

MTP6411* : Psychology of Extraordinary Dreams

This course focuses on the experience of extraordinary dreams and how they impact the dreamer's behavior. These unusual dreams are characterized by a vividness and intensity that makes them difficult to forget. They have been known to launch religious movements, inspire creative productions, and to change the course of relationships, vocations, and personal mythologies—the cognitive-affective maps that direct people's life decisions. The conventional scientific approach has been to focus on recent dreams gathered from surveys or sleep laboratories, considering extraordinary dreams "outliers" or exceptions. This course assumes the position that highly memorable dreams need to be at the forefront of dream science, as they afford an invaluable route into psychology's understanding of the psyche. These dreams tend to be "transpersonal" because their content extends beyond the socially constructed identity of the dreamer. They have been termed "big dreams" by Carl Jung, "mythic dreams" by Mircea Eliade, and "dreams of the light" in the Upanishads. Extraordinary dreams may foretell the future, may initiate social movements, and may provide breakthroughs in art, science, and technology.

Credits 3

Cross Listed

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