

Multi Dimensional Consciousness:  
From the Perspectives of Students in Astrosociology

By

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## Intro

This is the second semester that the astrosociology class taught by Professor Chrys Ingraham has left students wanting more. This is the second time students ask if there is a second part to the course. Theology courses usually exist in most colleges, but rarely do we see a course taught on what it means to be human. Sounds like such a simple concept, but it opens up to new theories that go over many people's heads. Students learn about theories on time, ancient tribal knowledges, aliens, and most importantly, consciousness. Each class holds a meditation session to allow students to see past the physical plane <sup>1</sup>. My research question is how students from an astrosociology class come to understand multi-dimensional consciousness and meditation from the beginning to the end of the course. I will be focusing on the areas of what meditation is, how meditation affects every day life, and finally understanding its connection to multi-dimensional consciousness to understand how students perceive the concept. My study will focus on the course in the Spring and in the Fall semesters.

I took Astrosociology and Consciousness Communities in Spring 2017. I wasn't sure what I would be expecting. The first question asked in the course<sup>2</sup> was, "What does it mean to be human?" One would think it is quite an easy question to answer, but then you begin to break down the idea. The answer is no longer simple. We have begun to see a new interest in the ideas of mindfulness and self-awareness in popular media. With television shows such as *Ancient*

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<sup>1</sup>We currently live on the physical plane the next plane is the astro plane

<sup>2</sup> the main and most important question in the course

*Aliens* and numerous documentaries on streaming sites like Netflix, it is no wonder that students want to dive deeper into these “new wave” knowledges. What I mean by knowledges is the realization of advanced civilizations before our own, knowledge of the higher self, and knowledge of the universe around us. With new theories of quantum science coming to light, people have become to understand that there is no limitations to humans. We may have not discovered secrets that our ancestors have been using. The course begs students to look deeper than what we can see. Right now, our focus is on the politics of this country. Everyone is fighting for a right to exist, yet with this course we understand that there are no real differences. Learning about the higher self makes politics seem like a minuscule issue, the real issue is elevation of self to achieve enlightenment so we can be better for ourselves, others and the planet. Life is so much more than politics. The course added touches of quantum physics to show the connection between the world we see around us and laws of the universe. The concepts of time that were introduced by Albert Einstein is taught prior to the class beginning, because the professor wants the students to begin comprehending the concept of time. That time as we know it may not function in the way we believe it does. The course constantly tests the beliefs of the students.

Darlene Van De Grift, a medicinal intuitive, receives assistance from her multidimensional self as well as other spatial beings to help people with touch. She speaks at the class to help students better understanding the lessons that are being taught and she uses her experiences as examples. When she comes to the class, she always enlightens the class with new knowledge and each time, the students are so grateful to have Darlene there. She was also a part of the *Disclosure* book<sup>3</sup>, where she spoke on her experiences with other beings. She also is working with

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<sup>3</sup> Required text for the class.

Professor Ingraham on a book titled, *Awakening the New Human*, which focuses on the same topics discussed in the course.

Some of the students have had past experiences with these ideas and have chosen to have formal teachings. Other students had no knowledge on the ideas presented and wanted to “dip their toes in the water”—sometimes the ideas introduced could scare them. Professor Ingraham informed students that this knowledge was not easy to take in, that no one was trying to disprove anyone’s belief systems. Students came from different backgrounds and might have had experiences with family members. Everyone was different. Students were encouraged to do a daily meditation and write a journal entry on their experience. When class met on Wednesday, students would also participate in a group meditation. The meditation was to teach students about themselves as well as help improve their daily perspectives of the world. “The use of mindfulness meditation as a tool for improving physical and mental health, in a secular context detached from spiritual beliefs, has increased significantly during the last two decades” (Tarrasch, 2015, p. 1323).

Students not only learned about the practice of meditation but also learned about the advantages of meditation. It is very important to give your brain a break sometimes. It is constantly in thought, even when sleeping. Meditation is a practice that quiets the thoughts in your mind. That is the main focus. It is like cleaning out the cluttered closet in your head. While cleaning this closet, you find old relics, realize how much space you really have, and gives you ease because you can easily locate items when needed. When people organize their brains, they begin to find new potentials they can reach. It was obvious when students weren’t doing their meditations because anxiety and stress would affect the message they would be sending. Physical appearance

would be different such as lowered heads and slouched shoulders. They would speak about stress going on in life and the professor would encourage them to continue with the practice. When going through difficult times, it is hard to stay focused on tasks. This is where meditation was important because it would help individuals come up with better solutions to issues they might be facing. Our current society has gotten stressful over the years, with things like politics and race. Many times, we need a break from that to focus on ourselves, so we don't lose sight of our paths. "Mindfulness practice has been reported to reduce emotional distress (Jain et al. 2007), anxiety and depression (Hoffman et al. 2010; Toneatto and Nguyen 2007), maladaptive behavior (Singh et al. 2007), and chronic pain (Kabat-Zinn et al. 1985), as well as improve social competence (Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor 2010), cognitive abilities (Chambers et al. 2007), and attention (Baijal et al. 2011; Semple 2010)" (Tarrach, 2015, p. 1323).

We all in some shape or form, understand that there is more to humans than flesh. It might exist under different names, but it is the same concept—the idea of consciousness. "We cannot see the brain think, but we can see the brain fire. Thus brain patterns can serve as proxy variables for conscious functioning and can provide objective measures of growing subjectivity—even of spiritual experiences and ethical behavior."(Travis, 2009, p.29) There is more to us, than what we see with our natural eye sight. One quote I recall from the course is that "We only see about 4% of what is truly surrounding us<sup>4</sup>." That is quite a shocking discovery for people. We understand that we don't see certain elements like wind, but to think bigger than the elements is quite mind-blowing. To become "aware"<sup>5</sup> was to expand your consciousness and help students

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<sup>4</sup> Professor Ingraham said this in the first class

<sup>5</sup> The concept of being aware or awake to the world around you, both the physical plane and beyond

maneuver better through life. Through meditations, some students began interpreting images or dreams they would see. They would travel far from the location of the classroom, without moving their feet.

One of my readings focused on Maharishi, a well-known guru, spoke about the idea of Transcendental Meditation (TM). I included him in the study because of his ideas of consciousness through meditation. He was a firm believer that all can be achieved through the power of meditation. One important aspect of his meditation was consciousness leaving this current physical plane. Transcendental Meditation shadows the concepts of multi dimensional consciousness and that we can exist in multiple places at one time. He believed that through meditation we could unlock all universal knowledges that included science. “Perhaps more important for the understanding of later TM languages we learn that the powers of nature (alternatively called “natural laws”) are in fact the deities, the *devas*, of the Rig Veda” (Lowe, 2011, p. 57) The idea of actually connecting with other worldly beings, without picking up a phone. The little voice that we always considered to be “our conscious” is evidence of our multi-dimensional selves. Multi Dimensional consciousness is the idea of being conscious in more than one dimension. Humans are multi dimensional creatures, as we understand what is around us. We are still limited to the third dimension and usually during meditation there is the possibility of the dimensions following ours. The idea that we exist beyond what we see in front of us—our reflections. Darlene, had vast knowledge of this concept and explained how she visited other dimensions. Her stories gave students a better explanation on the concept. Students were eager to learn more and ask her about their own experiences. I will go in depth on the discussions in Findings and Analysis section.

This study was done during the Fall of 2018. A new set of ears were ready to learn about this experimental course. Many students were referred by students from the previous semester and others were curious to what they would learn. This time, I was a teaching assistant instead of a student. Although I had some knowledge of what was being presented, I was still learning different perspectives and ideas. We will see how this course and its meditation practices taught students about self-awareness. Through this study, we will see how students of an astrosociology course view multidimensional consciousness through meditation from the beginning to the end of the course.

### **Literature Review**

The students in the astrosociology course were unfamiliar with the topics being discussed. To understand the entire concept of multi-dimensional consciousness, a few components need to be explained. This literature review will focus on important components needed to give a full understanding on what multi-dimensional consciousness means and how to achieve it. In the first section of this literature review, I will discuss meditation, a brief explanation of the process and its history. This section will help beginners understand the great power that meditation holds. The second section will discuss meditation in our modern everyday lives. I will discuss how meditation improves not just the self<sup>6</sup>, as well as school and careers. It causes us to be aware of our surroundings. The final topic will be focused on multi-dimensional consciousness: a full understanding of what surrounds us. These topics will help understand the process students went through during the course, since meditation was a large part of the class. There is a vast amount

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<sup>6</sup> Self in this context is referring to awareness of consciousness—of yourself.

of ancient and modern knowledge on the subject of consciousness and achieving mindfulness, so this will be a brief analysis on the concepts.

### **Meditation: A brief explanation**

Meditation is a practice that has existed since the earliest time. Its origin is something unknown, yet is an important aspect of human life, especially when trying to reach and understand multi-dimensional consciousness. Many religions, tribes, and many other individuals follow the daily practice of meditation<sup>7</sup>. Many people seek inner peace, inner knowledge, or universal awareness from it. To give your mind a break from constant thought as been seen as an effective tool during stressful moments in life. The full potential it unlocks is still unknown, things such as levitation and telepathy have been said to be a possible result of reaching a certain level of meditation<sup>8</sup>.

There is no right way to do meditation. Many people have a pre conceived notion that practicing meditation is difficult and so they avoid trying it. Others are turned off by meditation because they are not experiencing visions like experienced people. The truth is every experience is different—one might see visions while another can feel different emotions. One common misconception is “I don’t think I am doing it right”. There is no set way to practice meditation, it can be done almost anywhere. “Many different meditation practices exist, which are commonly classified into two basic types: concentrative meditation and mindfulness meditation. Concentration practices focus on a specific object of attention such as an image, a word (usually a mantra) or an

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<sup>7</sup> Sometimes more than once a day

<sup>8</sup> Maharishi at one point told followers they would be able to unlock these powers through Transcendental meditation.

emotion<sup>9</sup>. When the mind wanders away from the focus of meditation, attention is redirected back to the focal point. By contrast mindfulness meditation does not restrict attention to a single object/event. Instead awareness follows thoughts, feelings and sensations that arise, flowing freely from one to another” (Tarrasch, 2015, p. 1322). This is the basis of meditation, how it’s done is up to the person who is practicing.

### **Meditation and Modern Society’s Every Day Life**

Meditation is an important aspect to every day modern life. We are in constant motions in our life and put into some stressful situations. Many times, this could lead to people having panic/anxiety attacks and mental breakdowns. They start to lose focus on the bigger picture. Meditation provides that break from the world. A quick moment of escape that will help you keep focus of the larger picture—whether that is a personal goal or higher enlightenment. Meditation is being used in several settings from schools, grad schools, and even work environments. In this section, we will discuss how meditation could improve daily life. This will help us understand the importance of meditation in the course and how it connects to our multi-dimensional selves. “Epstein, Seigel, and Silberman (2008) suggested that cognitive training in the form of focused-awareness meditation, might be a useful way to enhance attention, cognitive resilience, and thinking-in-action skills of health care professionals” (Burger and Lockhard, 2017, p. 430).

There are various studies on meditation and institutions, so I was able to find a lot of resources on the effects of meditations. Mindfulness meditation practices are constantly added to curriculums to assist students with school work. Even young students are encouraged to take part

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<sup>9</sup> Birnbaum and Birnbaum 2004

in mindfulness meditation practices. These practices lead to students being able to be in charge of their emotions. Let's first discuss the idea of mindfulness, "Kabat-Zinn (2003) described mindfulness as "the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmental to the unfolding experiences moment by moment (p. 145). Similarly Bishop et al. (2004) recognized two components of mindfulness: (a) a self-regulatory component involving maintenance of attention on immediate experience in the present moment, and (b) maintenance of an orientation of curiosity, and openness and acceptance" (Wisney and Starzec, 2016, p. 246). We understand that mindfulness is being aware of our surrounding/moment. With our busy lives, it is difficult to take a moment and be mindful of what is going on around us. We are only focused on the issue in front of us. This leads to making poor choices based off negative emotions that lead us down a different path. If we seek certain accomplishments in life, we must become mindful of the world around us. "The mindfulness-based approach to teaching business ethics calls on business teachers to teach mindfulness meditation and open inquiry skills to their students. Rather than offering a set of rules to promote ethical behavior, this approach seeks to engage emotions, facilitate introspection, increase awareness and attention, leading students in learning processes which result in personal insights, Without business students gaining an understanding of the inner workings of the mind and being offered self-empowerment by adopting mind training processes, they will continue to look outside themselves for a way to fix unethical practices while the real solution to these problems lie within" (Lampe & Engleman-Lampe, 2012, p. 100) From business schools, at risk alternative schools, nursing schools, and beyond use meditation as a tool for the students. "My focus on consciousness, as well as the value to be discussed thereafter, is based on the premise that working people can enhance the quality of their

own life, as well as the lives of other stockholders at work if they act, think, and decide with these principles at their core” (Marques, 2012, p. 27-28). Everyone is trying to incorporate this practice, and it is for obvious reason. With technology and work, it is hard for us to connect to ourselves. We are constantly being distracted from listening to ourselves. How could we heal ourselves, if we aren’t listening to what our consciousness is telling us. The issues we face are remnants of that our consciousness is trying to tell us to fix. “Several years ago, I felt that a radical change in educational methods was needed to help transform our fractured selves, communities and ecosystems. I began experimenting with meditation techniques in my university courses on writing and literature as well as in more informal workshops on poetry, psychology, and spiritual development. As a longtime practitioner, I knew the powerful transformative effects of meditation and felt sure that contemplative practices could help heal the painful divisions I saw everywhere in contemporary life, particularly in education and business. Today I am more convinced than ever that we urgently need to recover as well as invent meditative approach that tap our complete powers of awareness, expression and compassionate action” (Burack, 1999, p. 41). The evidence on meditation is clear. We need meditation like we need to brush our teeth daily.

Research has proven how effective meditation could be in stressful trauma-based situations. In the article, “*Open Mind, Open Heart*”, Myers and Lewis did a study on women dealing with trauma and how meditation helps with the healing process. In the article, “*The Process of Personal Transformation for Adolescents Practicing Mindfulness Skills in an Alternative School Setting*”, Wisner and Starzec discuss meditation integrated in alternative school settings<sup>10</sup>. In the article, “*Meditation’s Effect on Attentional Efficiency, Stress, and Mindfulness Characteristics of*

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<sup>10</sup> Alternative schools are schools designed for “at risk” students, who have a chance of dropping out of school.

*Nursing Students*” by Burger stresses on the importance of being aware and mindfulness especially in medical emergency settings. It is important to separate yourself from the emotional trauma of seeing a patient bleeding out, and think in a logical mind in order to save the patient’s life. Those articles explain the benefit to people dealing with severely stressful situations and how through meditation they are trying to maintain focus on the task at hand. Each group in each article is different from women dealing with trauma to at risk teenagers to nursing students, all in some form deal with extreme stress. It is important to understand that no matter where you come from, how you look, etc it is important to take the time out to give you brain a break. It needs to comprehend what is going on prior to reacting because you can be hurting yourself or someone else. “Focused-awareness meditation is a practice of the purposeful self-regulation of attention, a conscious intention to maintain present moment awareness that, with consistent practice, is suggested to heighten one’s trait ability to pay attention in a discerning and concentrated way, despite external or internal distractors (Kabat-Zinn 1995). This position was supported by the seminal work of cognitive neuro science researchers (Davidson et. al. 2003; Lazar et. al. 2005) whose findings revealed significant attentional improvements in participants who meditated” (Burger and Lockhart, 2017, p. 430). When it comes to the study of the group of female trauma victims it is stated, “ Part of the reason for the rising interest in meditation is that clinical research now suggests that meditation-based practices may be an effective means of addressing anxiety (Kabat-Zinn 1992, Goldin and Gross 2010), depression (Toneatto and Nguyen 2007), and substance abuse (Dakwar and Levin 2009). Published accounts of meditation-based medical research typically focuses on changes in biomarkers or self-reported scales before and after a standardized intervention” (Myers et. al., 2015, p.488).

It is intriguing how important is to daily life, yet western society doesn't encourage the use. We should see meditation programs in all schools. "An innovative universal intervention found to be helpful for alternative high school students is mindfulness meditation. Students have been found to perceive mindfulness meditation as helpful in reducing stress, and improving interpersonal functioning, psychosocial functioning, and school climate (Wisner, 2013; Wisney & Norton, 2013)" (Wisner and Starzec, 2016, p. 246). It is understandable why Professor Ingraham found it very important to make sure students meditated in class because it would help students deal with the week, if it was school, work or home. You could clearly see the difference in people's energies when they meditated. I think school should teach each student to meditate in the morning from an early age. This will help them with problem solving skills in the future.

### **Multi-Dimensional Consciousness: A Universal Awareness**

Throughout this study, I have mentioned multi-dimensional consciousness. I am aware that many people do not understand what that means. When it comes to dimensions people understand that we live in the third dimension without knowing what that means. No, it's not a movie where you have to wear 3-D glasses, no glasses required here. The only thing required is to open you eye, meaning your third eye.<sup>11</sup> The third eye, which is mentioned in ancient texts and folklore, is located at the center of the forehead. This is the location of the pineal gland in our brains. It controls our sleep and other similar functions, like dreaming. When we are in a dream state, we are experiencing multi dimensional selves, we are conscious during the experience. Understanding our dreams could be a key to our higher selves, because we don't know where

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<sup>11</sup> Third Eye or the Pineal Gland

these visuals come from. Consciousness as we understand—is us; our souls, our desires, whatever you want to call it. It is what makes us alive and not mindless zombies. Our consciousness drives us and gives us daily purpose. It is what makes us aware of what’s outside and inside of us. Multi dimensional consciousness sounds like something you would hear in a science fiction film. When reading the definition, it may sound difficult to understand. What helped me understand the meaning was different videos and discussions in the class. Darlene used her personal experiences to help us get a clearer picture of what the term meant. Well it is actually an ancient practice that is connected with meditation. In the beginning of the semester, students were handed a syllabus along with a sheet with terms and concepts. Professor Ingraham used Suzan Carroll’s *“What Is Multi Dimensional Consciousness”* to break down some key terms that wouldn’t be found in a *Webster’s Dictionary*. Carroll identifies multi-dimensional consciousness as “the ability to be ‘conscious’ of more than one dimension. To be multi-dimensional in our consciousness we must remember that we have within us the potential to expand out perceptual awareness to the dimensions above and below our physical plane” (Carroll, 2011). We currently exist in the third dimension this means we understand our emotions and the emotions of other beings. Through meditation we can go forth to the fourth dimension which allows someone to understand that time and space are not concrete. As a person advances in their meditations, they can travel to further dimensions without moving their bodies. In these higher forms of dimensions, people can feel things like acceptance and love.

Humans are multi-dimensional creatures, the evidence is in our minds. Professor Ingraham showed a video that the other teaching assistant referred her to. It was a Youtube clip of rapper KRS-ONE. At that point, I was still trying to fully understand the concept of multi-dimen-

sional consciousness. Since it was a huge chunk of my research question,(how students of an as-trosociology course perceive multidimensional consciousness through meditation from the be-ginning to the end) I felt the concept was hard to grasp. The video broke the idea down very eas-ily for me to understand. I couldn't understand what multi-dimensional consciousness was, until she played the video. The clip shows KRS-ONE speaking at some kind of conference. He holds up a can of the drink Rockstar<sup>12</sup>. He asks everyone to read the name of the can, but not out loud. The audience does as asked. He follows up to say that the voice we heard in our heads, wasn't us. We heard the voice, so where did it come from. I speak I can hear my voice, but that voice that read the can—I had no explanation of where it could've come from. That is where he ex-plains that is us in a different dimension. Proof that dimensions outside of us exist. We can't see where this voice is coming from and no one else but us can hear it.

To reach multi-dimensional consciousness as Darlene explained we needed to practice meditation. Meditation is the train that leads us into the place. This is why it is important to un-derstand meditation and its connection to our daily lives to understand the awareness that we can travel through dimensions. “It is the Dalai Lama's opinion that consciousness has no end and no beginning” (Marques, 2012, p. 29). Just as the laws of physics state matter cannot be created nor destroyed, only transformed. <sup>13</sup> We know our physical bodies are born and die, but what about our conscious. Although, there is never a definitive answer, we know that our physical bodies are not our true forms—our consciousness is. “ In the case of the clay pot, the “substantial cause” is everything that turns into clay that becomes the pot. Everything else, such as the skill of the pot-

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<sup>12</sup> An energy drink

<sup>13</sup> From The course Moodle Site

ter, the potter himself, and furnace that heats the clay, are contributory factors” (Marques, 2012, p. 29) That is to say even certain characteristics are not us. They are a part of our physical form. We are the clay pot.

Hinduism has been speaking on the idea of consciousness traveling for years. Specifically, to speak and receive guidance from the gods. Transcendental meditation focuses on speaking to the gods to receive universal knowledges. It was said that with lots of practice, it would be easier to reach this godly plane, even if done in groups could cause a huge surge in energy. “ He [Maharishi] insisted that Transcendental Meditation was the key to world peace and that Vedic teachings provided complete Knowledge, that is to say total knowledge of everything in the universe” (Lowe, 2011, p. 55) Maharishi wrote a few works to further explain his practice. Now, Maharishi was not born in the proper caste, so he was not initially seen as a guru. He began to expand to his teachings to the West. In his work, *The Science of Being and Art of Living*, began to explain the union of science with ancient Hindu teachings of consciousness. This had not been done before in the west, because it was not seen as science. Science and religion have been separate concepts and so people found it hard to take him serious. He tried to use both concepts, by even having discussion with quantum physicists. At that time, quantum physics was starting to make a wave because of the theories that were emerging at the time. “Individual spiritual growth is discussed in terms of “evolution”, at which might evoke images of Darwin, but in fact refers to traditional Indian theories of reincarnation into progressively higher states of existence. The book presents “divine consciousness” as the ultimate goal of human life and suggests that spiritual development is the best and only solution to all issues or moral behavior, physical well-being, societal harmony and world peace” (Lowe, 2011, p. 58) In time, Maharishi couldn’t prove that his

practice would create world peace. With promises of telepathy and levitation, people in western society were expecting more yet not following with the practices or rather not being patient. He even promised students that through a course called Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI) that students would reach an existence of blissful reality through his meditational practices. Whether they worked or not is solely based on the individual.

Although we are multi-dimensional, we aren't listening to ourselves because society keeps us distracted from truly healing ourselves. Nhat Hanh (1998) is convinced that we can nurture our consciousness by practicing the Four Immeasurable Minds of love, compassion, joy and equanimity, or we can nourish our consciousness with greed, hatred, ignorance, suspicion and pride. Nhat Hanh (1998) ultimately warns, "Our consciousness is eating all the time, day and night, and what it consumes becomes the substance of our life. We have to be very careful which nutrients it ingest" (1998)" (Marques, 2012, p. 28).

These three topics are important to understand the nature of this study. These three topics were main focal points to the students in the astrosociology course. They had to complete meditation which was a large chunk of the grade and gave a better understanding to the material. The meditation feedback was to show how meditation was affecting the student's daily life and were they perceiving any changes in their actions. Multi-Dimensional consciousness is the focal point of this study so it needed to be understood what it was. There was a class dedicated to the topic and it is about awareness. Awareness being such a huge topic in the course. Who comes to mind when speaking about this idea is Emile Durkheim. He proposed the idea of functionalism, which meant we are all parts in a larger machine. That's how I see the universe and our consciousness. As told in the class, we have DNA that connects us to the universe. The universe being a part in

the machine, because we don't know how big this machine is. We are all each an integral part in that machine. Our consciousness chooses how we work and help maintain that machine. When we decide to make a choice, that can affect the machine. Imagine most people not paying attention to their functions, that could lead the machine to eventually break down. That's something I personally, do not want to see.

## **Methods**

This study was a qualitative study, because it focused on the students' experiences. I was exposed to the class, first as a student and then as a learning assistant. I have done some research on the material prior to joining the course.. Since, this was not an easy concept to write about, I decided to take on the task. For this study, I decided to observe and record the class, which took place at SUNY Purchase on Wednesdays at 3:00 PM. All students were able to sign up for the class, even if they wasn't a sociology major. I observed both classes, recorded and took notes of my findings.

The semester that I took the course as a student, it was still experimental. I don't think any of us knew what we were doing, but we wanted to learn more. That kept us coming to class each week. In this semester, I took notes and recorded students experiences through meditation and with consciousness. The beginning of the course, starts with the question, "What does it mean to be Human?" Students are also shown the "The Cave" a cartoon on the fable by Plato. They are asked to decipher both the question and the video that was showed to them. From there students are told that part of the requirement of the class is to do a daily meditation. Professor Ingraham would incorporate resources to the Moodle site to help students with meditation prac-

tices. On the site, there were also references on the importance of meditation and its beneficial effects. One student spoke about how they enjoyed the piece of the science of meditation because it “backed it up with fact”. In turn, Professor Ingraham asked, what the student considers fact. They began to explain that seeing numbers and charts have been a basis of fact for them, so to see that correlated with meditation made it seem believable.

Along with the resource articles on the Moodle site, there was also different meditation techniques, such as guided meditation and visual meditations. Students were required to meditate twice a day and record their experiences in a journal. I didn't have access to the journal entries because of the private nature of what the students discussed. I do respect privacy, so I didn't want to ask to see them. I do believe that it could've also helped my study because I would be getting a personal insight on the meditation as opposed to interviews. I think it could've given me a better understanding on what the students were experiencing with their meditations outside of class.

During class, students meditated as well. Each week, Professor Ingraham would have a new video that would help meditation. Meditations would last between 5-10 minutes. Some meditations were guided by well known gurus and others would be different frequencies<sup>14</sup>. Some preferred the guided meditations, but it would also depend on who was guiding the meditations. Some people seemed like they would be falling asleep. It was through these segments that I would observe the students and how they would be following the practice. Towards the end of the class, students were given “eggs”<sup>15</sup> that they could use to meditate as to help to boost energy.

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<sup>14</sup> This helped with different vibrations

<sup>15</sup> Crystallized eggs

Darlene Van De Grift, was a frequent guest speaker in both semesters. She gave students a better understanding on the practice of meditation as well as multi dimensional consciousness. She spoke about her own experiences in the different dimensions as well as her experiences while meditating. She spoke about the different beings she encountered in her daily life. She showcased different tools to help you consciousness. Items like pendulums that could help with life decisions you might have. Darlene was an integral part of the study, because she focused so much on multi dimensions. Students would be in awe when she spoke about her experiences. Professor Ingraham and Darlene are writing a book, that was used as one of the required texts to read for the class. It goes into detail about self awareness through ancient knowledges. I made sure to always be recording on days that Darlene visited the class. Students would ask her questions about their personal life, hoping Darlene could lead them into the right direction. At the end of both semester, students thanked Darlene for coming to the class and would ask for her information in order to reach her outside of class. Darlene was a pleasure to have in class and was a vast resource of knowledge for this study.

Through the notes, recordings, and class material, I was able to take the data and come up with this study. This study will better help people understand the different ideas of consciousness that exists, not only in this physical space. It will also help understand the importance of meditation to everyone. Meditation is the transportation to other realms and locations that our bodies cannot travel. The students—including myself enjoyed the class and what was being taught. It helped everyone become understanding and compassionate to others as well as bettering oneself.

## **Findings and Analysis**

In order to get my findings, I conducted observational studies in the Spring of 2018 and the Fall of 2018. The spring semester was the first time the class was being offered. In the Fall of 2017, the professor announced that she would be offering a class that was outside of the ordinary. I have always been fascinated by the universe and the paranormal, so I was intrigued. I immediately registered for the course. I was told the class was about seeing sociology outside the spectrum of the human experience. I have been a fan of sci fi as well as the study of people (thus the reason I am a sociology major), so I believed mixing both ideas would be interesting. I didn't know what to expect that very first class.

The class began with a simple question, "What does it mean to be human?". Sounded like a simple question, but once you break it down the answer doesn't seem so simple. The first video we watched was the "The Cave" an animated short on Plato's fable. There were about 30 students in the class, not all were sociology students. The professor explained how this course would be somewhat experimental because of the material being handled. She explained that what was going to be taught was not there to alarm anyone or force anyone to change their beliefs. It was a way to open your mind to new ideals and becoming more aware. The class was intimate, as students would share personal experiences <sup>16</sup>. As part of the requirements of the class, students were asked to keep journals. The journals would be used for meditational experiences. Journaling is a helpful tool for meditational practices both after meditations and as a free writing tool. It would help the professor understand where the students were with their meditations. "Students were asked to report when and why they did or did not practice meditation during the past week. They were encouraged to write what helped them to practice or what obstacles they encountered,

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<sup>16</sup> Students would share experiences in the beginning of class as a check in.

and describe and reflect upon each week's contemplative experience, and the insights gained from observing their thoughts, including both positive and negative experiences and insights" (Tarrasch, 2015, p. 1325). The other part of the assignment was to meditate twice a day, including a third (in class) on Wednesdays.

Students were handed a load of material on the Moodle<sup>17</sup>, including videos, articles, and terms. The first class went over expectations of the class and light introduction to the class. Within the list of terms is an excerpt from "What is Multidimensional Consciousness?" by Suzan Carroll. Meditation was the first term on the list; right below is the breakdown of the term multidimensional consciousness. "Dimensions are a means of organizing different planes of existence according to their vibratory rate. Each dimension has a certain set of laws and principles that are specific to the frequency of that dimension" (Carroll, 2011). That sounds very confusing, and in a sense can be difficult to understand. Everything vibrates differently, when we are in uncomfortable situations or people we feel "vibes". When we get "bad vibes" that's another dimension of ourselves trying to protect us.

"Consciousness represents awareness. The inhabitants of each dimension function clearly, easily, and with a minimum resistance within that plane because their consciousness vibrates in resonance with the frequency of that dimension" (Carroll, 2011). No matter what belief system the students had, they all believed in some version of consciousness. Most people commonly call it a soul. This was the first thing taught to students. Students thought this was the answer to the question that was asked in the beginning of the course, but as they began to look further at the terms—they realized everything has consciousness. That means that it cannot be the defining

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<sup>17</sup> SUNY Purchase uses Moodle for courses

characteristic that makes us humans. What students failed to understand is that everything has consciousness from rocks to plant life to animals, so it could not be the correct answer. The only difference was the level of consciousness. Through meditation, we could understand and help our consciousness grow. “In practicing insight meditation, students discover the ever-shifting nature of their consciousness. Some come to realize that their very being is constantly changing. Indeed, they realize they can not distinguish between their consciousness and their being because their only access to the latter is through the former” (Burrack, 1999, p. 44) Our consciousness is constantly changing, because the mind we had as children evolves with age and experience. This can bring new awareness to ourselves.

“Multidimensional consciousness is the ability to be “conscious” of more than one dimension. To be multidimensional in our consciousness we must remember that we have within us the potential to expand our perceptual awareness to the dimensions above and below our physical plane” (Carroll, 2011). This is what I explained prior, everything has consciousness, just on different levels. We exist in the third dimension, we are of animal life, plant life and our physical lives. As we move forward we can begin to experience things like unconditional love and forgiveness. Our third dimensional self is the conscious mind. The conscious mind is everything we experience—awake. My conscious mind at the moment is writing this paper, it knows what is going on in front of me. When we think of consciousness we should think of it like an iceberg. The top is visible that is our conscious mind. Below the water is the largest portion of the iceberg, which can be considered our subconscious mind.

Our subconscious mind is the key to truly understanding ourselves, yet we can't easily access it. We get snippets of it during dreams. Some might even consider dreams to be the actual

projections of other dimensions that we are or have existed in. This cannot be proven, nor can it be proven why we dream. The idea that dreams are deep, hidden desires is a theory of the past. The easiest ways in tapping into the subconscious is through dreaming, free writing, and meditation.

This is why my study focuses heavily on meditation. The meditation was important for students to understand these concepts because they were not easy to understand. The first class centered on what is consciousness. We began the class with a guided meditation for beginners<sup>18</sup> and students would be asked what they experienced during the meditation. Some students stated they saw shapes, others claimed to have seen colors. One student was skeptical to the entire experience. She explained that her parents were scientists, so she came from a fact based household. She constantly questioned the concepts being presented. It was interesting to see her dynamic in class because she was the complete opposite. Most students in the course have had prior experience with these concepts or have researched it. I think it was good to have someone who was not a believer because they interpreted the lessons completely different. The professor would also post meditations on the site, so that students can figure out what type of meditation was best for them. The most popular meditation was the frequency meditations. In the Spring semester, students tested out different frequencies during a meditation. The professor started with the lowest and students would meditate for a minute or so. The professor would then pause the students and go up the next frequency range. Some students experienced out of body experiences. I recall one student saying she actually left Earth, but something was forcing her to come back. The pro-

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<sup>18</sup> Spring semester started with the meditation for beginners, the fall semester began with a different meditation.

fessor explained that was her consciousness trying to keep her aware of this plane. In a way, almost like the conscious mind was holding her back from experiencing more.

Darlene had spoke three times each semester. In the Fall semester, on one visit <sup>19</sup>she focused on the multidimensional self. She asked if students understood the concept of the multidimensional self. None of the students were able to answer. She began to explain that we are all multidimensional and how it is about knowing that everything exists at the same time. She brought in rods and a pendulum as tools to help the students understand. We started with an exercise. She chose two students to stand up in front of the classroom. She explained that our multidimensional selves would guide us to our truths. She asked the one student to raise their arm, the other student would ask simple questions like “what is your name?” Darlene asked that the student answer incorrectly. She asked the student asking the question to push down the arms of the other student. She explained that because the student lied the arm would become weaker as it is being pushed down. This was a sign that your consciousness knew that what was said was not the truth. When the student answered correctly, their arm would be a lot tougher. Students tried it a few times and she explained there were different methods to this exercise and you would be able to do it to yourself. After the exercise, Darlene would continue to speak on her experience of her multidimensional self. Students were invited to ask questions. One particular student asked Darlene about an experience he was dealing with in his dreams. She answered, “Yes, so, this is where your multidimensional self maybe coming in...ok. Because you might have experienced it here and five minutes later have experienced it here so if your not connected or in residence with your multidimensional self you will not remember that you had it other than in the residence of

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<sup>19</sup> This visit was done on October 31st, 2018. This visit was focused solely on multidimensional consciousness.

that next moment<sup>20</sup>. Darlene then expressed that through our unique vibrations, we could even ask our multidimensional selves simple questions to guide us. She used the rods for this example. She held to rods in front of her, they were L shaped. She explained that when she would ask questions, while holding the rods firmly, they would begin to move in different directions. She explained that although they moved one way for her, they could move differently for us. She allowed them to be passed around the room. When she asked a question, one of the rods would slightly move towards the right, while the other rod shook back and forth. Students were amazed at this visual proof.

The next exercise used a pendulum. She explained that pendulums were unique for everyone as well. If we were to enter a crystal shop, different crystals might call our attention. She used a amethyst pendulum, but if we chose our own crystals the results to the exercise would be a lot greater. She held the pendulum in front of her and attempted to keep it still. Once the pendulum stopped moving, she said this experience worked the same way as the rods. She was meant to ask a question and the vibrations would cause the pendulum to move. The movement of the pendulum would be unique to everyone, for her it would go left and right. At one point it was going quickly or it would go very lightly right to left, again she allowed each student to practice. She did forewarn students that the crystal was imprinted to her, so it might not work as well for everyone. She encouraged everyone to find one that resonated with them. When I held the pendulum it would go in tiny circles. The answers would cause different movements. A yes would cause the rods and pendulum to move one direction and a no could cause them to move in another

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<sup>20</sup> This was from a recording of the class on October 31st 2018, this is in regards to a student explaining a reoccurring experience they were going through, turned out to be an issue in childhood that the student pushed down.

er or have lack of movement. She tied this lesson in with the idea of the karmic loop. Almost all the students has heard about karma. Karma is the notion that whatever you do will come back to you in some form. She explained that our different selves might keep a trait or some baggage from another plane and carry here with us. “This is where karma comes in, you know, you done something to someone else, if something was done to you, the likely hood is when you come into this life...this life, you can chose to bring that in with you as a pattern, as a belief, as a disconnect as whatever, and so that when you run up to that person again, when you have a situation that happens in this lifetime those patterns start to come up they don't necessarily mean they end in this lifetime they're like a string of pearls they could relate to three lifetimes ago or twenty lifetimes ago<sup>21</sup>.” Darlene’s visits were rich with information that helped students better understand awareness, consciousness and dimensions.

“Indeed, meditative experience gives students powerful evidence of the limits of language logic, representation, and expression. They come to realize the artificiality or conventionality involved in imposing ideas and images on experience. They start to see their own words and pictures are static, approximate renderings of the dynamic, complex flux of reality as it is experienced by a human being. Meditation also gives students more time to reflect with their full powers of awareness. And that is what is most needed in the classroom, sufficient time to contemplate deeply” (Burack, 1999, p. 46). Even with the tools, Darlene established the importance of meditation early on. During her last visit<sup>22</sup>, we were gifted an “egg”. This egg was to be imprinted with our energy and we used it for a meditation. The first semester, the meditation was not

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<sup>21</sup> Recording from Darlene’s visit on October 31st 2018.

<sup>22</sup> For both semesters

guided. We sat on the floor, and held our eggs. We listened to celestial music and meditated. During that experience, I recall seeing colors of blues and purples. I also felt a sensation as I was headed out of the atmosphere but a rope was tied to my waist, so that I wouldn't go too far. This was a first for me, because I never experienced so much during a meditation. I was aware of myself and surroundings, so much so that I didn't have any road rage on the way back home<sup>23</sup>. This semester, students were given a different meditation. We were not asked to sit on the floor this time, but Darlene asked us to place the eggs on our laps. This would be a guided meditation that would help unlock our chakras<sup>24</sup>. Some students explained that they enjoyed that meditation because they were able to feel relief in their body. I personally, couldn't focus properly on this meditation. I realized during both classes, the types of meditations that I enjoy and it is hard for me to do a guided meditation.

I believe the first semester class had a better understanding on what was discussed in the course. They were more involved and I believe that is because they entered that class without any knowledge of what it was about. The second class was a little larger and had more structure to their class, but I didn't feel they fully participated as the first class did. The second class a few more skeptics than the last class. The last class only seemed to have the young lady that would explain that it was hard for her to accept the lessons as truth because they didn't have any data or scientific evidence to back it up. The second class had people still not understand the nature of the class even to the end of the class. When asked about Darlene's visits, some people would say

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<sup>23</sup> I am usually stuck in traffic during rush hour, which can be very stressful.

<sup>24</sup> These are different levels of awareness in our bodies with different points starting from the base of our spines and working it's way to the top of the head. The unlocking of chakras is important in self awareness

it was interesting, but not sure if they could believe it. I also noticed that the second class might have missed a meditation here and there. Only a small amount of students experienced something during meditations.

This study would have better results with interviews from students from both semesters at the beginning towards the end of the course. It would have given a better understanding on how students reacted to the classes and gave better insight on what their consciousness was experiencing. I think this is a topic that cannot give a definitive answer because it is based on how much was the student actively participating. Were the students really meditating as much as they were supposed to? I think that factor could have skewed results. This study was relevant to understanding awareness of self and everything conscious around us. If I or anyone else would work on this study, they need to do interviews, observation, as well as see what the students were writing in their journals. The journals were meant to be personal and were used right after meditation. They would help see what the student would be experiencing at that moment.

## **Conclusion**

This study focused on how students from an astro sociology class perceived multi dimensional consciousness through meditation from the beginning to end of the course. We know the importance of meditation and how it can help us become aware of what is going on with us and around us. The important thing to understand is that it comes down to the person doing the meditation. We can't force anyone to do anything and everyone's experience is completely different. As I mentioned prior, some students saw colors and shapes during their meditations. In the second semester of the course, I didn't hear too many people saying they saw colors or shapes. Did

that mean that they were not meditating properly? There is no proper way to meditate, that's why there are so many forms. The issue is staying focused on the exercise and not going off course. "So while meditation is not a panacea, it does powerfully transform our lives and the lives of all other beings inhabiting this planet," (Burack, 1999, p. 46). This statement contradicts itself because at the beginning it says that although meditation can't solve everything it can transform your life as well as others. I think that being able to transforming your life could be the resolution to many issues.

To understand yourself and the things going around you is helping you reach another level of dimension. In time, everyone could reach the plane of unconditional love, forgiveness and acceptance. That is the goal we are all achieving, and the power is within us to achieve it. With the way the world is today, it is very hard to focus on that goal. One important point the Professor made in the first course was to stop watching the news. Watching the news was a distraction because it would always be there. There will always be headlines aimed to grab your attention. It cause you to distribute your energy into something that has nothing to do with you. Things like work and school already take our focuses from ourself.

We see a lot more people dealing with depression and we wonder why. We live in an era where not everyone can afford shelter or even food. Where most of us are forced to live pay check to pay check. Some of us only have time to sleep and that's our meditation. Recently people have begun to change their mindsets. With the state of politics we are dealing and with a nation constantly dividing, we need to recenter ourselves and become one with the universe again. We are light beings, we have the universe in our DNA. We must enlighten ourselves to move

forward. We need to become aware of ourselves again so we can find balance within ourselves again.

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