

Psychology of Consciousness JNST 000G.01
Professor Fred Rabinowitz
Fall 2019, Wednesdays 1-3:50 pm Larsen Hall 230

Psychology of Consciousness

This seminar will explore both intellectually and experientially various realms of consciousness and shed light on some of the mysteries of our own experiences in this life. We will approach topics such as mindfulness, self-awareness, mind-body links, dreaming, hypnosis, learning and problem-solving, habituation, implicit bias, sensory awareness, yoga, meditation, sensory deprivation, mystical experiences, religious conversion, visions, hallucinations, regression, premonitions, the effects of hallucinogenic substances, as well as finding meaning in our existence.

We will frame some of our understanding from transpersonal psychology, the study of phenomena that are subjective to an individual's experiences; phenomenological ways of viewing the world and oneself, and often perceived as significant, life changing, or spiritual in nature. At the same time we will tie our studies to more grounded research about the brain and the neuroscience processes at work in the production of the flow of consciousness. We will consider the possible evolutionary purpose of many of these states of consciousness and look at the work of current psychologists who study consciousness, learning their vocabulary and how their systems of categorization and conceptualization mark the field of consciousness studies. Through conceptual and scientific readings, class discussion around complex and paradoxical findings, and through our subjective experiences in the seminar and our lives, we will demystify and hopefully find essential human meaning in the various states of consciousness that we are able to examine.