

Alice laughed. "There's no use trying," she said. "One can't believe impossible things."

"I dare say you haven't had much practice," said the queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."



PSY 4910/5343

Science vs. Pseudoscience
& Psychological Science

Syllabus

Exercise #1

Answer the following question...

What is Science?

(You have five minutes)

Exercise #1

Time is up!

Hand them in!

Later, for the second part of the exercise, we will critique the answers

Thoughts Guiding Class

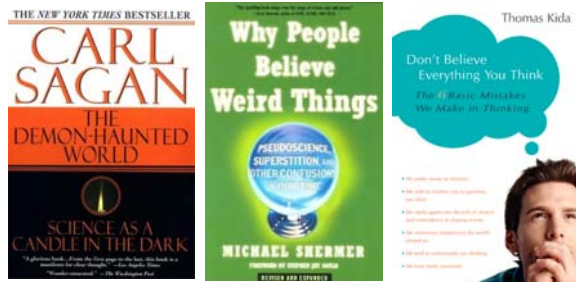
“Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.”

David Hume

“Keeping an open mind is a virtue, but not so open that your brains fall out.”

James Oberg

Required Texts



Goals & Objectives

Increase critical thinking skills

Learn how to apply scientific / empirical modes of thinking to various phenomena

Learn the difference between science and pseudoscience and how they explain things

Understand why we are so easily fooled

Class Tips

Lecture slides will be posted online

Read before coming to class

Come to class ready to discuss the readings

Come to class...period

Do not...

Talk while someone else is talking

Be afraid to ask questions

Have your phone on during class

Send me emails with any of the following:
Thx, u, r, dude, l8r, lol, omg, no capital letters, all capital letters, no name, "Mr. Lack," etc.

Do...

- Ask questions
- Think critically
- Be respectful of others
- Send me emails in the form of a letter
- Ask questions

Grading

- 50 points – Media critiques (5 @ 10)
- 350 points – Exercises (7 @ 50)
- 100 points – Group excursions
- 250 points – Blog posts
- 250 points – Pseudoscience booth

Media Critiques

For most topics, we will watch a video from either a skeptical or non-skeptical point of view

It is your job to carefully analyze these and determine what you see as their strengths and weaknesses, as well as what pieces of critical thinking are/are not violated

Exercises

Assignments either carried out during class time or assigned in class and turned in the next day

If missed, cannot be made up

There are 8 exercises for the course, meaning you can miss one

Excursions

An outing to Wal-Mart in Edmond is planned, as is one to Whole Foods

Brief write-ups will be required, as will discussion

Topics Covered

What is science?

What is pseudoscience?

Why can't we trust our brains?

Why can't we trust our world?

Is that a probe in your pocket, or are you just happy to see me?

Topics Covered

Ghosts, demons, & witches, oh my!

Frauds, fakes, and other psychics

If that's the alternative, I'll stick with this one

Evolution...or evilution?
