Your Brain and You

an adult education class sponsored by
the Olympic Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship



Reshaping patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior
to become happier, healthier, smarter, and kinder

This course approaches the brain not as a machine to be fixed, but as a *living, adaptive system* that shapes—and is shaped by—our experience. Each class explores a different "self" that emerges from brain activity, helping participants understand how these systems work *and how to work with them intentionall*y in everyday life.

The class is free and open to the general public.

Instructor: Candace Brower, Ph.D., retired Northwestern University professor (areas of specialization: neuroscience, cognitive linguistics, social psychology, and music cognition)

Course requirements: No prior knowledge of neuroscience is expected.

Class Meetings: Class will be held on the third Monday of each month, 1-2:30pm from March 16th to November 16, at the Olympic Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship Hall, at 1033 N Barr Road, Port Angeles, WA. Video recordings and course materials are also available online.

For further information or to be added to the distribution list for the class, contact Candace Brower at candacebrower@gmail.com or 505-264-4397.

Class syllabus

Monday, March 2: **What is Consciousness?**

- Consciousness as lived experience, how conscious states are shaped by brainwaves, and how attention, meditation, and conceptual metaphor can be used to gently shape our experience for the better.

Monday, March 16: **Your Brain and You: Who's Driving?**

-An overview of the brain's three major layers—cortex, limbic system, and brainstem—and how they compete and cooperate to guide behavior.

Monday, April 20: **The Volitional Self**

- How “free will,” “free won’t,” and “free choice” emerge in the prefrontal cortex, and why willpower works best when it aligns with deeper neural systems.

Monday, May 18: **The Emotional Self**

- How positive and negative emotions work together in the brain, and how cultivating a healthy ratio of positive to negative emotion (often around 3:1) helps us stay emotionally balanced, cognitively flexible, and better able to navigate life’s challenges.

Monday, June 15: **The Habitual Self**

- An exploration of how habits form in the brain, why they are so persistent, and how they can be reshaped with insight and practice.

Monday, July 20: **The Sensorimotor Self**

- How physical skills are learned through action and feedback, and how entering a “flow state” by balancing challenge and skill allows the body’s intelligence to guide growth without self-judgment.

Monday, August 17: **Left and Right Selves**

- An examination of hemispheric differences in the brain and how they contribute to distinct ways of thinking, feeling, and experiencing the self.

Monday, September 21: **The Autobiographical Self**

- How our life story weaves together past, present, and future selves, and how we can engage in “time travel” to imagine future possibilities that help us gradually become the selves we want to be.

Monday, October 19: **The Social Self**

- How the right hemisphere’s social networks are wired for connection, attunement, and empathy, and how engaging our “resonance” circuits can deepen connection and make relationships more satisfying.

Monday, November 16: **The Creative Self**

- A synthesis of the course, exploring creativity as a brain state that emerges when multiple systems integrate in flexible and playful ways.

Directions to the Olympic Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship:
From Highway 101, turn north on Barr Road, follow Barr Rd around the bend and then turn left at the sign.



