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**EMP 835: Sociology of the Paranormal (3 credits)**

## **Overview of Course:**

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.

## **Learning 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.

## **Audience:**

Open to all students in the Distance Masters or Doctoral program.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### I. Approaches to Paranormal Beliefs

- affirmation
- radical skepticism
- disbelief
- social constructionism

(Goode, preface, introduction, chap. 1-3; Radin, chap. 1; library reserve: Bengston, *"The Boggle Factor"*)

### 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. 6; Radin, chap. 2;4;5;6;9;10; library reserve: Jahn & Dunne, *"The Pear Proposition"*)

### III. Anomalous Healing

- case studies
- empirical studies

(Library reserve: Bengston, "*Breakthrough: Clues to Healing with Intention*"; Bengston & Krinsley, "*The Effect of the 'Laying-On of Hands' on Transplanted Breast Cancer in Mice*"; Bengston & Moga, "*Resonance, Placebo Effects, and Type II Errors...*"; Bengston & Murphy, "Can Healing Be Taught?"; Moga & Bengston, "*Anomalous Magnetic Field Activity During a Bioenergy Healing Experiment*"; Hendricks, Bengston, & Gunkelman, "*The Healing Connection: EEG Harmonics, Entrainment, and Schumann's Resonances.*"

### IV. Human Energy Systems

- Chi; Prana
- empirical studies - Kirlian photography
- polycontrast interference photography

### V. Altered States of Consciousness

- studies on meditation
- mystical experiences

(Radin, chap. 7;8;11; 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

(Radin, chap. 3; library reserve: Fox, "*The Structure, Stability, and Social Antecedents of Reported Paranormal Experiences*"; "Dagnall, "*Common Paranormal Belief Dimensions*"; Goode, chap. 4-7.

### VII. Practical Applications of Psi

- extraordinary experiences
- remote viewing studies
- healing

(Library reserve: Grafer, "*The Sense of Being Stared At: A Replication of Sheldrake...*"; Jahn & Dunne, "*The Pear Proposition*")

### VIII. The Implications for Science

- theoretical problems
- paradigm shifts in science

(Radin, chap. 12;13; Goode, chap. 3; on reserve: Bauer, “*Science: Past, Present, and Future*”; Bauer, “*Anomalies and Surprises*”; Jahn, “*20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> Century Science: Reflections and Projections*”; Jahn and Dunne, “*Change the Rules!*”; Recommended (on reserve): Jahn and Dunne, “*A Modular Model of Mind/Matter Manifestations*”; 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*”; Radin, *Supernormal*, chap. 16, pp. 297-319.

#### IX. The Social Implications of Paranormal Research

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

(Radin, chap. 14; Goode, chap. 8-11; on reserve: Bengston, “*Spirituality, Connection, and Healing with Intent: Reflections on Cancer Experiments on Laboratory Mice.*” Harman, “*The Social Implications of Psychical Research*”; recommended: Jahn and Dunne, “*Sensors, Filters, and the Source of Reality*”); Radin, *Supernormal*, chap. 16, pp. 297-319.

#### FACULTY-STUDENT COMMUNICATION

- **Telephone Contact:** Students should arrange all telephone communications with the instructor by email beforehand. An initial phone contact to clarify course objectives and develop a schedule should be made prior to beginning the course. This contact should be scheduled within the first few weeks of commencement of the semester. After this, periodic telephone communication can be arranged with instructor. All telephone calls will be at student’s expense.
- **Email Contact:** Reflection on and questions about the coursework papers and field placement internship should be addressed via email monthly or as needed. Students are always encouraged to contact the instructor via email whenever a problem arises.
- **Communications:** It is requested that students stay in weekly or every other week correspondence with the instructor using email. The student should also set up periodic telephone conversations, at their expense, to discuss problems, concerns, or determine the direction of their course work. Students are always encouraged to contact the instructor by email, fax, or telephone whenever a major concern may arise. It should be understood that as mature students, it is the responsibility of the students to stay in contact with their instructors. The instructor may be able to set up one-on-one discussions with the student using Skype. Students should check email frequently for professor and EMU messages.
  - **Note:** All lessons, coursework and papers must be copied from both the student and professor to [lessons@energymedicineuniversity.org](mailto:lessons@energymedicineuniversity.org)

Students will normally send communications via email and submit papers as MSWORD format files attached to email messages. Synchronous Internet sessions may be used for “chat sessions” using Yahoo Messenger Chat or Skype. Check with your instructor on the type of communications he uses.

**Internet Forums:** Please contact our Registrar to be included in the EMU Internet forums.

**Length of Course:**

Length of this Energy Medicine course is five (5) months or one (1) semester.

**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.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Erich Goode. 2012. *The Paranormal: Who Believes, Why They Believe, and Why It Matters*.

Prometheus Books.

Dean Radin. 2006. *Entangled Minds*. Pocket Books.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	30
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 involving some aspect of paranormal phenomena (which may be an experiment; library research; etc.) and clear it with me. Regardless of your topic, you must include within your discussion:

- 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 and scientific theories?
- 3) what are the social implications?

All students are expected to present the project to me at least once before the completion of the paper. I will look at and comment upon any portion of your project as the course progresses. The final eloquently written, paper is due two weeks before end of semester.

## Required reading):

(Note: you can also get many of the Journal of Scientific Exploration articles at the Society for Scientific Exploration website, [www.scientificexploration.org](http://www.scientificexploration.org))

Bauer, Henry. 2007. "Science: Past, Present, and Future." *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, vol. 21(1), pp. 141-155.

Bauer, Henry. 2001. "Anomalies and Surprises," *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, vol.15(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(3), pp. 353-364.

Bengston, William F. & Margaret Moga. 2007. "Resonance, Placebo Effects, and Type II Errors: Some Implications from Healing Research for Experimental Methods," *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, vol. 13(3), pp. 317-327.

Bengston, William F. & Donald G. Murphy. 2008. "Can Healing Be Taught?" *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*, vol 4(3) pp. 197-200.

Bengston, William F. 2010. "Breakthrough: Clues to Healing with Intention." *Edge Science*, no. 2, Jan-March, 2010.

Bengston, William F. 2012. "Spirituality, Connection, and Healing with Intent: Reflections on Cancer Experiments on Laboratory Mice." In Lisa Miller (ed). *Science and Spirituality*, Oxford University Press.

Bengston, William F. 2012. "The Boggle Factor." *Edge Science*, no. 12, Oct-Dec., 2012.

Dagnall, Neil, Andrew Parker, Gary Munley, Kenneth Drinkwater, 2010. "Common Paranormal Belief Dimensions." *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, vol. 24(3), pp. 477-494.

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

Grafer, Elizabeth. 2005. "The Sense of Being Stared At: A Replication of Sheldrake's Experiment Testing People's Ability to Detect and Differentiate Periods of Staring and Non-Staring." Unpublished Human Relations Seminar Paper, St. Joseph's College.

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

Hendricks, Luke, William Bengston, & Jay Gunkelman. 2010. "The Healing Connection: EEG Harmonics, Entrainment, and Schumann's Resonances." *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, vol. 24(4), pp. 655-666.

Jahn, Robert and Brenda Dunne. 2008. Change the Rules! *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, vol. 22(3), pp. 193-213.

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.

Jahn, Robert and Brenda Dunne. 2005. "The Pear Proposition." *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, vol. 19(2), pp. 195-245.

Jahn, Robert. 2001. "20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Science: Reflections and Projections." *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, vol. 15(1), pp. 21-31.

Moga, Margaret, and William Bengston. 2010. "Anomalous Magnetic Field Activity During a Bioenergy Healing Experiment." *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, vol. 24(3), pp. 397-410.

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>)

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- Aczel, Amir. 2001. *Entanglement: The Greatest Mystery in Physics*. Four walls; eight windows.
- Alexander, Eben. 2012. *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife*. Simon and Schuster.
- Backster, Cleve. 2003. *Primary Perception: Biocommunication with Plants, Living Foods, and Human Cells*. White Rose Millenium Press.
- Bauer, Henry. 2012. *Dogmatism in Science and Medicine: How Dominant Theories Monopolize Research and Stifle the Search for Truth*. McFarland & Co.
- Bauer, Henry. 1992. *Scientific Literacy and the Myth of the Scientific Method*. University of Illinois Press.
- Beischel, Julie. 2013. *Among Mediums: A Scientist's Quest for Answers*. Windbridge.
- Beischel, Julie. 2013. *Meaningful Messages: Making the Most of Your Mediumship Reading*. Windbridge.
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- Brown, Courtney. 2006. *Remote Viewing: The Science and Theory of Nonphysical Perception*. Farsight Press.
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- Castaneda, Carlos. *The Teachings of Don Juan; A Separate Reality; Journey to Ixtlan, etc.* Simon and Schuster.
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- Dossey, Larry. 2013. *One Mind: How our Individual Mind is Part of a Greater Consciousness And Why it Matters*. Hay House.
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- Goleman, Daniel, et.al. (eds). 2008. *Measuring the Immeasurable*. Sounds True.
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## World Wide Web

1) The most comprehensive site I've found is entitled *Parapsychology Resources on the Internet*, at:

[www.roma1.infn.it/rog/group/frasca/b/parap.html](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!

2) **The Society for Scientific Exploration** has a wonderful site at:

[www.scientificexploration.org](http://www.scientificexploration.org)

This is a group of about a thousand scientists from many different disciplines (most of whom are not parapsychologists) devoted to the study of anomalous phenomena in many fields. They have many articles which have been published by their journal (The Journal of Scientific Exploration, from which many of your assigned articles are drawn) and except for very recent editions, can be downloaded for free. They also have an annual meeting that is wonderful. Check the website for details, as well as a selection of videos from their annual conference. Side note: it only costs \$35/yr to join the SSE as a student.

3) PEAR - For three decades, the Engineering Department at Princeton University was doing experiments in two major areas: the effect of consciousness on material objects, particularly random number generators; and "remote viewing." They have amassed an astonishing array of data, which can be found at:

<http://www.princeton.edu/~pear>

4) ICRL – International Consciousness Research Laboratory – This is a spinoff group, also located in Princeton, intended to continue the work of the PEAR lab. There are many activities, announcements, and publications available.

[www.icrl.org](http://www.icrl.org)

5) 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/>

6) Or, for those of you more interested in psychology, the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology (ACEP) has recently been granted accreditation within psychology. Their site:

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

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

- Journal of Scientific Exploration
- Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine
- Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing
- Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine
- Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine
- Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research
- Journal of Parapsychology
- Journal of the Society for Psychical Research
- Research in Parapsychology