

COURSE DETAIL

THE PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE OF SPONTANEOUS THOUGHT

Country

Ireland

Host Institution

Trinity College Dublin

Program(s)

Trinity College Dublin

UCEAP Course Level

Upper Division

UCEAP Subject Area(s)

Psychology

UCEAP Course Number

151

UCEAP Course Suffix**UCEAP Official Title**

THE PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE OF SPONTANEOUS THOUGHT

UCEAP Transcript Title

SPONTANEOUS THOUGHT

UCEAP Quarter Units

5.00

UCEAP Semester Units

3.30

Course Description

Mental experience is not always anchored to the present moment; instead, when the constraints of cognitive control are released, the mind is free to transition from one mental state to the next. Spontaneous thought encompasses a range of mental phenomena that are an intrinsic part of the human experience. These include mind-wandering, daydreams, vivid fantasy, inner speech, creative insights and the nightly manifestations of dreaming. There are also negative ramifications of an excessively wandering mind including distractibility in disorders of attention, obsessive thoughts in OCD, uncontrolled ruminations in depression, and disinhibited traumatic imagery in PTSD. This course asks, what are these various unconstrained modes of thought? How are they generated and instantiated in the brain? Why does the mind and brain devote time and energy to generating these spontaneous mental states? Moreover, this course considers how we can guard against unwarranted mind-wandering by reflecting on techniques such as meditation, mindfulness and their philosophical origins, and how altered states of consciousness can shed light on the content and dynamics of spontaneous thought.

Language(s) of Instruction

English

Host Institution Course Number

PSU3476V

Host Institution Course Title

THE PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE OF SPONTANEOUS THOUGHT

Host Institution Campus

Trinity College Dublin

Host Institution Faculty

Host Institution Degree

Host Institution Department

Psychology

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