

**PSYCHOLOGY 461/561
IMAGINATION- Winter 2010**

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Office hours: Mon 2-3, Thurs 1-2 or by appointment

Lecture time and place: Tues & Thurs 4:00 to 5:20; Chiles 128

Discussion time and place: As part of the requirements for this course, you will be signing up for one of six discussion groups. These groups can meet during the hour scheduled at the end of class on Thursday (5:20 to 6:20) or at a time arranged by the group.

Course website: <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu>

You must have an email address and be registered for this course in order to log on to Blackboard. If you do not have an email address, go to the Information Technology Center (ITC) on the second floor in the Knight Library. ITC will also help you if you are having difficulty with Blackboard.

Overview: Imagination refers to the capacity to mentally transcend time, place, and/or circumstance to think about what might have been, plan and anticipate the future, create fictional worlds, and consider remote and close alternatives to actual experiences. This multi-faceted capacity emerges in early childhood early and is fundamental to human thought throughout life. The study of imagination crosscuts traditional areas in psychology and extends into other fields as well (e.g., philosophy, literature). In this course we will examine how psychologists think about and study human imagination, covering topics such as pretend play in children, counterfactual reasoning, imagery, mental time travel, creativity, consciousness, dreaming, mental illness, and the impact of technology on concepts of self and identity.

Note to Psychology majors: This course can be used to count towards the required upper division credits from List S (Social Science area). It cannot be used to count for List C (Science area).

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

The most enjoyable courses are those in which everyone comes to class well prepared and makes thoughtful contributions to the discussion. To enhance the quality of discussion, everyone should read the assigned material before the relevant class meeting. To encourage you to do so, students are required to post comments, questions and/or reactions to the reading on our Blackboard web site by 9:00 am on the morning of each class. You will be graded on your posted comments (each post is worth 5 pts). To receive the full number of points, a posted comment should be at least a paragraph long and the content should provide evidence that the student has read and thought about the assigned article. You are reading for knowledge and your post should explore the ideas in the article you have read.

Your class attendance will be 5 pts per class. To receive the full score you need to arrive on time, be an active part of the class (i.e., not surfing the web), and stay until the end of class. Students sometimes miss class due to sickness or other reasons. The quality of your posts and contributions to class discussions will be taken into account when assigning your grade for class participation. Thus you can make up for a missed class by taking an active part in other class meetings. On the other hand if you never speak up in class and your posts consistently reflect a superficial reading of the material, your grade for this part of the course will be reduced. (180 points: 95 for attendance, 75 for posts, and 10 for consistently strong contribution to posts or class meetings).

DISCUSSION GROUPS

Based on your preferences, you will be assigned to one of five discussion groups. The list of group topics below is tentative and might be adjusted if there is not sufficient interest in one or more of the groups. The group assignments will be announced on the second day of class. Each group will meet once a week (Thursday 5:20 to 6:20 or at a time of the group's choosing) to discuss a book/articles that you will be reading together, work on a group project, and plan a presentation to the class. Your attendance at group meetings and contributions to the discussion of the book and development of the project and class presentation will be part of your grade for the course.

Topics and assigned book:

1. Creativity

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. New York: Harper Collins.

2. Supernatural beliefs

Hood, B. M. (2009). *Supersense: Why we believe in the unbelievable*. New York: Harper Collins.

3. & 4. Dreaming (two sections)

Rock, A. (2004). *The mind at night: The new science of how and why we dream*. New York: Basic Books.

5. The psychology of virtual worlds

Boellstorff, T. (2008). *Coming of age in Second Life: An anthropologist explores the virtually human*. Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Group roles and responsibilities

Note: Blackboard Discussion groups will be set up to provide a forum for communicating with the other students in your discussion group.

Discussion leaders (2 students)

Make a schedule for the readings to be discussed at each group meeting; keep group on task during meetings; take attendance and notes about what happened at each meeting; schedule a meeting with professor to report on group discussions; turn in meeting notes by deadline.

Book reviewers (2 students)

Write first draft of the book review; collect group members' feedback on first draft and revise review; schedule a meeting with professor to discuss the contents of the book and the group's comments and criticisms of it; turn in book review by deadline.

Project leaders (2 students)

Schedule a meeting with professor during the second week of classes to plan the project; explain the project to the group and lead discussion about modifications, work out design details and create any data sheets or other handouts as necessary; schedule a meeting with professor to discuss the results of the project, submit a short summary of the project (purpose, method, results & discussion) by deadline.

Presentation leaders (2 – 4 people)

Plan the class presentation and take the primary roles in the presentation; schedule a meeting with professor to present the plan for the presentation (including Power points), and collect feedback from group members about the plan.

The expectation is that all group members will contribute to every part of the group requirements, although there will be division of labor for the primary roles. Drafts of schedules for the groups will be provided at the first group meeting; additional meetings can be scheduled as needed/desired. After the group has presented to the class, each member of the group will provide confidential evaluations of the other group members' contributions to the group meetings, discussion of book, development of project, and class presentation.

Evaluation of your contributions by other group members and professor (e.g., attendance at meetings, participation in group discussions, etc.)	80 points
Completion of your evaluations of other group members (must include commentary as well as numbers to get full points)	10 points
Written work (book review, project summary, discussion summary) or class presentation (for presentation leaders)	40 points
Overall Group score (for all group members)	20 points
Total = 150	

PAPER

Students will write a paper in which they summarize the research findings addressing an important question about the psychology of imagination (about 12 to 15 pages). It is recommended (but not required) that you pick a topic that is related to the topic of your group

presentation. (The reading you do for your paper will be great preparation for your classroom presentation.)

This course is designed to help develop your writing skills. For this reason, there are several deadlines associated with your review paper. Failure to meet deadlines 1, 2, and 3 will result in forfeiting the points indicated below and you will not have the opportunity to receive feedback on your outline/draft. Late papers will be marked down substantially; the exact number of points that you will lose will depend on how late the paper is and why it is late.

- 1. January 21:** Submit a one page proposal for your review paper. This will help me make sure that your topic is appropriate for this assignment and allow me to give you some feedback about possible sources of information. (5 points)
- 2. Feb 11:** Submit a first draft (hard copy) of your review paper to be read by another student. I will collect these papers, remove the cover pages with names, and then on Feb 16, I will pass out these papers (with no identifying information) to students in the class for written feedback. Thus, on Feb 16, everyone who turned in a paper on Feb 11 will be given a paper by another student to review. In the past, some students have turned in “papers” at this stage that were little more than outlines -- not finished enough to allow another student to edit and give feedback. You will not receive the full number of points if your paper is not a reasonable draft (at least 10 pages). In some cases, your paper might be returned to you and you will not be given another student’s paper to review. Note that the more complete your paper is, the more help the student will be able to give you. (15 points).
- 3. Feb 18:** Submit your written feedback plus the edited paper (10 points). On Feb 23, I will give you back your own review paper, along with the peer review.
- 4. March 11:** Turn in the final draft of your paper (120 points).

Total for paper: 150 points

Grades: It is sometimes difficult for students to figure out what to expect for a grade in a course that has no exams, lots of little scores, points for participation, etc. For example, students who come to class every lecture and post their comments regularly tend to expect to receive an A. While it is true that it is difficult for students to get an A without doing those things, students who do not do a good job on their written work will not receive an A in this course.

PSY 561: Graduate students who have registered for Psy 561 will be expected to submit more extensive written work than the undergraduates (20 pages for the literature review) and to play a prominent role in the class presentation.

Academic Honesty: All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. No form of cheating or plagiarism will be tolerated. Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else’s product, words, ideas, or data as one’s own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate and specific references. On written assignments, if verbatim statements are included, the statements must be enclosed by quotation marks. Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects can inadvertently

lead to a charge of plagiarism. In addition, it is plagiarism to submit work in which portions were substantially produced by someone acting as a tutor or editor. If in doubt, consult the instructor or seek assistance from the staff of Academic Learning Services (68 PLC, 346-3226). If cheating is discovered on the assignments, then the University will be notified and appropriate action will be taken (e.g., if a large proportion of the paper has been plagiarized, it will receive a score of 0).

Accommodations: If one of the following applies to you, please see the instructor as soon as possible to make adjustments. You are strongly encouraged to contact Disability Services (346-1155) if you have a non-documented condition that creates difficulty for you as a student.

Documented learning or medical disability

Non-documented need for adjustments to help you learn

On a sports team that travels this quarter

English is not your first language

With advanced planning, adjustments are relatively straightforward. Adjustments at the last minute can be problematic and sometimes are not possible.

OUTLINE OF LECTURE TOPICS

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| Jan 5 | Introduction to the study of imagination |
| Jan 7 | <p>The development of imagination</p> <p>Gopnik, A. (2009). <i>The Philosophical Baby: What children's minds tell us about truth, love and the meaning of life</i>, Ch.1, pp 19-46. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.</p> |
| Jan 12 | <p>Interactions with invisible others</p> <p>Taylor, M., Shawber, A. B., & Mannering, A. M. (2009). Children's imaginary companions: What is it like to have an invisible friend? In K. Markman, W. Klein, & J. Suhr (Eds.) <i>The handbook of imagination and mental simulation</i> (pp. 211-224). New York: Psychology Press.</p> <p>Caughey, J. L. (1984). <i>Imaginary social worlds: A cultural approach</i>, Chapter 2, 31-76. Lincoln Nebraska: University of Nebraska.</p> |
| Jan 14 | <p>Discussion of writing</p> <p>Lamott, A. (1995). <i>Bird by bird: Some instructions on writing and life</i>. (Chs. 1</p> |
| Jan 19 | <p>Imagination and emotion</p> <p>Sayfan, L., & Lagattuta, K. H. (2009). Scaring the monster away: What children know about managing fears of real and imaginary creatures. <i>Child Development</i>, 80, 1756-1774.</p> <p>Sadeh, A., Hen-Gal, S., & Tikotzky, L. (2008). Young children's reactions to war-related stress: A survey and assessment of an innovative intervention. <i>Pediatrics</i>, 121, 46-53.</p> |
| Jan 21 | Narrative and fiction |

- Mar, R. A. , & Oatley, K. (2008). The function of fiction is the abstraction and simulation of social experience. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3, 173-192.
- Mar, R. A., Oatley, K., Hirsh, J., Paz, J., & Peterson, J. B. (2006). Bookworms versus nerds: Exposure to fiction versus non-fiction, divergent associations with social ability, and the simulation of fictional social worlds. *Journal of Research in Personality* 40, 694-712.
- Jan 26 Memory and imagination
 Pezdek, K., Blandon-Gitlin, I., & Gabbay (2006). Imagination and memory: Does imagining implausible events lead to false autobiographical memories? *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 13, 764-769.
- Hyman, I. E., & James, F. (1998). Individual differences and the creation of false childhood memories. *Memory*, 6, 1-20.
- Jan 28 Mind wandering and mental time travel
 Smallwood, J., & Schooler, J. W. (2006). The restless mind. *Psychological Bulletin*, 132, 946-958.
- Suddendorf, T., & Corballis, M. C. (2007). The evolution of foresight: What is mental time travel and is it unique to humans? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*.
- Feb 2 Counterfactual reasoning
 Byrne, R. M. J. (2005). *The rational imagination: How people create alternates to reality*. Chs. 1 and 2. London, UK: Bradford.
- Feb 4 Neurological disorders of the imagination
 Hirstein, W. (2005). *Brain fiction: Self-deception and the riddle of confabulation*. Ch. 1 pp. 1-23. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Feb 9 Imagination and autism
 Scott, F. J., & Baron-Cohen, S. (1996). Imagining real and unreal things: Evidence of a dissociation in autism. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 8, 371-382.
- Feb 11 Mental illness, creativity and imagination
 Deadline for first draft of paper. No required reading or post.
- Feb 16 Film: The Sketches of Frank Gehry
 Damasio, A. R. (2001). Some notes on brain, imagination, and creativity. In K. H. Pfenninger & V. R. Shubik (Eds.) *The origins of creativity*, pp 59-68. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Feb 18 Creativity process
 Deadline for peer reviews of student papers; no post required.

- Feb 23 Roundtable on the creative process (invited guests)
Simonton, D. K. (2007). Creativity: Specialized expertise or general cognitive processes? In M. J. Roberts (Ed.) *Integrating the mind*, pp. 351-367. New York: Psychology Press.
- Feb 25 Creativity (student presentation)
Readings to be assigned by students; posts are due by 9:00 am Feb 24
- March 2 Supernatural beliefs (student presentation)
Readings to be assigned by students; posts are due by 9:00 am March 1
- March 4 Dreaming (two student presentations)
Readings to be assigned by students; posts are due by 9:00 am March 3
- March 9 Virtual worlds (student presentation)
Readings to be assigned by students; posts are due by 9:00 am March 8
- March 11 Summary
Deadline for final draft of paper. No required reading or post.