

Sociology 096
201 Torrey

Spring, 2009
Prof. Fred Fengler

SCIENCE AND THE SEARCH FOR EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE

“We argue that not only intelligent life, but even the simplest of animal life, is exceedingly rare in our galaxy and in the universe. Life in the form of microbes is very common in the universe but complex life—animals and higher plants—is likely to be far more rare than is commonly assumed. We combine these two predictions of the commonness of simple life and the rarity of complex life into what we will call the Rare Earth Hypothesis.” (Peter Ward and Donald Brownlee, Rare Earth: Why Complex Life is Uncommon in the Universe)

“Looking back at the path that brought me to my present viewpoint, I realize that one cannot begin to consider seriously something so preposterous (as alien abductions) without at least a minimal willingness to look at the possibility that our view of the universe and ways of knowing about it have indeed been incomplete and perhaps flawed. This worldview would require that for something to be real, its behavior must be consistent with the laws of nature we already know, and it should yield its secrets to a way of knowing that relies primarily on the five senses, rational analysis, and a virtually complete separation of subject and object, of the explorer and what is being explored.

Having this in mind, I would like to make a plea that my readers begin with an attitude of not knowing, including not knowing about how we know about anything, especially what is most important to us. I would also ask that they suspend the natural tendency to form questions according to the logic that is characteristic of the human mind as it applies itself to the human world, such as, “If the aliens are X, then why don’t they do Y?” (John Mack, Passport to the Cosmos)

“The thought of life elsewhere is just barely becoming acceptable to large numbers of people on Earth. Fossils of ancient microbial life on a ten-thousand-year-old Martian meteorite are not threatening to most people. The possibility of life on the moons of Jupiter, or on unseen planets revolving around distant stars, does not fill the average person with alarm today. But the idea that advanced intelligences may be visiting our planet for reasons known only to them is another matter. The concept that these visits may be in response to our poor stewardship of Planet Earth is something far beyond the implications of extraterrestrial reality itself. How can we begin to understand what is happening?” (Michael Mannion, Project Mindshift)

“Things that were only twinkles in the minds of engineers and scientists were right here in front of me as life forms, specifically engineered for long-distance travel through space or time.” (Col. Phillip Corso, The Day After Roswell)

“All truth passes through three stages. First it is ridiculed. Second it is violently opposed. Third it is accepted as being self-evident.” (Shopenhauer)

“I never said it was possible. I said it was true!” (Sir William Crookes, British Scientist)

INTRODUCTION

Most of our present experiences are interpreted through the filters of our past personal experiences and our learned cultural beliefs. What happens when we hear about or experience something that falls outside the prevailing paradigm or “consensus reality” of our culture? Do we experience shock, cynicism, skepticism, indifference, curiosity or excitement?

This course addresses the question “Are we alone in the universe?” What is the evidence for the presence of intelligent life outside our planet and how is our response to that evidence often a reflection of our institutional affiliations, cultural beliefs and personal experiences? Furthermore, if we were to assume the presence of extraterrestrial intelligent life, how and when and under what circumstances is contact likely to take place and with what short and long term consequences for human evolution?

Required Books for Course

Jesse Marcel Jr. The Roswell Legacy
 Lynne D. Kitei, The Phoenix Lights
 Seth Shostak & Alex Barnett, Cosmic Company: The Search for Life in the Universe
 Fred Fengler The Law of the Tall (Purchase Through Sociology Department)
 Fred Fengler, Conversations with Sir Garrod: Talking with Extraterrestrials (Purchase Through Soc. Dept)
 Stanton Friedman, Flying Saucers & Science
 Andy Thomas, An Introduction to Crop Circles
 John Mack. Passport to the Cosmos

Topics and Assignments

I Researching the Extraterrestrial Presence

- A. “**Mindsets**” as an Organizing Principle – The Sociological Perspective
- B. From Simple Life Forms to Encounters of the Third and Fourth Kinds
- C. “Rare Earth” and the SETI Mindsets

II Exobiology and Astrobiology

- A. The Case for Our Uniqueness in the Universe
- B. Mars and Rock ALH84001
- C. Mars and “the Face” NASA Coverup??
- D. Life Within Our Solar System
 1. Moons of the planets
- E. Life Outside Our Solar System
- F. Astronomy’s Search for Extra Solar Planets

January 14, 21

Readings: Shostak & Barnett, Cosmic Company Chapters 1-4

Recommended Readings

Ward and Brownlee, Rare Earth: Why Complex Life is Uncommon in the Universe
 S. Dick, Life on Other Worlds: The Twentieth Century ET Life Debate
 Goodwin & Gribbin, XTL: Extraterrestrial Life & How to Find It
 S. McDaniel and M. Parson, The Case for the Face (Mars)

III Radio Contact: The Search for Intelligent ET Life (SETI)

- A. Justifying the Search – The Drake Equation
- B. Lack of Evidence for UFO Related Phenomena
- C. Likely Consequences of Initial Contact
- D. The Cult of SETI

January 28

Readings: Shostak & Barnett, Cosmic Company Chapters 5-7
 Stan Friedman, Flying Saucers & Science, Chapter 5

Recommended Readings

Michael White, *Life Out There: The Truth and Search for ET Life*
 David Lamb, *The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence: A Philosophical Inquiry*
 Albert Harrison, *After Contact: The Human Response to ET Life*

IV Unidentified Flying Objects

- A. Debunkers, Skeptics and True Believers
- B. Witness Evidence & Testimonials
 - 1. Missile Deactivation Witnesses
 - 2. Airline Pilots' Descriptions
 - 3. Retired Military Retrospectives
- C. Photographic Evidence
- D. Physical Evidence
 - 1. Radiation
 - 2. Plant destruction
 - 3. Soil Imprints
 - 4. Debris
- E. Government Coverup or "Mindshift" Policy?
- F. Seeding With The Roswell Alien Technology
- G. Documentation: Classified & Declassified Memos

V Who or what are "The Men in Black?"

VI Ancient Astronauts and Ancient Myths (brief consideration)

- A. The Atlantean and Sumerian Links with ETS
- B. Biblical UFOs
- A. The Nazca Lines of Peru
- B. Ancient Unexplained Artifacts
- C. Mystifying Maps
- D. Pyramids

February 4, 11, 18, 25

Readings: Lynne Kitei, **The Phoenix Lights**
 Jesse Marcel Jr. **The Roswell Legacy**
 Stan Friedman, **Flying Saucers & Science** Forward & Chapters 1,3,4, 6, 8-10 & Conclusion

Recommended Readings:

Nick Pope, Open Skies. Closed Minds
 Col. Philip Corso, The Day After Roswell
 K. Randle, Invasion Washington: UFOs Over the Capitol
 K. Randle, Scientific Ufology
 L. Warren and P. Robbins, Left at East Gate
 M. Mannion, Project Mindshift: The Reeducation of the American Public Concerning ET Life
 A. Baker, UFO Sightings
 H. Cantril, Invasion from Mars: A Study in the Psychology of Panic
 K. Randle and D Schmidt, The Truth About the UFO Crash at Roswell
 S. Greer, Project Disclosure
 R. Salas & J. Klotz, Faded Giant: The 1967 Missile Incidents
 R. Dolan, UFOs and the National Security State: Chronology of a Coverup 1941-1973
 J. Marrs, Alien Agenda

- S. Friedman, Crash at Corona
 Sci Fi Channel, The Roswell Dig Diaries
 I. Clark, Strange Skies: Pilot Encounters with UFOs
 J. Allen Hynek, Night Siege: The Hudson Valley UFO Sightings

Relevant Commercial Films

“Contact” “The Day the Earth Stood Still” “Close Encounters of the Third Kind” “Roswell” “Invasion from Mars” “Independence Day”

MIDTERM EXAM MARCH 4

VIII The Alien Abduction Phenomena

- A. Hallucination, Hypnotic Suggestion, Sleep Paralysis or Alien Experience?
- B. Ridiculing or Accepting the Abductee’s Account
- E. Abduction or Consensual Encounter?
- F. Alien Harvest: The Cattle Mutilations
- G. Alien Healings: Miracle Cures
- H. Visit of Abductee (tentative)

March 18, 25, April 1

Readings: John Mack, Passport to the Cosmos Parts I, II & IV

Recommended Readings:

John Mack, Abduction, Passport to the Cosmos (highly recommended)
 Stanton Friedman et.al., Captured! The Betty & Barney Hill UFO Experience
 Whitley Strieber, Communion: Confirmation
 J. Randles, The Truth Behind the Men in Black
 CDB Bryan, Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind
 Budd Hopkins, Witnessed: Sight Unseen: Science, UFO Invisibility and Transgenic Beings
 Budd Hopkins, Witnessed: The True Story of the Brooklyn Bridge UFO Abductions
 Budd Hopkins, Intruders: The Incredible Visitations at Copley Woods
 Author Unknown, The Allagash Abductions
 L. Leir, Aliens & the Scalpal
 L. M. Howe, Alien Harvest

Relevant Films: “Fire in the Sky,” “Intruders,” “Communion”

IX The Crop Circle Mystery

- A. Hoaxed, Natural or Extraterrestrial Origins?
- B. What do the Patterns Mean?
- C. Are they limited to English Wheat Fields?
- D. Patterns in Ice

April 8, 15

Readings: Fred Fengler, **The Law of The Tall**
 Andy Thomas, **An Introduction to Crop Circles**

Recommended Readings:

P. Delgado & C. Andrews, Circular Evidence
 E. Haselhoff, Deepening Complexity of Crop Circles
 L. Pringle, Crop Circles: The Greatest Mystery of Modern Times
 Colin Andrews, Signs of Contact
 Andy Thomas, Vital Signs: A Complete Guide to the Crop Circle Mystery
 Jay Goldner, **Messages from Space** (recommended though out of print)

X Our ET Heritage / Reflections & Speculation

- A. Past Life Origins
- B. Learning About ET Civilizations Through Remote Viewing
- C. The Perspective of the ET Through Channeled Conversations
 - 1. Visit of Channeler (tentative)

April 22, 29

Reading:

Fred Fengler, **Conversations with Sir Garrod: Talking to Extraterrestrials**

Recommended Readings:

R. & L. Boylan, Close ET Encounters: Positive Experiences with Mysterious Visitors
 D. Cannon, Legacy from the Stars
 C. Brown, Cosmic Voyage; Cosmic Explorer
 L. Sprinkle, Soul Samples: Personal Explorations in Reincarnation and UFO Experiences
 N. Milanovice, We the Arcturians
 N. Jenice, For We Are One: The Pleiadians
 Daryl Anka & Luana Ewing, Bashar, Blueprint for Change
 L. Larkins, Talking to Extraterrestrials

FINAL EXAM, STUDENT REPORTS, EVALUATIONS

Course Evaluation

Grading will be based on ten class quizzes totaling 200 points or 20 points per quiz. The ten highest scores will be used. Another 100 points each will come from a mid term and a final exam for a total of 400 points. All materials discussed in class, readings, tapes and any guest speakers will be included. It is essential that all classes be attended! Class participation can also play a role in the final evaluation.

Extra Credit Assignment

See the movie **Contact**. Then write a **five page** review and critique of the film. What did you think were the major themes of the film? Which of the various “mindsets” we discussed in class did you see represented in the film? How did they treat the subject of UFOs? How well were they represented based on what we have discussed? What did you learn about the nature of reality, space travel and extraterrestrials from this film? How much of this film seemed like fiction or fantasy and how much factual? Did you enjoy the film overall? Why or why not?