



University of  
Massachusetts  
Dartmouth

285 Old Westport Rd.  
Dartmouth, MA  
02747-2300

UMass Dartmouth  
Center for  
Indic Studies

508.910.6630  
508.999.8588  
[www.umassd.edu/indic](http://www.umassd.edu/indic)

## Center for Indic Studies

P r e s e n t s

### PATANJALI LECTURE SERIES

*"William James on Pure experience and Samadhi:*

*A message for Experimental Psychologists"*

**Eugene Taylor, PhD**

Saybrook Institute & Harvard Medical School

**Date:** Friday, April 30, 2010

**Place:** Library Browsing

**Time:** 12noon-1:30pm, Pizza & Beverage at 11:45am



**Abstract:** American philosopher-psychologist, William James (1842-1910), actually a physician, pioneered in the scientific study of consciousness at Harvard from the earliest days of the Darwinian revolution to his death in 1910, believing all philosophers should study physiology and all physiologists should study philosophy. He was heir to the Swedenborgian and Transcendentalist literary legacy, essentially an intuitive psychology of spiritual self-realization, which, in the more scientific age in which he lived, he transmuted into a laboratory study of mental science at Harvard, a psychology of individual differences, and a spirited defense of religious beliefs for the pragmatic effects of spiritual experience on healing. Undergirding his efforts to develop a science of consciousness he developed a tripartite metaphysics, the core of which was his radical empiricism—pure experience in the immediate moment before the differentiation of subject and object, as a new epistemology for the way experimental psychology, and science in general, should be conducted. Recent scholarship has demonstrated that his knowledge of the Samkhya-Yoga Darshana may even have had some role in the articulation of his doctrine of pure experience. In any case, though honored in many other ways, he was ignored during his lifetime for these ideas. Meanwhile, his work has returned after a century among some investigators in the form of a budding challenge to the current neuroscientific study of consciousness.

**Eugene Taylor** holds the BA and the MA in experimental psychology and Asian studies from Southern Methodist University, and the PhD in the history and philosophy of psychology, which he earned through the University Professors Program at Boston University under the late philosopher of science and psychologist, Sigmund Koch. He has written numerous books on the life and work of William James and authored most recently *The Mystery of Personality: A history of psychodynamic theories* (Springer, 2009). Currently, he is Professor of Psychology at Saybrook University; Lecturer on Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, and Senior Psychologist on the Psychiatry Service at the Massachusetts General Hospital.

For further information, contact: [jsolfvin@umassd.edu](mailto:jsolfvin@umassd.edu)



University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Indic Studies • Knowledge Augurs Humility