

CALL FOR PAPERS

PHENOMENOLOGY AND MINDFULNESS

**Interdisciplinary Coalition of North American Phenomenologists
Ninth Annual Meeting
Ramapo College of New Jersey
May 26–28, 2017**

The **Interdisciplinary Coalition of North American Phenomenologists** (cf. <http://www.icnap.org>) is committed to cultivating connections between teachers, students and researchers in phenomenology across the disciplines. Founded in 2008 by colleagues from Architecture, Communicology, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology and Sociology, ICNAP has had its annual conferences enriched by the contributions of colleagues from Education, Environmental and Sustainability Studies, Literature, Musicology, Nursing and Health Care, Social Work and Psychiatry. Findings in other fields are also expanding our horizons.

We are now pleased to announce that the topic of our Ninth Annual Meeting will be **Phenomenology and Mindfulness**. The conference will take place at **Ramapo College of New Jersey on Memorial Day Weekend 2017**. The event will be supported not only by Ramapo College but also by the **Krame Center for Contemplative Studies and Mindful Living at Ramapo College of New Jersey** (cf. <http://www.ramapo.edu/kramecenter/>). We invite educators, scholars and health practitioners from all areas, backgrounds and disciplines who engage in theoretical and practical research on issues of mindfulness to participate. Our featured speakers will be:

Shaun Gallagher
The Lillian and Morrie Moss Professor
Department of Philosophy, University of Memphis
<http://www.ummoos.org/>

and

Richard Kearney
The Charles B. Seelig Professor
Department of Philosophy, Boston College

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

Our featured Husserliana speaker will be:

Michel Bitbol

**Director of Research, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
Husserl Archives, École Normale Supérieure, Paris**

<http://michel.bitbol.pagesperso-orange.fr/index.html>

We especially encourage submissions that engage the life and legacy of a philosopher whose excellent scholarship and extraordinary service have advanced the phenomenological movement in an exemplary manner:

Lester Embree (1938–2017)

We look forward to organizing a special session commemorating the work and cultivating the memory of this founding member of the Interdisciplinary Coalition of North American Phenomenologists.

We welcome not only theoretical studies but also, and especially, applied research, particularly that which is conducted by using phenomenological methodologies, as well as reflective discussions of the state of mindfulness generally. Our organization is interdisciplinary and phenomenological, so we aim to organize a conference that generates an inclusive and rigorous dialogue on the many paths to mindfulness.

A distinctive feature of ICNAP is its practice of bringing together people based both on the depth of their knowledge of phenomenology and on the level of their interest in it. We equally welcome established scholars and new students to share their experiences and explorations of topics from a phenomenological perspective. We offer workshops on phenomenological methodology, the theory and practice of phenomenology and clinical applications of phenomenology. We seek to bring more scholars and practitioners into phenomenological work, and to expand the work of phenomenologists beyond historical investigation and textual exegesis. We think that the topic of mindfulness is ideally suited to this purpose.

Rationale for and timeliness of the topic

In *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty writes: “Phenomenology is accessible only through a phenomenological method.” Yet the phenomenological

method is not a procedure for explaining things, but rather a way of describing how phenomena present themselves to us in our experiences of them. Focusing on “the things themselves” in their manners of givenness to us, it requires a disciplined approach that redefines our direct, immediate “inalienable presence” to or “primitive contact” with the things and persons of the world in which we live. The enhanced presence of the world to us in the phenomenological sense is achieved through a specific procedure that Husserl refers to as the “epoché” — a methodological move that many commentators cite as one of his crucial contributions to philosophical thinking. The “epoché” involves a methodical suspension, or placing in brackets, of all our presuppositions about everything. Its aim is to enable us to see others, the world and ourselves from a perspective that is characterized by a heightened attentiveness to genuine being and evident truth.

While we credit Husserl as the originator of the rich tradition that has emanated from this methodological approach, and while we acknowledge the important contributions of other major figures, for example, Heidegger, to the question of what thinking in the mindful sense seeks to be, we also recognize that alternative traditions of mindfulness have in certain respects anticipated the phenomenological movement across culture, history, and geography. Asian Yogic and Buddhist traditions in particular have employed methodological procedures that are similar to the phenomenological method. Some European contemplative traditions have also maintained meditation practices that are analogous to those of phenomenology. Current culture exhibits an earnest interest in the health benefits of mindfulness practices, which span a wide range of origins and influences.

Indeed, current developments highlight the timeliness of a lively interdisciplinary conversation aimed at exploring the promising relationships between dimensions of traditional phenomenology and aspects of the new fields of contemplative studies and professional applications of mindfulness. Collegial collaboration and constructive critique have the potential to yield renewal and enlightenment for representatives of mindfulness practices and phenomenological procedures.

We are an interdisciplinary organization that supports phenomenological inquiry from all possible fields. While particular disciplines such as Philosophy and Religious Studies may be clearly pertinent to the topic “Mindfulness and Phenomenology”, many other disciplines can also make significant contributions to it. Therefore we strongly encourage phenomenologically-minded scholars, researchers and professionals from a wide range of fields to participate in this conference. We especially invite submissions from those who are new to phenomenology or who may be interested in learning more about it. We also feel

that many professionals who practice or research some form of meditation or mindfulness — but who may have only limited familiarity with classical academic phenomenology — may be able to contribute in their own special way to our discussion. Thus we also have a special interest in comparative research on mindfulness and meditation in phenomenological and alternative methodologies.

Submission guidelines

We accept proposals for papers, panels and posters. Participants have 30 minutes for presentation and 20 minutes for discussion. We welcome volunteers to serve as moderators. Please indicate whether you are willing to serve in this function.

Paper submissions should consist of two pages. The first page should include the title, a 250–500 word abstract of the paper, the presenter’s name, discipline and contact information. The second page should contain, for anonymous review, only the title of the paper, the abstract and the presenter’s discipline.

Panel submissions should consist of two parts. The first part should include the titles of the panel and papers, a rationale of 250–500 words for the panel, abstracts of 250–500 words for the papers, the names of the chair and presenters, their respective disciplines and contact information. The second part should contain, for anonymous review, only the titles of the panel and papers, the rationale for the panel, the abstracts of the papers and the disciplines of the presenters.

Poster submissions should follow similar guidelines as paper and panel submissions.

All proposals should exhibit both a phenomenological and an interdisciplinary focus. Priority will be given to those that clearly demonstrate a solid familiarity with, or a genuine interest in, phenomenology, and to those that clearly transcend disciplinary boundaries in their focus on phenomenology and mindfulness. Proposals on topics other than mindfulness will also be considered.

Please send submissions as email attachments to George Heffernan, Program Committee Chair: George.heffernan@Merrimack.edu. Please also put ICNAP VII SUBMISSION in the subject line, and format submissions in Word.doc or Docx (not PDF) to facilitate anonymous review. **The deadline for submissions is March 15, 2017.** Notifications of acceptances will be sent by April 1, 2017.

Conference fee

The conference fee of \$295.00 (\$150.00 for students) covers participation as well as breakfast, lunch, and dinner on Friday, May 26, and Saturday, May 27, and breakfast on Sunday, May 28. Refreshments will also be served between meals.

Possible topical focuses for paper, panel and poster proposals

Contemporary: relationships between phenomenology and contemporary mindfulness-based clinical practices, e.g., Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, etc.

Contemplative: relationships between phenomenology and South and East Asian mindfulness traditions, e.g., classical yoga, Taoism, Jainism and Tantrism; between phenomenology and Buddhist mindfulness traditions and practices; between phenomenology and European as well as indigenous contemplative traditions; etc.

Religious: the phenomenology of religious experience in mindfulness or spiritual practices; the relationships between the sacred and the secular in phenomenological procedures and mindfulness or spiritual practices; between phenomenological methodology and Christian, Jewish and Islamic contemplative traditions; etc.

Scientific: qualitative empirical phenomenological research on the experience of mindfulness or meditation; the relationships between the phenomenological method and various experimental or natural scientific methods for studying mindfulness and meditation; etc.

Systematic: approaches to embodiment, space, time and relations with others, e.g., in phenomenological procedures and mindfulness practices.

Historical: potential relationships between the thought of figures of the phenomenological movement, e.g., Brentano, Husserl and Heidegger, and that of figures of the contemporary mindfulness movement, e.g., Goenka and Kabat-Zinn.

Prospective: new meditative or mindfulness procedures that could contribute to phenomenological methodology.

This list is suggestive but not exhaustive.