

School for New Learning
DePaul University
Course Syllabus

**SW 237 The Tremendous Power of Self Inquiry
(Transforming life with one simple question)**

1) General Information

- Faculty:** **Kevin Edwards**
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- Location:** O'Hare Campus
Winter, 2009/10
- Dates/Times:** Thursday, 6:30-9:30 pm.; (1/7 – 3/18/2010)
- Credits** 4 credit hours (for two competencies) or 2 credit hours
(for one competence)

2) Course Description and Faculty Biography

Together we will endeavor to explore assumptions about ourselves and about reality as we experience it. For this course, you will be the authority. The resources I have chosen are there only to assist you in your endeavor, the endeavor of self-inquiry, the endeavor of finding out who you are.

As a general rule, we see reality as we are. That is the message of the mystics. Reality can be understood only to the extent that you are understood, and self-knowledge is indeed a paradox: The more you know, the more you realize you don't know. The opposite is true as well, the more you don't know the more you realize you know.

So in a nut shell, this course is about finding out who you truly are. It is about awakening out of the dream of suffering and realizing abiding peace and happiness. Most importantly, it is about you, in the simplest definition of you.

By looking deeply, by overturning beliefs and assumptions, by analyzing your own experience, you might just find what you are looking for, and you might discover that it has been here all along, just not in the place you were looking.

The little known method that we will be exploring is called self-inquiry. Self-inquiry is a practice that originated in India, but it could have originated anywhere. It is not a religious practice. It is transcendent of religion and culture. The self-realized maintain that no practice is needed to realize oneself. This understanding arose spontaneously in the life of "the greatest sage of the 20th century," Ramana Maharshi with a single question: "Who or What am I?"

Throughout the course, you will be exposed to great eastern sages, such as Ramana Maharshi, Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, H.R.L. Poonja, Ramesh Balsekar, J. Krishnamurti, Osho, select poetry from Lao Tsu, Hafiz, Kabir, Rumi, and others, and an introduction to satsang teachers, including but not limited to Eckhart Tolle and Adyashanti.

Also, we will look at ordinary women who have discovered this extraordinary wisdom, who are affectionately called "heart teachers."

We will discuss their contribution which has humanized our concept of enlightenment and our approach to the Mystery.

The aim of the course is to address both the head and heart, the masculine and feminine, the intellect and experience. With any luck, after completing this course, you will have found your own articulation for this Mystery, Self-realization. You will know abiding peace and happiness. You will understand the paradox of Self knowledge. You will no longer objectify yourself or others, and you will know Peace.

Kevin Edwards is a spiritual teacher. Through his books, talks and retreats, he endeavors to do just one thing. This one thing has been called by many names, such as emptiness, enlightenment, the peace that surpasses understanding, self knowledge, awakening to one's true nature, surrender, knowing God, discovering being, presence, living in the NOW, finding Heaven on Earth, returning to Source, Self-realization, realizing the timeless state, embodiment, freedom and exiting the dream.

After a series of profound awakenings, Kevin took to writing in the hope of capturing and sharing the inexpressible. He chose as his vehicle poetry, which then grew in to parables and reflections. At the turn of the century, Kevin received a Masters in Theology, with an emphasis on Spirituality from the Angelicum in Rome.

No stranger to other cultures, Kevin has enlightened audiences in Rome, the US, and India where he received the name Prakash, which means light. Kevin is the Founder of Enter the New and is the author of several books on awakening.

3) Competencies

You can choose to do either one (for 2 credit hours) or two (for four credit hours) of the following competencies in this course. If you are registering for two competencies, remember that you have to register twice (once for each of the two competencies that you want).

A-3-B:

Can explore a model of spiritual development and apply it to oneself or others.

1. Discusses the assumptions and implications of a model(s) of spiritual development.
2. Discusses the model in relation to one's or other's experience.

Students fulfill this competence by discussing a model of spiritual development. Such models always imply assumptions about the meaning of the spiritual and the value and purpose of spiritual development. They also have implications for how we choose to live. Models of spiritual development might include twelve-step, evangelical, feminist, contemplative, Eastern, or liberation spiritualities.

L-7:

Can learn collaboratively and examine the skills, knowledge, and values that contribute to such learning.

1. Participates in a learning project with others.
2. Applies collaborative learning skills, such as communication skills, skills of group dynamics, etc.
3. Reflects on one's ability to contribute to the collaborative learning process as characterized in at least one model or theory.

Students demonstrate this competence by working with others to develop common understandings around a shared agenda that leads to an assessable outcome. Collaborative learning is characterized by a willingness to explore the ideas and insights of others in an atmosphere of mutual respect, encouragement, and challenge. Essential to this competence is understanding the distinctions among collaboration, cooperation, and strategies of group dynamics.

A-3-X and H3-X Written by student and Faculty. This competence allows students to create statements that meet their specific learning needs.

4) Learning Experience

The classroom experience: Class sessions will involve a variety of different activities, including:

- γ Large and small group dialogues
- γ Audio/Video presentations
- γ Self inquiry and self-realization methods and practices
- γ Techniques for arriving at the goal of meditation
- γ Reflective writing about course competencies
- γ Short interactive presentation from the teacher on weekly topics.
- γ Critical thinking and reflection on key eastern sages.
- γ Field research project on living examples of presence, including Eckhart Tolle, author of The Power of Now
- γ One on one chat (exam) with the teacher

Self-inquiry: Self inquiry, popular in jnana yoga, or path of knowledge, is the most important learning experience this course offers. Made popular by the greatest sage of the 20th century, Sri

Ramana Maharshi, it is the most direct path to “abiding peace and happiness.” As a method of liberation, self-inquiry is unsurpassed, and instantly brings one to the goal of meditation.

Self-inquiry is deceptively simple, but only one who has experiential knowledge can teach it. Traditionally, it has been thought of as transmission of supreme knowledge. In truth it is just an invitation to notice what is almost always overlooked. With any luck, one can stumble upon a direct experience that removes all doubt, ending the game of self-help and self-seeking. Through self-inquiry, one arrives at the goal of meditation without ever having meditated.

Is it that simple? Yes. If you are earnest, it is that simple. Self-realization is the eastern version of “Seek first the Kingdom, and all else will be added unto you.” It brings an abundance of peace, joy and love, each according to his or her own destiny. If you are tired of effort, which often ends up strengthening the ego, and want to be rid of it instead, this course is for you.

This course does not require any religious background, spiritual tradition or agreed upon beliefs. One’s personal beliefs do not interfere or assist in any way. Here we are unconcerned with beliefs. Our only concern is whether or not you can look deeply into your own experience. To re-examine a truth much more intimate than your beliefs, I have discovered, can bring about a total shift in consciousness and identity.

Internet resources: There will be a course “Blackboard” site that will be used to communicate and post supplementary materials and resources. (See www.oll.depaul.edu) You will need to have access to a computer through which you can view streaming video and or audio.

Required Books: *The Course will be drawn from primarily three sources. Talks by Ramana Maharshi; The Truth Is; and Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Wisdom. You will be introduced to additional sources and more can be provided upon request.*

Talks with Ramana Maharshi: On Realizing Abiding Peace and Happiness (Inner Directions Publishing) (ISBN: 1-878019-007)

Publisher's Description: (The content will be covered extensively in class.)

This spiritually significant work is a profound series of dialogues between one of the greatest sages of our time and his inquirers. These "Talks" offer a genuinely universal approach to Truth by directly pointing to the certainty of our essential nature. By applying even a few of these pages to our life, we can become aware of the ever-present abiding Reality. The great Indian sage Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950) had the unique gift of embodying the highest wisdom in the most ordinary manner. His words, full of insight and understanding, express the authentic experience of Enlightenment. For decades, they have guided people from diverse backgrounds and traditions to the Source of enduring peace and happiness. Through the wise words of this beloved sage, we are clearly and consistently shown how to reclaim our innate Freedom – simply by looking in the right place and discovering what has always been present. A fundamental shift of attention is all that is required. By approaching these dialogues in the spirit of inquiry, one has the opportunity to awaken to a greater Reality: that of our own Being, our true Self.

Talks with Ramana Maharshi will shift what you ordinarily refer to as yourself, with all your problems, confusions, doubts and dilemmas to something that is inherently perfect. Once you've extended this courtesy to yourself, you can extend it to others, to everyone and everything. This new understanding will directly impact your relationship with yourself, with others and with the world.

Reviews:

Highly recommended reading for all students of Eastern philosophy and spirituality who seek to awaken themselves to a greater reality."

- The Bookwatch

What we find in the life and teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi is the purest of India... He is the whitest spot in a white space."

- **Carl G. Jung**

This is a book that can help any seeker build a raft for the journey home.

- **Light of Consciousness Magazine**

The Truth Is (Samuel Wiser Inc.) (ISBN: 1-57863-175-0)

Publisher's Description

This collection of spontaneous "Satsangs," or "Truths," spoken from Sri. H.W.L. Poonja's experience, illustrates the highest and yet simplest truth: that we are pure love and consciousness, the totality of existence. Poonja reveals thousands of ways to help us inquire into who we really are, to bring our awareness into the infinity of the moment, and to surrender to the wisdom of our Truth.

The Truth Is – a collection of discourses, from 1990 to 1996 between Poonja and his visitors – is highly regarded by members of all spiritual traditions, especially those interested in Advaita, or non-duality.

Poonja, or Papaji, as he is called by his followers, was born in the Punjab in 1910 to the sister of Swami Rama Tirtha, one of India's most respected saints. He realized the Truth when he was eight years old. This realization blossomed in his early thirties when he met his guru, Sri Ramana Maharshi, the Sage of Arunachala. Since then he has shared the beauty of the Truth with his wise words, his look, his touch, and simply by the silent spiritual power that radiated from his presence. Sri Poonja passed on in September, 1997.

Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Wisdom, by Rita Marie Robinson (O Books) (ISBN 978 1 84694 068 2) *Publisher's Description:*

Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Wisdom, by Rita Marie Robinson, is a collection of intimate, heartfelt conversations with women spiritual teachers who live and look like ordinary people. They have kids, husbands, jobs, and bills to pay. What makes them extraordinary is that each woman has awakened to her true nature. And while that sounds like enlightenment, it doesn't look like the old stereotype of transcendence, detachment, and bliss. Quite the contrary. This is the feminine half of the spiritual journey—bringing it down to earth and embracing all of what it means to be human.

These real life stories show by practical example what it means to be fully awake and fully engaged, to meet the world without resistance—even and especially when it's not easy—whether it's death, divorce or illness. The invitation is explicit... "if these ordinary women can be fully awake and fully human, why not me, why not you? And why not now."

Additional Materials: Short additional readings will be assigned during the course. These will include some articles, videos, dvds and audios.

Attendance and participation policy: Given the experiential nature of this course, it is essential that you participate fully in every class.

5) Outcomes

The personal outcomes of this course are:

- γ Being fully human
- γ Freedom from suffering
- γ Realizing abiding peace and happiness.
- γ Shifting one's self definition from something problematic to one's own inherent perfection
- γ Experiencing the goal of meditation
- γ Experiencing yourself as whole and complete
- γ Spontaneous surrender of the ego through self-inquiry
- γ Realizing your connection with all beings
- γ Embodying wisdom and innocence
- γ Cessation of seeking

γ Rest from personal concern

The academic outcomes of this course are:

You will learn introspection, and be able to critique a philosophical and spiritual system, using your own direct experience and articulation of what it means to be human.

You will have explored jnana yoga, the path of knowledge, which is rooted in the enlightenment and Hindu tradition, and will be able to apply these insights to yourself and others.

You will understand and experience what is meant by “self,” in the Indian Culture, according to the tradition and discoveries of Self-inquiry.

You will learn to write reflectively, juxtaposing knowledge learned with your own wisdom, keeping an open mind and heart to the insights of others.

You will gain collaborative learning skills, such as communication skills, skills of group dynamics, etc.

You will gain an understanding and a new articulation of how exchange occurs among seemingly disparate parts of nature and how interconnection among systems is basic to nature and results in an integrated whole.

6) Evidence the Students will Submit; Assessment and Grading

Students will demonstrate completion of the competencies in the following ways.

- A-3-B:** Students fulfill this competence by personally entering into a dialogue with what it means to be a representative of two natures and keep a journal as to what this means for daily life to yourself and others.
- A-3-X:** Written by student/faculty. **This competence allows students to create statements that meet their specific learning needs.**

L-7: Students fulfill this competence by collaboratively, conceptualizing and creating a welcome outreach project. (including the excluded)

H-3-X: Written by student/faculty. **This competence allows students to create statements that meet their specific learning needs.**

Class participation: Given the experiential nature of this class, it is possible and even likely that a classmate will experience a breakthrough during group discussions and inquiries. To be inspired and encouraged and to glean a deeper experiential understanding, you need to be present.

Journals & Reflection Papers: The content of my own books, came out of a direct experience with the Mystery. This is what I am inviting you to. Throughout the course, you will have insights and aha moments that you may be inspired to express creatively. One way to do this is to journal. Another way is writing a short reflection. However, sometimes the silence is so great that to journal seems disruptive. When this is case, it is best to keep quiet. Reflection will come later.

You will be expected to submit short reflection papers. If you've kept a journal, your consistent, dated journal entries will count, but they are to be typed. What I will be looking for is evidence of a breakthrough with relevance to the material. It is best just to be truthful, earnest and honest.

γ Students should submit a 1 to 2 page reflection paper each week relating their experiences relative to the course competencies. Please write in a manner which reflects understanding of the material. Every realization or insightful moment is fair game. With any luck, you will come to see the extraordinary in the ordinary.

γ Please include the competency in the heading and be sure that each paper bears both name and date.

γ Be sure to use proper grammar, and check spelling.

γ One reflection paper will be handed in before the beginning of the second class period, and all subsequent class periods, unless specified.

γ Reflection papers are to be submitted through the "Assignments" area on Blackboard.

Grading: Upon completion of the course, you will receive a letter grade for each competence that you registered for. Final grades will be based on overall understanding, class participation, your ability to reflect (as ascertained by reflection papers) and your enthusiasm in attacking the Satsang - Field Research Project.

If you wish to take the course on a **Pass/Fail** basis, please inform me by email before the third class. Once you have chosen to do so, you cannot change back to a letter grade.

7) Important DePaul and SNL Policies

Academic Integrity Policy

The version of the Academic Integrity Policy that is linked to Campus Connect is the one that is the most current and the one that will govern all issues relating to issues of academic integrity. Students are directed to review the policy in place on Campus Connect to check for the most recent changes

A. Preamble

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. To preserve the quality of education offered to students, the University is responsible for maintaining academic integrity and protecting all those who depend on it, including DePaul's community partners and institutional affiliates. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, to the pursuit of knowledge, and to the transmission of ideas. All members of the university community share the responsibility

for creating conditions where violations of academic integrity are curtailed. In particular:

1. Students must abstain from any violations of academic integrity and set examples for each other by assuming full responsibility for their academic and personal development, including informing themselves about and following the university's academic policy;

2. Faculty members must foster a climate that is conducive to the development of student responsibility. They should provide guidance as to what constitutes violations of the Academic Integrity Policy and educate students about the ethical and educational implications of their actions. For instance, syllabi should call attention to the Academic Integrity Policy.

3. Faculty members, furthermore, have the authority and the responsibility to make the initial judgment regarding violations of academic integrity in the context of the courses that they teach. They may impose sanctions up to and including failure of a course at their own discretion in cases involving a violation of academic integrity policies. In cases such as alleged plagiarism, it is important that faculty members distinguish between an intentional violation of the Academic Integrity Policy and a technical error or careless work.

4. Deans of the various colleges, with the support of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA) and the chair of the Academic Integrity Board (AIB), are responsible for ensuring that their faculty, particularly new faculty and part-time faculty, are aware of the university's Academic Integrity Policy and of their responsibilities in this regard, to maintain the integrity of the academic review process. The deans should monitor periodically the number and disposition of cases involving students in their college to ensure that their faculty members are both fair and rigorous in enforcing the university's Academic Integrity Policy.

These efforts are supported by detailed guidelines and procedures that are designed to deal with violations, to maintain the integrity of the institution and to ensure that university standards are upheld.

B. Violations of Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's

academic resources--alteration or falsification of academic records; academic misconduct; and complicity. This policy applies to all courses, programs, and learning contexts in which academic credit is offered, including experiential and service-learning courses, study abroad programs internships, student teaching and the like. If an instructor finds that a student has violated the Academic Integrity Policy, the appropriate initial sanction is at the instructor's discretion (cf. Section Q). Actions taken by the instructor do not preclude the college or the university from taking further action, including dismissal from the university Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in criminal or civil prosecution.

1. Cheating: Cheating is any action that violates University norms or instructor's guidelines for the preparation and submission of assignments. This includes but is not limited to unauthorized access to examination materials prior to the examination itself, use or possession of unauthorized materials during the examination or quiz; having someone take an examination in one's place-copying from another student; unauthorized assistance to another student; or acceptance of such assistance.

2. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

1. The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgment that it is someone else's.

2. Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgment.

3. Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.

4. The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgment.

3. Fabrication, Falsification or Sabotage of Research Data: Fabrication, falsification or sabotage of research data is any action that misrepresents, willfully distorts or alters the process and results of

scholarly investigation. This includes but is not limited to making up or fabricating data as part of a laboratory, fieldwork or other scholarly investigation; knowingly distorting, altering or falsifying the data gained by such an investigation-stealing or using without the consent of the instructor data acquired by another student; representing the research conclusions of another as one's own; and undermining or sabotaging the research investigations of another person.

4. Destruction or Misuse of the University's Academic Resources: Destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources includes but is not limited to unauthorized access to or use of university resources including equipment and materials; stealing, destroying or deliberately damaging library materials; preventing, in an unauthorized manner, others' access to university equipment, materials or resources; using university equipment, materials or resources to destroy, damage or steal the work of other students or scholars.

Given the importance of computers to the academic functioning of the university, computer usage is of particular concern under this general heading. The special rules for computer usage can be found in the Code of Student Responsibility, under the heading Computing Services.

5. Alteration or Falsification of Academic Records: Alteration or falsification of academic records includes any action that tampers with official university records or documents. This includes but is not limited to: any alteration through any means whatsoever of an academic transcript, a grade or grade change card; unauthorized use of University documents including letterhead; and misrepresentation of one's academic accomplishments, awards or credentials.

6. Academic Misconduct: Academic misconduct is any action that deliberately undermines the free exchange of ideas in the learning environment, threatens the impartial evaluation of the students by the instructor or advisor, or violates standards for ethical or professional behavior established by a course or program. This includes but is not limited to attempts to bribe an instructor or advisor for academic advantage; persistent hostile treatment of, or any act or threat of violence against, an instructor, advisor or other students; and/or actions or behavior that violate standards for ethical or professional behavior established by a course or program in an off-campus setting and could damage the university's relationship with community partners and affiliated institutions.

7. Complicity: Complicity is any intentional attempt to facilitate any of the violations described above. This includes but is not limited to allowing another student to copy from a paper or test document; providing any kind of material—including one's research, data, or writing—to another student if one believes it might be misrepresented to a teacher or university official; providing information about or answers to test questions.

8) Class Schedule

Class #1 Introduction to Self-Inquiry

Introduction, Overview of course, syllabus

Written reflections assigned.

First meditation (*Self Inquiry* pages 153-156)

Presentation by the Teacher followed by discussion and small group activity.

self-investigation exercise 1

Home practice in preparation for class #2

Class #2 Practicing the Habit of Self-Inquiry

First written reflection is due.

Second meditation (*Self* pages 25-27)

Presentation by the Teacher followed by discussion and small group activity.

self investigation exercise 2

Home practice in preparation for class #3

Class #3 What are the Benefits as Experienced by You?

Second written reflection is due.

Third meditation (*The Satguru* pages 55-57)

Short Presentation by the Teacher followed by discussion and small group activity.

self investigation exercise 3

Home practice in preparation for class #4

Class #4 What are the Difficulties as Experienced by You?

Third written reflection is due.

Fourth meditation (*Satsang: Association with the Truth* pages 97-98)

Short Presentation by the Teacher followed by discussion and small group activity.

self investigation exercise 4

Home practice in preparation for class #5

Class #5 What do you Need in Order to Rest?

Fourth written reflection is due.

Share any insights

Fifth meditation (*Bhakti: Love of the Divine* pages 283-284)

Short Presentation by the Teacher followed by discussion and small group activity.

self investigation exercise 5

Home practice in preparation for class #6

Class #6 Once You Are Resting - What to do?

Fifth written reflection is due relating to competence A3-B
Share any insights
Sixth meditation (*I am with You Wherever You Are* page 315)
Short Presentation by the Teacher followed by discussion and small group activity.
self investigation exercise 6
Home practice in preparation for class #7

Class #7 What is New about My Relationship With My Self?

Sixth written reflection is due relating to competence H 3-I
Share any insights
Seventh meditation (*Thieves in an Empty House* pages 361-362)
Introduction to satsang research presentation project
Short Presentation by the Teacher followed by discussion and small group activity.
Video / Presentation
self investigation exercise 7
Home practice in preparation for class #8

Class #8 What is New About My Relationship With Others and The World?

Seventh written reflection is due relating to competence L-7
Share any insights
Eighth meditation (*There is no Becoming Being* pages 399-402)
Short Presentation by the Teacher followed by discussion and small group activity.
Journal / Written Reflection
Satsang research presentation project
Video Presentation.
self investigation exercise 8
Home practice in preparation for class #2

Class #9 Have I Lost Anything of Value?

Eighth written reflection is due relating to competence S-4
Share any insights
Ninth Meditation (*Living Skillfully* pages 455-460)
Short Presentation by the Teacher followed by discussion and small group activity.
Satsang research presentation project
self investigation exercise 9
Home practice in preparation for class #10

Class #10 How Do I Share this Secret that I've Seen?

Tenth Meditation (Freedom pages 519-521)

Satsang research presentation project

self investigation exercise 10

Schedule Oral (evaluative chat)

Common Themes

How to Attain Unity Consciousness? - The Self is Already Realized

- There Aren't Two - Being the Self is Enough

What is Permanent Must be Eternally Present

Do you deny your own existence?

No Such Thing as Self Knowledge - Removing the Obstacle

The True Teacher is One's Own Self - Who Says "I"?

Surrender is Immediate / Rest from Doership