

Psychology 376 – Spring 2008
Topics in Exp'tal/Cognitive Psychology: Creativity

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Johnson

Phone: 610-625-7013

Office: 224 PPHAC

Office Hours: Monday 2-3pm
Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-2pm

When: TR 2:20-3:30pm

Where: 301 PPHAC

Website: <http://blackboard.moravian.edu/>

Pwd: ideas

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Course Objectives: In this course, we will explore the nature of creativity, approaching the issue from multiple perspectives: What characteristics do creative individuals have? How do we measure creativity? What kinds of cognitive processes (knowledge, expertise, flexible thinking) go into creativity? What are societal influences on our perceptions of creativity? We will read about psychological theories of creativity and discuss how those theories apply to specific examples across disciplines (science, art, literature, etc.) of creative individuals and endeavors.

Readings: Required text: *Handbook of Creativity* by R. J. Sternberg (ed.). Additional readings will be provided either in class or via the blackboard website.

Specific Course Objectives:

1. Discuss important psychological theories and findings about creativity—including knowing some of the important researchers in these areas. Explore different explanations of what creativity is and who is creative. Think critically about how societal, cognitive, personality, and other factors contribute to creativity.
2. Hear thoughts about creativity in other disciplines from guest speakers and integrate those ideas with psychological theories.
3. Communicate to others your own ideas and the gist of a piece of research and how they fit into the larger picture of creativity theories and findings.
4. Use psychological theories of creativity to formulate questions about real-world examples of creativity (creative ideas/achievements or creative individuals).
5. Research a creative achievement of your choice, looking in a detailed way at the steps that led to this product or idea and discussing how theories of creative relate to the process involved in this achievement.

Course Evaluation:

Attendance: Each student can have up to 3 allowed absences. Except where arranged with me (on a case-by-case basis), for each absence beyond the 3 allowed ones, **your final class participation grade will be reduced by 1 letter** (e.g., B+ → C+). A legitimate reason for being late can happen to anyone now and then, but repeated lateness is disrespectful to me and to your classmates. Come see me if you have a legitimate reason for repeated lateness or absence.

Class Participation: You will be given a grade (see scale below) based on your participation in class discussions and on questions/reactions in response to the readings made in a *class journal*. Some of these reflections will be written during class in response to prompts given by the professor, and some will be comments, questions, ideas, etc. made in response to the assigned readings. I will collect the class journals at semi-random intervals throughout the term, in an unannounced fashion, so you should bring these journals to every class.

- A:** Contributes to class discussion by asking questions or making comments, in particular providing insightful and thought-provoking ideas that go beyond simple methodological questions. Contributions can include either bringing up points or responding to other's points, but without overly dominating the discussion. Insightful written questions/comments are formed in conjunction with the reading. Ideas go beyond what is read to show an incorporation of your own ideas or a synthesis of information across sources.
- B:** Consistently attentive and engaged but only occasionally contributing spontaneously to class discussions. Questions/comments that consistently reflect an accurate but superficial understanding of the material (e.g., reiterating an authors' point in your own words rather than going beyond the point to add something of your own or make any integration across ideas).
- C:** No spontaneous contribution to class discussion, or contribution with evidence of poor preparation. Lateness beyond 15 min = automatic start grade of C. Written questions/comments are made but reflect poor preparation (e.g., a question that could be answered with minimal effort by the student him- or herself).
- D:** Shows up but doesn't participate except when directly asked a question. Disengaged from class. No written questions/comments apart from what is directly prompted in class.
- F:** Highly disruptive (e.g., table-dancing) or inconsiderate (e.g., snoring loudly during the entire class, initiating fist-fights) behavior in class discussions. No written comments/questions.

Discussion papers: You will be responsible for turning in two medium-length reaction papers (4-5 pages). These papers will synthesize some of the foundational ideas about creativity. These assignments should be typed (double-spaced) and proofread for clarity, spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. Any ideas presented by a guest speaker during that section will also need to be incorporated.

Creativity in a Discipline presentation: You will be responsible for an in-class presentation on how the study of creativity can relate to a particular discipline of your own choosing (no duplicates will be allowed). Your presentation should tap into main themes regarding creativity as discussed in class and promoted through class readings. No outside literature research is required, but you will need to conduct a brief and informal interview of a person in that discipline and integrate some of their ideas into your presentation.

"Madness" presentation: You will be placed in pairs to give an in-class presentation on a particular mental condition as it relates to creativity. You will lay out the fundamental aspects of the condition to which you have been assigned and briefly discuss two pieces of scholarly experimental/case-study research (one source per person) addressing creativity of people with this condition.

Interview paper: You will write a paper (~5-7 pages) summarizing an interview (actual or hypothetical) you conducted with a person that you characterize as a “highly creative” individual. The interview itself does not need to be very long, but a good portion of the paper will involve laying out how you came up with the questions for the interview using material and concepts discussed in class.

Creative achievement paper: You will write a paper (~10-12 pages) that chooses a particular creative achievement and treats this achievement as a case study, exploring how it occurred, personal and social conditions surrounding it, how it was received, and how psychological theories we have discussed in class relate to that achievement. The main concern you should have at the beginning is making sure you select a topic that has sufficient literature available about it.

Late Policy: Late papers will be accepted for up to four days after the due date and, unless otherwise noted, will result in a reduction of *1 letter grade* (i.e., 10%) *for every calendar day late* beginning *sharply* at 5pm on the day the assignment is due. After the four-day period, the paper will not be accepted and a grade of 0 will be applied. Exceptions to this policy will only be made under truly extenuating circumstances (determined by me on a case-by-case basis), and NO exceptions will be made for technical difficulties. In addition, I will only accept work turned in by email if you have arranged with me to do so for that particular assignment.

Note that it is within my purview as instructor to use qualitative judgments in determining grades for presentations, papers, participation, or other aspects of the course.

Overall grades- Breakdown:

Class participation	15%
Discussion papers (2 @ 15% each)	30%
Presentations (2 @ 10% each)	20%
Interview paper	15%
<u>Creative achievement paper</u>	<u>20%</u>
Total	100%

Plagiarism and cheating:

Any work that you turn in for this class must be entirely your own work. Any sources used must be properly documented. For more information on plagiarism and cheating, refer to the Student Handbook and the following website regarding academic responsibility at Moravian College: <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/academic2.htm>. As this site clearly explains, the consequences for cheating or plagiarism can range from failing the assignment to receiving an F for the final course grade to expulsion, depending on the severity of the case and prior history of offenses. Although I am not generally opposed to your discussing assignments with fellow students from the class, all of the work you submit to me must be entirely your own, and in some cases I may ask you not to collaborate with fellow students. I will spend class time discussing ways to avoid plagiarizing and how to quote appropriately, but apart from this it is your responsibility to come see me if you have any questions about your use of sources or when/in what way it is okay to collaborate with other students in the class.

Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides for some accommodations to be made for students with certain disabilities. If you have such a disability and are willing to disclose it, you may take advantage of such accommodations. In order to do so, you are required to meet with Mrs. Laurie Roth in the Office of Learning Services (for learning disabilities and/or ADD/ADHD) or Dr. Ronald Kline in the Counseling Center (for all other disabilities). Accommodations cannot be offered until I have received authorization from one of these centers based on documentation of your disability. You should also consider taking advantage of the Learning Services Office if you are having difficulty academically in this (or any other) class. The office is located at 1307 Main St. (phone: 610-861-1510).

Class Schedule: This schedule is tentative. It is likely that some changes will be made to the precise layout of course coverage and to the assigned readings, e.g., to accommodate outside speakers, and in particular regarding the last few weeks of the course. Any changes will be announced in class and listed on Blackboard.

Week:	Class topic/activities:	Readings/Assignments:
1	Jan 15 T Introduction and course overview	
	Jan 17 R What is creativity?	Bowden Ch. 1-2
2	Jan 22 T What is creativity, cont'd	Handbook Ch. 1
	Jan 24 R Methodologies for studying creativity	Handbook Ch. 3; Kim (2006)
3	Jan 29 T Methodologies cont'd	Handbook Chs. 5-6*
	Jan 31 R Creativity theories: Investment	Handbook Ch. 16*; Nature Ch. 16 <i>Discussion paper 1</i> (Fri)
4	Feb 5 T Creativity theories: Personality &	Handbook Ch. 14
	Feb 7 R Motivation	Handbook Ch. 15; Kasof et al. (2007)
5	Feb 12 T Creativity theories: Cognitive	Handbook Ch. 10
	Feb 14 R	Handbook Ch. 12 (dropped); Weisberg (2004)
6	Feb 19 T Insight & creativity	Nature Ch. 4
	Feb 21R	Segal (2004); Djikic et al. (2006) <i>Discussion paper 2</i> (Fri)
7	Feb 26 T <i>Discipline presentations</i>	
	Feb 28 R <i>Discipline presentations</i>	

Week:	Class topic/activities:	Readings/Assignments:
8	Mar 3-7 NO CLASSES – SPRING BREAK	
9	Mar 11 T <u>Scientific creativity</u>	Nature Ch. 9
	Mar 13 R	Nature Ch. 11
10	Mar 18 T <u>Creativity and “Madness”</u>	Kaufman (2001)
	Mar 20 R <i>Madness presentations</i>	
11	Mar 25 T <u>Creative process</u>	
	Mar 27 R Creativity across cultures	Handbook Ch. 17; <i>Interview paper</i> (Fri)
12	Apr 1 T <u>Creativity in organizations</u>	Handbook Ch. 19
	Apr 3 R	Stokols et al. (2002)
13	Apr 8 T <u><i>Creative achievement profile presentations</i></u>	
	Apr 10 R <i>Creative achievement profile presentations</i>	
14	Apr 15 T <u>Writing center meetings (required)</u>	
	Apr 17 R No class meeting – Work on papers	
15	Apr 22 T <u>No class meeting – Work on papers</u>	
	Apr 24 R Meet to fill out course evals	<i>Final Creative Achievement paper due</i> (Fri)

*Reading(s) to be split amongst class

Handbook = Handbook of Creativity (Sternberg, ed.); main text available at bookstore

Nature = The Nature of Insight (Sternberg & Davidson, eds.); to be provided by Prof. Johnson

Boden = The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanisms (Boden); to be provided by Prof. Johnson

All other names refer to articles; to be provided by Prof. Johnson