

Instructor: Kiel Shaub, Ph.D.

THE DOORS OF PERCEPTION: PSYCHEDELICS, HEALING, AND CREATIVE INSIGHT

“If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, Infinite.”

—William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

Course Description:

Take a trip through "The Doors of Perception" to discover how psychedelics have shaped our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. This interdisciplinary course explores the spiritual, artistic and cultural revolutions inspired by altered states of consciousness and investigates the profound questions these substances provoke. From indigenous traditions to modern art movements and contemporary clinical research, we will trace the interplay between psychedelics and transformative insight, using diverse media to unpack their potential as companions and guides in our personal and collective growth.

Drawing on Aldous Huxley's seminal essay "The Doors of Perception," musical explorations of the Doors and visual art from the psychedelic era, and contemporary works like Michael Pollan's *How to Change Your Mind*, students will uncover how these experiences have redefined creative expression and holistic health. The course will also feature contemporary studies on psilocybin, MDMA, and ayahuasca, guest lectures from artists and experts in neuroscience and psychedelic therapy, as well as creative assignments to channel personal reflection and artistic exploration. Prepare to embark on a mind-expanding journey into the fantastically real, a realm where science, art, and imagination come together to ignite our human potential.

Potential Media:

(Students will play a role in selecting from and augmenting this list)

Fiction, Poetry, Essays, Memoirs:

Rig Veda

William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793)

Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception* (1954)

Ken Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962)

Tom Wolfe, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968)

Maria Sabina, *Selections* (2003)

Michael Pollan, *How to Change Your Mind* (2018)

Christopher Kilham, *The Lotus and the Bud: Cannabis, Consciousness, and Yoga Practice* (2021)

Experimental Science:

Rick Strassman, *The Psychedelic Handbook: A Practical Guide* (2022)

Dennis McKenna (Ed.), *Ethnopharmacological Search for Psychoactive Drugs* (2018)

Instructor: Kiel Shaub, Ph.D.

Rick Strassman, *DMT: The Spirit Molecule* (2001)

Phil Wolfson; Glenn Hartelius, *The Ketamine Papers* (2016)

Havenith, et.al., “Decreased CO₂ saturation during circular breathwork supports emergence of altered states of consciousness” (2014)

Historical & Anthropological:

R. Gordon Wasson, *The Wondrous Mushroom: Mycolatry in Mesoamerica* (1980)

R. Gordon Wasson, *The Road to Eleusis* (1978)

Carl Ruck; Mark Hoffman, *Entheogens, Myth, and Human Consciousness* (2013)

Musical Artists:

The Doors

The Gamblers

The Beatles

Pink Floyd

Jefferson Airplane

Janis Joplin

Jimmy Hendrix

George Clinton

Marvin Gaye

David Bowie

The Grateful Dead

The Flaming Lips

Animal Collective

Daniel Donato

Sturgill Simpson

A\$AP Rocky

Film & Television:

Easy Rider (1969)

James Cameron Interview about Psychedelic Trips (1980s???)

Avatar: The Way of Water (2022)

Fathom (2021)

Squaring the Circle: the Story of Hipgnosis (2023)

Hamilton's Pharmacopeia (2016)

The Sunshine Makers (2017)

Have a Good Trip (2020)

Magic Trip (Ken Kesey) (2011)

Fantastic Fungi (2019)

Curandera (2025)