BA in Contemplative Psychology

The Contemplative Psychology major requires 37 credit hours: 28 from the core requirements and 9 from one of the concentrations. The core requirements consist of courses in psychology and meditation from the Buddhist and Shambhala traditions, as well as courses in Western psychology. Students pursue further study in one of four concentrations: Somatic Psychology, Psychology of Health and Healing, Transpersonal and Humanistic Psychology, or Psychological Science.

Other requirements include a contemplative community retreat offered every other fall semester and a community-based field placement within the Boulder/Denver area.

Program Vision

The BA Contemplative Psychology program offers an innovative approach to the study and practice of psychology, guided by the principle that psychological health and well-being are innate. The Contemplative Psychology program creates and supports a learning environment that values personal experience and insight as essential to embodied achievement. Through various modes of inquiry, such as contemplative practice, empirical research, theoretical analysis, oral and written narrative, group dynamics, and community engagement, the field of contemplative psychology nourishes individual and collective transformation. The program develops the whole person through experiential learning that broadens and sharpens intellect, deepens intuition, nourishes compassion, and embodies confidence. Drawing from meditative wisdom traditions and contemporary practices of diversity, the curriculum provides fertile opportunity for understanding complexity, while fostering reciprocal learning across deeply valued difference.

Entering the Major

In accordance with University policy, students can declare their major at any time. In order to progress through the course work in this major, students should take the following important course prerequisite at the earliest opportunity: PSYB101, Introduction to Western Psychology. Please consult with your Academic Advisor to plan your schedule in the program.

Degree Requirements

BA in Contemplative Psychology

Core Requirements

- PSYB314  Buddhist Psychology I: Mindfulness Meditation (3)
- PSYB325  Buddhist Psychology II: Awakening Compassion (3)
- PSYB343W  Contemplative Community Retreat (1)
- PSYB415  Maitri: Working with Emotions (3)
- PSYB425  Field Placement (3)
- PSYB482  Senior Seminar I: Transformational Psychology—The Group Experience (3)
- PSYB483  Senior Seminar II: Transformational Psychology—The Threshold Experience (3)

SUBTOTAL 19

Select two of the following courses:

- PSYB301  Statistics and Research Methods (3)
- PSYB345  Developmental Psychology (3)
- PSYB357  Cognitive Psychology (3)
- PSYB371  Personality Theories (3)
- PSYB373  Social Psychology (3)

SUBTOTAL 6

Select one of the following courses:

- PSYB420  Abnormal Psychology (3)
- PSYB490  Special Topics in Psychology (3)
- PSYB495  Advanced Practicum in Psychological Research (3)

SUBTOTAL 3

CORE REQUIREMENTS 28

Concentrations

Select one of the following four concentrations: Somatic Psychology, Psychology of Health and Healing, Transpersonal and Humanistic Psychology, or Psychological Science. Each concentration has one or more required courses.

Somatic Psychology

The Somatic Psychology concentration emphasizes the practice of making meaningful connections between emotional process and the body’s expressions, sensations, and symptoms. Course work includes three learning domains: 1) the historical and developing theory of body psychology; 2) the research and science regarding body psychology; and 3) the increase of body/self-awareness developed through experiential and movement-oriented classes.

Required Course

PSYB304  Somatic Intelligence: The Neuroscience of Our Body-Mind Connection (3)

Select two of the following courses:

- PSYB208  Embodiment: Process and the Individual (3)
- PSYB255  Body-Mind Centering (3)
- PSYB303  The Psychology of the Five Elements I (3)
- PSYB328  Gestalt: Presence (3)
- PSYB333  Hakomi Somatics (3)
- PSYB359  Learning from Trauma: Understanding Its Effects and Building Personal Resources (3)
- PSYB435  Authentic Movement/Body Awareness Practice (3)
- PAR321  Contemplative Dance Practice (3)

CONCENTRATION TOTAL 9

Psychology of Health and Healing

The Psychology of Health and Healing concentration emphasizes body-mind synchronization as the key to inner harmony and well-being. Students explore a diversity of ancient and modern healing
methodologies and learn experiential techniques for balancing the spiritual and somatic aspects of health.

Required Course

- PSYB329 Approaches to Healing (3)

Select two of the following courses:

- PSYB208 Embodying Process and the Individual (3)
- PSYB209 Herbal Medicine (3)
- PSYB239 Nutrition (3)
- PSYB303 The Psychology of the Five Elements I (3)
- PSYB323 The Psychology of the Five Elements II (3)
- PSYB333 Hakomi Somatics (3)
- PSYB359 Learning from Trauma: Understanding Its Effects and Building Personal Resources (3)

CONCENTRATION TOTAL 9

Transpersonal and Humanistic Psychology

The Transpersonal and Humanistic Psychology concentration helps students synthesize two major forces in Western psychotherapy and appreciate their unique contributions to the understanding of mental health. These include the recognition of spiritual longing for wholeness as essential to psychological growth, and the acknowledgment of the importance of the client-therapist relationship in the healing process.

Required Courses

- PSYB350 Humanistic Psychology (3)
- PSYB354 Introduction to Transpersonal Psychology (3)

Select one of the following courses:

- PSYB225 Family Systems (3)
- PSYB328 Gestalt: Presence (3)
- PSYB330 Introduction to Jungian Psychology (3)
- PSYB355 Dynamics of Intimate Relationships (3)
- PSYB430 Exploring Dream Psychology (3)

CONCENTRATION TOTAL 9

Psychological Science

The Psychological Science concentration emphasizes the study of human experience and activity through systematic observation. Topics include development from infancy through adulthood, individual differences, embodiment, perception, emotion, consciousness, thinking, social influence, self, and other aspects of mental life. In addition to theoretical study, methods of obtaining and evaluating empirical evidence are explored, ranging from behavior assessment to contemplative phenomenology.

Required Course

- PSYB301 Statistics and Research Methods (3)

Select two of the following courses:

- PSYB234 Perception (3)
- PSYB345 Developmental Psychology (3)
- PSYB371 Personality Theories (3)
- PSYB373 Social Psychology (3)
- PSYB420 Abnormal Psychology (3)

CONCENTRATION TOTAL 9

PROGRAM TOTAL 37

Course Listings

PSYB100

Anatomy: Learning through the Senses (3)
A traditional approach to the study of normal human anatomy, rooted in the conventional science of anatomy, studying the structure and subsequent function of the major body systems: skeletal, muscular, nervous, endocrine, immune, digestive, blood, cardiovascular, respiratory, urinary and reproductive systems. Some practical understanding of these major systems is given from a naturopathic physician/acupuncturist’s perspective. One class briefly introduces energetic systems of anatomy (e.g. meridians, chakras). Special fee to cover two optional visits to a cadaver lab. Fee will be refunded if student chooses not to participate.

PSYB101

Introduction to Western Psychology (3)
This survey course explores psychology as it has developed in the Western world. Students learn to better understand mental life and behavior by studying diverse Western traditions that range from laboratory science to the intuitive clinical work involving clients and therapist. Topics covered include brain function, consciousness, perception, learning, thought, maturation, emotion, personality, mental illness, and therapy. Understanding these topics is deepened by critically evaluating Western psychological frameworks with respect to each student’s experience.

PSYB208

Embodying Process and the Individual (3)
The body is the vessel of emotions, the vehicle for actions, and the tool of perceptions. Culturally, we have been trained to ignore bodily processes. This class examines the role of bodily experience. By studying sensation, energy, emotion, perception, movement, breath, speech, and touch, students cultivate an ongoing individual practice of embodiment.

PSYB209

Herbal Medicine (3)
This course offers an introduction to the use of food, herbs, and other natural remedies to experience vital health. We learn to make a few simple herbal preparations, and discuss herb safety and proper dosages. Topics include herbal history, food as medicine, reproductive health, emotional health, children’s health, addictions, psychoactive plants, aromatherapy, color therapy, feng shui, and careers in natural medicine. The class has an East-West approach and enables students to use plants and other natural therapies for their own health as well as helping others.
PSYB225
Family Systems (3)
An investigation of the family as a system, which has a structure and organization of its own. Interactions between family members are seen from a systematic perspective, thereby deepening the students’ understanding of their family of origin and the families of others. The course provides an introduction to the history of family therapy and to the major theorists in the field. A variety of family structures are explored from different therapeutic models. The course combines readings, lectures, discussions, and experiential exercises. Open to all students with 30+ credits.

PSYB234
Perception (3)
The senses—sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch, and bodily sensations—give our minds access to the world. Students practice contemplative sensory awareness by attending to nuances and details of their own experience. Reflections are documented in student journals. Introspection (direct observation of conscious experience) joins scientific understanding of perceptual processes in laboratory exercises, lecture, and discussion. Findings from modern research on perception and attention provide a more complete understanding of the embodied nature of subjective experience. Materials fee.

PSYB239
Nutrition (3)
Students learn basic human physical nutritional requirements from four perspectives: the field of nutritional anthropology, the scientific discoveries of the 20th and 21st centuries, direct experience, and intuition. Students acquire information and tools to determine a diet that currently suits them, as well as how to alter that diet as personal health requirements change. We study the dietary changes in the 20th century that underlie the most common causes of chronic disease and death. Nutritional strategies are studied to prevent those diseases.

PSYB255
Body-Mind Centering (3)
This class focuses on the relationship between the body and mind through basic patterns of movement. Students experience their patterns through guided development and transform movement patterns in both themselves and others. The basis of the work is Body-Mind Centering, movement re-education, and analysis developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen. This class includes a study of living anatomy that brings awareness to the different body systems, developmental movements, and supports alignment and integration. Open to upper-division Contemplative Psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies students only. Others by permission of the instructor.

PSYB301
Statistics and Research Methods (3)
This course introduces statistical analysis and research methods used to test theories within psychological science. Students learn the most common techniques for describing data and making inferences in psychological research. Students learn to develop research questions, design rigorous and ethically sound experiments, and collect, analyze and interpret data. Prerequisite: PSYB101.

PSYB303
Psychology of the Five Elements I (3)
An exploration of the Law of the Five Elements and the classical medicine “System of Kings,” which originated in China over 5,000 years ago. The ancient Chinese viewed our body, mind, and spirit as inseparable from the world of nature around us and believed that if we observe nature closely enough, we could find the cause of any affliction of body, mind, or spirit. Through lecture and discussions, meditations, visualizations, and hands-on exercises we work directly with our sense perceptions and the techniques of identifying color, sound, odor, and emotion as tools to perceive elemental balance or imbalance. We work directly with our current state of physical, mental, and spiritual health.

PSYB304
Somatic Intelligence: The Neuroscience of Our Body-Mind Connection (3)
An introduction to somatic psychology, this course presents a theoretical study of the body-mind continuum. The importance of emotions, movement, perception, and the nature of illness and healing is illustrated by recent scientific theories and findings. By studying how our bodies and psyches weave together, we become aware of their interdependence and can construct more effective therapeutic experiences both for ourselves and for others. Students learn the fundamental principles of the somatic psychology field and explore, in depth, their relationship with advanced developmental psychology theories. Prerequisite: PSYB101. PSYB100, Anatomy, is strongly recommended.

PSYB314
Buddhist Psychology I: Mindfulness Meditation (3)
An introduction to the psychological principles and sitting practice of mindfulness-awareness meditation. The meditation is drawn from the Tibetan and Zen Buddhist traditions as well as the Shambhala teachings of sacred warriorship. By exploring the many ways ego-fixation creates suffering and confusion in our lives, students are trained to develop inner tranquility, insight, and loving-kindness. This develops an essential ground for working effectively with personal life challenges and those of others. Co-requisite: PSYB101. Open to Contemplative Psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies students with 45 credits only. Others by permission of instructor.

PSYB323
Psychology of the Five Elements II (3)
The Psychology of the Five Elements II is a continuation of the work in PSYB 303. Students work more deeply with Five Element theory through practicing pulse reading and identifying color, sound, odor, and emotion as ways to uncover elemental imbalances. We study the classical Daoist system of the Five Spirits and learn how to cultivate and maintain their presence in our lives. In addition, we study various local plants and trees to access their wisdom.
and healing powers. Prerequisite: PSYB 303 or by permission of instructor.

**PSYB325**  
**Buddhist Psychology II: Awakening Compassion (3)**  
An in-depth examination of the principles of compassionate action, as taught in both the Tibetan tradition of Mahayana Buddhism (the bodhisattva path) and the Western tradition of service to others. Students learn and practice tonglen meditation and the skills of deep listening, empathic attendance, dialogue, and servant leadership. Students are required to practice the skill of attending relationship. Prerequisite: PSYB314 or meditation experience with permission of instructor. Open to Contemplative Psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies students only. Others by permission of instructor.

**PSYB328**  
**Gestalt: Presence (3)**  
Gestalt, a way of being, is a powerful and provocative method to understand one’s body, speech, and mind. By focusing on the details of moment-to-moment experience and on the interplay between the individual and the environment, Gestalt seeks to develop self-knowledge, satisfaction, self-support, and clear boundaries. The course includes readings, lectures, discussions, and experiential exercises on "the nature of being" and ego. Upper-division Contemplative Psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies students only. Prerequisite: PSYB101.

**PSYB329**  
**Approaches to Healing (3)**  
A basic overview of the theory, practice and use of various natural approaches to health and healing. Emphasis is placed upon understanding and appreciating these modalities and discerning when and for what they are appropriate. Students research and articulate the paradigms of holistic medicine, clarifying their personal interest for future work in this field. Open to upper-division students with 60+ credits only.

**PSYB330**  
**Introduction to Jungian Psychology (3)**  
A general introduction to the psychology of C.G. Jung, this course covers Jung’s major contributions to dynamic psychology, including topics such as ego consciousness, complexes, libido theory, archetypes and the collective unconscious, persona and shadow, anima and animus, the self, individuation, synchronicity, active imagination and dream analysis. Students are required to explore their own inner world and confront unconscious processes by maintaining a journal, sharing dreams and working toward developing a “life myth.” Each class combines lecture, discussion and process, in order to bring meaning and reality to Jung’s concepts. Prerequisite: PSYB101 or by permission of instructor. Open to students with 30+ credits.

**PSYB333**  
**Hakomi Somatics (3)**  
Mind and body jointly express and reflect deeply held, often unconscious beliefs about oneself and others. Hakomi somatics helps bring these beliefs to conscious awareness. The body, with its various patterns, is used to access an intelligence that underlies habitual, limiting patterns which can be recognized and understood. This process allows learning and transformation to occur with the support of mindfulness exercises. Topics include the Hakomi principles, character strategies, boundaries, resources, and somatic psychological skill building, which can be applied to daily life. Upper-division BA students only.

**PSYB343W**  
**Contemplative Community Retreat (1)**  
This two-day retreat at Shambhala Mountain Center takes place every other fall semester. The practices of sitting and walking meditation, Tonglen, Maitri Space Awareness, and contemplative play, bring students, faculty, and staff together in community with a sense of purpose and friendship. Open to Contemplative Psychology students only. A required retreat orientation occurs in advance of the retreat and serves to prepare students for success in the PSYB343W retreat environment. Co-requisite: PSYB314. Special fee for room and board.

**PSYB345**  
**Developmental Psychology (3)**  
A study of theory in human development from birth through the span of life. Students are introduced to major theorists and discuss philosophical and practical relationship of ethics to psychology, including cross-cultural issues. Students clarify, formulate and develop their own beliefs and approaches to human development in relation to these major schools of thought and explore the relationship of these traditional approaches to the contemplative and transpersonal perspectives. Prerequisite: PSYB101.

**PSYB350**  
**Humanistic Psychology (3)**  
An exploration of the basic principles of humanistic and existential psychology and psychotherapy. This is the so-called “third force” in the modern Western tradition of psychology, which emerged after 1940 as an expansion of and alternative to the psychoanalytic and behavioral schools that preceded it. Humanistic emphasizes the authenticity of the therapist as the key factor in promoting the client’s potential for growth and healing. Focus is on the work of Adler, Rogers, and Maslow among the humanists, and the work of Yalom, May, Frankl, Perls, and Bugental among the existentialists. Prerequisite: PSYB101. Open to Contemplative Psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies students only.

**PSYB354**  
**Introduction to Transpersonal Psychology (3)**  
An exploration of the basic principles of transpersonal psychology and psychotherapy. This is the so-called “fourth force” in the modern Western tradition of psychology, which emerged in the 1960’s as an expansion and alternative to the psychoanalytic, behavioral,
and humanistic schools that preceded it. Transpersonal, meaning “beyond the persona or mask,” studies human transcendence, wholeness, and transformation. Focus is on the work of Jung, Assagioli, Grof, Wilber, Walsh, Vaughan, and others to introduce students to transpersonal theory and practice. Students also explore their personal journey through a transpersonal lens. Prerequisite: PSYB101. Open to upper-division Contemplative Psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies students only.

**PSYB355**  
**Dynamics of Intimate Relationships (3)**  
An exploration of multiple approaches to intimate relationship from schools of thought such as feminism psychology, social psychology, attachment theory, counseling psychology, Buddhist and transpersonal psychology, sociology, queer theory, and multicultural and scientific research. Issues discussed include attraction, communication, neurobiology of love, relationship as spiritual path, attachment and family of origin, cultural influences, relationship dysfunction, relationship violence, gender, and sexuality. Through the synthesis of contemplative introspection, critical thinking and the research and theories explored in class, students will develop their own theories of relationship. Prerequisite: PSYB 101. Open to upper-division students only.

**PSYB357**  
**Cognitive Psychology (3)**  
This course concerns the study of thought, conscious experience, and associated mental functions. This area of psychological science focuses on the high-level mental processes and related brain activity involved in conscious mental life and unconscious information processing. Specific topics include attention, language, intelligences, imagery, emotion, conceptual knowledge, memory, problem solving, expertise, reasoning, and decision-making. This course emphasizes the perspectives of information processing, cognitive neuroscience, and contemplative psychological science. Prerequisite: PSYB101.

**PSYB359**  
**Learning from Trauma: Understanding Its Effects and Building Personal Resources (3)**  
Unresolved trauma affects our psychological and physical well-being. This class educates students about the aftereffects of trauma, such as the inability to modulate physiological arousal, dissociation, emotional problems, and negative beliefs that often follow traumatic experiences. An experiential class, we explore somatic resources for dealing with trauma and work with the effects of trauma in a group setting. The primary focus is on accessing the body and developing somatic resources to help a person cope with and resolve the symptoms of trauma. This encourages mastery over helpless and overwhelming feelings. Pre-requisite: PSYB101. Open to upper-division students only.

**PSYB371**  
**Personality Theories (3)**  
Students explore the development of human personality by studying the theories of major traditional systems of psychology, including psychoanalysis, analytical psychology, behavioral, humanistic, systemic, feminist, and existential models. Students clarify, formulate, and develop their own thoughts and approaches to the psychology of personality in relation to these major theories and explore the relationship of these approaches to the contemplative and transpersonal perspectives. Prerequisite: PSYB101. Open to students with 45+ earned credits only.

**PSYB373**  
**Social Psychology (3)**

**PSYB415**  
**Maitri: Working with Emotions (3)**  
Maitri: Working with Emotions continues the meditation course sequence, introducing the Vajrayana approach to working with emotions through the Five Buddha Family principles. Maitri Space Awareness Practice provides a personal experience of these families. Students practice particular postures in specially designed rooms, inviting an exploration of psychological states of mind and emotions such as pride, passion, paranoia, ignorance, and aggression. Approaching these emotions with curiosity and openness, there is the possibility of discovering one’s inherent wisdom compassion and insight. The course includes weekly lectures, practice in the maitri rooms and participation in a smaller group to process material more personally. Prerequisite: PSYB 314 or equivalent meditation experience. Upper-division Contemplative Psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies students only. Others by permission of instructor. Special fee for art supplies.

**PSYB420**  
**Abnormal Psychology (3)**  
Students investigate the merits and liabilities of Western assessment and treatment approaches to psychological problems. We consider the sociocultural contexts in which assessment and treatment approaches are variably formulated and applied. We investigate both transcultural understandings of psychological problems and the wisdom of cultural relativity. Students acquire a solid foundation in traditional Western clinical approaches to mental health as articulated and codified in the DSM 5. Prerequisites: PSYB345, or PSYB357, or PSYB371. Open to students with 60+ earned credits only.

**PSYB425**  
**Field Placement (3)**  
Students engage in an approved community-based volunteer project. Lectures, dialogue, guest speakers, and experiential activities support students in developing their own vision of socially relevant community-based learning that is culturally sensitive and nurtured by contemplative practice. Students hone previously learned skills in diversity and contemplative practice and apply these to real world settings. Prerequisite: PSYB415.

**PSYB430**  
**Exploring Dream Psychology (3)**  
This course works with dreams in a highly experiential manner and context, using an eclectic variety of perspectives with an
emphasis on Jungian and Gestalt approaches. Students’ dreams are explored in and out of the classroom: individually, in small and large group contexts, and with art media. An ongoing dream practice is required, including the creation and maintenance of a dream journal. Students are asked to relate their dream work to their waking psychological life in assignments. Prerequisite: PSYB330 or PSYB354.

**PSYB435**  
**Authentic Movement: Movement/ Body Awareness Practice (3)**  
Authentic Movement is a self-directed movement process employing the wisdom of the body as a pathway to awareness. It offers an opportunity to experience the individual and collective body as a vessel for healing and transformation and creative process. This course explores the ground form of Authentic Movement: the mover, the witness and the relationship between them. Students explore their own process while experiencing this therapeutic movement form. Through learning how to increase the authenticity of presence, students explore the ground of healing relationships. Authentic Movement provides a model for life lived in authentic relationship to self, others and community. Prerequisite: Any of the following: PSYB 208, PSYB 255, PSYB 304, PSYB 333, or PSYB 359

**PSYB482**  
**Senior Seminar I: Transformational Psychology- The Group Experience (3)**  
Senior Seminar I is the initiatory phase in a two-semester multisensory, multifaceted process, whereby students explore the nature of creativity and its fundamental relationship to psychology in the context of the classroom community. Through readings, writings, class discussions, and exercises, students uncover their relationship to creativity and learn what exposing oneself to the larger world means. By engaging their curiosity and liveliness, and developing awareness around habitual patterns and resistances, students cultivate trust in themselves and their inherent qualities of wakefulness, wisdom, and compassion. Open to Contemplative Psychology seniors with 90 CREDITS only or by permission of instructor. Materials fee.

**PSYB483**  
**Senior Seminar II: Transformational Psychology- The Threshold Experience (3)**  
Senior Seminar II is the culminating phase in a two-semester multisensory, multifaceted process, which introduces and explores the topic of transition. Students utilize the lessons learned and relationships formed within the first semester as inspiration for developing their final integrative papers. Students research topics that provoke deep inquiry and challenge both their intellect and intuition. This course culminates in an event held during an extended class period on the last day of the course. prerequisite: PSYB482. Materials fee.

**PSYB490**  
**Special Topics in Psychology (3)**  
An advanced examination of a topic drawn from psychology. Assignments may include reading, labs, papers, oral presentations, quizzes/exams, literature searches and manuscript preparation. This course culminates in a public oral presentation. Topics vary by semester and section. Prerequisites include PSYB101 and any 300-level course. May be repeated.

**PSYB495**  
**Advanced Practicum in Psychological Research: (3)**  
An advanced examination using research methods that discover new knowledge about a topic drawn from psychology. Assignments may include literature search, study design, data collection, data entry, data analysis, and manuscript preparation. This course culminates in a public oral presentation. Topics vary by semester and section. Prerequisites: PSYB101 and any 300-level PSYB course, or permission of instructor. Spring 2015: Contemplative Metacognition Together we explore a new theoretical framework for understanding mindfulness and meditation, by reading newly published work in the field and also by conducting our own empirical research that involves collecting and analyzing data. The Contemplative Metacognition Framework involves nonconceptual awareness, together with sophisticated cooperation between attention and intention. This practicum introduces students to new theoretical constructs in contemplative psychological science, and provides hands-on experience conducting collaborative scientific research.

**PSYB499**  
**Independent Study: BA Psychology (0.5)**  
This course offering is an opportunity for students to engage in in-depth, concentrated study with a particular faculty member for a semester. The design of study and coursework is decided upon by the student and faculty member.