

Short Biography

Jeffrey J. Kripal holds the J. Newton Rayzor Chair in Philosophy and Religious Thought at Rice University, where he is also the Chair of the Department of Religious Studies. He received his B.A. in Religion from Conception Seminary College in 1985 and his Ph.D. in the History of Religions from the University of Chicago in 1993. He is the author of *Esalen: America and the Religion of No Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), *The Serpent's Gift: Gnostic Reflections on the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), *Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom: Eroticism and Reflexivity in the Study of Mysticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), and *Kali's Child: The Mystical and the Erotic in the Life and Teachings of Ramakrishna* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). He has also co-edited volumes with Wouter Hanegraaff on eroticism and esotericism, *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism* (University of Amsterdam Press, forthcoming); Glenn W. Shuck on the history of Esalen and the American counterculture, *On the Edge of the Future: Esalen and the Evolution of American Culture* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2005); with Rachel Fell McDermott on a popular Hindu goddess, *Encountering Kali: In the Margins, at the Center, in the West* (California: University of California Press, 2003); with G. William Barnard on the ethical critique of mystical traditions, *Crossing Boundaries: Essays on the Ethical Status of Mysticism* (Seven Bridges, 2002); and with T.G. Vaidyanathan of Bangalore, India, on the dialogue between psychoanalysis and Hinduism, *Vishnu on Freud's Desk: A Reader in Psychoanalysis and Hinduism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). His areas of interest include the comparative erotics of mystical literature, American countercultural translations of Asian religious traditions, and the history of Western esotericism from ancient Gnosticism to the New Age.