L608, Survey of Non-Traditional Beliefs

Agenda:

1. **Session I, September 22**
   - Introduction
   - Sources
   - Mystical Traditions
   - What Is a Mystic
   - Classical Elements

2. **Session II, September 29**
   - Karma
   - Resolution of Karma

3. **Session III, October 6**
   - Reincarnation
   - Akashic Records

4. **Session IV, October 13**
   - Free Will Choice
   - Understanding Karma, Reincarnation and Free Will Choice
   - Changing Your Energy

5. **Session V, October 20**
   - Astrology
   - Ley Lines
   - Healing Systems

6. **Session VI, October 27**
   - Chakras
     - Kundalini
   - Energy Layers in Body
   - Mystery Schools
   - Lesser Mysteries/Greater Mysteries

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NOTES:
Said I would give examples about how class information can be used

- Mercury is retrograde and will be for the first three classes
- Will be a full explanation of all this when we talk about astrology in Session V

Why is this an issue
- Mercury is all things associated with communication and mental acuity
- Retrograde means that looks like it is going backwards
- Happens three times a year and lasts for about three weeks each time
- Can be all kinds of problems:
  - Set up a meeting, need to reconfirm
  - Ask friends for dinner, reconfirm before you buy the food
  - Watch travel arrangements, confirm, allow extra time
  - Handle computer carefully
  - Watch words as out of mouth
  - Expect senior moments
  - Watch out for confusions

And in the class we’re talking about really unusual things

So ask your help
- Be sure that things are clear and easily understood
- Two of the three most important classes are during the retrograde
- If anything at all does not make sense, please ask

Used data from Internet after careful review, have numerous links
If you have trouble using that kind of data, please let me know
Are ways to help
Lots of concern about how to present this material
there is “original” or “core data” but have been a lot of changes
many people or groups have adjusted or added changes or nuances
sometimes changed the names to show the enhancements
sometimes kept the old names but used the enhancements
some of it I found very unusual, but that is MY reaction, my choice

decided that it would be best to give a basic understanding
not all the recent add ons
not all the recent adjustments

decided that for class would try to provide a solid base of core knowledge
you can then go through any information you find
see the changes
some will fit for you, some will not fit for you, personal choice

if I give you the “original” data, you will have a solid core understanding
then can research intelligently from that base
come to your own conclusions about what is right for you

Sources of Information
story that various concepts held by various groups or religious sects
started release began about 50's and 60's
means lots of sources from mystical sects/traditions
will share resources and give Internet links
Vocabulary
often different religions have same names but a different meaning
also definitions have changed over time
for those religions that accept reincarnation, the definition has changed
wanted to make the definition more palatable for those who do not accept
reincarnation

example: the meaning of “nirvana” (goal of reincarnation in Buddhism):

Webster’s College Dictionary, 2010
1. A state of ultimate wisdom and blessedness
2. A state of release from the cycle of reincarnation and absorption into the universal reality

Macmillan Dictionary
1. nirvana or Nirvana a state of complete spiritual happiness that Buddhists and Hindus try to achieve in which human existence no longer seems important
2. INFORMAL a feeling of complete happiness and peace

Merriam Webster
: the state of perfect happiness and peace in Buddhism where there is release from all forms of suffering
: a state or place of great happiness and peace

Full Definition of NIRVANA
1: the final beatitude that transcends suffering, karma, and samsara [aka reincarnation] and is sought especially in Buddhism through the extinction of desire and individual consciousness
2 a: a place or state of oblivion to care, pain, or external reality; also : bliss, heaven
   b: a goal hoped for but apparently unattainable : dream

clearly, if you are in conversation with someone
be sure you are both talking about the same thing
be sure you both mean the same thing for the words you are using
Historic Mystery Traditions

Isis and Osiris (Egypt)
   Osiris was killed by his brother Seth and dismembered
   Seth hid the pieces in various places
   Iris, wife of Osiris, found all the pieces and put them back together again

Pythagoras

Plato and Socrates (Greece)

Eleusis (Greece)
   Demeter, goddess of agriculture, spouse of Hades
   Persephone, daughter with Zeus
      abducted by Hades
      4 months in Hades, 8 months on Earth, hence the seasons

Ephesus (Greece)
   based on worship of Artemis (Roman Diana)

Dionysus (Greece and later Roman)
   Romans later turned lesser mysteries turned into Bacchanalia
      just a drinking fest and orgy
   greater mysteries still strong

Mithras (Persian god)

Druids (especially in northern Gaul)

Dark Ages
   Cathars
   Knights Templar

Freemasons
### Chart of the Mystical Traditions/Sects

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<tr>
<th>RELIGION</th>
<th>MYSTICAL TRADITION</th>
<th>EXAMPLES OF MYSTICS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic Figures</td>
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<td>Pythagoras (580 BCE – 500 BCE)</td>
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<td>Plotinus (205 CE – 270 CE)</td>
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<td>Judaism</td>
<td>Kabbalah</td>
<td>Moses Cordovero (1522 – 1570)</td>
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<td>Isaac Luria (1534 – 1572)</td>
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<td>Baal Shem Tov (1698 – 1760)</td>
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<td>Hinduism</td>
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<td>Kabir (d. 1518)</td>
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<td>Ramakrishana (1836 – 1886)</td>
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<td>Vivekananda (1863 – 1902)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
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<td>Lord Buddha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>Zen</td>
<td>Dogen (1200 – 1253)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>Sufi</td>
<td>Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmi (1207 – 1273)</td>
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<td>Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882 – 1927)</td>
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<td>Christianity</td>
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<td>Apostle John</td>
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<td>St. Francis of Assisi (1181/2 – 1226)</td>
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<td>Hildegard von Bingen (1098 – 1179)</td>
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<td>Meister Eckhardt (1260 – 1327/8)</td>
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<td>Richard Rolle (1290-1349)</td>
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<td>St. John of the Cross (1542 – 1591)</td>
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<td>St. Teresa of Avila (1515 – 1582)</td>
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<td>Evelyn Underhill (1875 – 1941)</td>
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<td>Thomas Merton (1915 – 1968)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confucianism</td>
<td>Tao</td>
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<tr>
<td>(China)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Note that there is no Christian mystical tradition but are many Christian mystics
second century CE
a lot of unrest in church, factions not always agree
churches Asia Minor
Roman church
Gnostic activity
Irenaeus (c. 120 – c. 202) was mediator
became Bishop of Lyon
he felt that the Gnostics were threat to Roman church, a heresy
he said Gnostics taught:
there was a duality of good vs evil, light vs dark, etc
not idea of the single God of the Roman church
Jesus taught lesser mysteries to public, greater mysteries to disciples
reference actually in Mark 4:11
members used own pathway to get to salvation
per Elaine Pagels
(Harvard professor, study of Gnosticism
worked with translation of the Nag Hammadi documents,
found in 1940s in Egypt)
she felt that the Gnosticism was political threat to Roman church
Irenaeus attacked the Gnostic beliefs as heresies, he said
only one God
what Jesus taught is written in the New Testament
only one set of teachings
population needs church to provide absolution of sins
many of the Gnostic ideas were like the experiences of the mystics
but Irenaeus put a stop to all Gnostic beliefs or anything like them
hence
no mysticism
teachings of Jesus are only what is said in Bible
no greater mysteries (includes karma, reincarnation, etc)
what is a mystic, precise definition of mystic

Rabbi Amy Scheinerman:

Kabbalah (meaning “that which has been received”) is the intellectual and methodological approach to accessing the timeless truth of reality in the here and now. In other words, it is the process of acquiring and practicing esoteric knowledge and techniques for glimpsing the reality beyond our material world -- ultimately, for “glimpsing” the Ultimate Reality, God.

Google: (same as the Oxford English Dictionary)
a person who seeks by contemplation and self-surrender to obtain unity with or absorption into the Deity or the absolute,
[Note continuation]:
or who believes in the spiritual apprehension of truths that are beyond the intellect.

Sufi: direct personal experience of God

mine: a oneness experience with the Godhead/Creator
also: process of having the mystical experience changes how you choose to live your life go from believing there is a Central Deity to knowing there is some power out there

[after mystical experience Gospel of John makes sense!!]

not a conversion experience like Paul’s on the road to Damascus
not a dream
not a series of dreams that give unusual impact
not a near death experience (NDE)
not like a mystical image of fog above a lake in a forest
not equivalent to a wizard
how to get to a mystical experience
   traditionally three pathways:
       service
       study
       mediation and contemplation
   I would add how you live and the choices you make
       need to do what you say you believe

not something to take on lightly
   Jewish story of 4 rabbis who entered the “divine orchard” or paradise:
       one died immediately
       one went mad immediately
       one cut the plants (did he perhaps try to destroy the orchard?)
           one source felt he was a heretic, worked with Gnostics
       one emerged in peace

generally a multiyear project
   lots of work and study
lots of fixing your issues and changing some habits

example: restrictions on learning the Kabbalah:
   be at least 40 years of age (changed to 20 years by Cordovero)
   high moral standards
   prior rabbinic learning
   married
   mental and emotional stability

no control over when the experience will happen
   it just does
   happens when you are ready and the time is right
   usually no warning
Classical elements
air, earth, water, fire
proposed by pre-Socratic philosophers
Plato added regular convex polyhedron solids to each
Aristotle dropped the shapes and added hot & cold/wet & dry

used by Medieval alchemists
gets into their very early scientific work
also gets into the alchemists
desire to turn lead into gold
also used the humors in healing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Humor</th>
<th>Shape (Plato) Hot/Cold/Wet/Dry (Aristotle)</th>
<th>Proposed by (dates approximate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Melancholic: depressed, irascible, sad, unhappy</td>
<td>Cube 6 squares cold and dry</td>
<td>Xenophanes (540–537 BCE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Phlegmatic: slow, stolid, cool, impassive</td>
<td>Icosahedron 20 triangles cold and wet</td>
<td>Thales (624 – 546 BCE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Choleric: zeal, enthusiasm, daring</td>
<td>Tetrahedron 4 triangles hot and dry</td>
<td>Heraclitus, around 500 BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Sanguine: sturdy, confident, optimistic, cheerful, happy</td>
<td>Octahedron 8 triangles hot and wet</td>
<td>Anaximenes (flourished c. 545 BCE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aether</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dodecahedron 12 pentagons</td>
<td>first mentioned by Plato in <em>Timeas</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

also used in astrology, each sign of the zodiac is air, water, fire or earth
Aether
historically 4 elements resulted from trying to understand the universe
i.e., basically very early science
added aether for name of the medium in which the stars existed
also the “air” breathed by the gods on Mt. Olympus
not the same as the air we breathe
Medieval alchemists called it “quintessence”
study to try to prove aether:
Michelson-Morley experiment of 1887
showed that aether was not present

Prana
found one reference that says same as aether and White Light
not accurate, are totally different
life force or aliveness in the body, leaves with soul at death
in Indian philosophy (Upanishads)
one of body’s vital airs or energies (Encyclopedia Britannica)
in Ayurvedic medicine
life force, vitality; life sustaining energy centered in human brain
life force governing inspiration and conscious intellect
similar to qu (chi) in Chinese medicine
similar to ki in Japanese

Chopra Center:
(part of article on chakras
will discuss in detail later, Session VI, 10/27/15)
“To visualize a chakra in the body, imagine a swirling wheel of energy
where matter and consciousness meet. This invisible energy, called Prana,
is vital life force, which keeps us vibrant, healthy, and alive.”

White Light
a lot of trouble finding any good information with resources
lunch with a Reiki healer so I asked her
friend in Baltimore
when her kids were first starting to drive
she would just wrap the car in white cotton batting!!
what little I found was the following:
always positive, never dark
if you think of it, it is there for you
used for protection and healing
definitely not aether or prana
Resources:

General:
http://www.themystica.com/mystica/default.html
Awarded from: Britannica.com; Criteria: Editors selected site as one of the best on the Internet for quality, accuracy of content, presentation and usability.

http://www.crystalinks.com/

http://www.ancient-wisdom.com/

http://www.encyclopedianomadica.org/

an excellent dictionary with entries on just about anything relating to spiritual and esoteric concepts and thought from a number of religions, clear, easy to understand

*Kybalion*, Three Initiates
actual authorship uncertain, primary candidate is William Walker Atkinson
not a book to sit down and read through
better to read a chapter and then think about it awhile
however, it is a book that one can go back to again and again

ADK Luk books
To purchase:
http://www.alohapeace.com/lawoflife.aspx
not necessarily an easy read
lots of very detailed information on the Masters of the White Brotherhood
(mystical beings who are often mentioned in various discussions)

Mystical Traditions:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mysticism - Jewish_mysticism
about Plotinus
long but interesting, good definition and understanding

https://westernmystics.wordpress.com/
read thoroughly, some things hidden in this I think

http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mysticism/
check, good resource so may be helpful

http://www.sawka.com/spiritwatch/cehsc/ipure.htm
Bruce B Janz, Ph.D. Professor, University of Central Florida
www.religiousworlds.com/mystic/whoswho.html
- site temp closed for repair, was very good, worthwhile checking back on it
- lots of info, links and references, not always clear about who is/isn’t a mystic
http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~janzb/mysticism/
- resources for Bruce Janz’s class on Western Mysticism,
  University of Central Florida
- lots of info, links and cross references
- under section on Academic Study of Western Mysticism, first subsection:
  click on Mysticism, PPT presentation

Evelyn Underhill
http://www.evelynunderhill.org/
  Janz: “an old classic but later works fulfill this project better”
  Janz: “good introduction, kind of a primer on mystical life”

Rabbi Amy Scheinerman
http://scheinerman.net/judaism/Ideas/index.html
  click on Kabbalah in the list
Recommended reading:
Daniel C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism*
Lawrence Kushner, *The Way Into Jewish Mystical Tradition*
Zev ben Shimon Halevi, *The Work of the Kabbalist*
Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*

per Rabbi Scheinerman, not recommended are:
The Kabbalah Centre
Michael or Yehuda Berg
Classical Elements:
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/xenophanes/
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heraclitus/
http://www.britannica.com/biography/Anaximenes-of-Miletus

http://www.spiritual-knowledge.net/articles/fire-water-air-earth.php
from Slovak web site www.poznanie.sk

http://www.friesian.com/elements.htm

http://www.friesian.com/
some interesting concepts but rather unusual
   just the kind of thing that may challenge your ideas
   but also the kind of material that may just have a nugget of interest for you

Aether – Michelson-Morley Experiment (1887):
http://galileoandeinstein.physics.virginia.edu/lectures/michelson.html
see section: Detecting the Aether Wind

http://scienceworld.wolfram.com/physics/Michelson-MorleyExperiment.html

Prana:
http://www.chopra.com/ccl/what-is-a-chakra#sthash.KQtORR3o.dpuf
quoted under section on Prana in class notes