

PSYCHOLOGY 399
Imaginative Minds- Fall 2011

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Office hours: Wed 3-4 by appointment; Straub 390

Lecture time and place: Tues & Thurs 12:00 -1:50; 303 GER

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 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, mental time travel, creativity, dreaming, and virtual worlds.

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 write a one-page double-spaced typed reaction to the reading (critique, questions, etc.) that will be due at the time of each class meeting. Each reaction paper is worth 10 points. To receive the full number of points, the paper should provide evidence that you have read and thought about the assigned article(s).

You will also receive a score out of 50 for class attendance and participation. 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 reaction papers 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 reaction papers consistently reflect a superficial reading of the material, your grade for

this part of the course will be reduced. (150 points for reactions papers and 50 points for attendance/participation; total of 200 points).

Review Paper

Students will write a review paper in which they summarize the research findings addressing an important question about the psychology of imagination (about 10 pages). You will be given a list of possible topics, but you can also propose your own topic related to the study of imagination (these must be approved). **Please schedule a meeting within the first 3 weeks of the quarter to discuss plans for your paper with Mirjam Staeb, the peer assistant for this course.**

This course is designed to help develop your writing skills. For this reason, there are three deadlines associated with your review paper. Failure to meet deadlines 1 and 2 will result in forfeiting the points indicated below and you will not have the opportunity to receive feedback on your outline/draft.

1. November 1: 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 Nov 3, I will pass out these papers (with no identifying information) to students in the class for written feedback. Thus, on Nov 3, everyone who turned in a paper on Nov 1 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 6-7 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. (30 points).

2. Nov 10: Submit your written feedback plus the edited paper (20 points). On Nov 17, I will give you back your own review paper, along with the peer review.

3. Dec 1: Turn in the final draft of your paper (100 points). 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.

Total for paper: 150 points

Projects

(1) Dream Project. You will be keeping a dream journal and completing an exercise designed to give you control of your dream content. (15 pts. for data collection, 10 pts. for commentary; total of 25 points)

(2) Creativity Project. You will be creating a character and monitoring your creative process in a series of writing assignments. Most of these assignments will be completed in class. (5 pts for each of 5 assignments; total of 25 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 assignments, points for participation, etc. For example, students who

come to class every lecture 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.

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.

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

(Note: In some cases, the required readings might be changed from the ones listed below. Readings will be available on the course Blackboard site.)

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| Sept 27 | Introduction to the psychology of imagination |
| Sept 29 | <p>Imagination in everyday life</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> |
| Oct 4 | <p>Fantasy and reality</p> <p>(Please write your reaction paper on the chapter by Harris.)</p> <p>Harris, P. L. (forthcoming). Fairy tales, history and religion. In M. Taylor (Ed.) <i>Oxford handbook of the development of imagination</i>. New York: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Lamott, A. (1995). <i>Bird by bird: Some instructions on writing and life</i>, pp 3-32. New York: Random House.</p> |

- Oct 6 Imaginary relationships
 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.) *The handbook of imagination and mental simulation* (pp. 211-224). New York: Psychology Press.
 Caughey, J. L. (1984). *Imaginary social worlds: A cultural approach*, Ch. 2 (pp. 31-76). Lincoln Nebraska: University of Nebraska.
- Oct 11 Anthropomorphism
 Hood, B. M. (2009). *Supersense: Why we believe in the unbelievable*. Ch. 8 (pp. 197-221). New York: Harper Collins.
 Epley, N., Akalis, S., Waltz, A., Cacioppo, J. T. (2008). Creating social connection through inferential reproduction: Loneliness and perceived agency in gadgets, gods, and greyhounds. *Psychological Science*, 19, 114-120.
- Oct 13 Imagination and emotion
 Harris, P. L. (2000). *The work of the imagination*, Chapter 4, pp 58-93. Oxford UK; Oxford University Press.
 Sadeh, A., Hen-Gal, S., & Tikotzky, L. (2008). Young children's reactions to war-related stress: A survey and assessment of an innovative intervention. *Pediatrics*, 121, 46-53.
- Oct 18 Dreaming
 Rock, A. (2004). *The mind at night: The new science of how and why we dream*. Chs. 1 (pp. 1-16) and 9 (pp. 149-171). New York: Basic Books.
- Oct 20 Virtual worlds
 Boellstorff, T. (2008). *Coming of age in Second Life: An anthropologist explores the virtually human*. Ch. 1 (pp. 3-16). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
 Yee, N., Bailensen, J. N., Urbanek, M., Chang, F., & Merget, D. (2007). The unbearable likeness of being digital: The persistence of nonverbal social norms in online virtual environments. *Cyber Psychology and Behavior*, 10, 115-121.
- Oct 25 The importance of 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.

- Oct 27 Imagination and memory
Hyman, I. E., & James, F. (1998). Individual differences and the creation of false childhood memories. *Memory*, 6, 1-20.
- Nov 1 Law, B. M. (2011). Scared in our memories. *Monitor on Psychology*, 42, 61-65.
Mind wandering and mental time travel
First draft of review paper is due -- no required reading
- Nov 3** Big C Creativity
Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. Ch. 1 (pp.1-20). New York: Harper Collins.
- Nov 8 The creative process
Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. Ch. 2 (pp. 23-50). New York: Harper Collins.
- Nov 10 little c creativity
Feedback on student paper is due – no required reading
- Nov 15 Creativity and mental illness
Andreasen, N. C. (1987). Creativity and mental illness: Prevalence rates in writers and their first-degree relatives. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 144, 1288-1292.
Kaufman, J.C. (2001). The Sylvia Plath effect: Mental illness in eminent creative writers. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 35(1).
- Nov 17 Neurology and imagination
Hirstein, W. (2005). *Brain fiction: Self-deception and the riddle of confabulation*. Ch. 1 (pp. 1-23). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Nov 22 Autism and imagination (guest lecture by Candee Mottweiler)
Scott, F. J. (forthcoming). The development of imagination in children with autism. In M. Taylor (Ed.) *The development of imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nov 24 Thanksgiving Holiday
- Nov 29 Anomalous experiences
Blakemore, S. (2004). *Consciousness: An introduction*. Ch. 24 (pp. 354-368). New York: Oxford University Press.
Wegner, D. (2002). *The illusion of conscious will*. Ch. 4 (pp. 99-144). Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Dec 1 Conclusions
Review paper is due – no required reading
- No Final Exam