

Evidence, Experience, and Authority in Contested Knowledge

International Interdisciplinary Workshop (final program 8 August 2026)

Online | 26-27 August 2026

Organised by Dr Lucia Assenzi (PH Tirol) & Dr Matteo Polato (Manchester Metropolitan University)

All sessions are scheduled in **UK time**.

Presentations are **20 minutes** long, with 10 minutes reserved for discussion.

Wednesday 26th August

Session Link: [Evidence, Experience, and Authority in Contested Knowledge - day 1](#)

12:00-12:30 – Welcome and Introduction

12:30-14:00 – Panel 1: Evidence in Media, Politics and Conspiracies

- *David Mee* - Screenshot: The Ephemeral Evidentiality of the Web
- *Dmitry A. Mikhailov and Nikolai M. Ternov* - “Great Again”: Repetition and Evidential Authority in Political Discourse
- *Isabella Ferron* - Evidentiality and Epistemic Authority in German-Language Conspiracy Discourse

14:00-14:30 – Online Coffee Break

14:30-16:30 – Panel 2: Contested Evidentiality in UAPs and UFOs Discourse

- *Aaron French* - UAP Esotericism and Negotiating the Weird
- *Gabriel Mckee* - Religious epistemology, charismatic authority, and syncretism in the flying saucer contactee movement: John W. Dean’s portrait of the extraterrestrial realm
- *Greg Eghigian* - Weighing the Truth of Testimony in the UFO and Alien Encounter Experience

16:30-17:00 – Discussion

Thursday 27th August

Session Link: [Evidence, Experience, and Authority in Contested Knowledge - day 2](#)

12:00-13:30 – Panel 3: Evidence in Religions and Conspiratorial Beliefs

- *Marielle Hesselink* - Embodying the Conspiracy: Satanic Ritual Abuse and the Credibility of Female Survivor Entrepreneurs
- *Krushna Dande* - Hitler's UFOs Against the Demiurge: Miguel Serrano's Gnostic Conspiracy
- *Marion Ronca* - After the "New Age": Bert Hellinger's family constellations between "effective" and "unscientific"

13:30 – 14:00 – Online Coffee Break

14:00 – 15:00 – Panel 4: Spiritualism, Ghosts and Scientific Evidence

- *Emma Merklings* - 'Science, Spectacle, and Spiritualist Belief: Margery Crandon's Photographic Performances'
- *Helen Hall* - Evidence and the Cock Lane Ghost Saga

15:00 - 15:15 – Short Online Break

15:15 - 16:15 - Panel 5: Cryptozoological Traces and Remains

- *Jason Potel* - Torso to tale: The Feejee Mermaid as Scientific Specimen in Evangelical America
- *Nicholas Mohlmann* - "Whatever the Loveland Frogman Is or Isn't": fortune telling and autobiographical evidence in Zelia Edgar's Just Another Tinfoil Hat

16:15-16:45 – Concluding Remarks