HONS381: Altered States of Consciousness
(M/W 2:00-3:15, Maybank 320)

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Office Hours

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Mon & Weds. 11:00-12:30	Tues 12:15-1:45, Thurs 9:00-10:30
(or by appointment)	(or by appointment)

Course Description

This course will be an interdisciplinary survey of research on altered states of consciousness. The course is team taught and will review material from the perspectives of religious studies and psychology. Specifically, we'll examine how different disciplines understand altered states of consciousness—what they are, their diversity and origins, how they are achieved, and their potential value to human life. We will explore the role of altered states of consciousness in a variety of religious and mystical practices, in transpersonal theory, and in other more mundane, daily life practices. We will explore their implication for understanding of the mind and self-hood, life and death, paranormal abilities, and the boundaries of exceptional human experience. We will also examine what altered states look like neurologically and then explore the question of how much research in brain states can tell us about the mental states they are taken to instantiate or represent.

Required Reading (All books available in Kindle)

- Mario Beauregard & Denyse O'Leary, *The Spiritual Brain: A Neuroscientist's Case for the Existence of the Soul.* HarperOne (September, 2008).
- Amit Goswami, *Physics of the Soul: The Quantum Book of Living, Dying, Reincarnation and Immortality.* Hampton Roads Publishing (September, 2001).
- Dean Radin, *Supernormal: Science, Yoga, and the Evidence for Extraordinary Psychic Abilities.* Deepak Chopra; 1st edition (July, 2013).
- Charles Tart, *The End of Materialism: How Evidence of the Paranormal Is Bringing Science and Spirit Together.* New Harbinger Publications; 1st edition (April, 2009).
- In addition, a few overview articles will be posted on OAKS for your review throughout the semester.

Expectations:

You (the student) can expect **us** (the instructors) to:

1) have high (but fair) standards
2) provide thought-provoking lectures, facilitate class discussion, and otherwise provide a challenging and interesting class environment
3) provide ample opportunities for learning assessment
4) be available both inside and outside of class for all class-related questions and more general curiosity
5) be respectful and open minded, and willing to answer any question (no matter how "dumb")

We (the instructors) will expect **you** (the student) to:

1) **PRACTICE CURIOSITY** – *actively engage with the material for the purpose of personal exploration, growth, discovery, and learning…not for a grade.*
2) **TURN OFF ALL FORMS OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD**
   *** Technology may be used for taking notes in class ONLY with prior approval from us ***
3) leave egos, bad attitudes, and prejudices at the door
4) attend class regularly and participate in discussion/activities *vigorously*
5) come to class prepared: read all assigned materials in advance
6) complete assignments thoroughly, thoughtfully, and on time
7) check your e-mail account and the class website regularly for class announcements and/or changes
8) be respectful and open minded, and willing to ask any question (no matter how "dumb")

Requirements: Four critical reading exercises (CRE, each 5% = 20%), two take home exams (each 20% = 40%), final synthesis paper (20%), two applications (5% each = 10%), one group presentation (10%).

Honor Code: Lying, cheating, and plagiarism are violations of the Honor Code and are not permitted at the College. 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 on papers--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 please visit the CSL website at http://csl.cofc.edu 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: Letter (or numerical) grades will be assigned as follows: 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- (62-61), F (60 or lower).

Reading Assignments: Reading assignments must be done **BEFORE** the class for which they are assigned, not after; then you can follow the discussion, ask questions, and we can have an informed dialogue on the reading. **PLEASE BRING THE ASSIGNED BOOK TO CLASS**.

Tentative Schedule:

	MON		**WEDS**
11-Jan	Introduction (Articles)	13-Jan	Spiritual Brain, Ch 1
18-Jan	MLK	20-Jan	Spiritual Brain, Ch 2-4
25-Jan	Spiritual Brain, Ch 5-6	27-Jan	Spiritual Brain, Ch 7-9 (CRE)
1-Feb	Spiritual Brain, Ch 10	3-Feb	Supernormal: Chs 1-2
8-Feb	Supernormal: Chs 3-5 (CRE)	10-Feb	Supernormal: Chs 6-7
15-Feb	Supernormal: Chs 8-10	17-Feb	Supernormal: Chs 11-13 (**Exam**)
22-Feb	Supernormal: Chs 14-16	24-Feb	EoM: Chs 1-3
29-Feb	EoM: Chs 4-5	2-Mar	EoM: Chs 6-7 (Application #1)
7-Mar	SPRING BREAK	9-Mar	SPRING BREAK
14-Mar	EoM: Chs 8-9	16-Mar	EoM: Chs 10-11 (CRE)
21-Mar	EoM: Chs 12-13	23-Mar	EoM: Chs 14-16
28-Mar	EoM: Chs 17-20 (Application #2)	30-Mar	PoS: Chs 1, 2
4-Apr	PoS: Chs 3, 4	6-Apr	PoS: Chs 5,6 (CRE)
11-Apr	PoS: Chs 7, 8	13-Apr	PoS: Chs 9, 10 (**Exam**)
18-Apr	PoS: Chs 11-13	20-Apr	Class presentations
21-Apr	Class Presentations		**Final Paper Due Monday April 25th @ NOON**

This is a work in progress and will be subject to change as needed.