

Psychology 607: Science of Imagination

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Office hours: Mon 2-3; Thurs 10-11; or by appointment

MEETINGS: Wednesday 10:00 to 11:50 in Franklin 271B

OVERVIEW: The capacity to mentally transcend our current time, place, and/or circumstance is a powerful tool that is available to us throughout life, part of our biological endowment as human beings. With our imaginations, we can relive (even improve) the past, plan and anticipate the future, process and come to terms with the issues in our present. In this graduate seminar we will be discussing new research investigating imagination from a variety of perspectives. Our readings include work in comparative literature and philosophy, as well as cognitive, developmental, and social psychology.

GRADES: Grades will be based on class attendance, your role as discussion leader for one class meeting, a 15-minute presentation of a proposed study investigating an issue related to the science of imagination, and a five-page paper describing the proposed study.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

Note: Readings to be adjusted based on student feedback.

April 2 Organizational meeting

Taylor, M. (2013). Imagination. In P. Zelazo (Ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Child Development: Body and Mind* (Vol. 1, pp. 791-831). New York: Oxford University Press.

April 9 Counterfactual thinking

Beck, S. R. & Riggs, K. (2013). Counterfactuals and reality. In M. Taylor (Ed.) *The Oxford handbook of the development of imagination* (pp. 325-341). New York: Oxford University Press.

Gendler, T. (2000). The puzzle of imaginative resistance. *Journal of Philosophy*, 97, 55-81.

Weisberg, D. S., & Gopnik, A. (2013). Pretense, counterfactuals, and Bayesian causal models: Why what is not real really matters. *Cognitive Science*, 37, 1368-1381.

April 16 Fantasy reality distinctions

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

Woolley, J. D. (2013). Revisiting the fantasy-reality distinction: Children as naïve skeptics. *Child Development*, 84, 1496-1510.

April 23 Imaginary relationships

Gleason, T. R. (2013). Imaginary relationships. In M. Taylor (Ed.) *The Oxford handbook of the development of imagination* (pp. 251-271). New York: Oxford University Press.

Waltz, A., Klein, N., & Epley, N. (2013). Imagining other minds: Anthropomorphism is hair-triggered but not hair-brained. In M. Taylor (Ed.) *The Oxford handbook of the development of imagination* (pp. 272-287). New York: Oxford University Press.

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.

Taylor, M., Hulette, A. C., & Dishion, T. J. (2010). Longitudinal outcomes of young high-risk adolescents with imaginary companions. *Developmental Psychology*, 46, 1632-1636.

April 30 Pretend play

Carlson, S. M., & White, R. E. (2013). Executive function, pretend play and imagination. In M. Taylor (Ed.) *The Oxford handbook of the development of imagination* (pp.161-174). New York: Oxford University Press.

Gaskins, S. (2013). Pretend play as culturally constructed activity. In M. Taylor (Ed.) *The Oxford handbook of the development of imagination* (pp. 224-247). New York: Oxford University Press.

Lillard, A. S., & Kavanaugh, R. L. (in press). The contribution of symbolic skills to the development of an explicit theory of mind: Scales models, language and pretend play. *Child Development*.

May 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.
- Landy, J. (forthcoming). Mental calisthenics and self-reflexive fiction. In *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Approaches to Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Zunshine, L. (2006). *Why we read fiction: Theory of mind and the novel* (pp. 121-155). Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press.

May 14 Creativity

- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. New York: Harper Collins. Ch. 2 (pp. 23-50).
- Runco, M. A. (2004). Creativity. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 657-687.
- Bristol, A. S., & Viskontas, V. (2006). Dynamic processes within associative memory stores: Piecing together the neural basis of creative cognition. In J. C. Kaufman & J. Baer (Eds.), *Creativity and reason in cognitive development*, p. 60-80. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Silvia, P. J., Winterstein, B. P., Willse, J. T., Barona, C. M., Cram, J. T., Hess, K. I., Martinez, J. L., Richard, C. A. (2008). Assessing creativity with divergent thinking tasks: Exploring the reliability and validity of new subjective scoring methods. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts*, 2, 68-85.

Note: Paul Silvia will be visiting the UO on May 16, with talks at 12-1 and 4-5:30.

May 21 Virtual reality

- Blascovich, J., & Bailenson, J. (2012). *Infinite reality: The hidden blueprint of our virtual lives*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. Chs. 1 & 4.
- Granic, I., Lobel, A., & R.C. M. E. Engels. (2014). The benefits of playing video games. *American Psychologist*, 69, 66-78.
- 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.

May 28 & June 4 Discussion of research proposals

Readings to be assigned by students

Papers are due on June 9.

