McGill psychology professor Don Donderi continues his four-part, weekly discussion of UFO phenomenon with a review of the best evidence that UFOs are a class of phenomena by themselves, and not mistaken observations of either natural phenomena or human artifacts (e.g. satellites, aircraft). Dr. Donderi will discuss and illustrate the arguments of skeptics, including those of psychoanalyst C. G. Jung, and well-known scientists like Carl Sagan and the late British physicist R. V. Jones, as well as the role of the UFO phenomenon in modern written and media culture.

Following today's lecture, the series continues next Wednesday, March 18 with a discussion of the most controversial aspect of the UFO close encounter experience: UFO abductions. Dr. Donderi will discuss the modern background of the phenomenon, the arguments of psychological skeptics, including those raised at a symposium he organized in May 2008 at the Association for Psychological Science convention in Chicago. He will also describe his own research involvement with this problem, which involves the use of standard psychological measurement methods to evaluate alleged abductees and to define common features of the experience.

A research psychologist who has published many experimental and theoretical papers in the areas of visual perception, memory, and psychological measurement, Dr. Donderi has studied the UFO phenomenon since 1966.

The talks conclude on Wednesday, March 25 with a discussion of the epistemology of the UFO phenomenon, based on a widely known work, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, written by Thomas Kuhn in 1962. Dr. Donderi will also discuss the role of Bayes' theorem in evaluating the evidence, and the contribution of Leon Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory in explaining the scientific public's reaction to the UFO phenomenon in general.

Each lecture is scheduled to last an hour, with time for audience questions and discussion both during and after the talk.

UFOs and Close Encounters: The Psychology of a Phenomenon, Four talks by Don C. Donderi; Wednesdays March 4, 11, 18 and 25, 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m, Room N 2/2 Stewart Biological Sciences Building. Admission is free, all are welcome.

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