



A M B R O S E  
S E M I N A R Y

**CS 660 EXPLORING THE ‘DREAM EXPERIENCE’  
IN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY (3)**

**Ambrose Seminary  
Winter Intersession / February 18-22 /2014**

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**Class Times:** Tuesday-Saturday/ 9:00-4:00

**Office:** L2069  
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**Class Location:** A2131

## **I Course Description**

The course will survey the significance and understanding of the dream experience in both eastern and western Christian traditions. Special attention will be given to the role of the dream in the spiritual journeys of prominent Christians, the dream and the death experience, as well as to developing a Christian approach to dream interpretation. Students will gain from the course an historical / theological appreciation for the value of the dream within a Christian worldview as well as a sense of how to integrate dream interpretation with an understanding of one’s own spiritual journey. (Class limit - 20 persons)

## **II Course Objectives**

- To help the student appreciate the nature / significance of the dream experience in biblical literature;
- To expose the student to various historical perspectives on the dream experience within eastern and western Christian traditions;
- To investigate the role and significance of the dream experience in the lives of individuals from diverse Christian traditions and time periods;
- To help the student determine the relevance of and guidelines for integrating the dream experience with his/her own spiritual journey.

## **III Textbooks**

Robert L. Van de Castle, *Our Dreaming Mind* (1994)  
Russ Parker, *Healing Dreams* (1993)  
Robert Moss, *The Secret History of Dreaming* (2009)  
Course Handouts

#### IV Course Schedule

**Day 1** A Personal Odyssey in Dreaming / Dreaming and the Scriptures  
The 'Sin' of Dream Interpretation

**Day 2** Dreams in the Eastern Christian Tradition  
Dreams in the Western Christian Tradition

**Day 3** Dreams in the Western Christian Tradition (cont'd)  
Dream Vignettes of Prominent Christians

**Day 4** Dream Vignettes (cont'd)  
Dreams / Visions and the Death Experience

**Day 5** Dreams and the Spiritual Journey

#### V Course Requirements

**A.** A **dreamography** (10-12 pages), the structure/content of which will be discussed in class

OR

A **research paper** (10 pages) on some dimension of 'Christian dreaming' (subject to be chosen in consultation with the professor with respect for the student's disciplinary interests). The paper should follow an acceptable scholarly format. **(30%)**

**B.** A **review/response paper** (6-8 pages) on Parker, *Healing Dreams* which includes the following:

1. A summary of the thesis of the book and its relationship to the title/subtitle (5 marks);
2. An identification of the critical issues raised by the book with respect to a 'Christian' view of dreaming. Think 'within' and 'beyond' the book (10 marks);
3. A discussion of the strengths / weaknesses of the book ( be specific!) (8 marks);
4. A reflection on the theological / experimental value of the book ( 4 marks);
5. A mention of those specific aspects of the dreaming experience prompted by the book which require further study / consideration on your part (3 marks). **(30%)**

OR

- C. A **review/response paper** (6-8 pages) on Moss, *Secret History of Dreaming* which includes the following:
1. A summary of the thesis of the book and its relationship to the title/subtitle (5 marks);
  2. An indepth discussion of the development of the thesis (5 marks);
  3. An identification of the strengths / weaknesses of the book (8 marks);
  4. A reflection on the implications of the book for a 'Christian worldview' (6 marks);
  5. A brief discussion of 3 aspects of the dream experience prompted by the book which require further study / consideration on your part (6 marks). **(30%)**

- D. A **reading report** (6-8 pages) based on Van de Castle, *Our Dreaming Mind*

Chapter 2 / "Dreams That Have Changed the World"

1. Identify those areas of human activity (with examples) which have been influenced profoundly by the dream experience (3 marks);
2. How would you evaluate the formative dream experiences of non-Christian religious traditions? (3 marks)
3. What is your personal response to the content of this chapter? (1 mark)

Chapter 10 / 'Contemporary Dream Research'

1. Summarize the various dimensions of the dream experience which have occupied the attention of contemporary dream scientists (3 marks);
2. What implications would the findings of dream scientists have for a 'Christian' view / evaluation of the dream experience? (3 marks)
3. What is your personal response to the content of this chapter? (1 mark)

Chapter 12 / 'Dreams Throughout the Life Span'

1. Explain how various dimensions of the 'human journey' affect the dream experience.  
Refer also to Chapters 13 & 14 for pertinent material (3 marks)
2. Identify the distinguishing characteristics of a 'night terror' or 'nightmare'. In your opinion (give reasons), is the differentiation of 'night terrors / nightmares' from other forms of the dream experience supportable? (2 marks)
3. What is your personal response to the content of this chapter? (1 mark) **(20%)**

D. **A reading report** on 5 scholarly articles on dreaming which includes:

1. a summary of the thesis of each article;
2. a brief discussion of the main themes/ideas developed in each article;
3. an identification of at least 3 subjects prompted by the article which require further consideration/study on your part.

If you have any doubt about the scholarly acceptability of any article you select, consult with the professor for confirmation as it could impact your grade.

**Note: Each article can be reviewed in 2 pages. (20%)**

## VI Grading

Dreamography <b>or</b> research paper	-	<b>30%</b>
(Research paper will be evaluated on the basis of the clear definition and development of subject, quality of research, and the ability to draw conclusions regarding a Christian view of dreaming / structure and content of dreamography to be discussed in class)		
Book Review / Response Paper #1	-	<b>30%</b>
<b>OR</b>		
Book Review / Response Paper #2	-	<b>30%</b>
Reading Report on <i>Our Dreaming Mind</i>	-	<b>20%</b>
Reading Report on 5 scholarly articles	-	<b>20%</b>

**DUE DATE (for all assignments): Friday April 11<sup>th</sup> /2014**

**Note: extensions will only be granted for very serious reasons beyond the student's control at the professor's discretion**

## VII Grading Schedule

96-100	A+	82-85	B+	68-71	C+	56-59	D+
91-95	A	75-81	B	63-67	C	50-55	D
86-90	A-	72-74	B-	60-62	C-	<50	F

## VIII IMPORTANT NOTES

1. **All late assignments which have not received an officially approved extension will be granted the highest possible failing grade. Extensions will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, the hospitalization of yourself or a member of your immediate family, or a prolonged illness for which you required treatment by a physician. All requests for extensions must be received in writing at least seven days prior to the due date. Factors such as assignments for other courses, computer software**

- difficulties, or computer printer malfunctions are not sufficient grounds for requesting an extension. If an extension has been granted it is your responsibility when submitting the paper to attach a note indicating the date to which the extension was granted and the date on which the paper is actually submitted. Retain for yourself a copy (software or hard copy) of each paper.**
2. The title page of **ALL** assignments should include the course name and number, the professor's name, the student's name, student ID number and mailbox number. This is imperative!
  3. All assignments must be turned in by the due date in order to receive credit for the course.
  4. **No assignments will be received by electronic transmission.**
  5. Minimum standards of writing will be observed in all type-written essay assignments.
  6. **Any student absent for more than one day of the course is not eligible to pass the course.**

## **IX      ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as are stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar.

Personal information, that is, information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at [privacy@ambrose.edu](mailto:privacy@ambrose.edu) .