

**Apocalypse Now!**  
(CEPS – 4960)  
Fall, 2010

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**Narrative Description**

The course will be grounded in current work that explores the possible/probable collapse of 21<sup>st</sup> century global civilization. Extensive reading and research in scientific texts, reference to ancient writings as well as the use of depth psychologies and modern/post modern transformational strategies will propel our work. Two critical dynamics characterize and dominate our times: That we could lose it all; and that there are two powerful opposing global forces at play—regeneration/revolution and destruction. In light of that reality, our goal will be to lay the groundwork for a post civilization consciousness that is rooted in both thea/ological/cosmological depth and activist empowerment that will assist us in developing collective survival strategies, personal/individual transformation and leadership skills.

Facing apocalypse is dangerous and demanding work. Facing the probability that we have already crossed beyond the point of no return in a “perfect storm” of social, ecological, economic catastrophe previously unknown in human history requires a *sangha* of support that course participants will be called upon to co-create during our semester’s work. Through the compassion, intellectual clarity and generative wisdom inherent in the theoretical and experiential work of many thinkers, researchers and activists, especially of deep ecologist Joanna Macy, as well as the radical insights into human nature of Rebecca Solnit’s study of major world disasters, and archetypal understandings gleaned from Jungian psychology, apocalyptic theologians and the core of world religious teachings, we will endeavor to create a class culture sturdy enough to sustain our gaze into the maw of global unraveling.

Extensive readings, film study, in-class transformative exercises, guest leaders, journaling, exploration of current research and activist activities, and personal and collective spiritual practices will compose the substance of our work.

**Accompanying Documents**

Syllabus Grid.

Book List.

The Syllabus Grid is a work in progress, but the book list in Cache I offers a solid sense of the textual material at the core of the course. Cache II and III books, along those from Cache I that are not selected as necessary texts, will be extensively used to create a Reader that will be on Moodle.

### **Course Goals**

- 1) Integrate a comprehensive personal understanding of our complex global dilemma (both the Unraveling and the Great Turning [Transformation/Revolution]).
- 2) Develop several processes for (a) dealing with the emotions stirred by societal unraveling and environmental destruction; and, (b) generating courage, hope, intention and skill for the purpose of communicating with others and for carrying out the work of healing, justice and love.
- 3) Cultivate a deepening trust of Call to religious leadership within the context of this global moment—and a corresponding personal confidence/conviction in the capacity to take responsible action.

### **Work Processes**

- 1) Reading texts and articles and viewing videos.
- 2) Class discussion/dialogue. (Class attendance is critical to this course. Our dialogue together will build community, deepen understanding, develop communication skills [re the most complex and difficult communication problem of our times], and provide fertile material for self-reflection.)
- 3) Self-reflective Personal Journaling.
- 4) Guest Presenters (learning from and dialogue with): Joanna Macy (International workshop leader in *The Work That Reconnects/The Great Turning*); Miki Kahstan (Co-founder Bay Area Nonviolent Communication Community); Rebecca Solnit [invited] (Author of *A Paradise Built in Hell*); Julie Whitty (Author of *Deep Blue Home*).
- 5) Visiting/contacting individuals and groups doing relevant work in the world (a list of groups/communities will be provided) to support # 5.
- 6) Two Papers (presented in class):

(1) A Reflection (3 – 5 pages) on personal integration of Unraveling/Turning/Apocalypse realities—so that some degree of individual transformation can be confirmed.

(2) A *Teaching Paper* (10 - 12 pages, documented) that establishes the ground for personal leadership in the face of the Unraveling/Turning/Apocalypse. The nature of that leadership is to be defined by each student as befits their thea/ology, temperament, social/cultural “location,” vision and Call.