

# Course syllabus

Meaning in a Disenchanted Age: Myth, Mind, and Spirituality in the 21st Century - a seven-session course on myth, psyche, faith, wonder, and moral life in a disenchanted age. It offers orientation, pressure, and a deeper way of seeing rather than a quick system. Each session is text-based, designed to take roughly 45 to 75 minutes, and includes a companion PDF.

## Course description

This course begins from the modern meaning crisis: the thinning of shared symbolic worlds, the over-identification of worth with productivity, and the strange weightlessness produced by unlimited choice. From there it moves into archetype and the collective unconscious, then into inward work, the slow evolution of faith, the recovery of wonder, the outward pressure of ethics and community, and finally a provisional synthesis adequate to late modern life. The course assumes that myth, psyche, attention, and moral life cannot be separated without making life thinner than it is.

## Who it is for

It is aimed at people navigating a modern meaning crisis, spiritually curious readers who want depth without dogma, readers drawn to Jung, myth, and symbolic life, reflective readers who prefer depth to quick answers, and small groups looking for serious conversation.

## Suggested pace

Move through the course in order. A weekly pace is probably best, because these pieces are written to settle rather than be consumed quickly, though the material also supports a more compressed reading if the thread is alive. A notebook helps, but the course itself explicitly privileges silence and attention over overactive note-taking.

## Session 1 - The Modern Crisis of Meaning

Why disenchantment happened and what it left behind. This session names the crisis: the erosion of shared metaphysical worlds, the substitution of productivity for purpose, the destabilizing effects of technological change, and the loss of existential stakes in a culture of endless revision. It is diagnostic, not solutionist.

## Session 2 - Mythic Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious

How ancient patterns still shape our stories, fears, and hopes. This session restores symbolic depth to a flattened world by introducing archetypal life: the Hero, Trickster, Shadow, Great Mother, and the collective psyche beneath personal consciousness. It argues that myth is not behind us but beneath us, still shaping culture, dream, conflict, and longing.

## Session 3 - Journey to the Inner Self

Practices for meeting the deeper layers of the psyche with honesty. This session turns inward after crisis and archetype, exploring the layered psyche, dreams, symbol, active imagination, non-striving attention,

and the slow work of shadow integration. Its central claim is that inner work is not self-manufacture but responsibility at depth.

#### **Session 4 - Evolving Faith**

What spiritual maturity looks like when certainty fades. This session takes up the question of faith after the collapse of coercive certainty. It argues for a quieter, tougher faith: less triumphalist, less transactional, more participatory, more corrigible, and more willing to live with unansweredness without becoming either dogmatic or vague.

#### **Session 5 - Rediscovering Wonder**

Reclaiming awe, beauty, and reverence in everyday life. This session shifts from belief to perception, arguing that wonder is disciplined receptivity rather than emotional spectacle. It treats attention, repetition, beauty, embodiment, and contemplative practices as ways of restoring contour and seriousness to the everyday, while also showing how wonder naturally begins to create ethical pressure.

#### **Session 6 - Ethics and Society**

How personal meaning becomes shared responsibility. This session insists that inward depth must cross into relation, speech, community, and institutions. It explores the moral complexity of pluralism, the fragility of communal memory, the difficulty of ethical language, and the need to hold principle, context, and discernment together without collapsing into slogans or tribalism.

#### **Session 7 - A Synthesis**

Drawing the threads together into a coherent way of life. The final session gathers the course into a way of standing rather than a final doctrine: a life shaped by interior depth, relational responsibility, discernment of forms, chosen constraints, and technological seriousness. It aims not at closure, but at durable, revisable coherence in an age of drift and infinite revision.

#### **Course outcomes**

By the end, the reader should not feel as though they have been handed a simple framework. They should feel more oriented inside the actual pressures of modern life: more able to name the meaning crisis, more able to recognize mythic patterning, more honest about the inner life, more mature in faith, more receptive to wonder, more serious about ethical and communal life, and more capable of holding these dimensions together without forcing premature closure. That is what the course, in its current form, now largely achieves.