

## General Education Course Information Sheet

*Please submit this sheet for each proposed course*

<i>Department &amp; Course Number</i>	World Arts and Cultures/Dance: –W1 Arts 51W
<i>Course Title</i>	Aliens, Psychics and Ghosts
<i>Indicate if Seminar and/or Writing II course</i>	Writing II

1 Check the recommended GE foundation area(s) and subgroups(s) for this course

**Foundations of the Arts and Humanities**

- Literary and Cultural Analysis X \_\_\_\_\_
- Philosophic and Linguistic Analysis \_\_\_\_\_
- Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice \_\_\_\_\_

**Foundations of Society and Culture**

- Historical Analysis \_\_\_\_\_
- Social Analysis X \_\_\_\_\_

**Foundations of Scientific Inquiry**

- Physical Science \_\_\_\_\_  
*With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more)* \_\_\_\_\_
- Life Science \_\_\_\_\_  
*With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more)* \_\_\_\_\_

2. Briefly describe the rationale for assignment to foundation area(s) and subgroup(s) chosen.

Literary and Cultural Analysis: The class explores alien contact and abduction narratives, particularly between 1942 and 1998, to ask how the claims of abduction are routed in larger national conversations about the cold war, government conspiracy, and space exploration. Students will also be introduced to the writing of psychics and mediums in order to outline an approach to understanding the utility of the scientific method. Students will also be required to engage with the literature of skeptics, helping develop the concepts of “suspensions of disbelief” and “concomitant and opposing hypotheses.”

---

Social Analysis: The course will compare the narratives of alien abductees, ghost witnesses, and self-professed mediums to the social science research of psychopompic and psychogenic hallucinations in the psychological sciences to develop a theory of how humans respond to fear. Particularly, the students will engage the research on hypnosis and memory reconstitution. This research raises troubling questions about the role of first-hand testimony in our legal system as well as our individual worldviews.

---

3. "List faculty member(s) who will serve as instructor (give academic rank):

David Delgado Shorter, Associate Professor

Do you intend to use graduate student instructors (TAs) in this course?    Yes    X    No    \_\_\_\_\_  
 If yes, please indicate the number of TAs    \_\_\_\_\_    2

4. Indicate when do you anticipate teaching this course over the next three years:

2012-2013	Fall	X	Winter	_____	Spring	_____
	Enrollment	40	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	_____
2013-2014	Fall	_____	Winter	_____	Spring	_____
	Enrollment	60	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	_____

2014-2015	Fall	_____	Winter	_____	Spring	_____
	Enrollment	80	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	_____
		_____		_____		_____

5. GE Course Units

Is this an ***existing*** course that has been modified for inclusion in the new GE? Yes \_\_\_ No X  
 If yes, provide a brief explanation of what has changed. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Present Number of Units: \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed Number of Units: 5

Please present concise arguments for the GE principles applicable to this course.

❑ General Knowledge

Students will be introduced to the long fascination in human culture with the “alien” figure. From national and community “others,” to visitors from the sky, we are compelled by these others and utilize our fascinations with them to project our fears and hopes. Similarly, ghosts (the living dead) and psychics enable humans to imagine a world not firmly defined by the spatial and temporal boundaries of time and space.

❑ Integrative Learning

By reading books from literary scholars, anthropologists, religious studies scholars and native autobiographers, students will gain an understanding of the relationships between training, methodological approach and resulting ethnographic results. Additionally, students will compare the ways documentary films and scholarly articles convey information/arguments.

❑ Ethical Implications

Because the class concerns itself with how people know their worlds, it necessarily must address how people value, or the axiological implications of varying epistemological systems. In addition, the students will need to ask how alien abduction narratives are similar to claims of sexual abuse, and how such stories are treated within American legal frameworks.

❑ Cultural Diversity

One of the primary links between aliens, psychics and ghosts is that they are shared phenomena across cultures (hence it’s fit in World Arts and Cultures). In our exploration of cave paintings of aliens, tribal stories of life on other planets, varying roles of the living dead (pre-Canaanite vs Navajo, for example), and the representation of certain ethnic groups as mystical (gypsies and Mayan, for example), the class surveys cultural diversity.

❑ Critical Thinking

The course is developed to specifically address how to critically read not simply the content of supernatural claims but how such content is framed and discussed within differing contexts: scholarly articles versus science fiction writers, for example. By looking at competing claims regarding the existence of these three subjects (aliens, psychics, ghosts), students understand the importance of questioning how rational thinking differs from a faith-based thinking.

❑ Rhetorical Effectiveness

Students will be required to write a series of “position papers” that enable a student to track the evolution of their thinking over time, over a range of related subjects. Second, students will exercise the critical evaluation of source material (websites, scholarly articles, the popular press, journalism) in a mid-term project that lays the foundation of their final research project. Relying on this source material evaluation, students will have a rough draft due of a research paper in week eight. This final paper will be the development of an analytical argument that supports their original thesis about the conjoined studies of aliens, psychics, and ghosts. The final project will be a redrafting of that final research paper during the final three weeks of the course.

❑ Problem-solving

Because this course deals with the paranormal, or what Folklorists call “the uncanny,” each week of the course will continually ask basic questions of what counts as proof. By measuring the effectiveness of competing claims, students will be developing primary skills in analytical thinking. Additionally, the students will be honing their ability to communicate and listen in a group discussion setting.

❑ Library & Information Literacy

This course requires the searching, retrieval, and analysis of various media

pertaining to the study at hand. Students will learn how to obtain information through internet, library and popular media outlets. Then students will be evaluated on their ability to bring together and evaluate the strengths of both visual and written source material.

**(A) STUDENT CONTACT PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)**

- |   |          |         |
|---|----------|---------|
| 1. Lecture:   | <u>3</u> | (hours) |
| 2. Discussion Section:                                  | <u>1</u> | (hours) |
| 3. Labs:  | _____    | (hours) |
| 4. Experiential (service learning, internships, other): | _____    | (hours) |
| 5. Field Trips:   | _____    | (hours) |

**(A) TOTAL Student Contact Per Week** **4** **(HOURS)**

**(B) OUT-OF-CLASS HOURS PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)**

- |                                     |            |         |
|-------------------------------------|------------|---------|
| 1. General Review & Preparation:    | <u>3.5</u> | (hours) |
| 2. Reading                          | <u>5</u>   | (hours) |
| 3. Group Projects:                  | <u>N/A</u> | (hours) |
| 4. Preparation for Quizzes & Exams: | <u>N/A</u> | (hours) |
| 5. Information Literacy Exercises:  | <u>2</u>   | (hours) |
| 6. Written Assignments:             | <u>1.5</u> | (hours) |
| 7. Research Activity:               | <u>2</u>   | (hours) |

**(B) TOTAL Out-of-class time per week** **14** **(HOURS)**

**GRAND TOTAL (A) + (B) must equal at least 15 hours/week** **18** **(HOURS)**

## **World Arts and Cultures 51W: Aliens, Psychics and Ghosts**

(5 credit hours, Writing II, GE, Impacted Status)

Professor David Delgado Shorter

E-mail: [shorter@ucla.edu](mailto:shorter@ucla.edu)

Office: Kaufman Hall 153F

Office Hours:

**Course Description:** Since beliefs are given in both symbolic and expressive forms, we must attend to how they are expressed in oral, written and graphic mediums. Folklore and other ethnographically informed studies have long provided a distinct contribution to the understanding of epistemology since social scientists focus on narratives as analyzable data. By surveying the stories told of the uncanny, or “supernatural,” unbelievable, and unreal experiences, we learn much about the human condition and the desire to convince others of lived experience. This course asks the basic question of how do people come to develop a cosmology, a view of the larger cosmos, which may entail non-human beings, life after death, and life before death. Our subject matter will include interviews with psychics, first-person UFO abduction experiences, and ghost stories. We will also read scientific perspectives of these stories and these storytellers. Through the writing process, students will be asked to analyze the discourse of folk belief as well as the suspension of disbelief. Additionally, in class discussions, students will be required to respect their own voices as well as the other students’ voices as we meet weekly to interrogate our own narratives about those things considered stranger than fiction. During discussion sections, students will work with the Teaching Assistants on two primary aspects of the course: better comprehending the course materials and translating that comprehension into critical writing skills. Topics to be covered in discussion sections will include the course readings, research paper design and implementation, effective rhetorical devices in scholarly analyses, and peer editing techniques.

### **Required Texts:**

Humphrey, Nicholas. *Leaps of Faith: Science, Miracles and the Search for Supernatural Consolation*. Springer Press, 1999.

Hufford, David. *The Terror that Comes in the Night: An Experience-Centered Study of Supernatural Assault Traditions*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989.

Streiber, Whitley. *Communion: A True Story*. Harper Paperbacks, 2008.

**NOTE:** A Course Reader is required which will include the articles listed on the last page of this syllabus and will be available at Ackerman Union.

<b>Grading:</b>	Final Research Projects	50 points
	Secondary Investigation	10 points
	Pop Quizzes	20 points
	2 Research Status Reports    2 X 10	20 points

**Research Status Reports:** At two times during the first seven weeks of the quarter, you will present in written form your research findings and paper outline to the professor. Each status report will contain the following subtitled sections: Thesis, Statement of Problem, Statement of Solution, Statement of Significance, Scope of Paper, and Resources Consulted. You will be evaluated on both the quantity of sources referenced and the quality of your writing. Because this is a writing intensive course, students should take care to develop professional writing skills including college standard formatting, proper grammar and clear prose. Much of the TA-moderated section meetings will be devoted to assuring timely research progress as well as peer-editing workshops. In course lecture meetings, the professor will take care to demonstrate how one makes a logical argument and then proves or disapproves a theory through written analysis of texts. Due to the wide range of information available through multiple platforms, research resources will include websites, on-line journals, film and video.

**Pop Quizzes:** At random times throughout the course, students will be required to complete unannounced quizzes. These may be presented on-line or in class. They will draw directly from the readings or the movies required prior to the quiz.

**Final Projects:** For your final grade in this course, you will be responsible for working on a research project that will necessarily span the entire length of the quarter. These final papers will be approximately 7,500 words or roughly 17 pages. The results of your research must be in written form and must have your name on it, and the name of your secondary investigator. Final papers without a secondary investigator will not be accepted. Students must follow the Guide to Writing an Analytical Paper, provided in the Resource section of the course CCLE. Students should also expect to discuss in lecture meetings not only the content of the course readings, but also how to write as a means of critical thinking, rather than an outcome of critical thinking. In other words, students will be asked to discuss their writing process and offer examples of writing drafts to the class.

Each student must be the principal investigator of one research project and the secondary investigator of another project. Each principal investigator will compile a research paper based upon the keynote method (explained on the first day and in the Guide to Writing an Analytical Paper). As the PI, you choose a topic, research the topic beyond the materials

presented in class, develop or discuss a theory of the phenomena, test previous theories OR discuss how previous theories might be discarded based on their testing methods.

Each student must complete a 5,000 word draft of their research paper two weeks before the final due date in order that the S.I.'s can have time to read and respond with edits. As the SI, you are required to review another student's research project and write up a commentary on their hypotheses, methods, evidence, and theories. Both PI and SI are required to develop separate, yet full conclusions. Note: these are not group projects. All final papers will be submitted through Turnitin.com to verify original research and writing on behalf of all students.

**Movie Times:** On the third day of class, you will be asked to decide on a date and time on which you can watch movies outside of class time. Please bring your calendar in preparation of making that decision. The total time commitment on this one meeting will be less than four hours, or approximately two feature length films.

### **Assignment Calendar:**

\*(Asterisks) signify the aspects of writing to be covered in TA-facilitated section meetings. All writing handouts will be available on the course's CCLE site.

- Week One:                   a) First Day of Class, Questionnaire, Introductions, Work Due  
                                  In-Class Video: "Unexplained Mystery: Roswell"
- b) In-Class Video: "The Phoenix Lights"  
                                  Discussion of "Evidence"  
                                  \* Critical Reading/Writing: The Connection  
                                  \* Topic Development
- Week Two:                   a) Whitley Strieber's *Communion* 0-52  
                                  The Keyhole Diagram and Analytical Writing: Proving with Prose
- b) *Communion* 53-110  
                                  Bryan, "Chapter One: Background." 3-32.  
                                  \* Compound Sentences \* Complex Sentences
- Week Three:               a) *Communion* 111-220  
                                  Bryan, "Chapter Seven: Postconference Interview: Carol and Alice  
                                  in Boston." 201-230.  
                                  Discussion of Library Research vs. Internet Research
- b) *Communion* 221- end  
                                  Bryan, "Chapter Fourteen: Postconference Interview: Carol and  
                                  Alice – First Hypnosis Session at Budd Hopkin's Studio." 315-  
                                  333.  
                                  ***Due: Research Status Report I***

\* Organizing Ideas \* Paragraph Formation

- Week Four:
- a) Bryan, "Chapter Fifteen: Postconference Interview: Brenda, Erica, Terry and Linda Cortile." 334-338.  
Bryan, "Chapter Sixteen: Postconference Interview: Carol and Alice." 339-357.
  - b) Shermer, "Prologue: Next on Oprah." 1-10.  
Discussion of Research Status Reports and Writing Benchmarks  
\*Editorial Marks \* Punctuation \*Modifiers
- Week Five:
- a) Shermer's *Why People Believe Weird Things*, (88-98)  
In-Class Video: "X-Files: El Mundo Gira"
  - b) Sagan's *The Demon Haunted World* (63-77)  
Shermer's *The Borderlands of Science* (1-30)  
\* Topic Sentences \* Coordinating Conjunctions
- Week Six:
- a) Sagan's *The Demon Haunted World* (81-111; 153-168)  
Shermer's *Why People Believe Weird Things* (44-61)
  - b) In-Class Video: John Edward's "Crossing Over"  
Humphrey's *Leap of Faith* (1-51)  
\* Revising and Editing \*Parallel Structures
- Week Seven:
- a) Humphrey's *Leap of Faith* (52-113)  
In-Class Video: "John Edward Meets the Pet Psychic"
  - b) Humphrey's *Leap of Faith* (114-end)  
***Due: Research Status Report II***  
\* Editing Paragraphs and Essays
- Week Eight:
- a) Stewart's "Sasquatch Sightings in South Dakota" (287-304)  
*The Paranormal, A Bishop Investigates* (xi-69; 116-132)  
In-Class Video: "John Edward Gets Tested at the Human Energy Systems Lab, University of Arizona"
  - b) Montefiore's "Chapter One: Psi Phenomena." 19-42.  
David Hufford's *The Terror that Comes in the Night* (1-46)  
\* Editorial Marks
- Week Nine:
- a) Montefiore's "Chapter Two: Mediums, Ghosts and Apparitions" 43-69  
Hufford (47-114)
  - b) Hufford (115-end)



***Due: 5000 word draft of Final Paper with name of SI***

Week Ten:

- a) Writing Workshop I: In-Class Discussion of Final Papers
- b) Writing Workshop II: In-Class Discussion of Final Papers

## **WAC51: Aliens, Psychics, and Ghosts Reader Table of Contents**

Bryan, C. D. B. *Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind: A Reporter's Notebook of Alien Abduction, UFOs, and the Conference at M.I.T.* New York: Penguin Books, 1995.

“Chapter One: Background.” 3-32.

“Chapter Seven: Postconference Interview: Carol and Alice in Boston.” 201-230.

“Chapter Fourteen: Postconference Interview: Carol and Alice – First Hypnosis Session at Budd Hopkin's Studio.” 315-333.

“Chapter Fifteen: Postconference Interview: Brenda, Erica, Terry and Linda Cortile.” 334-338.

“Chapter Sixteen: Postconference Interview: Carol and Alice.” 339-357.

Sagan, Carl. *The Demon-Haunted World.* New York: Ballentine Books, 1996.

“Chapter Four: Aliens.” 62-111.

“Chapter Nine: Therapy.” 152-168.

“Chapter Thirteen: Obsessed with Reality.” 219-263.

Shermer, Michael. *The Borderlands of Science.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

“Introduction: Blurry Lines and Fuzzy Sets: The Boundary Detection Problem in the Borderlands of Science.” 1-30.

Shermer, Michael. *Why People Believe Weird Things.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997, 2002.

“Prologue: Next on Oprah.” 1-10.

“Chapter Three: How Thinking Goes Wrong.” 44-61.

“Chapter Six: Abducted!” 88-98.

Montefiore, Hugh. *The Paranormal: A Bishop Investigates.* Leicestershire: Upfront Publishing, 2002.

“Introduction.” xi-xvi.

“Chapter One: Psi Phenomena.” 19-42.

“Chapter Two: Mediums, Ghosts and Apparitions.” 43-69.

“Chapter Five: Questions to the Co-Chairman of the CCDSG.” 116-132.

Zollschan, G. K., J. F. Schumaker and G. F. Walsh. *Exploring the Paranormal.* Great Britain: Prism Press, 1989.

“Chapter Seventeen: Sasquatch Sightings in South Dakota” by James R. Stewart. 287-304.



## New Course Proposal

### World Arts and Cultures 51W Aliens, Psychics and Ghosts

**Course Number** World Arts and Cultures 51W

**Title** Aliens, Psychics and Ghosts

**Short Title** ALIEN/PSYCHIC/GHOST

**Units** Fixed: 5

**Grading Basis** Letter grade only

**Instructional Format** Lecture - 3 hours per week  
Discussion - 1 hours per week

**TIE Code** LECS - Lecture (Plus Supplementary Activity) [T]

**GE Requirement** Yes

**Major or Minor Requirement** No

**Requisites** English Comp 3, or 3H, or ESL 36 - enforced. Designate as impacted course.

**Course Description** This course combines the approaches of discourse analysis and the scientific method in order to understand how people make sense of other people's stories of aliens, psychics and ghosts. The class will explore how people come to believe what they do about human life, life after death, and other-than-human life. Satisfies Writing II requirement.

**Justification** Because UCLA offers no specific class on the studies of the "uncanny" or the "paranormal," this course fills a very particular lacunae where students would understand the relationship between rational/scientific thinking and reasoning driven by faith and emotion. Because the trichotomy of aliens/psychics/ghosts encompasses themes found all over the globe and throughout history, and because these themes share common histories of conspiracy, charlatanism, and church conflict, this course allows students in and out of World Arts and Cultures to see how much religious symbolism and art develops from how people define themselves in relation to otherness and ideologies. This course will also become one of the choices in the lower division elective requirement for the proposed WAC BA revisions. There has been no conflict found in the course offerings of Anthropology, Sociology, Film Studies or the Religious Studies IDP.

**Syllabus** File [WAC 51W syllabus 12-15-11.doc](#) was previously uploaded. You may view the file by clicking on the file name.

**Supplemental Information** Submitted by Silvily Thomas, designee for Chair Angelia Leung. Also requesting approval for Writing II (per additional documents submitted separately) and Impacted status. In the quarter system, the Writing II and Impacted Status are co-justifying, particularly in the case of a course title bound to attract student interest. Only by having the Impacted Status can I have students working on the research components of this course early enough to understand the amount of work required to edit multiple drafts of writing, a feature of the Writing II status.

**Grading Structure** Final Research Projects - 50 points  
Secondary Investigation - 10 points  
Pop Quizzes - 20 points  
2 Research Status Reports (2 X 10) - 20 points

**Effective Date** **Fall 2012**

**Instructor** Name

**David Delgado Shorter**

Title

**Associate Professor**

**Quarters Taught**  Fall  Winter  Spring  Summer

**Department** **World Arts and Cultures/Dance**

**Contact** Name

**SILVILY THOMAS**

E-mail

**sthomas@arts.ucla.edu**

[Routing Help](#)

## ROUTING STATUS

**Role:** Registrar's Scheduling Office

**Status:** Pending Action

**Role:** FEC Chair or Designee - Pace, Merrilyn K. (mpace@arts.ucla.edu) - 59707

**Status:** Approved on 1/13/2012 4:06:25 PM

**Changes:** No Changes Made

**Comments:** Merrilyn Pace for Janet O`Shea, SOAA FEC chair. Writing II Course Information Sheet, General Education Course Information Sheet, and WI Arts 51W syllabus submitted to Myrna Castillo.

**Role:** FEC Chair or Designee - Pace, Merrilyn K. (mpace@arts.ucla.edu) - 59707

**Status:** Returned for Additional Info on 12/15/2011 1:39:53 PM

**Changes:** Grading Basis, Requisites, Description

**Comments:** Minor corrections per department and Leann Hennig.

**Role:** Department Chair or Designee - Thomas, Silvily Kessler (sthomas@arts.ucla.edu) - 63696, 61342

**Status:** Approved on 12/6/2011 4:02:20 PM

**Changes:** Description, Justification

**Comments:** Thanks for adding the "W" Yes the course description is complete, except for the period, which I added. The justification has been revised. I'll return the other two documents separately. Submitted by Silvily Thomas, designee for the Chair, Angela Leung.

**Role:** FEC Chair or Designee - Pace, Merrilyn K. (mpace@arts.ucla.edu) - 59707

**Status:** Returned for Additional Info on 12/6/2011 11:48:18 AM

**Changes:** Course Number, Requisites, Quarters Taught

**Comments:** Sil - in addition to the other docs I returned to you, per the CIMS form: WII courses carry the "W" suffix. Is the course description complete? The justification section states there is no degree program in Religious Studies at UCLA -- there is an IDP BA in the Study of Religion.

**Role:** Initiator/Submitter - Thomas, Silvily Kessler (sthomas@arts.ucla.edu) - 63696, 61342

**Status:** Submitted on 11/18/2011 10:43:18 AM

**Comments:** Initiated a New Course Proposal

[Back to Course List](#)

[Main Menu](#) [Inventory](#) [Reports](#) [Help](#) [Exit](#)  
[Registrar's Office](#) [MyUCLA](#) [SRWeb](#)

Comments or questions? Contact the Registrar's Office at  
[cims@registrar.ucla.edu](mailto:cims@registrar.ucla.edu) or (310) 206-7045