerges." (2013, 17). This general structure of conceiving of things that, in Western philosophy, are usually taken to be 'inner' events (e.g. agency, cognition, meaning), echoes throughout his work. Mental processes are, from this perspective, radically de-centered and require a global reevaluation of cognitive topography, and what can be properly considered a part of human cognition. I think that this understanding of cognition can find some valuable explanatory resources from the Buddhist tradition, especially with respect to the emphasis on (1) cognition emerging out of our everyday engagements with the world, (2) the idea that cognition and mental process in general do not have a determinate substantial locus, but are multicausal processes, and (3) that human beings are ever-changing types of things; we are things that are in a process of becoming, rather than being—expressed in Malafouris' concepts of metaplasticity and creative evolution.

University of Memphis
Philosophy Graduate student



Additional Participants

Roxanne Rashedi

A Classroom-Based Yoga Intervention

This poster draws from a randomized delayed treatment control study, which examined an 8-week yoga intervention (48 yoga videos to which students practiced during classroom instruction over the course of the 8 weeks) on self-regulation among five to six-year-olds. The study combined quantitative assessments of teacher reports and direct assessments of behavior, in addition to video data of children practicing yoga and perspectival data (student interviews and teacher focus groups). This poster discusses the preliminary quantitative and qualitative findings and highlights teachers' perceptions of the following: (a) enjoyable and beneficial aspects of the yoga practices and (b) feasibility of integrating yoga into classroom instruction. Impact of yoga on self-regulation (as indexed by several direct assessments of behavior) will also be discussed. Most importantly, qualitative findings will contribute to developing a conceptual framework of feasible age appropriate yoga practices for children in school settings.

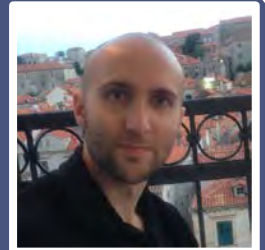
Roxanne is a Ph.D. Candidate in Education at the University of California, Davis and is interested in cognition, the body, and movement-based contemplative practices. Her dissertation investigates the effects that a classroom-based yoga intervention may have on children's self-regulation and emotional regulation. This study also qualitatively explores the effects this program has on teachers' perceptions of students' behaviors in the classroom, teaching quality, and overall feasibility of integrating yoga into classroom instruction. Roxanne's research interests relate to her development as a student of yoga and instructor and led her to explore the therapeutic aspects of the practice and ways these practices may be accessible and beneficial for children. She is currently pursuing training to become a Certified Yoga Therapist and looks forward to learning and sharing ways to offer high quality yoga-based practices to children and adolescents.

Adam Safron

The cybernetic Bayesian brain as middle way between enactivism and cognitivism; towards understanding teleology through active inference

Enactivists have criticized traditional cognitive science as hamstrung by naïve Cartesian assumptions that mischaracterize minds as analyzable apart from the context of embedded bodies. Indeed, the starting place for understanding minds must be in terms of their evolution and development as control systems for niche-constructing organisms. However, in this presentation I will draw from both perspectives, proposing that an adequate characterization of teleological phenomena may require revisiting mental homunculi, understood as body maps with quasi-agentic properties. I will also introduce a model in which simulated engagement of motor responses (along with associated perceptions) allow for voluntary attending to representations, which may produce (via active inference in a predictive coding framework) intentionally-directed actions if sufficiently robustly activated. This cybernetic grounding of teleology suggests that cognitivist and enactivist perspectives are synergistic, rather than competing.

I am currently finishing my PhD at Northwestern University, where I have pursued three main lines of interest: 1) Exploring biological bases of desire and motivation, focusing on sexual orientation; 2) Studying unification frameworks for understanding minds; and 3) Investigating mental training as a potential means of enhancing cognitive and affective control. My ultimate ambition is a thoroughgoing multi-level understanding of goal-directedness, characterized in terms of mechanism, evolution, development, and experience. Part of my motivation for these academic pursuits is a belief that much of the world is in a state of spiritual crisis. More specifically, I believe that individuals and communities are suffering from an absence of intrapersonal and interpersonal connection, and that this lack of presence divorces people from a felt sense of the richness of existence, with far-reaching consequences. It is my hope that a combination of science and philosophy can help move humanity towards sustainable flourishing.

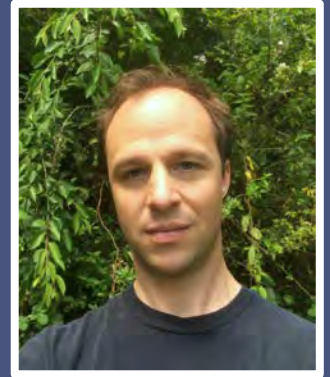


Additional Participants

Karl Schmid

My poster will be divided into three columns which together lay out Kamalaśīla's theories on vipaśyanā meditation, his argument for its necessity in ethical development, and how this argument relates to current debates on ethics in mindfulness meditation. The first column contains an overview of my project, its objectives, and a brief description of the texts being used, the Bhāvanākramas. The second column explains how vipaśyanā works, using three flowcharts of the cognitive processes when observing phenomena before, during and after vipaśyanā training. These three stages are modeled after Sellars's theories (and Brandom's explication) on a similar series of stages during learned observation. The third column uses bullet points to show Kamalaśīla's argument for how this results in an ethical development that is not possible with nonconceptual meditation alone. Finally, I give a point-by-point comparison of Kamalaśīla's argument and the recent debates on ethics for mindfulness meditation.

I am currently working on my PhD in the Graduate Division of Religion at Emory University in Atlanta, GA. I completed a Master's in Tibetan Buddhism at Maitripa College in 2011 and a Master's in Philosophy of Religion at the University



of Chicago in 2014. My dissertation research centers on Buddhist philosophical theories on meditation, and their relations to contemporary philosophy of mind and psychology. In particular, I am working on the triad of meditation manuals, the Bhāvanākramas, written by the 8th century Indian Buddhist philosopher Kamalaśīla. I am interested in how his depiction of vipaśyanā (insight meditation) and his arguments on conceptual meditation relate to contemporary discussions on meditation's potential for ethical development.

Frank Schuman

Mindful movement and skilled attention

Given the mind-body connection implied in many mindfulness practices, it is surprising that mindfulness research has largely overlooked the role of motor control and motor learning. Here I present a theory of skilled control of attention grounded in higher-level motor control as a model of mindful awareness (Clark et al., 2015). The model proposes that practices such as Tai Chi or Feldenkrais situate mindfulness training directly within the embodied organisation of the sensorimotor loop. It suggests mindful observation of how one executes movement as a profound mechanism for shaping joint co-organisation processes between volitional movement, skilled attention and body awareness. I also provide neuroimaging evidence that this process can be enacted intersubjectively when a trained practitioner applies his own sensorimotor skills to aid functional improvements in the sensorimotor organisation of a student, here improving the student's body awareness (Verrel et al., 2015).

I am a post-doctoral researcher with J. Kevin O'Regan at the Laboratoire Psychologie de la Perception at the Université Paris Descartes in Paris. My research interest is in enactive theories of cognition, attention and perception form both experimental and philosophical perspectives. I study the



sensorimotor foundation of integrating novel sensory information indicating the magnetic north into the human sensory apparatus using behavioral, phenomenological and physiological techniques, the guidance of visual attention in spontaneous natural behavior using mobile eye tracking, and the potential to improve body awareness and cognitive control via contemplative sensorimotor practices. I hold a PhD, Master and Bachelor degree in Cognitive Science from the University of Osnabrück.

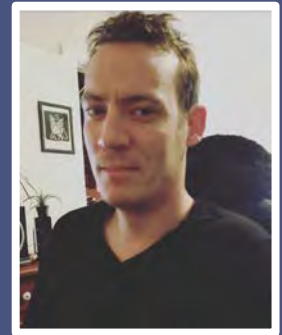
Additional Participants

Sean Smith

The Phenomenology of Attention and the Mereology of the Self

In the past two decades, much ink has been spilled extolling the many ways in which Buddhist philosophy and contemplative practice can have a generative impact on discussions in western philosophy (Garfield 2015), cognitive science (Varela et al. 1991) and neuroscience (Lutz et al. 2007; Lutz et al. 2008). The purpose of this paper is to consider the possibility of a reverse trend of influence (cf. Garfield 2011). I propose to show how Western philosophy and neuroscience can help to adjudicate philosophical disputes indigenous to Buddhism, in this case, the question is about the relation between attention and the self.

Sean is a PhD candidate in the Philosophy Department at the University of Toronto. His research is focused on the nature of phenomenal consciousness and



embodied affect. He explores this topic through three different but related domains of philosophical and scientific inquiry; namely, the philosophy and cognitive science of consciousness, affective neuroscience, and early Indian Buddhist psychology. Sean has been practicing Vipassana meditation in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin and S.N. Goenka for over ten years.

Zachary Walsh

*Towards a Contemplative Commons:
Building a Platform for Contemplative Social Sciences*

This poster presents a project that I am working on at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in Potsdam, Germany. The project is called *A Mindset for the Anthropocene (AMA)*. It aims both at establishing a community of spiritually interested stakeholders within the field of sustainability while conducting specific research projects that help underpin the relevance and legitimacy of qualities like mindfulness and compassion for achieving sustainability. Research projects are integrated into stakeholder mapping projects, so that they connect stakeholders who are not typically engaged with contemplative science (including policy-makers, NGOs, think-tanks, and activists), but who stand to benefit from the development of contemplative research within their respective disciplines and target areas of concern. In addition to communicating the project's basic platform, I will outline its future plans to develop "A Contemplative Commons," conceived as a collaborative commons for doing contemplative research in social science disciplines, including sociology, economics, political science, environmental studies, and media studies.

Zack Walsh is a PhD candidate in the Process Studies graduate program at Claremont School of Theology. His research



is transdisciplinary, exploring process-relational, contemplative, and engaged Buddhist approaches to political economy, sustainability, and China. His most recent writings provide critical and constructive reflection on mindfulness trends, while developing contemplative pedagogies and practices for addressing social and ecological issues. He is a research specialist at Toward Ecological Civilization, the Institute for the Postmodern Development of China, and the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies in Potsdam, Germany. He has also received lay precepts from Fo Guang Shan, an engaged Buddhist organization based in Taiwan, and attended numerous meditation and monastic retreats in Thailand, China, and Taiwan.