

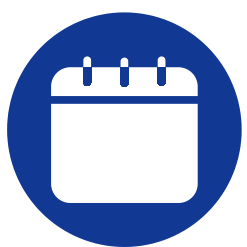
## VIEWS OF HEALING AMONG BRAZILIAN SPIRITISTS AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

This lecture looks at relations between Spiritist and allopathic discourses and practices of healing in a small city in the state of São Paulo, Brazil, where esotericism (Spiritisms) and science (allopathic medicine) are in direct competition as theorists and agents of healing. Sharp distinctions are complicated for three reasons: (i) popular religious beliefs are prevalent throughout Brazilian society (e.g., spirits, supra-natural disease and healing, reincarnation); (ii) a majority of the population sees religious rituals as sources of healing (e.g., popular Catholicism, Neo-Pentecostalism, Spiritisms and other esoteric traditions, especially New Age sensu lato, and Afro-Brazilian traditions; and (iii) Kardecist Spiritism is widely accepted and culturally influential, with tens of millions of non-members regularly participating in rituals. In 2024, I conducted twenty-eight interviews with three groups of individuals: esotericists (Kardecism and Umbanda); allopathic medical professionals not engaged in esoteric practices; and doctors who are also practicing esotericists. Initial results suggest that this is an excellent example of CAS-E's focus on "dynamics of reciprocal influence, adaptation, assimilation, hybridization and inclusion / exclusion." Most interviewees draw a pragmatic and relative line between esoteric and allopathic healing (each has its sphere), and none see them as standing in a relation of stark conflict.



### Prof. Dr. Steven Engler (CAS-E Fellow)

Steven Engler is Professor of Religious Studies in the Department of Humanities at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Canada, and Affiliate Professor in the Department of Religions and Cultures at Concordia University in Montréal. He was a visiting professor at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo from 2005–2007. He studies Brazilian esoteric spirit-incorporation religions (Umbanda and Kardecism), with publications on Quimbanda, popular Catholicism and Neo-Pentecostalism. He works also works on theory, meta-theory, and methodology (primarily grounded theory and coding). Since 2007, he has been working with philosopher Mark Gardiner on the intersection between the study of religions and Donald Davidson's semantic theory. In addition to these areas, he teaches courses on esotericism and magic, death/afterlife, apocalypticism, religion and film, and religion and the fantastic.



**Date:**  
**Tuesday - 29 April, 2025**



**Time:**  
**6.15 - 7.45 PM**

**Location: Big Seminar room,  
Hartmannstr. 14, Building D1, Erlangen**

Link for virtual attendance: <https://fau.zoom-x.de/j/62556506187>



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