

Paranormal Education

by Joe Wetterling & Michelle Wetterling

Televised ghost investigation has, at the very least, made more people aware of and interested in the paranormal. Many newly-interested people, especially those that want to start investigating, have asked about the available educational choices. Is there a degree in paranormal investigation?

There had been at least one such degree offered by an accredited college. (Lloyd Auerbach, for instance, completed that degree program.) Unfortunately, there isn't one available right now. There are, however, options available to anyone that wants to formally study the paranormal.

Accreditation

To "accredit", as related to education, means:

- "to provide or send with credentials; designate officially"
- "to certify as meeting all formal official requirements of academic excellence, curriculum, facilities, etc."
- "to make authoritative, creditable, or reputable; sanction."

An accredited program is important, then, because it means the academics of the program have been evaluated. Accreditation is only as good as the agency offering the accreditation. "Regional accreditation" is done by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. (The US DoE website offers a list: http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg7.html)

Another accrediting agency may be acceptable to you. Many religious institutions offer accreditation to schools of their particular faith, for example; if you are a member of that faith and *their* certification carries weight with you, then you would study at a school accredited by that agency.

Be wary of schools that are not accredited or accredited by an agency that is not itself managed by a reputable group. Without accreditation, a school decides on its own policies and procedures, which may or may not be rigorous enough to earn respect from the community at large.

Other Degree Programs

To become a medical doctor, you don't typically study medicine as an undergraduate, instead you study topics related to the field - biology and chemistry. To become a lawyer, you don't get your undergraduate degree in "lawyering", you study a relevant topic - criminal justice, English, communication, computer science, biology, and so on.

I propose (and I'm far from the first to suggest this) following a similar model for becoming a paranormal investigator. Study one or more relevant topics. If you want a degree in the field, take a degree in a subject that will benefit you in some way.

Successful investigators have been trained in cultural anthropology, journalism, counseling, psychology, electrical engineering, and other fields. Among the academic options available, you could consider studying:

- Anthropology
- Audiology
- Biology/Neuroscience
- Civil/Construction engineering
- Communication (human or electronic)
- Counseling
- Electrical engineering
- History (American)
- Philosophy
- Psychology
- Statistics
- Sociology
- Theology/Religion

Franklin Pierce, an accredited U.S. college, offers a minor in Parapsychology. The classes they recommend include:

- Psychology of perception
- Theories of personality
- Biological psychology
- Systems and theories of psychology
- Experimentation (hands-on project work)

You can also take classes, or otherwise study, a number of relevant subjects. A few of these include:

- Abnormal psychology
- Construction / Inspection
- Logic
- Statistics
- Photography
- Recording technology
- Video technology
- Writing

Don't forget, also, that people have been involved in the paranormal before you. In addition to what's published on the Internet, you can find many resources at your local library. Also consider inter-library loan, if your local branch has a slim paranormal section.

References

American Psychological Association (APA): *accredit*. (n.d.). Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1). Retrieved November 06, 2007, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/accredit>

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