

**PSYCHOLOGY 399**  
**Imaginative Minds - Fall 2013**

**Professor:** Dr. Marjorie Taylor  
Office: 1715 Franklin Blvd. Rm. 225, 346-4933  
email: [mtaylor@uoregon.edu](mailto:mtaylor@uoregon.edu)  
Office hours: 11:30-12:30 Tues & Thurs in Rm. 118 GSH  
and by appointment in Rm. 225, 1715 Franklin Blvd.

**Lecture time and place:** Tues & Thurs 10:00-11:20; Global Scholars Hall 132

**College Scholars Peer Advising:** Peer advising for students in College Scholars is available in Week 1 (Oct 1 – Oct 3), Weeks 6 & 7 (Nov 4 – 7, Nov 12 -14), and by appointment in Rm. 118 Global Scholars Hall. For more information go to [http://csch.uoregon.edu/?page\\_id=453](http://csch.uoregon.edu/?page_id=453)

**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 and think about the assigned material before the relevant class meeting. To encourage you to do so, a short paper (1-2 page double-spaced typed) will be due most Thursdays (see course outline). In this paper, you will provide your reaction to the week's readings (critique, questions, etc.). 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 articles for that week. Late papers will not be accepted.

You will also receive a score out of 36 for class attendance and participation. To receive the full score you need to arrive on time, be an active part of the class (e.g., not texting), 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. (50 points for reactions papers and 36 points for attendance/participation; total of 86 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).

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 5:** Submit a first draft (hard copy) of your review paper to be read by another student. I will remove the cover pages with names and assign the papers (with no identifying information) to other students in the class for written feedback. On November 7, everyone who turned in a paper on November 5 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 8 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.
- 2. Nov 12:** Submit your written feedback plus the edited paper (10 points). On Nov 14, I will give you back your own review paper, along with the peer review.
- 3. Dec 5:** 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: 110 points

### **Book Review (12 points)**

Weeks 1 & 2: All students will schedule a brief meeting (15-20 minutes) with me to discuss their plans for their review papers and their interests in imagination. I will choose a relevant book for each student to read over the next 3 weeks. Week 5: All students will schedule an appointment with me to return the book and discuss its contents.

### **Creativity Project (22 points)**

Over the course of the first 6 weeks, 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. The final assignment will be completed outside of class time. A 2-page discussion of the assignment will be due on Nov 14.

### **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 regular attendance, 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 me 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

This outline and required readings are subject to change depending upon class interests and discussion. Readings will be available on the course Blackboard site.

**Oct 1** Introduction to the psychology of imagination

**Oct 3** Development of imagination

Gopnik, A. (2009). *The Philosophical Baby: What children's minds tell us about truth, love and the meaning of life*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Ch.1 (pp 19-46).

Creativity project: Create a character

**No reaction paper is due.**

**Oct 8** Fantasy and reality

Harris, P. L. (2013). Fairy tales, history and religion. In M. Taylor (Ed.) *Oxford handbook of the development of imagination* (pp. 31-41). New York: Oxford University Press.

How to write a review paper (do not discuss this topic in your reaction paper)

Lamott, A. (1995). *Bird by bird: Some instructions on writing and life*. New York: Random House. Ch 1. (pp. 3-32).

**Oct 10** Imagination and emotion

Sayfan, L., & Lagattuta, K. H. (2009). Scaring the monster away: What children know about managing fears of real and imaginary creatures. *Child Development*, 80, 1756-1774.

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.

Creativity project: An ordinary day in the life of your character

**Reaction Paper #1 is due.**

**Oct 1 - Oct 11** Meet with professor to discuss paper topic and receive book.

- Oct 15** Dreaming  
Rock, A. (2004). *The mind at night: The new science of how and why we dream*. New York: Basic Books. Chs. 1 (pp. 1-16) and 9 (pp. 149-171).
- Oct 17** Dreaming continued (Film: *What are dreams? Inside the Dreaming Brain*)  
  
Creativity project: Your character overcomes a challenge  
Professor is away at a conference; no office hours.  
**No reaction paper is due.**
- 
- Oct 22** 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.  
Taylor, M., Hulette, A. C., & Dishion, T. J. (2010). Longitudinal outcomes of young high-risk adolescents with imaginary companions. *Developmental Psychology*, 46, 1632-1636.
- Oct 24** Anthropomorphism  
Guthrie, S. (1993). *Faces in the clouds*. New York: Oxford University Press. Ch. 4 (pp. 91-121).  
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.  
  
Creativity project: Your character makes a friend  
**Reaction Paper #2 is due**
- 
- Oct 29** Virtual worlds (Film: Frontline: Digital Nation)  
Blascovich, J., & Bailenson, J. (2012). Infinite reality: The hidden blueprint of our virtual lives. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. Chs. 1 & 4.  
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 31** Social robots (Guest lecture by Naomi Aguiar)  
Severson, R. L., & Carlson, S. M. (2010). Behaving as or behaving as if? Children's conceptions of personified robots and the emergence of a new ontological category. *Neural Networks*, 23, 1099-1103.  
Turkle, S., Taggart, W., Kidd, C. D., & Dastè, O. (2006). Relational artifacts with children and elders: The complexities of cyber companionship. *Connection Science*, 18(4), 347-361.  
  
Creativity project: Your character has a stunning success  
**Reaction Paper #3 is due.**

---

**Oct 28 – Nov 1** Meet with professor to discuss book

---

**Nov 5** Magical thinking  
Wegner, D. (2002). *The illusion of conscious will*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press. Chs. 3 & 4 (63-144).

**First draft of review paper is due.**

**Nov 7** 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.

You will receive a review paper by another student to review.  
Creativity project: Final assignment to be completed outside of class  
**Reaction Paper #4 is due.**

---

**Nov 12** Imagination and memory  
Hyman, I. E., & James, F. (1998). Individual differences and the creation of false childhood memories. *Memory*, 6, 1-20.  
Law, B. M. (2011). Scared in our memories. *Monitor on Psychology*, 42, 61-65.

**Peer review is due.**

**Nov 14** Mind wandering and mental time travel (Guest lecture by Emilee Naylor)  
Readings to be announced

You will receive feedback on the first draft of your review paper.  
**Creativity Project Paper is due.**

---

**Nov 15** Dr. Jeremy Bailenson of Stanford University will be giving a colloquium talk from 3:30 to 5:00 pm at 101 Jaqua Center (more information to follow).

---

**Nov 19** Creativity  
Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. New York: Harper Collins. Ch. 1 (pp.1-20).

**Nov 21** The creative process  
Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. New York: Harper Collins. Ch. 2 (pp. 23-50).

**Reaction Paper #5 is due.**

---

**Nov 26** Creativity and mental health  
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 28** Thanksgiving Holiday

**No reaction paper is due.**

---

**Dec 3** Autism and imagination  
Scott, F. J. (2013). The development of imagination in children with autism. In M. Taylor (Ed.) *The development of imagination*, pp. 499-515. New York: Oxford University Press.

**Dec 5** Neurological disorders of the imagination  
Hirstein, W. (2005). *Brain fiction: Self-deception and the riddle of confabulation*. Cambridge: MIT Press. Ch. 1 (pp. 1-23)

**No reaction paper is due.**

**Final draft of review paper is due.**

The UO automatically reserves final exam times for all courses, but there is no final exam for this course.