Concentrative Studies

The concentration in Concentrative Studies investigates the underlying philosophical, psychological, and scientific bases of human concentrative experience. Students pursue a "third person" academic approach drawn from the humanities and sciences to analyze the cultural, historical, and scientific underpinnings of concentrative experiences in religion, art, music, and literature. This is developed in combination with a "critical first-person" approach based in practical experience of concentrative techniques and methods to provide an integrated understanding of the role of concentrative thought and experience in societies and on the individuals who constitute them.

Concentration Core (6 courses total including Senior Capstone Seminar)

UNIV 0540 Introduction to Concentrative Studies
Two science courses that focus on the cognitive neurological functioning of the human brain and how concentrative practices affect it.
Select one from the following list:
CLPS 0040 Mind and Brain: Introduction to Cognitive Neuroscience
CLPS 0200 Human Cognition
CLPS 0500 Perception and Mind
NEUR 0010 The Brain: An Introduction to Neuroscience
Select one from the following list:
UNIV 0090 Meditation and the Brain: Applications in Basic and Clinical Science
UNIV 1000 Cognitive Neuroscience of Meditation
Two humanities courses that introduce students to concentrative religious traditions and to the philosophical analysis of the key questions of human existence from following list:
ANTH 1240 Religion and Culture
CLAS 1120G The Idea of Self
CLAS 1140 Classical Philosophy of India
PHIL 0010 The Place of Persons
PHIL 0020 Mind and Matter
PHIL 0350 Ancient Philosophy
RELS 0040 Great Concentrative Traditions of Asia
RELS 0065 On Being Human: Religious and Philosophical Conceptions of Self
RELS 0120 The Classical Chinese Philosophy of Life
RELS 0130 Religions of Classical India
Senior Capstone Seminar (UNIV 1010)

Track Requirements (6 additional courses)

Students must complete either a Science or Humanities track in addition to the concentration core.

Science Track

The Science track in Concentrative Studies gives concentrators in-depth understanding of the scientific methods used to investigate the cognitive neuroscience of concentrative practice. Students will be taught how to critique current research as well as how to develop, operationalize, and test hypotheses related to concentrative practice. Students will become well-versed in how to study first-person reports related to the phenomenology of concentrative experience as a foundation for formulating third-person tests of the effects of practice on brain function and behavior. The Concentrative Studies Science Track trains students to investigate these types of questions not only for academic scholarship, but also to provide a method of self-inquiry that can be used to augment any area of life.

Honors Requirement

Students with a minimum GPA of 3.5 in the concentration may apply for entrance into the Honors program in the middle of their sixth semester. To apply, students submit a proposal for a senior thesis project describing the work to be undertaken and its relevance to the field of Concentrative Studies, along with a copy of their academic transcript. Students accepted into Honors must complete the required Capstone seminar, UNIV 1010, and enroll in an additional semester of independent study in their advisor's department. Students must complete an Honors Thesis to the satisfaction of the department. Students must complete an Honors Thesis to the satisfaction of the department.

Humanities Track

The Humanities track explores the origin and development of concentrative practices within specific religious, cultural, and historical contexts and gives students a foundation in the Philosophy of Mind relevant to the scientific study of concentrative practice. Students will choose a concentration program that includes at least two of the three advanced seminars drawn from the two areas below. While it is recommended that students focus primarily on one of these two areas, the prescribed balance of the individual concentration program for each student will be established with the concentration advisor when the student applies to enter the concentration, normally in their fourth year of study.

Six Courses total from across the two areas below: 6

Contemplative Religious Traditions

CLAS 0850 Mythology of India
CLAS 0855 The Bhagavad Gita
EAST 1420 The Confucian Mind
EAST 1880D Early Daoist Syncretism: Zhuanzi Zi and Huainian Zi
EAST 1950S The History, Philosophy, and Practice of Rinzai Zen Buddhism
RELS 0056 Spiritual But Not Religious: American Spirituality Past and Present
RELS 0530 Laozi and the Daodejing
RELS 0911 Buddhism in India
RELS 1370B Philosophy of Mysticism
RELS 1441 Zen Meditation in China, Korea, and Japan
SCSO 1550E Science and Religion

The Philosophy of Mind

PHIL 0990L Moral Psychology
PHIL 1520 Consciousness
PHIL 1590 Philosophy of Science
PHIL 1650 Moral Theories
PHIL 1660 Metaphysics
PHIL 1750 Epistemology
PHIL 1720 Kant: The Critique of Pure Reason
PHIL 1770 Philosophy of Mind
UNIV 1520 The Shaping of World Views

Three thematic science courses drawn primarily from NEUR and CLPS, at least two of which must be 1000-level

APMA 0410 Mathematical Methods in the Brain Sciences
CLPS 0400 Brain Damage and the Mind
CLPS 1291 Computational Methods for Mind, Brain and Behavior
CLPS 1400 The Neural Bases of Cognition
CLPS 1492 Computational Cognitive Neuroscience
NEUR 1020 Principles of Neurobiology
NEUR 1030 Neural Systems

One statistics course (others with approval) 1

APMA 1650 Statistical Inference I
CLPS 0900 Quantitative Methods in Psychology
CLPS 2906 Experimental Design

Two semesters of laboratory research in an established lab (e.g. BIOL 1950/1960) 2
of their advisor and present the results of their studies in formal talks or poster sessions open to all interested faculty and students.