College of Social Sciences, PSYC 4085-09: Psychedelics and Psychology

Spring 2020

Instructor Information
Instructor: Dr. Christine Simmonds-Moore
Class Meeting/
Time & Location Tuesdays and
thursdays,12.30-1.45, Callaway Annex room
145
Office Location: Melson 215

Support for courses
*Hyperlinks provided for accessibility throughout; full URLs are available at the end of the
document.
CourseDen D2L Home Page
CourseDen Help (8 AM – 5 PM)
Call: 678-839-6248 or 1-855-933-8946 or
email: online@westga.edu
24/7/365 D2L Help Center
Call 1-855-772-0423
University Bookstore
Student Services
Course Information
Course Description :

In this class, students will explore the emerging research literature on psychedelics for
understanding consciousness, the mind-body relationship, human potential and our relationship
to the environment. We will explore altered states of consciousness, state specific sciences,
different ways of knowing and the impact of psychedelics on creativity, mental imagery,
consciousness, therapy, transpersonal and mystical experiences, paranormal experiences, ecology
and for death and dying.

January 4th, 2020
Texts, Readings, Instructional Resources and References

Required Texts

You will also be asked to engage in other readings which will be provided in pdf or electronic format via courseden.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

As a result of participating in this class, students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of psychedelic experiences
- Demonstrate an understanding of the neural and psychological correlates of psychedelic and non-psychedelic states of consciousness
- Demonstrate an understanding of various exceptional experiences
- Develop their own understanding of consciousness and reality as informed by research with psychedelics
- Demonstrate an understanding of various therapeutic potentials of psychedelic substances
- Apply research findings regarding psychedelics and psychedelic experiences to aspects of the real world

Important statement about this class:
The professor of this class and the class content are not advocating the use of psychedelic drugs. This is a research-based psychology class in which we will explore experiences associated with the consumption of psychedelic drugs and the implications of these experiences for understanding human consciousness, human potential and healing. It is duly noted that psychedelic drug use is currently illegal in many countries, including the USA, and can be associated with negative outcomes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
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| Reflexive writing                | 1. Students will summarize themes they notice in verbal descriptions and images that have been used to represent psychedelic experiences (5).  
  2. Reflect on why psychedelic states may contribute to transpersonal and mystical experiences (5)  
  3. Reflect on the value of psychedelics as therapeutic tools (5)  
  4. Reflect on whether you think psychedelic experiences can enable access to other realities and psychic information or if they are the result of misfirings of the brain (5). | 1. January 30th  
  2. March 3rd  
  3. March 24th  
  4. April 14th | 20%     |
| Altered state experience         | Students will explore a legal altered state of consciousness (lucid dreaming, regular dreaming, hypnagogia, hypnosis, meditation, mild sensory deprivation, a float tank, mirror gazing) and reflect on their experiences using journaling and the Phenomenology of Consciousness Inventory [to be provided]. They will experience this altered state at least 2 times and will examine how their experiences differ from their waking consciousness in terms of imagery, sense of self, empathy, etc. (20). | Due on March 12th by 5 pm. | 20%     |
| Presentations/APA paper          | In groups of 4 or 5, students will develop a research informed presentation (using at least 4 peer reviewed articles) that will explore one application of psychedelics or psychedelic experience. Groups will be coordinated by an MA student mentor.  
  Pick one of the following (you may also propose another topic not listed here) | Presentation files and group contribution ratings are due on April 21st | 40%     |
| What do psychedelics tell us about fairy stories, myths and legends (e.g., little people, flying reindeer, etc.) |  |
| What do psychedelics tell us about religion and/or spirituality? |  |
| What do psychedelics tell us about alien encounter experiences? |  |
| How do psychedelic experiences inform feminism? |  |
| What do psychedelics tell us about time? |  |
| What do psychedelics tell us about the mind-body relationship? |  |
| How do psychedelics inform us about nature and the environmental crisis? |  |
| What do psychedelics tell us about compassion, empathy and love? |  |

| Quiz | The quiz will be run via courseden and will tap student learning from all 15 weeks of the semester. | 20% |
| TOTAL | -- | -- | 100% |

Grading Information and Policy

The 4 reflexive writing assignments and your altered state written assignment should be submitted as a hard copy to your professor AND via the assignment folder on courseden which is enabled for Turnitin (see note about plagiarism and Turnitin below). Presentations may make use of powerpoint or other presentation software, and may also incorporate a creative work. Presentations should be supplemented with an APA formatted reference list, and the completion of a group contribution form.
Grading structure and point scale for undergraduates
90% - 100%  A
80% - 89%    B
70% - 79%    C
60% - 69%    D
< 60%        F

Please read over the assignment expectations and rubrics prior to submitting your work. Each assignment has a different percentage weighting which all add up to a total of 100%. There may be opportunities for additional credit during the course, including the exhibition of good professional behavior inside and outside of class. The quiz will be graded automatically.

**Grading Rubrics**

Grading rubrics for assignments will be available on coursesden prior to submission dates.

Please see the [Common Language for Course Syllabi](#) for official information on UWG’s Academic Integrity Policy.

**Plagiarism and Turnitin**

Plagiarism is a serious issue in academia. This occurs if someone presents another person’s ideas (written or spoken) as their own. Turnitin is some electronic software (that is tied to the assignment folder in coursesden) that allows you to check the originality in your written work and can help you to avoid plagiarism. It is highly unlikely that you will get an originality report of 0 – but the reports will be color coded, and a higher score (above 25% similarity) implies that your work is less original, you should aim for a low score (this means that your work is more original). If plagiarism is detected in your work, you will automatically fail the assignment, and may fail the course.

**Communication Rules**

**Communication Rules:**

If you have a question about a grade, please email me using the email within the coursesden system. You can also organize an office hour appointment in person or via email or the telephone. Office hours appointments can be booked directly via google calendar and are 30 minutes in length. I prefer that you send me your questions via email or CourseDen email as I rarely check my voicemail. You can also send a text message via google voice to contact me directly.
Classroom Etiquette:

- Be sensitive and reflective to what others are saying.
- Keep the dialog collegial and professional.
- It is expected that students arrive on time (not more than 10 minutes after the official start of the class) and stay for the duration of the class. Students who are attending only to sign the class roll will not be marked as having attended.
- Students should switch their cell phones off or onto “silent” during class time and should not use Facebook, email, texts etc. such that you can concentrate on the class.
- If you use your cell phone or electronic device for non-class related purposes during the class, I will not be able to write a letter of recommendation at the end of your degree.
- Students are encouraged to ask questions and engage in discussions relevant to the topics covered during each session.
- Remember that it is not possible to hear what someone is saying when more than one person talks at once.
- Students should respect each others’ belief systems and perspectives. The classroom is a place for academic discussion about psychedelic experiences.
- When emailing your professor, please use appropriate language (as if you are writing a letter). This is good practice for life after university and reflects professionalism.

Expected Response Times

I will endeavor to grade your assignments in a timely manner. Presentation grades will be given following the completion of all presentations by all groups (using a rubric). I will make every attempt to return your short written assignments within 7 days, but the amount of feedback required may extend that time. I will endeavor to return all emails in 36-hours during the week. If you email me over the weekend, I will endeavor to reply first thing on Monday morning.

Late work policy:

Exams must be completed by the due date. Assignments may be accepted late, subject to a penalty, unless there is a valid medical or other extenuating circumstance (in which case, evidence will be requested).

What to do if you miss your final exam

If you miss your final exam and prior arrangements have not been made, you may receive a grade of F on that exam or paper and this may affect your final grade in the class. If you miss your exam due to an emergency, please contact the Psychology office at (678)839-6510 or go to Melson Room 123 as soon as possible to complete the application: “Missed Final Exam: Verification of Emergency”. This form will need to be approved by the chair for an incomplete grade which may allow you the time to make up your exam or complete your final assignments. This application will require documentation and authorization from you to verify your emergency.
Expectations of Students

Course Structure:
This class will critically explore a range of subjective experiences and applications associated with psychedelics. It is important that all students read and prepare prior to attending classes so that you can participate in our in-class discussions and activities. Classes will consist of lectures, discussions and hands-on activities. Undergraduate students will work in small groups with a graduate student mentor for in class activities and in researching and preparing your presentation. It is expected that students keep on top of the assignments in order to succeed in this class.

Course and UWG Policies

Attendance Policy:
In order to distribute Title IV funding (federal student aid), student attendance verification is required. **It is the student’s responsibility to make sure that they are marked present by signing the class roster that will be circulated during each class. If you do not sign the class roster, you will be marked as absent.** Students who do not attend classes during the first week may be dropped from the class. Students who add classes during drop/add are responsible for ensuring that they are verified as being in attendance by contacting the course instructor.

Americans with Disabilities Act Statement:
If you are a student who is disabled as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and require assistance or support services, please seek assistance through the [Office for Accessibility Services](#). UWG also provides [Accessibility Statements for Technology](#) that you may be required to use for this course.

For more information on the Americans with Disabilities Act, UWG Email, Credit Hour, and UWG Honor Code policies as well as information on Academic Tutoring, Student Services, and Technical Requirements, Privacy Policy, and Accessibility Statements, please see the [Common Language for Syllabus](#) document.

Additional Support Information

Technical Support
Technical support for CourseDen, as well as the technological requirements, accessibility statements, privacy statements, tutorials, and other information can be found at [Technology Requirements](#).

Center for Academic Success
The new [Center for Academic Success](#) (CAS) provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. The CAS offers free appointment-based peer tutoring in core courses, as well as supplemental instruction (SI)—which is peer-facilitated collaborative learning—in a variety of disciplines. Students seeking help with study skills and strategies can attend workshops through the Academic Success Workshop series, or work individually with either a staff or peer Academic Coach. Beginning Fall 2014, the CAS will also offer “Back on Track,” a voluntary academic recovery program designed for students who want
to improve their grades and academic standing. The Center for Academic Success is located in UCC 200, and can be reached at 678-839-6280. Our email address is cas@westga.edu.

**Smarthinking**

Smarthinking offers online tutoring services and resources (including the Writing Center) for UWG students/instructors in all courses. A link to Smarthinking is available in CourseDen under Resources in the navigation bar.

**Student Services**

Here is a great resource of Student Services for all students at UWG, whether or not they are taking online courses. This link provides students with most of the information they need. If a student is experiencing distress and needs some help, check out UWG Cares.

**Full URL Support for Courses**

- **CourseDen D2L Home Page**  
  [https://westga.view.usg.edu/](https://westga.view.usg.edu/)
- **CourseDen Help (8 AM – 5 PM)**  
  [https://uwgonline.westga.edu/uwg-online-student-help.php](https://uwgonline.westga.edu/uwg-online-student-help.php)  
  Email: [online@westga.edu](mailto:online@westga.edu)
- **24/7/365 D2L Help Center**  
  [https://d2lhelp.view.usg.edu/](https://d2lhelp.view.usg.edu/)
- **University Bookstore**  
  [http://www.bookstore.westga.edu/](http://www.bookstore.westga.edu/)
- **Common Language for Course Syllabi**  
  [https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php](https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php)
- **UWG Cares**  
  [http://www.westga.edu/UWGcares/](http://www.westga.edu/UWGcares/)
- **Accessibility Services**  
  [https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php](https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php)
- **Student Services**  
- **Center for Academic Success**  
  [http://www.westga.edu/cas/](http://www.westga.edu/cas/)
- **Distance Learning Library Services**  
  [https://www.westga.edu/library/resource-sharing.php](https://www.westga.edu/library/resource-sharing.php)
- **Ingram Library Services**  
  [http://www.westga.edu/library/](http://www.westga.edu/library/)
- **Proctored Exams**  
  [http://uwgonline.westga.edu/exams.php#student](http://uwgonline.westga.edu/exams.php#student)
- **UWG Accessibility Statements for Technology**  
  [https://docs.google.com/document/d/16Ri1XgaXiGx28ooO-zRvYPraV3Aq3F5ZNJJyVDGyVnEA/edit?ts=57b4c82d#heading=h.yrquefffvts1f](https://docs.google.com/document/d/16Ri1XgaXiGx28ooO-zRvYPraV3Aq3F5ZNJJyVDGyVnEA/edit?ts=57b4c82d#heading=h.yrquefffvts1f)

*This syllabus is subject to minor amendments and alterations.*