How does one study spirituality? Where does it come from? Why do so many people say they are “spiritual but not religious”? What is spirituality anyway? This class will be an investigation of spirituality through the lenses of phenomenology, history, and critical theory. We will be looking at a variety of examples, mostly from the United States, including in depth studies of Oprah Winfrey and the National Park Service. We will also spend 24 hours at spiritual retreat center in Myrtle Beach. Students will research and present papers in their own area of interest. This class will be conducted as a seminar, modeled on those found at graduate programs in religious studies.

**Required Texts** (available for purchase at the C of C bookstore):

* American Spiritualities: A Reader edited by Catherine L. Albanese
* Selling Spirituality by Jeremy Carrette and Richard King
* Oprah: The Gospel of an Icon by Kathryn Lofton
* Spirituality and the State by Kerry Mitchell
* Spirituality: A Very Short Introduction by Philip Sheldrake

There are also required short readings on OAKS. Print these out. Please bring the relevant book or printout to class.

**Course Requirements:**

* Participation and attendance including in-class writing assignments and serving as discussion leader for the Mitchell or Lofton readings: 20%
* Presentation of primary source from Albanese: 5%
* 4-5 pp. reflection paper based on visit to Meher Baba Center: 10%
* 4-5 pp. critical book review, plus in-class presentation of such: 15%
* 15-20 pp. original research paper, including proposal, first draft, and in-class presentation of such: 50%
Grading Scale: A: 93-100; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 83-86; B-: 80-82; C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-: 70-72; D+: 67-69; D: 63-66; D-: 61-62 F: 60 or below.

Schedule of Classes:

Tues 8/23 — What is spirituality?
Read: Sheldrake 1-23

Thurs 8/25 — Are there types of spirituality?
Read: Sheldrake 24-41; Albanese 1-13, 179-182, 289-292

Tues 8/30 — What is "embodied spirituality?" Special Guest: Dr. Lee Irwin
Read: Albanese 19-22, 130-155; Sheldrake 60-77

Thurs 9/1 — What is "mystical spirituality?"
Read: Sheldrake 42-59, 78-122; Albanese 431-439

Tues 9/6 — How did spirituality develop in 19th c. America?
Read: Schimdt (OAKS); Albanese 301-318, 385-389

Thurs 9/8 — What is "New Age" spirituality?
Read: Albanese 391-424, 481-488

Tues 9/13 — What is "SBNR?"
Read: Bloomberg (OAKS); Parsons (OAKS)

Thurs 9/15 — Feminist Spirituality (Student presentations, part 1)
Read: Albanese Ch 6, Ch 8 and Ch 9

Tues 9/20 — Spirituality and Social Action (Student presentations text, part 2)
Read: Albanese Ch 15, 16 and Ch 17

Thurs 9/22 — What is Neoliberalism? Special Guest: Dr. Claire Curtis
Read: Piketty (OAKS)

Tues 9/27 — What does spirituality have to do with Neoliberalism?
Read: King 1-53

Thurs 9/29 — What does spirituality have to do with privatization?
Read: King 54-86; James (OAKS)

Tues 10/4 — What is "Asian" spirituality?
Read: King 87-122; Albanese 454-463; 498-511

Thurs 10/7 — Is spirituality a consumer product?
Read: King 123-181; Albanese 253-260
Tues 10/11 — Research Workshop

Thurs 10/13 — Student book reviews, part 1

Tues 10/18 — Student book reviews, part 2
Books review due

Thurs 10/20 — First case study: Spirituality, the State and Nature I
Read: Mitchell 1-88

Tues 10/25 — First case study: Spirituality, the State and Nature II
Read: Mitchell 89-129

Thurs 10/27 — First case study: Spirituality, the State and Nature III
Read: Mitchell 130-199

Tues 11/1 — Second case study: Spirituality and Media I
Read: Lofton 1-81

Thurs 11/3 — Second case study: Spirituality and Media II
Read: Lofton 82-147

Tues 11/8 — NO CLASS (ELECTION DAY)

Thurs 11/10 — Second case study: Spirituality and Media III
Read: Lofton 148-221

Tues 11/15 — Research Paper workshop

Thurs 11/17 — What have we learned?
Read: TBD- Class Choice (OAKS)

Tues 11/22 — Writing Day

Thurs 11/24 — NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)

Tues 11/29 — Research paper presentations

Thurs 12/1 — More research paper presentations (Last Class)

Tues 12/6 — Research paper due in Religious Studies Office

Tues 12/13 — “Final Exam”

Thurs 12/15 — deadline for submission to SECSOR conference (March 3-5, 2017) in Raleigh NC
Note: Students with documented disabilities who have been approved to receive accommodation through SNAP should feel free to discuss this during office hours. For more information, contact Disability Services at 953-1431.

Help for writing papers
A good resource for how to write a religious studies paper: http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/religious-studies/

The Center for Student Learning on campus has writing labs and consultations: http://www.cofc.edu/~csl/
953-5635

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. Students can find a complete version of the Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook, available online.

How to Act Like You're in Grad School

Come to every class, despite the absence of an attendance policy.

Don't text, email, twitter etc, during class (in fact, put away all cell phones and laptops).

Participate in discussion (with high quality, informed comments that show engagement with the reading).

Continue the discussion outside of class, preferably over beer.

During discussion, don't be afraid to sharply (but respectfully) disagree with your classmates’ and your professor's opinions.

Do all the reading, despite the absence of quizzes, tests, or exams. Read carefully, and take notes while you read.

Read the citations and bibliographic information of the required reading, and use it to track down sources for your paper. Grad students love footnotes!

Meet with the professor during office hours.

Write a really good, original research paper that you might want to present publically and/or publish eventually.