

Course Outline/Syllabus (required)

You may list broad topics, a detailed weekly schedule, or a formal syllabus. Attach this form and any additional pages to your course proposal.

Course Title: Conversations on the Future of the Planet and of the People

Week 1: Establish the rationale for the course and my credentials to guide it.

At present, our civilization is facing two major challenges: 1. climate related disasters and disappearance of species. 2. dangers related to irrational group behavior rooted in the weakness of human biology and social media. Science has helped us understand nature better and has improved the quality of life in all parts of the world. Technologies that came out of scientific study of nature have helped to reduce poverty and increase the quality of our lives. Technologies have also come with their own set of problems contributing to environmental issues. Information technology has helped us in many ways but also has created many social issues. Social media with its emphasis on individualism, equal weight for all information, factual or not, and monetized algorithm has contributed to erratic and often, irrational group behavior jeopardizing group welfare.

Amidst information overload and information disorder, we are struggling to find our spiritual center. We have to synthesize science and spirituality and develop a new set of Dharma (rules of conduct and morality) emphasizing sacredness of Mother Earth and Compassion.

At the end of the course, I hope each one of us will be able to develop an idea or two to act on, at an individual level, to make this world a safer place for future generations.

Self - introductions by participants.

Establishing guidelines for discussion period.

Agenda for subsequent weeks.

Week 2: State the following *facts* and give a short talk. (20 minutes)

There has been enormous progress in science in the past 200 years. We have better understanding of the physical aspects of this planet and of life. Science has advanced so many new technologies which have enriched life for the humans. They have contributed to longer life, elimination of diseases, rapid travel, rapid communication, space travel etc., But what are the weaknesses of science and technology which have contributed to the current situation?

Questions for discussion - Open to Discuss

Week 3: State the following *facts* and give a short talk.

Every technology comes with its own problem, Information technology and social media particularly. Experts have started sounding the alarm (recent articles on climate crisis and crisis in group behavior). Misinformation spreads faster and difficult to eradicate. What is media education?

Questions to discuss open to discuss

Week 4: State the following *facts* and give a short talk.

A short summary of cultural anthropology.

Based on understanding of cultural anthropology, behavioral sciences and neurobiology, can we understand how we got here?

Emphasis on Individuality, Competition and individual happiness at the expense of collective welfare and cooperation. Morals more important than legality. Contracts or covenants?
Too many people want to influence our thoughts. Too many distractions to think on our own. People with ambition are leading – not those with vision

Questions to discuss: Open to discuss

Week 5: State the following *opinion* and give a short talk. Open to Discuss

Ancient wisdom says that to know something fully, we need to understand it with all four modes of being – body, mind, emotions (heart), and spirit. Science covers only two of them. This is a good time in history to reconcile science and spirituality. It is also a good time to merge observed facts of science with the observations and “lived experiences” of peoples. It is good time to learn from ancient civilizations and the natives of the lands on how to be good guardians of natural resources. Time is also ripe to balance competition, individual happiness and legality with cooperation, universal happiness, and morality.

It is also a good time to redefine what “sacredness” means. It is time to develop a Shared Sacred Space, common to all of humanity, not a parochial sacred space. It is time to separate the enduring lessons of sacred texts, applicable to all of humanity, (example: the Golden Rule) from their temporal applications and rituals.

Some suggestions for such a shared sacred space, shared sacred celebration and a shared sacred symbol.

*Some important Videos
Discussions*

OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING-WILMINGTON – EQUIPMENT REQUEST FORM

PLEASE PRINT

Course Title: Conversations on the Future of the Planet and of the People

Instructor(s): Balu H. Athreya

NO AV EQUIPMENT IS NEEDED FOR THIS COURSE.

Schedule your AV needs as well as the needs of your guest speakers. Indicate "ALL" when equipment is needed for every class; indicate "SOMETIMES" for an occasional need. If you know the exact dates, please note them on the form.

If you rearrange furniture, please return it to its original state at the end of your class.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Microphones</u></p> <p><u>DATES</u></p> <p>Wireless Lapel Wireless Handheld _____ Headset Microphone</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Visual Aids</u></p> <p><u>DATES</u></p> <p>Video Document Camera Videotape/DVD Blu-Ray Player</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Audio</u></p> <p><u>DATES</u></p> <p>Tape Bo</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Computers</u></p> <p><u>DATES</u></p> <p>X PC computer</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Teaching Aids</u></p> <p><u>Lecterns on a table and a chair are standard equipment in all rooms.</u></p> <p>Light for Lectern _____ Stools</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Special Equipme</u></p> <p><u>DATES</u></p> <p>Piano Electronic Keyboard Video Camera Music Stands: _____</p> <p>**Music stands MUST BE returned to the r</p>	

Comments/Explanations: _____

