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EMP 735: Sociology of the Paranormal (3 credits)

Description

A critical analysis of the methodology of parapsychology and other approaches to the study of psychic phenomena. The importance of the current interest in paranormal phenomena will be sociologically interpreted.

Course Objectives

- 1) to critically analyze the methods and perspectives of parapsychology.
- 2) to analyze the theoretical implications and practical consequences of paranormal research for scientific inquiry.
- 3) to sociologically interpret the importance and relevance, both for the individual and society as a whole, of the current interest in paranormal phenomena.

COURSE DELIVERY STYLE

Distance Education - Coursework is completed at a location determined by the student utilizing a computer that has the ability to play audio and video clips, with Microsoft Office Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Adobe Reader, along with a current web browser, internet connection and email address. Contact and communication with distance students is typically conducted by telephone, Internet, Skype, text chat, and email. Students are also encouraged to contact the University by facsimiles, and postal mail, and by personal visit to the University.

All lessons, coursework and papers must be copied to lessons@energymedicineuniversity.org from both the student and professor.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

You are expected to read all the required text in a timely manner, keeping weekly email dialogue communication with the instructor. For each of the eight (8) assignments write a 10-page scholarly paper address the points outlined under each topic. Email each paper to the instructor for critique.

I. Approaches to Paranormal Beliefs

- affirmation
- radical skepticism
- disbelief
- social constructionism

(Goode, Introduction, chap. 1-3; Radin, chap. 13)

II. The Field of Parapsychology

- early investigations into psychic phenomena
- development of parapsychology
- methodological techniques and controversies
- correlates of Psi
- counterhypotheses to Psi
- theoretical models

(Goode, chap. 8; Radin, chap. 1-3; 5-8)

III. Anomalous Healing

- case studies
- empirical studies

(Radin, chap. 9; on library reserve: Bengston & Krinsley, "*The Effect of the 'Laying-On of Hands'...*"; Bengston, "*Some Implications of the Bengston/Krinsley Healing Experiments*"; Bengston, "*Methodological Difficulties Involving Control Groups in Healing Research*"; Grad, "*Reflections on Healing Research*"; recommended: Benor, *Healing Research*)

IV. Human Energy Systems

- Chi; Prana
- empirical studies - Kirlian photography
- Kirlian photography demonstration

V. Altered States of Consciousness

- studies on meditation
- mystical experiences

(On library reserve: Hall, "*Deliberately Caused Bodily Damage: Metahypnotic Phenomena?*"; Hussein, "*Deliberately Caused Bodily Damage Phenomenon*" at: <http://www.whps.com/misaha/issue11.htm>)

VI. The Sociology of Psi

- early studies on distributions of Psi
- General Social Survey studies
- computer testing of hypotheses of Psi distributions

(Library reserve: Fox, "*The Structure, Stability, and Social Antecedents of Reported Paranormal Experiences*")

VII. Practical Applications of Psi

- extraordinary experiences
- remote viewing studies
- healing

(Radin, chap. 12)

VIII. The Implications for Science

- theoretical problems
- paradigm shifts in science

(Goode, chap. 4-5; Radin, chap. 15-17; on reserve: Sheldrake, "*Mind, Memory, and Archetype: Morphic Resonance and the Collective Unconscious*"; "*Society, Spirit & Ritual: Morphic Resonance and the Collective Unconscious*"; "*Extended Mind, Power, and Prayer*"; Bauer, "*Anomalies and Surprises*"; Shoup, "*Anomalies and Constraints: Can Clairvoyance, Precognition, and Psychokinesis be Accommodated within Known Physics?*" Recommended (on reserve): Jahn and Dunne, "*A Modular Model of Mind/Matter Manifestations*"; Rauscher and Targ, "*The Speed of Thought: Investigation of a Complex Space-Time Metric to Describe Psychic Phenomena*")

IX. The Social Implications of Paranormal Research

- interpreting popular interest in the paranormal
- projections for the future

(Goode, chap. 10, 14; on reserve: Harman, "*The Social Implications of Psychical Research*"; recommended: Jahn and Dunne, "*Sensors, Filters, and the Source of Reality*")

Required Texts

Erich Goode. 2000. *Paranormal Beliefs: A Sociological Introduction*. Waveland Press.

Dean Radin. 1997. *The Conscious Universe*. Harper Edge.

Course Requirements and Grading

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Papers | 30 |
| Midterm Exam | 15 |
| Final Exam | 15 |
| Term Project | 30 |
| Class Grade | <u>10</u> |
| | 100% |

Term Project:

I will provide detailed instructions and examples. In brief, you will be expected to choose a topic (which may be an experiment; library research; etc.) and clear it with me. Regardless of your topic, you must include within your 10-page discussion style paper:

- 1) an introduction, stating the purpose and scope of the paper; sources of information.
- 2) how does the information support or call into question existing beliefs or

theories?

3) what are the social implications?

Course Packet - required reading:

Bauer, Henry. 2001. "Anomalies and Surprises," *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, vol.15, No.4, pp.459-463.

Bengston, William F. & David Krinsley. 2000. "The Effect of the 'Laying-On of Hands' on Transplanted Breast Cancer in Mice." *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, vol. 14, No.3, pp. 353-364.

Bengston, William F. 2000. "Some Implications of the Bengston/Krinsley Healing Experiments." *Monterey Institute for the Study of Healing Arts*, Vol 30-31, pp. 12-15.

Bengston, William F. 2004. "Methodological Difficulties Involving Control Groups in Healing Research," *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, vol. 10; no. 2.

Fox, John. 1992. "The Structure, Stability, and Social Antecedents of Reported Paranormal Experiences," *Sociological Analysis*, 53:4, pp.417-431.

Grad, Bernard. 2000. "Reflections on Healing Research." Paper presented to the Society for Scientific Exploration, The Netherlands.

Hall, Howard. 2000. "Deliberately Caused Bodily Damage: Metahypnotic Phenomena? *Journal of the Society for Psychological Research*, vol. 64, pp. 211-223.

Jahn, Robert and Brenda Dunne. 2001. "A Modular Model of Mind/Matter Manifestations." *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, vol 15(3), pp.299-329.

Jahn, Robert and Brenda Dunne. 2004. "Sensors, Filters, and the Source of Reality." Paper presented to the Society for Scientific Exploration annual meeting.

Rauscher, Elizabeth and Russell Tart. 2001. "The Speed of Thought: Investigation of a Complex Space-Time Metric to Describe Psychic Phenomena." *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, vol. 15(3), pp.331-354.

Sheldrake, Rupert. "Mind, Memory, and Archetype: Morphic Resonance and the Collective Unconscious" (<http://www.sheldrake.org/papers/Morphic/part1.html>)

Sheldrake, Rupert. "Society, Spirit & Ritual: Morphic Resonance and the Collective Unconscious" (<http://www.sheldrake.org/papers/Morphic/part2.html>)

Sheldrake, Rupert. "Society, Spirit & Ritual" (<http://www.sheldrake.org/papers/Morphic/part3.html>)

Shoup, Richard. 2002. "Anomalies and constraints: Can Clairvoyance, Precognition, and Psychokinesis be Accommodated within Known Physics?" *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, vol. 16, no.1, pp.3-18.

Recommended reading

Benor, Daniel J. 2002. *Healing Research: Spiritual Healing: Scientific Validation of A Healing Revolution* (vol 1). Vision Publications.

Edge, Hoyt, Robert Morris, John Palmer, Joseph Rush (eds.). 1986. *Foundations of Parapsychology*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Kurtz, Paul (ed.). 1985. *The Skeptics Handbook of Parapsychology*. Buffalo: Prometheus Books.

Mitchell, Edgar (ed.). 1974. *Psychic Exploration: A Challenge for Science*. G.P. Putnam & Sons.

Murphy, Michael. 1992. *The Future of the Body: Explorations into the Further Evolution of Human Nature*. Jeremy Tarcher.

Wolman, Benjamin (ed.). 1977. *Handbook of Parapsychology*. Van Nostrand.

Newsletter Articles

(from the American Society for Psychical Research)

Dossey, Larry, "The Integration of Healing and Modern Science"

Grad, Bernard, "An Anatomy of Healing"

Harary, Keith, "The Call of the Wild in Transformative Experiences"

Krippner, Stanley, "Exceptional Human Experiences in the Field of Healing"

Krippner, Stanley, "Shamans: The First Healers"

Krippner, Stanley, "Four Models of Healing: A Cross-Cultural Comparison"

Stanford, Rex, "Adaptive Response to Unconscious Knowledge"

Tart, Charles, "Altered States of Consciousness and Psi Phenomena"

Ullman, Montague, "Dreams as Exceptional Human Experiences"

Selected Bibliography

- Abell, George, Barry Singer (eds.). 1981. *Science and the Paranormal*. Charles Scribner's.
- Backster, Cleve. 2003. *Primary Perception: Biocommunication with Plants, Living Foods, and Human Cells*. White Rose Millenium Press.
- Beloff, John. 1993. *Parapsychology: A Concise History*. St. Martin's Press.
- Beloff, John. 1990. *The Relentless Question: Reflections on the Paranormal*. Jefferson: McFarland.
- Benor, Daniel J. 2002. *Healing Research: Spiritual Healing: Scientific Validation of A Healing Revolution* (vol 1). Vision Publications.
- Ben-Yehuda, Nachman. 1985. *Deviance and Moral Boundaries: Witchcraft, the Occult, Science Fiction, Deviant Sciences and Scientists*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Blackmore, Susan. 1986. *The Adventures of a Parapsychologist*. Prometheus Books.
- Broughton, Richard. 1991. *Parapsychology: The Controversial Science*. Random House.
- Bruce, Debra. 2003. *Miracle Touch: A Complete Guide to Hands-on Therapies*. Three Rivers.
- Castaneda, Carlos. *The Teachings of Don Juan; A Separate Reality; Journey to Ixtlan*, etc. Simon and Schuster.
- DeMeo, James. 1989. *The Orgone Accumulator Handbook*. Natural Energy Works.
- Dossey, Larry. 2001. *Healing Beyond the Body: Medicine and the Infinite Reach of Mind*. Shambhala.
- Douglas, Alfred. 1977. *Extra Sensory Powers: A Century of Psychical Research*. Overlook Press.
- Eisenbud, Jule. 1982. *Paranormal Foreknowledge: Problems and Perplexities*. New York: Human Sciences Press.
- Eysenck, H.J. 1997. *Explaining the Unexplained: Mysteries of the Paranormal*. London: Prion.
- Frazier, Kendrick. 1997. *Encounters with the Paranormal: Science, Knowledge and Belief*. Prometheus Books.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1963. *Studies in Parapsychology*. Collier-Macmillan.
- Goode, Erich. 2000. *Paranormal Beliefs: A Sociological Introduction*. Waveland Press.

- Greeley, Andrew. 1975. *The Sociology of the Paranormal*. Sage Publications.
- Hansel, C.E.M. 1980. *ESP and Parapsychology: A Critical Re-evaluation*. Prometheus Books.
- Hansen, George. 2001. *The Trickster and the Paranormal*. Xlibris Corporation.
- Hunt, Valerie. 1996. *Infinite Mind: Science of the Human Vibrations of Consciousness*. Malibu Publishing Co.
- Inglis, Brian. 1992. *Natural and Supernatural: A History of the Paranormal*. Prism Press.
- Irwin, H.J. 1989. *An Introduction to Parapsychology*. McFarland & Company, Inc.
- Jahn, Robert & Brenda Dunne. 1987. *Margins of Reality: The Role of Consciousness in the Physical World*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Jung, Carl. 1973. *Synchronicity and Human Destiny*. Julian.
- Koestler, Arthur. 1972. *The Roots of Coincidence*. Vintage.
- Korotkov, Konstantin. 1998. *Light After Life: A Scientific Journey into the Spiritual World*. Backbone Publishing Co.
- Krieger, Dolores. 2002. *Therapeutic Touch as Transpersonal Healing*. Lantern Books.
- Krippner, Stanley, Daniel Rubin. 1974. *The Kirlian Aura*. Doubleday.
- Krippner, Stanley (ed.). 1997. *Advances in Parapsychological Research*. Plenum Press.
- Kuhn, Thomas. 1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.
- LeShan, Lawrence. 1974. *The Medium, the Mystic and the Physicist: Toward a General Theory of the Paranormal*. Viking.
- Lyons, Arthur & Marcello Truzzi. 1991. *The Blue Sense: Psychic Detectives and Crime*. Mysterious Press.
- Ludwig, Jan. 1978. *Philosophy and Parapsychology*. Prometheus Books.
- Monroe, Robert. 1994. *Ultimate Journey*. Doubleday.
- Moss, Thelma. 1974. *The Probability of the Impossible: Scientific Discoveries and Explorations of the Psychic World*. Plume.
- Murphy, Gardner. 1961. *Challenge of Psychical Research*. Harper.
- Murphy, Gardner. 1969. *William James on Psychical Research*. Viking.

- Murphy, Michael. 1992. *The Future of the Body: Explorations into the Further Evolution of Human Nature*. Jeremy Tarcher.
- Nash, Carroll. 1986. *Parapsychology: The Science of Psiology*. Charles C. Thomas.
- Newton, Michael. 2004. *Journey of Souls: Case Studies of Life Between Lives*. Llewellyn Publications
- Oschman, James. 2000. *Energy Medicine: The Scientific Basis*. Harcourt Publishers.
- Ostrander, S. and L. Schroeder. 1970. *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain*. Prentice-Hall.
- Ostrander, S., and L. Schroeder. 1974. *Handbook of Psi Discoveries*. G.P. Putnam & Sons.
- Panati, Charles. 1974. *Supersenses: Our Potential for Parasensory Experience*. New York Times Book Co.
- Pearce, Joseph. 1974. *The Crack in the Cosmic Egg*. Pocket Books.
- Pratt, J.G. 1977. *Parapsychology: An Insider's View of ESP*. Scarecrow Press.
- Radin, Dean. 1997. *The Conscious Universe*. Harper Edge.
- Rao, K. Ramakrishna (ed.). 1984. *Basic Experiments in Parapsychology*. McFarland & Co.
- Rhine, J.B. 1953. *New World of the Mind*. William Sloane.
- Rhine, J.B., J.G. Pratt. 1957. *Parapsychology*. C.C. Thomas.
- Rhine, J.B., and Robert Brier. 1968. *Parapsychology Today*. Citadel.
- Rhine, J.B. 1968. *Extrasensory Perception After Sixty Years*. Citadel.
- Rhine, J.B. 1947. *The Reach of the Mind*. Morrow.
- Rhine, Louisa. 1970. *Mind Over Matter: The Study of PK Research*. Macmillan.
- Rhine, Louisa. 1966. *Manual for Introductory Experiments in Parapsychology*. Parapsychology Press.
- Ring, Kenneth. 1980. *Life at Death*. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan.
- Rogo, D. Scott. 1986. *Mind Over Matter: The Case for Psychokinesis*. The Aquarian Press.
- Sagan, Carl. 1996. *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*. Random House.

- Schmeidler, Gertrude. 1988. *Parapsychology and Psychology: Matches and Mismatches*. McFarland.
- Schmeidler, Gertrude. 1976 *Parapsychology: Its Relation to Physics, Biology, Psychology, and Psychiatry*. Scarecrow Press.
- Schwartz, Gary. 2002. *The Afterlife Experiments*. Simon and Schuster.
- Sheldrake, Rupert. 1981. *A New Science of Life: The Hypothesis of Formative Causation*. J.P. Tarcher.
- Sheldrake, Rupert. 1995. *Seven Experiments that Could Change the World*. Riverhead Books.
- Sheldrake, Rupert. 2003. *The Sense of Being Stared At*. Crown Publishers.
- Sorokin, Pitirim. 1954. *The Ways and Power of Love*. Beacon.
- Stein, Gordon. 1996. *The Encyclopedia of the Paranormal*. Prometheus Books.
- Stoeber, Michael & Hugo Meynell (eds.). 1996. *Critical Reflections on the Paranormal*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Stokes, Douglas. 1997. *The Nature of Mind: Parapsychology and the Role of Consciousness in the Physical World*. McFarland.
- Targ, Russel, and Jane Katra. 1999. *Miracles of Mind: Exploring Nonlocal Consciousness and Spiritual Healing*. New World Library.
- Targ, Russel, and Harold Puthoff. 1977. *Mind-Reach: Scientists Look at Psychic Ability*. Delacorte Press.
- Targ, Russel, and Keith Harary. 1984. *The Mind Race*. Villard Books.
- Tart, Charles. 1969. *Altered States of Consciousness*. John Wiley.
- Thouless, R.H. 1963. *Experimental Psychical Research*. Penguin.
- Tiller, William. 1997. *Science and Human Transformation: Subtle Energies, Intentionality And Consciousness*. Pavior.
- Tipler, Frank. 1994. *The Physics of Immortality: Modern Cosmology, God, and the Resurrection of the Dead*. Anchor Books.
- Tiryakian, Edward. 1974. *On the Margin of the Visible*. John Wiley.
- Ullmann, Montague, and Stanley Krippner. 1973. *Dream Telepathy*. Macmillan.

Watkins, William. 1980. *The Psychic Experiment Book*. Prentice-Hall.

Winters, Paul (ed). 1997. *Paranormal Phenomena: Opposing Viewpoints*. Greenhaven Press.

Encyclopedia (reference section of library): Encyclopedia of Pseudoscience, 2000.

World Wide Web

The most comprehensive site I've found is entitled *Parapsychology Resources on the Internet*, at:
<http://www.roma1.infn.it/rog/group/frasca/b/parap.html>

From here you can hyperlink to an incredible variety of topics, educational centers, ongoing research projects, people, etc. Caution: the resources are almost limitless!

The "Journal of Scientific Exploration" (see below) also has an interesting site at:

<http://www.jse.com>

This is a group composed of scientists from many different disciplines (most of whom are not parapsychologists) devoted to the study of anomalous phenomena in many fields.

There are also societies which investigate "alternative medicine." One interesting group is ISSSEEM, "The International Society for the Study of Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine." They are devoted to the study of the basic sciences and medical and therapeutic application of "subtle energies." Their site is at:

<http://www.issseem.org/>

Recommended Journals: (you can also look up their web sites)

Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research
Journal of Parapsychology
Journal of Scientific Exploration
Journal of the Society for Psychical Research
Research in Parapsychology