

Science and its Neighbors  
A Humanities Seminar  
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Is a UFO an advanced craft of extraterrestrial origin, or a laser plasma column projected by military drones of terrestrial origin, or a combination of mass hysteria and wishful thinking? This seminar is a critical examination of the many areas which lie near science but which are not (for the most part) science, often called “marginal science” or “pseudoscience.” We will begin by examining scientific method and discovery science, falsifiability, and the nature of truth. Then each session will be devoted to a set of practices, asking questions like: Is it science? Is it valuable? Does it offer insights not otherwise available? Does it involve fraud, pretending to be scientific when it is not? Is it founded on a fallacy? Class sessions will be a combination of lecture and discussion, and will meet in the Poetry Center on Wednesday afternoons 2 to 4.

1. July 12 Introduction. ESP. Telepathy, Psychokinesis, Precognition. Remote Viewing. Psychics and the police. Ghosts, fairies, elves and sprites. The séance. Past Lives. Channeling. Chakras, Auras, and Astral Projection.
2. July 19 On the Margins of Science: Phrenology. Transient Phenomena: Ball Lightning, GRB’s, LTP’s. Cold Fusion. Therapeutic Touch. Magnets. Rods. Archaeoastronomy and Ancient Aliens.
3. July 26 Tarot Cards. Crystals. Tea leaves. Chicken innards. Dietary fads: Herbal supplements, food additives, diet pills, vitamins, etc. The Flat Earth. The Hollow Earth.
4. Aug. 2 Astrology. Alchemy. Pyramids. Blending together planetary science, astrological symbolism, Biblical prophecy. Y2K, 2012. Radio call-in shows, instant predictions, computer horoscopes.
5. Aug. 9 UFO’s and the Air Force. UFO’s as a psychological phenomena: Abductions and the treatment of abductees. UFO’s and popular culture. UFO’s and spirituality. The Phoenix Lights. Cattle mutilations. What is a “conspiracy theory”? Chemtrails. 9/11. “Did We Go to the Moon”? The Kennedy Assassination. Alien ruins on the Moon.

Reading materials for this course will be posted online and available to seminarians.