



The Paranormal, the Supernatural, and the Human Experience

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Dates/Times: WEDNESDAYS 1 PM - 3 PM

- September 29, October 6, 13, 20, 27, November 3, 10, 17, December 1, and 8, 2021

Location: POETRY CENTER, Dorothy Rubel Room, 1508 E Helen, Tucson, AZ

This course will be primarily based on the following book:

- ***Paranormal America (2nd Edition): Ghost Encounters, UFO Sightings, Bigfoot Hunts, and Other Curiosities in Religion and Culture*** (Bader, Baker & Mecken, 2017).
- (Amazon) https://www.amazon.com/Paranormal-America-second-Encounters-Curiosities/dp/1479815284/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=Paranormal+America&qid=1629759212&s=books&sr=1-3

Classes will primarily involve discussion of coursebook content, as well as supplementary videos, etc. used during class. Any additional readings or sources will be made available to students.

Course Overview

Every day we are confronted with paranormal and supernatural beliefs - loosely defined as things that exist or occur outside the natural world - and surveys show that most people in the United States and throughout the world are supernatural/paranormal believers. Such phenomena as UFOs, ghosts, astrology, and ESP (extrasensory perception) clearly defy conventional wisdom and understanding, yet belief in them is a

widespread component of human culture, often exerting a profound effect on people's lives. Why are such unusual beliefs part of the human experience for so many? Why do some people find such phenomena to be compelling, while others reject them outright? How do we decide which claims are credible? What distinguishes rational from irrational claims? This course practices critical thinking and reasoning through an examination of widely held beliefs about the paranormal and the supernatural. distinguishes knowledge

Course Objectives

Thinking about the supernatural, the paranormal, and the mysterious brings us face-to-face with some of the most fundamental beliefs and influences of the human experience. The course is intended to help students explore and evaluate such unconventional ideas, and by extension, any claim (i.e., not just those dealing with weird phenomena). By learning about how unusual beliefs are formed and maintained, as well as about the consequences they have on people's lives, students will (1) improve their critical and analytical thinking skills, and (2) develop empathy and a deeper appreciation for the appeal of the unusual and mysterious in the human experience.

Expected Learning Outcomes

What should you be able to know and do by the end of this course?

You will be able to:

- analyze and assess various paranormal/supernatural beliefs and reports of relevant research;
- form a deeper understanding of individuals and groups believing in and engaging with the paranormal and the supernatural;
- develop an understanding of the processes that inform the formation and maintenance of unconventional beliefs;
- identify key principles of critical thinking, reasoning, and evidence that can be used to enhance problem-solving skills and sharpen judgement.

The course schedule on the next page provides a summary of topics and readings for each class.

Course Schedule

Class /Dates	Content	Readings
1 (Sept.29)	Course Introduction, The Paranormal Spectrum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Paranormal Spectrum (provided in class)
2 (Oct. 6)	Chasing the Paranormal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paranormal America, Chapter 1,
3 (Oct. 13)	The Truth is Within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paranormal America, Chapter 2
4 (Oct. 20)	The Truth is Out There	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paranormal America, Chapter 3
5 (Oct. 27)	The Thrill of the Haunt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paranormal America, Chapter 4
6 (Nov. 3)	UFO's and Aliens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paranormal America, Chapter 5
7 (Nov. 10)	Paranormal Subcultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paranormal America, Chapter 6
8 (Nov. 17)	Paranormal People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paranormal America, Chapter 7
9 (Dec.1)	Darkness & Light	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paranormal America, Chapter 8
10 (Dec. 8)	Course Conclusion; Paranormal America – Key Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paranormal America, Chapter 9