

L608, Survey of Non-Traditional Beliefs  
Agenda:

1. **Session I, September 22**
  - Introduction**
  - Sources**
  - Mystical Traditions**
  - What Is a Mystic**
  - Classical Elements**
2. Session II, September 29
  - Karma
  - Resolution of Karma
3. Session III, October 6
  - Reincarnation
  - Akashic Records
4. Session IV, October 13
  - Free Will Choice
  - Understanding Karma, Reincarnation and Free Will Choice
  - Changing Your Energy
5. Session V, October 20
  - Astrology
  - Ley Lines
  - Healing Systems
6. Session VI, October 27
  - Chakras
  - Kundalini
  - Energy Layers in Body
  - Mystery Schools
  - Lesser Mysteries/Greater Mysteries

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NOTES:

Said I would give examples about how class information can be used

well, Mercury is retrograde and will be for the first three classes  
will be a full explanation of all this when we talk about astrology in Session V

why is this an issue

Mercury is all things associated with communication and mental acuity  
retrograde means that looks like it is going backwards

happens three times a year and lasts for about three weeks each time

can be all kinds of problems:

set up a meeting, need to reconfirm

ask friends for dinner, reconfirm before you buy the food

watch travel arrangements, confirm, allow extra time

handle computer carefully

watch words as out of mouth

expect senior moments

watch out for confusions

and in the class we're talking about really unusual things

so ask your help

be sure that things are clear and easily understood

two of the three most important classes are during the retrograde

if anything at all does not make sense, please ask

used data from Internet after careful review, have numerous links

if you have trouble using that kind of data, please let me know

are ways to help

Lots of concern about how to present this material

- there is “original” or “core data” but have been a lot of changes
  - many people or groups have adjusted or added changes or nuances
  - sometimes changed the names to show the enhancements
  - sometimes kept the old names but used the enhancements
  - some of it I found very unusual, but that is MY reaction, my choice

- decided that it would be best to give a basic understanding
  - not all the recent add ons
  - not all the recent adjustments

- decided that for class would try to provide a solid base of core knowledge
  - you can then go through any information you find
    - see the changes
    - some will fit for you, some will not fit for you, personal choice

- if I give you the “original” data, you will have a solid core understanding
  - then can research intelligently from that base
  - come to your own conclusions about what is right for you

Sources of Information

- story that various concepts held by various groups or religious sects
  - started release began about 50's and 60's
  - means lots of sources from mystical sects/traditions
  - will share resources and give Internet links

## Vocabulary

often different religions have same names but a different meaning

also definitions have changed over time

for those religions that accept reincarnation, the definition has changed

wanted to make the definition more palatable for those who do not accept  
reincarnation

example: the meaning of “nirvana” (goal of reincarnation in Buddhism):

*Webster’s College Dictionary, 2010*

1. A state of ultimate wisdom and blessedness

2. A state of release from the cycle of reincarnation and absorption into the universal reality

*Macmillan Dictionary*

1. nirvana or Nirvana a state of complete spiritual happiness that Buddhists and Hindus try to achieve in which human existence no longer seems important

2. INFORMAL a feeling of complete happiness and peace

*Merriam Webster*

: the state of perfect happiness and peace in Buddhism where there is release from all forms of suffering

: a state or place of great happiness and peace

Full Definition of NIRVANA

1: the final beatitude that transcends suffering, karma, and samsara [aka reincarnation] and is sought especially in Buddhism through the extinction of desire and individual consciousness

2 a : a place or state of oblivion to care, pain, or external reality; also : bliss, heaven

b : a goal hoped for but apparently unattainable : dream

clearly, if you are in conversation with someone

be sure you are both talking about the same thing

be sure you both mean the same thing for the words you are using

## Historic Mystery Traditions

### Isis and Osiris (Egypt)

Osiris was killed by his brother Seth and dismembered

Seth hid the pieces in various places

Iris, wife of Osiris, found all the pieces and put them back together again

### Pythagoras

### Plato and Socrates (Greece)

### Eleusis (Greece)

Demeter, goddess of agriculture, spouse of Hades

Persephone, daughter with Zeus

abducted by Hades

4 months in Hades, 8 months on Earth, hence the seasons

### Ephesus (Greece)

based on worship of Artemis (Roman Diana)

### Dionysus (Greece and later Roman)

Romans later turned lesser mysteries turned into Bacchanalia

just a drinking fest and orgy

greater mysteries still strong

### Mithras (Persian god)

### Druids (especially in northern Gaul)

### Dark Ages

Cathars

Knights Templar

### Freemasons

## Chart of the Mystical Traditions/Sects

RELIGION	MYSTICAL TRADITION	EXAMPLES OF MYSTICS
Historic Figures		Pythagoras (580 BCE – 500 BCE) Plotinus (205 CE – 270 CE)
Judaism	Kabbalah	Moses Cordovero (1522 – 1570) Isaac Luria (1534 – 1572) Baal Shem Tov (1698 – 1760)
Hinduism		Kabir (d. 1518) Ramakrishana (1836 – 1886) Vivekananda (1863 – 1902)
Buddhism		Lord Buddha
Buddhism	Zen	Dogen (1200 – 1253)
Islam	Sufi	Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmi (1207 – 1273) Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882 – 1927)
Christianity		Apostle John St. Francis of Assisi (1181/2– 1226) Hildegard von Bingen (1098 – 1179) Meister Eckhardt (1260 – 1327/8) Richard Rolle (1290-1349) St. John of the Cross (1542 – 1591) St. Teresa of Avila (1515 – 1582) Evelyn Underhill (1875 – 1941) Thomas Merton (1915 – 1968)
Confucianism (China)	Tao	

Note that there is no Christian mystical tradition but are many Christian mystics  
second century CE

a lot of unrest in church, factions not always agree

churches Asia Minor

Roman church

Gnostic activity

Irenaeus (c. 120 – c. 202) was mediator

became Bishop of Lyon

he felt that the Gnostics were threat to Roman church, a heresy

he said Gnostics taught:

there was a duality of good vs evil, light vs dark, etc

not idea of the single God of the Roman church

Jesus taught lesser mysteries to public, greater mysteries to disciples

reference actually in Mark 4:11

members used own pathway to get to salvation

per Elaine Pagels

(Harvard professor, study of Gnosticism

worked with translation of the Nag Hammadi documents,

found in 1940s in Egypt)

she felt that the Gnosticism was *political* threat to Roman church

Irenaeus attacked the Gnostic beliefs as heresies, he said

only one God

what Jesus taught is written in the New Testament

only one set of teachings

population needs church to provide absolution of sins

many of the Gnostic ideas were like the experiences of the mystics

but Irenaeus put a stop to all Gnostic beliefs or anything like them

hence

no mysticism

teachings of Jesus are only what is said in Bible

no greater mysteries (includes karma, reincarnation, etc)



what is a mystic, precise definition of mystic

Rabbi Amy Scheinerman:

Kabbalah (meaning “that which has been received”) is the intellectual and methodological approach to accessing the timeless truth of reality in the here and now. In other words, it is the process of acquiring and practicing esoteric knowledge and techniques for glimpsing the reality beyond our material world -- ultimately, for “glimpsing” the Ultimate Reality, God.

Google: (same as the Oxford English Dictionary)

a person who seeks by contemplation and self-surrender to obtain unity with or absorption into the Deity or the absolute,

[Note continuation]:

or who believes in the spiritual apprehension of truths that are beyond the intellect.

Sufi: direct personal experience of God

mine: a oneness experience with the Godhead/Creator

also: process of having the mystical experience changes how you choose to live your life go from *believing* there is a Central Deity to *knowing* there is some power out there

[after mystical experience Gospel of John makes sense!!]

not a conversion experience like Paul’s on the road to Damascus

not a dream

not a series of dreams that give unusual impact

not a near death experience (NDE)

not like a mystical image of fog above a lake in a forest

not equivalent to a wizard

how to get to a mystical experience  
traditionally three pathways:

- service
- study
- mediation and contemplation

I would add how you live and the choices you make  
need to do what you say you believe

not something to take on lightly

Jewish story of 4 rabbis who entered the “divine orchard” or paradise:  
one died immediately  
one went mad immediately  
one cut the plants (did he perhaps try to destroy the orchard?)  
one source felt he was a heretic, worked with Gnostics  
one emerged in peace

generally a multiyear project

- lots of work and study

lots of fixing your issues and changing some habits

example: restrictions on learning the Kabbalah:

- be at least 40 years of age (changed to 20 years by Cordovero)

- high moral standards

- prior rabbinic learning

- married

- mental and emotional stability

no control over when the experience will happen

- it just does

- happens when you are ready and the time is right

- usually no warning

Classical elements

air, earth, water, fire

proposed by pre-Socratic philosophers

Plato added regular convex polyhedron solids to each

Aristotle dropped the shapes and added hot & cold/wet& dry

used by Medieval alchemists

gets into their very early scientific work

also gets into the alchemists

desire to turn lead into gold

also used the humors in healing

Element	Humor	Shape (Plato) Hot/Cold/Wet/Dry (Aristotle)	Proposed by (dates approximate )
Earth	Melancholic: depressed, irascible, sad, unhappy	Cube 6 squares cold and dry	Xenophanes (540–537 BCE)
Water	Phlegmatic: slow, stolid, cool, impassive	Icosahedron 20 triangles cold and wet	Thales (624 – 546 BCE)
Fire	Choleric: zeal, enthusiasm, daring	Tetrahedron 4 triangles hot and dry	Heraclitus, around 500 BCE
Air	Sanguine: sturdy, confident, optimistic, cheerful, happy	Octahedron 8 triangles hot and wet	Anaximenes (flourished c. 545 BCE)
Aether		Dodecahedron 12 pentagons	first mentioned by Plato in <i>Timeas</i>

also used in astrology, each sign of the zodiac is air, water, fire or earth

## Aether

historically 4 elements resulted from trying to understand the universe  
i.e., basically very early science  
added aether for name of the medium in which the stars existed  
also the “air” breathed by the gods on Mt. Olympus  
not the same as the air we breathe  
Medieval alchemists called it “quintessence”  
study to try to prove aether:  
Michelson-Morley experiment of 1887  
showed that aether was not present

## Prana

found one reference that says same as aether and White Light  
not accurate, are totally different  
life force or aliveness in the body, leaves with soul at death  
in Indian philosophy (Upanishads)  
one of body’s vital airs or energies (Encyclopedia Britannica)  
in Ayurvedic medicine  
life force, vitality; life sustaining energy centered in human brain  
life force governing inspiration and conscious intellect  
similar to qu (chi) in Chinese medicine  
similar to ki in Japanese

## Chopra Center:

(part of article on chakras  
will discuss in detail later, Session VI, 10/27/15)  
“To visualize a chakra in the body, imagine a swirling wheel of energy  
where matter and consciousness meet. This invisible energy, called Prana,  
is vital life force, which keeps us vibrant, healthy, and alive.”

## White Light

a lot of trouble finding any good information with resources  
lunch with a Reiki healer so I asked her  
friend in Baltimore  
when her kids were first starting to drive  
she would just wrap the car in white cotton batting!!  
what little I found was the following:  
always positive, never dark  
if you think of it, it is there for you  
used for protection and healing  
definitely not aether or prana

Resources:

General:

<http://www.themystica.com/mystica/default.html>

Awarded from: Britannica.com; Criteria: Editors selected site as one of the best on the Internet for quality, accuracy of content, presentation and usability.

<http://www.crystalinks.com/>

<http://www.ancient-wisdom.com/>

<http://www.encyclopediaomadica.org/>

Carol E. Parrish-Harra, Ph.D., *New Dictionary of Spiritual Thought*, Sparrow Hawk Press, Tahlequah, Oklahoma, 2002

an excellent dictionary with entries on just about anything relating to spiritual and esoteric concepts and thought from a number of religions, clear, easy to understand

*Kybalion*, Three Initiates

actual authorship uncertain, primary candidate is William Walker Atkinson  
not a book to sit down and read through

better to read a chapter and then think about it awhile

however, it is a book that one can go back to again and again

ADK Luk books

To purchase:

<http://www.alohapeace.com/lawoflife.aspx>

not necessarily an easy read

lots of very detailed information on the Masters of the White Brotherhood  
(mystical beings who are often mentioned in various discussions)

Mystical Traditions:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mysticism> -

[Jewish\\_mysticism](http://holybooks.lichtenbergpress.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/The-Origin-of-Western-Mysticism.pdf)<http://holybooks.lichtenbergpress.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/The-Origin-of-Western-Mysticism.pdf>

about Plotinus

long but interesting, good definition and understanding

<https://westernmystics.wordpress.com/>

read thoroughly, some things hidden in this I think

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mysticism/>

check, good resource so may be helpful

<http://www.sawka.com/spiritwatch/cehsc/ipure.htm>

Bruce B Janz, Ph.D. Professor, University of Central Florida

[www.religiousworlds.com/mystic/whoswho.html](http://www.religiousworlds.com/mystic/whoswho.html)

site temp closed for repair, was very good, worthwhile checking back on it  
lots of info, links and references, not always clear about who is/isn't a mystic

<http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~janzb/mysticism/>

resources for Bruce Janz's class on Western Mysticism,  
University of Central Florida

lots of info, links and cross references

under section on Academic Study of Western Mysticism, first subsection:  
click on Mysticism, PPT presentation

Evelyn Underhill

<http://www.evelynunderhill.org/>

Underhill, Evelyn, *Mysticism*, 12<sup>th</sup> EDITION, New York, Meridian Books, 1955

Janz: "an old classic but later works fulfill this project better"

Underhill, Evelyn, *Practical Mysticism*, New York, E.P. Dutton, 1915

Janz: "good introduction, kind of a primer on mystical life"

Rabbi Amy Scheinerman

<http://scheinerman.net/judaism/Ideas/index.html>

click on Kabbalah in the list

Recommended reading:

Daniel C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism*

Lawrence Kushner, *The Way Into Jewish Mystical Tradition*

Zev ben Shimon Halevi, *The Work of the Kabbalist*

Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*

per Rabbi Scheinerman, not recommended are:

The Kabbalah Centre

Michael or Yehuda Berg

Classical Elements:

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/xenophanes/>

<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Thales-of-Miletus>

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heraclitus/>

<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Anaximenes-of-Miletus>

<http://www.spiritual-knowledge.net/articles/fire-water-air-earth.php>

from Slovak web site [www.poznanie.sk](http://www.poznanie.sk)

<http://www.friesian.com/elements.htm>

<http://www.friesian.com/>

some interesting concepts but rather unusual

just the kind of thing that may challenge your ideas

but also the kind of material that may just have a nugget of interest for you

Aether – Michelson-Morley Experiment (1887):

<http://galileoandstein.physics.virginia.edu/lectures/michelson.html>

see section: Detecting the Aether Wind

<http://scienceworld.wolfram.com/physics/Michelson-MorleyExperiment.html>

Prana:

<http://www.chopra.com/ccl/what-is-a-chakra#sthash.KQtORR3o.dpuf>

quoted under section on Prana in class notes