

Phenomenology of UAP



Live 8 Week Course

Wednesdays, October-November 2023

Dr. Kimberly S. Engels

Description:

This course will introduce the phenomenological method as a tool for studying UAP. The course will begin by introducing phenomenology as conceived by founding figure Edmund Husserl. Next, we will transition to differentiating mythical or cultural UFOs from the phenomenal UAP. We will then study different types of UAP encounters: from seeing nocturnal lights, to encounters with perceived entities and different dimensions of reality. We will use Husserl's method of bracketing to suspend assumptions and preconceptions about what appears. We will then use eidetic reduction to ask what the unique and essential components make the phenomenon or the experience unique from all other kinds of phenomena or experiences. We will use Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception to study the emotions, bodily sensations, and responses of experiencers. Last, we will use Sartre's phenomenology to understand the role of human value and meaning that is ascribed to the experiences. We will examine close encounters of the first through fifth kinds, as well as draw comparisons and contrasts with other classifications of extraordinary encounters. The course will feature literature from philosophers as well as leading UAP researchers such as Jacques Vallee, John E. Mack, Thomas Bullard, Kenneth Ring, Peter Gutilla, Michael E. Zimmerman, and Jeffrey Kripal.

Session 1: October 4th, 2023

Intro to Husserlian Phenomenology

The first session will introduce phenomenology as a method, focusing primarily on founding

phenomenologist Edmund Husserl. Husserl famously argued that a phenomenon cannot be divorced from our perception of it. This method calls attention to the observable phenomena, descriptions, emotions, and responses of the experiencer. This session will focus on Husserl's concepts of bracketing, which suspends as much as possible preconceptions and assumptions about what is observed, as well as eidetic reduction, which isolates the unique and essential components that make the phenomenon or the experience unique from all other kinds of phenomena or experiences. We will explore why phenomenology is useful for studying dimensions of the UAP experience.

Readings:

Jeffrey Kripal "Making the Cut"

Robert Sokolowski, "An Initial Statement of What Phenomenology Is" and "Eidetic Intuition"

Edmund Husserl, "The Positioning which belongs to the Natural Attitude and its Exclusion" and "The Phenomenological Reductions" from *Ideas 1*.

Session 2: October 11th, 2023

The Mythic vs. Phenomenal UFO

Session 2 will differentiate the mythic or cultural UFO from the phenomenal UFO (or UAP). The UFO myth includes gray aliens, spaceships, abductions, the Space Brothers, alien hybrids, and government coverup. The phenomenal UFO (or UAP) is remarkably different: lights or discs in the sky, strange electrical occurrences, indentations on the ground, effects or marks on the physical body, unknown/atypical looking beings, talking raccoons and owls. We will discuss how utilizing the phenomenological attitude can help differentiate the cultural myth of UFOs from the phenomenal UFO.

Readings:

Thomas Bullard, "The Growth and Evolution of UFO Mythology"

"Explaining UFOs: An Inward Look" and "Explaining UFOs: Something Yet Remains"

Session 3: October 18th, 2023

Lights in the Sky, Discs, and Close Encounters of the First Kind

This session will focus on documented witness accounts of UAP, including encounters close enough to make out some detail. We will examine accounts from pilots, military personnel, and government officials, as well as the experience and footage of Dorothy Izatt. We will apply the eidetic reduction in an attempt to isolate what is common to these encounters. We will also explore the forced suspension of the natural attitude that some experiencers report, as UAP do not follow the every day rules about how reality is supposed to operate.

Readings:

Richard F. Haines, "Unidentified Aerial Phenomena and Aviation Safety"

Julio Miguel Guerra, "Circled by a UFO"

Peter Gutilla, "First Contact," from *Contact with Beings of Light: The Amazing True Story of Dorothy Wilkinson-Izatt*

Session 4: October 25, 2023

Phenomenology of Close Encounters of the 2nd Kind

This session will focus on documented experiences where physical effects of the UFO are observed. We will examine what appears: animals reacting, electrical interferences, paralysis, heat, discomfort in witnesses, marks on the ground, etc. To explore the effects of the UAP experience on the body, we will use Husserl as well as examine the existential phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. For Merleau-Ponty, people construct meaning through bodily experiences in direct engagement with the world. Perceiving means having a body inhabiting the world. We are open to the world, and we are embedded in it. We will specifically utilize his concepts of the lived body, the phenomenal field, and operant intentionality in relation to CE2s. We will briefly begin to address questions of meaning for the individual subject, using both Merleau-Ponty and Husserl.

Readings:

Merleau-Ponty: "The Body as Object and Mechanistic Physiology" from *The Phenomenology of Perception*

Nick Pope, "It's Coming This Way" and "Debriefing the Witnesses" from *Encounter in Rendelshem Forest*

Jacques Vallee, "The Delphos Case" from *UFOs: The Psychic Solution*

Session 5: November 1st

Phenomenology of Close Encounters of the 3rd Kind

This session will explore instances in which the UAP is accompanied by the appearance of an entity. We will look specifically at the Socorro and Ariel School encounters. We will examine the different layers of intentionality in these experiences, and what appears physically, mentally, and emotionally to experiencers. We will also explore the issue of deception on the behalf of the phenomenon, that so often accompanies CE3s, and what the phenomenological attitude adds to analysis of this deception.

Readings:

John Mack, excerpts from *Passport to the Cosmos*

Kevin Randle, "The Beginning" from *Encounter in the Desert: The Case for Alien Contact at Socorro*

Jacques Vallee, "The Phenomenon Negates Itself" from *UFOs: The Psychic Solution*

Session 6: November 8th

Phenomenology of Close Encounters of the 4th Kind

This session will explore close encounters of the fourth kind. This includes “abduction” experiences, as well as cases when witnesses experience a transformation of their sense of reality. The abduction phenomenon is perhaps the most puzzling aspect of UAP studies. Using both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, we will explore what appears in the conscious and bodily experience of individuals who report abduction experiences. We will also introduce Sartre’s famous work on “The Look” to help understand the alien gaze that so many abductees find alarming as well as integral to the encounter.

Readings:

Jean Paul Sartre, “The Look” from *Being and Nothingness*

John Mack, selections from *Abduction*

Kenneth Ring, selections from *The Omega Project*

Michael E. Zimmerman, “Encountering an Alien Otherness”

Peter Gutilla, “With the Light Beings”

Session 7: November 15th

Phenomenology of Close Encounters of the 5th Kind

This session will examine what have come to be known as close encounters of the fifth kind, in which humans initiate the contact process. There is very limited scholarly literature on this phenomenon, however, many witnesses and CE-5 participants report sightings of anomalous phenomena in response to their initiation of contact. In addition to the readings, we will look at footage and photos from CE-5 events. The experience of a CE-5 is considerably different as humans initiate the process. There is a lack of intrusion, violation, confusion, and deception that are often present in other types of close encounters. We will examine both the phenomenal presentation as well as the intentionality of CE-5 participants. In this session we will also continue to use Sartre’s phenomenology, which introduces human freedom and the projection of meaning and value into the world of conscious experience. Sartre’s phenomenology is particularly applicable to CE-5 experiences as it is the individual subject who freely initiates the experience and assigns value and meaning to what appears.

Readings:

Jean Paul Sartre, “The For-Itself and the Being of Value,” and “The For-Itself and the Being of Possibilities” from *Being and Nothingness*

Frida Melacavo, “Close Encounters of the Fifth Kind CE 5 Protocol Journal”

Mark Thomas Clavelle “A Close Encounter of the Fifth Kind: A True Story”

Session 8: November 29th

Phenomenology of the Impossible

This session will use the phenomenological attitude to examine similarities with other anomalous experiences, such as near-death experiences, religious miracles, Marian apparitions, fairy folklore, and Shamanic initiation. Using eidetic reduction, we will identify that which is unique to UAP/UFO experiences, and those elements that are shared with other types of extraordinary encounters.

Readings:

Jacques Vallee, "A Morphology of Miracles" *UFOs: The Psychic Solution*

Mack, "What Kind of Phenomenon is this, and What Can it Tell Us?" from *Passport to the Cosmos*

Kenneth Ring, "Demystifying Extraordinary Encounters," from *The Omega Project*

Joshua Cutchin excerpts from *Ecology of Souls*