Course Description: This course will be an interdisciplinary course on the relationship between the sacred and the paranormal. We will first look at a few specific areas of study starting with Frederic Myers and the SPR and then venture into studies on western occulture and contemporary research in paranormal studies. We will investigate the following topics: UFO phenomena, with reference to Science Fiction and the psychosocial hypothesis; supernormal powers in relation to Hinduism and PSI research; the role of dreams and the paranormal; and the impact of theories in cosmology, biology, and physics on religion and religious conceptualizations. Student will be expected to do short intensive writing assignments, one ethnographic paper, and a final research paper.

Books (Required):

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO): 1) The purpose of the course is to engage in comparative analysis of materials across several academic disciplines to evaluate the role of the paranormal in the general field of Religious Studies. 2) Students must demonstrate an ability to recognize and explain major theoretical perspectives and key issues of debate in the academic study of religion. 3) Students must demonstrate effective writing skills and the ability to craft a persuasive argument in defense of a thesis statement using and analyzing appropriate evidence. 4) Student will demonstrate the processes and procedures for writing a serious, scholarly paper based on both fieldwork and research.

Requirements: Requirements are as follows: Five CRP - critical response papers (5% each = 20%); two take home exams (15% each = 30%); one ethnographic paper (25%); and one final research paper (25%). Paper guidelines will be provided for all written assignments. No excuses will be accepted for missed assignments, such as oversleeping, lost books, or being stuck out of town. Assignments and tests are due on the day they are assigned. If you have a legitimate excuse, please talk to me before the scheduled assignment. Students must make up any missed assignments
within one week (or receive an F for that assignment). Students are expected to attend all classes and participate in class discussions, failure to do so will result in a lower final grade (only two missed classes permitted).

**Classroom Electronics:** Students must TURN OFF all electronic devices before class starts; you are not permitted to engage in texting or reading electronic mail (etc.) while class is in session. If you have a computer for taking notes, you must ONLY take notes (no jumping to read email or surf the web, unless requested).

**Honor Code:** Lying, cheating, and plagiarism (failure to cite sources used in a paper) are violations of the Honor Code. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Dean of Students. A student responsible for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure based on dishonesty. Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission--is a form of cheating.

**Center for Student Learning** offers academic support services for assistance in study strategies, speaking & writing skills, and course content. For more information regarding these services: http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/ or call (843) 953-5635.

**Disabilities:** If you have a disability that qualifies you for academic accommodation, please present a letter to me from the Center for Disability Services at the beginning of the semester. Please discuss with me any special needs you may have. For more information regarding accommodation and the SNAP program, see: http://www.cofc.edu/~cds/index.htm

**Grading Scale:** Numerical/letter grades: A+ = 100-97; A = 96-93; A- = 92-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70; D+ = 69-67; D = 66-63; D- = 62-60; F = 59 or lower.

**Extra Credit:** Students can turn in additional Critical Reading Paper on unassigned sections of readings (at least 25 pages per reading). You can suggest other ideas for additional credit.

**Reading Assignments:** Readings are assigned per class, generally two per week. Please do the readings by the due date, that way you will be prepared for the lecture and discussion.

I. **Week One: August 23** Introduction to Religion and the Paranormal
   A. Reading Assignment: None

II. **Week Two: August 28, 30**
   A. Reading Assignment: Kripal, 1-34, Liminal Topics in Religious Studies
   B. Reading Assignment: Kripal, 37-91, Frederick Myers / SPR
   C. CRP #1 Due August 30, Kripal, 37-91

III. **Week Three: September 4, 6**
    A. Reading Assignment: Kripal, 95-141, Charles Fort / Western Occulture
    B. Reading Assignment: Kripal, 143-197, Jacques Vallee / UFOs
IV. Week Four: September 11, 13 (Pass out Exam One)
A. Reading Assignment: Kripal, 199-249, Bertrand Méheust / Mediumship
B. Reading Assignment: Kripal, 251-282, The Sacred and the Psyche

D. Jeff Kripal presentation on Thursday September 14, 3:30, Room 115 / Wachovia Auditorium; on Friday, September 15 at 3:30-4:30 RELS lounge, he will answer questions.

V. Week Five: September 18, 20
A. Reading Assignment: Moody, 1-50, Childhood Impressions
B. Reading Assignment: Moody, 51-111, Life After Life / NDE
C. Grade Assignment: Take-home Exam #1 DUE, Sept 18, in class

VI. Week Six: September 25, 27 (Pass out Ethnography Paper guide)
A. Reading Assignment: Moody, 112-177, Past-Life Regressions
B. Reading Assignment: Moody, 178-242, Facilitated Apparitions
C. CPR #2 DUE, Sept 25, Moody 112-177

VII. Week Seven: October 2, 4
A. Reading Assignment: Radin, 1-45, Yoga and Other Realities
B. Reading Assignment: Radin, 46-93, Mysticism and the Unbelievable

VIII. Week Eight: October 9, 11
A. Reading Assignment: Radin, 94-155, Yoga Sutras and Precognition
B. Reading Assignment: Radin, 156-199, Precognition and Telepathy
C. ETHNOGRAPHIC PAPER DUE, October 9, in class

!!! FALL BREAK !!! (October 14-17)

IX. Week Nine: October 18
A. Reading Assignment: Radin, 200-266, Psychokinesis
B. CRP # 3 DUE, October 18, Radin pp. 200-266

X. Week Ten: October 23, 25
A. Reading Assignment: Radin, 267-319, Clairvoyance and the Future Human
B. Reading Assignment: Moss, 1-39, Shamans as Dreamers

XI. Week Eleven: October 30, November 1
A. Reading Assignment: Moss, 41-77, Understanding Soul Loss
B. Reading Assignment: Moss, 79-129, The Road to Soul Recovery
C. CRP #4 DUE, October 30, Moss, 41-77

XII. Week Twelve: November 6, 8 (Pass out Exam Two)
A. Reading Assignment: Moss, 131-165, The Cave and the Perch
B. Reading Assignment: Moss, 167-211, Ancestral Healing
XIII. **Week Thirteen: November 13, 15 (Pass out Paper #2 Guide)**
A. Reading Assignment: Moss, 213-263, Dream Archaeology
B. Reading Assignment: Haisch, 1-26, Asking Fundamental Questions
C. Grading Assignment: EXAM TWO DUE, November 15, in class

XIV. **Week Fourteen: November 20**
A. Reading Assignment: Haisch, 27-47, Creation and a Spiritual Worldview
B. FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL DUE

**THANKSGIVING BREAK (November 22-26)**

XV. **Week Fifteen: November 27, 29**
A. Reading Assignment: Haisch, 49-77, Explaining Consciousness
B. Reading Assignment: Haisch, 79-101, The Zero Point Field
C. CRP #5 DUE, November 29, Haisch, 69-101

XVI. **Week Sixteen: December 4**
A. Reading Assignment: Haisch, 103-153, God and the Theory of Everything
C. FINAL PAPER DUE, DECEMBER 4, IN CLASS, PRESENTATIONS