

# Course Syllabus

## Psychology of Creativity

PSY 3355.001

Spring 2017

### 1. Course Information

Meeting Times: Monday & Wednesday, 1:00 PM –2:15 PM

Meeting Location: GR 4.204

Instructor: Dr. Magdalena Grohman, [mggrohman@utdallas.edu](mailto:mggrohman@utdallas.edu)

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 2:30 PM-3:30 PM or by appointment, JO 4.118

TA: Vignesh Murugavel, [vrn130030@utdallas.edu](mailto:vrn130030@utdallas.edu)

Office Hours: by appointment, JO 4.118

### 2. Course Description

Creativity is a very complex and multi-facet phenomenon. No wonder then, that to give it a thorough look, we have to consider the personality, cognition, biology, development of those who create, and contexts in which they create (the nature and nurture of creativity), and how best to enhance creativity (as artist, scientist, teacher, business or human service professional, or other). We will review what research shows (including multiple perspectives, methods, and answers), and what it does not (we may discover more questions than answers!). The course examines creativity from four main perspectives: product that meets criteria for being creative; process that leads to conceiving of a creative product, person that is capable of engaging in such process, and people that form social context for creativity. On top of that, during some of the class meetings we will learn how to use certain mental tools, with the aim of developing richer and more flexible mental strategies in creative thinking. For the most part, I envision this course as an interactive lecture. It means that I will try to engage you in conversation about culture and creativity through various readings, assignments and group discussions.

### 3. Student Learning Objectives

- Students will describe and explain the nature of psychology of creativity as a scientific discipline (how psychology, as a social science, asks and answers questions about creativity).
- Students will describe and analyze major theoretical perspectives in the area of psychology of creativity, and overarching themes of psychology
- Students will identify and explain different research methods used by psychologists in the area of creativity
- Students will use critical thinking to evaluate popular media, scholarly literature, and empirical reports (debunking myths about creativity).
- Students will apply main concepts of creativity and creative thinking to issues in everyday life
- Students will organize and synthesize the vast amount of information we will cover in the course
- Students will demonstrate effective writing skills in the formats of summaries & integrations, and for informing, explaining and arguing purposes.

### 4. Required & Recommended Texts and Materials

#### Required Textbook and Materials

- Sawyer, R. K. (2012). *Explaining Creativity. The Science of Innovation*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Oxford University Press (available at University Bookstore, Stanza Off-Campus Bookstore, in the McDermott Library Reserves: 13444, 13445).
- Amabile, T. (2001). Beyond talent: John Irving and the passionate craft of creativity. *American Psychologist*, 56, 333-336
- Ward, T. B. (2001). Creative cognition, conceptual combination, and the creative writing of Stephen R. Donaldson. *American Psychologist*, 56, 50-353
- Stokes, P. (2001). Variability, constraints and creativity: Shedding light on Claude Monet. *American Psychologist*, 56, 4, 355-359
- A 9" x 12" spiral-bound sketchbook (at least 40 pages, although you may need more or less depending on how much you include, whether you use both sides of the page, and how often you remove pages to "start over"). Sketchbooks should have no lines; smaller sketchbooks will not be accepted! You may use a sketchbook that you used for a different class. You will also need drawing/coloring materials (this will be discussed in class).

- 3 x 5 index cards for one-minute evaluation essays

### Recommended Reading

- Root-Bernstein, R. & Root-Bernstein, M. (1999). *Sparks of genius. The 13 thinking tools of the world's most creative people*. Boston, MA: A Mariner Book Houghton Mifflin Company (available at University Bookstore or at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)).
- Burroway, J. (2010). *Imaginative writing. The elements of craft* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Penguin Academic Series). Longman (available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com))
- Sawyer, R. K. (2013). *Zig Zag. The surprising path to greater creativity*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley (available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com))

**Important Note:** The hard copies of the three full-text articles from *American Psychologist* can be found in **Behavior and Brain Science EPSCO database, McDermott Library**. Go to the library website, then go to “find articles & databases”, then click on Behavior and Brain Sciences Power search. Type in relevant key words, and get the pdfs of those texts. **I will not** put copies of these articles on e-learning; it is your responsibility to find them and read them. There will be questions based on these three articles in the tests!

## 5. Assignments

**A. Attendance and participation (up to 40 pts.).** Class attendance and participation are crucial components of learning process. When you attend and when you actively engage in class activities, you process new information in at least four ways: you listen, you take notes, you ask questions, and while discussing a given subject, you paraphrase what you have just heard. All of the above increases the odds of understanding and remembering the material covered in class. That’s why I expect you to attend class and to participate in class discussions and exercises. I am aware that unforeseen life circumstances may impact your ability to attend class. I believe that natural consequences are appropriate here: if you miss class, you miss out on important course material and experiences, which impacts learning. It is my experience that students who miss classes have the most difficulty with this course.

Furthermore, at the end of each class I will be assigning points to students who were active and who made a significant contribution to discussion (quality of remarks based on readings). If after a class, you think you contributed to the discussion, write your name on an index card, and hand it to me on your way out. If you are shy and don’t feel comfortable participating in a discussion in class, you can still have the voice in the discussion by posting your reflections and arguments on the discussion board. Please make sure that your post is on the board after the respective class, no later than 10 PM that day. Lastly, at the end of some classes I will assign short “one-minute essays” on various aspects of a given class (“the muddiest point”, “my favorite part”, and the like). I may also ask you to summarize the material covered during class. The quality of those short essays will tell me how attentive you were during the class, and whether you read your assigned material or not. To sum up, although I will not assign points for mere attendance, if you skip classes you may lose chance to score participation points. **Each one minute essay of good quality is worth 2pts, up to 20 points total, and for each class that you attended and participated in you will get 2 pts., up to 20 points total.**

**B. Three noncumulative exams (up to 300 pts.).** We will have three noncumulative exams (100 points each), based on the class content (lecture, activities, discussions) and readings covered prior to them. Please, remember to plan and pace your reading! The first exam will cover class content and readings from week one through week four, the second exam covers weeks five through eight, and the third one – weeks nine through fifteen.

The exams will include multiple choice and short-answer essay questions. Your familiarity with *our main text and lecture content* will be assessed through the open-ended essay questions. They will belong to three categories: analytical (probing your ability to compare, contrast, point to differences and similarities between learned concepts), creative (probing your creative thinking and the ability to go beyond what has been learned), and practical (probing your ability to apply what you have learned). The multiple-choice part, which covers your familiarity with class the major concepts covered is designed in such a way that only one answer is correct, although sometimes all of the answers will be possible, but only one will be correct. If however, after reviewing your exam, you feel that another answer may also be correct, you can *challenge* the answer in the key. You may do so by means of *writing* a paragraph or two, explaining clearly why you think your choice is correct. Please, identify the test question, the correct answer according to my answer key, and the answer you had. *Challenges to exam items will be accepted for a week after we review the exams in the class.*

**C. Journal (up to 54 points).** You will use the sketchbook for your journal. Some journal assignments require a creative product (e.g., drawing) that requires you to apply the course material to your work in some way (you will also answer questions based on this work). Other assignments require you to answer questions about the course material and overall course. Assignments will take as much time as you would like them to take (except for timed assignments). Some assignments may require you to do something “outside your comfort zone”—they involve doing something that you do not typically do (e.g., drawing or creative writing). The order of the journal assignments is deliberate for a specific reason: each assignment illustrates a given course concept (and contribute to your learning). Please try to complete tasks as requested (we will discuss how trying something new may contribute to creativity). The journal assignments are not focused on drawing or writing techniques, but rather on considering and experiencing course concepts. These assignments will be graded according to whether you complete the product as requested, and whether you answer the questions concretely; therefore, training and experience/practice will not impact grading. See the handout on journal assignments posted on e-learning for more information about assignments, the due dates, and grading. Be sure to bring your journal to class since assignments will be discussed in class, and some work will be done in class. I reserve the right to collect journals on additional dates, if I determine that students may require additional feedback, or to check understanding of the material and completion of assignments.

**D. Creative Project (up to 72 pts.).** Your project will be the completion of a creative work that includes the application of course material to an influential artist/scientist/inventor of your choice. The project will require a larger scale application of course material and more specific use of course concepts (when compared with the journal assignments) to an artist/scientist/inventor and to your

own creative work. You will have three options for your creative project: (1) children's book, (2) comic strip(s), (3) poem, song lyrics, or spoken word performance, (4) creative essay. The project has been broken down into three main tasks: (1) preparation for the project, which includes the artist/scientist/inventor choice, library homework assignment and an application homework assignment, (2) the completion of the project itself and submission of the project to e-learning according to guidelines, and (3) a class presentation of your project (and you will comment on your classmates' projects). Further information, including the guidelines, due dates, and grading system for the project, can be found on the handout on creative project posted on e-learning.

**Note: All above components must be completed in satisfactory manner in order to receive a passing grade in the course.**

**F. Extra credit (up to 11 pts.).** I will give 3 extra points to those showing exceptional attendance – *no more than two absences*. Additionally, you can get up to 6 points if you engage your classmates in the thoughtful discussion on our discussion forum. To do so, you need to post your comments on anything related to creativity. Search the Internet... or read supplemental texts (articles/chapters), found in a designated folder on e-learning. If you read any of those articles/chapters, and share your thoughts on Discussion Board and initiate discussion—you will earn your 6 extra points. Additional 2 points will be available, once 70% of the class completes an online mid-semester evaluation form.

## 6. Grading Policy

Again, requirements for this course include: Participation, One-minute essays, three exams, completion of all journal assignments by deadline, completion and presentation of creative project and creative project assignments. And as mentioned above, **all above components must be completed in satisfactory manner in order to receive a passing grade in the course.**

The total points possible for required assignments in this course is 466. Total points for each grade are based on the minimum percentage of total points for the corresponding letter grade; e.g., an "A" is equal to 92% of 466 total points, which is equal to 428.5 points, and so on. The credit points will be considered after all required points are summed up.

For midterm, points scored before October 15 will be summed up and assigned a corresponding letter grade. This typically includes exam #1, participation and one-minute essays, and project assignments # 1 and # 2.

Participation and One-minute essays – 40 pts. • Journal Assignments – 54 pts. • Creative Project and related assignments – 72 pts. • Exams – 300 pts.

Letter Grade	Percentage	Total points	Letter Grade	Percentage	Total points
A	92+	428.5+	C	76-70	354-326
B+	91-87	424-405	D+	69-67	321.5-312
B	86-81	400-377.5	D	66-60	307.5-279.5
C+	80-77	372.5-358.5	F	<60	279.5

## 7. Course and Instructor Policies

**A. Contacting the Instructor.** Before you contact me, I suggest checking the syllabus, and all handouts to see if the answer to your question is there. For more complex questions, you should see me in office hours or make an appointment. You can send me an email, but please note, that I do not respond to emails sent after 5pm, unless it is clearly an urgent matter. I will not accept work or provide feedback via email. Please note, that according to the UT Dallas policy, I do not have to respond to emails sent from private accounts. Please make sure you use your UT Dallas email or our Blackboard course page to email me.

**B. Late Work, Make-Up, and Completion.** No late work or make-up exams will be allowed without consent of the instructor prior to the due/exam date, except in situations where University policy requires it, or in case of truly dire circumstances. All non-optional assignments must be completed in satisfactory manner in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

**C. Class Attendance.** A central part of this course is in-person discussion, during which you have an opportunity to clarify, expand upon, apply, and challenge what you have read in the assigned texts. Class time will be divided into lecture, discussion and other structured activities. Attendance is thus considered mandatory. Excessive, unexcused absenteeism—more than 2 classes missed—will be grounds for lowered grade in the course at the instructor's discretion. Excused absences—scheduled athletic events, military duties, jury duty, auto accidents, death in immediate family, medical emergencies – will require documentation to verify. While e-mails are NOT acceptable documentation, you can email me or call me if the matter is urgent. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to find out what material has been covered in class during your absence. In-class assignments and activities likewise cannot be made up unless the instructor agrees to it before the class is missed. And about tardiness, disruptive or extremely late arrivals or early departures will be considered absences. So, think twice before you decide not to show up or show up really late (after first 15 minutes) or leave a class way before it ends.

**D. Laptops and Other Devices.** Multitasking is a myth. Therefore, you should not use a laptop or tablet computer in this course during lecture or discussion, including for note-taking or reading purposes, unless you can demonstrate a compelling need for it. Likewise, you may not use a music player or headphones, unless they are attached to a hearing-assistive device approved by the instructor or the Office of Student AccessAbility. If you are given such an exception, it will be immediately and permanently revoked if you abuse the technology for off-topic purposes. The use of such devices can be a distraction to your classmates and instructor and a detriment to your own learning. Readings should be brought to class in the print version or printed out. Notes should be taken on paper and scanned or transcribed after class (transcribing handwritten notes is a fairly effective study method). This strict and paternalistic policy is a result of both personal experience and a close look at the psychological and pedagogical research on the pros and cons of laptop usage in class. Across every measure, the evidence speaks against indiscriminate use of laptops in class. For certain activities in-class, the instructor may request you to bring a laptop or to take it out and use it for that specific purpose. These will be

specified by the instructor.

#### **E. Classroom expectations**

You are expected to have read the assignments before class, and it would be to your benefit to also read them again after class. You are expected to bring a copy of assigned readings for each day's class, and have them available to refer to. You are expected to listen respectfully to the professor and your fellow students, and participate in class discussions and activities. Clear failure to abide by these expectations will result in you being asked to leave the classroom and being counted absent for the day.

#### **F. Some Pro Tips**

- Read the syllabus carefully and refer to it often.
- Come to class with questions, sections of texts you want to discuss already flagged, and comments to make. Write in your books and/or take notes while you read! Pose questions and make observations as you read and write them down. Reflect upon our previous class discussions and jot down notes and page numbers that you think are relevant.
- Come to every class prepared. Read carefully and take time to skim through readings before class to refresh details that you may have forgotten or details that you may have overlooked the first read-through.
- Listen and contribute actively to the conversation.
- Know where my office is. Know when I have my office hours.
- Visit me during Office Hours, especially if you have a question or observation that you did not get to make in class. Visit me in Office Hours even if you don't have questions.
- Complete every assignment on time.
- If you have concerns or questions about your work or performance (at any stage in the process), come see me. I am happy to work with you.
- Get the email addresses or phone numbers of a couple of students in case you need to find out what you missed. Consider discussing your presentation or the readings with each other before they are due.
- Come to class on time and do not pack up early. If something comes up and you have to be absent or leave early, please talk to me about it. Life happens.
- If you are having difficulties (in life, class, etc.) talk to me before you get too far in a hole. Everyone has a tough semester.

#### **G. Comet Creed**

The UT Dallas student body voted for this in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

***“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”***

#### **H. Other Important Policies**

<http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

<http://www.utdallas.edu/campuscarry/>

### **8. Class Timeline (see last page of the syllabus)**

This course will be “in the making” throughout the semester, therefore, the descriptions, readings, timelines, and policies contained in this syllabus are subject to change in the interest of improving the quality of the course, at the discretion of the professor. Adequate notice will be provided for any changes.

Week	CP	Date	Topic	Reading Due (*)	Journal Due	Project Due
W1	1	1/9/17	Introduction: Syllabus, goals, expectations			
	2	1/11/17	Defining Creativity: Cultural beliefs, creativity concept over time, contemporary definitions of creativity	Chapter 1, 2, Project Handouts	#1 Define creativity	
W2		1/16/17	<b>MLK No Classes</b>			
	3	1/18/17	How to measure creativity in valid and reliable way?	Chapter 1, 2	#2 Hope	Bring project handout and creative process activities handout to class
W3	4	1/23/17	Measuring creativity: Product & Visit to the Gallery	Chapter 3		
	5	1/25/17	Measuring creativity: Divergent thinking tests		#3 Sleep	
W4	6	1/30/17	Creative Process I: Introduction, Problem Finding & Learning (workshops)	Chapter 5	#4 Haiku	
	7	2/1/17	Creative Process II: Acquiring Knowledge & Gathering Information (workshops)	Chapter 5		Assignment # 1, Creators choice; due 11:59 pm
W5	8	2/6/17	Creative Process III: Incubation and Generation of Ideas (workshops)	Chapter 6		
	9	2/8/17	Creative Process IV: Combination of Ideas & Selection of Ideas (workshops)	Chapter 6, 7		
W6	10	2/13/17	Creative Process: Creative Cognition, an alternative framework for Process	Chapter 7 & "Creative Cognition"		
	11	2/15/17	<b>Exam 1, class periods 1 through 10</b>			
W7	12	2/20/17	Creative Person: Personality, Openness to Experience, Intellect, Intelligence	Chapter 4	#5 Draw a person	
	13	2/22/17	Creative Person: Motivation, Self-regulation, Mindset, Flow	Chapter 4	#6 Favorite song	Assignment # 2, Application paper; due 11:59 pm
W8	14	2/27/17	Development of creativity: Prodigies and savants & family factors	Chapter 4		
	15	3/1/17	Development of creativity: early & and middle childhood, fluctuations of creativity, role of play	Chapter 4		
W9	16	3/6/17	Development of creativity: adulthood, peaks of achievements	Chapter 4 & pp. 285-289		
	17	3/8/17	CRITIQUE of Project Draft, Creative process Step 8			Project draft due
W10		3/13/17	<b>Spring break</b>			
		3/15/17	<b>Spring break</b>			
W11	18	3/20/17	Brain and creativity: Drugs and mental illness	Chapter 9	#7 2983	
	19	3/22/17	Brain and creativity: neurons, cortices, left brain and right brain	Chapter 9 & 10		
W12	20	3/27/17	Brain and creativity: Neuronal networks and creativity	Chapter 9 & 10		
	21	3/29/17	<b>Exam 2, class periods 12 through 20</b>			
W13	22	4/3/17	Sociocultural approaches: Fields, Domains, Audiences,	Chapter 11	#8 Audience	
	23	4/5/17	Sociocultural approaches: Confluence Models & Organizations	Chapter 12 & "Beyond Talent"	#9 Tattoo	
W14	24	4/10/17	<b>PROJECT PRESENTATIONS</b>		Final journal entries # 10 & # 11 and final journal due	Final Project Due; post on elearning/turnitin, bring presentation forms and handouts
	25	4/12/17	<b>PROJECT PRESENTATIONS</b>		Late deadline for final journal and project is at 1 PM (start of class); note that if both are turned in late, the late penalty will be applied to each separately. Project should also be posted on e-learning by this time.	
W15	26	4/17/17	Sociocultural approaches: Groups, Organizational Creativity & Ethics	Chapter 14		
	27	4/19/17	Sociocultural approaches: Culture & Creativity	Chapter 13		
W16	28	4/24/17	How to educate for creativity?	TBD		
	29	4/26/17	How to be more creative? Enhancing creativity	Chapter 22 & "Invariable Constraints"		
			<b>Exam 3, class periods 22 through 29</b>			

**NOTE:** "Chapter" refers to an assigned chapter from the Sawyer's textbook; "Creative Cognition", "Beyond Talent" & "Invariable constraints" refer to assigned journal articles, listed in the **Required and Recommended Text & Materials** section.