

**PSYCHOLOGY 399**  
**Imaginative Minds – Winter 2015**

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**Lecture time and place:** Mon & Wed 10:00-11:20; 303 Deady Hall

**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 pages double-spaced typed hard copy) will be due every Wednesday (except in Week 1). 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. If you have to miss a class meeting, please email the reaction paper to me by the due date.

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 (e.g., not texting, etc.), 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 one missed class will not hurt your grade if you consistently take 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. (90 points for reaction papers and 50 points for attendance/participation; total of 140 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 - 12 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. February 16:** 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 February 18, everyone who turned in a paper on February 16 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.

**2. February 25:** Submit your typed feedback plus the edited paper (10 points). On March 2, I will give you back your own review paper, along with the peer review.

**3. March 18:** 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 (25 points)**

Weeks 1 & 2: All students will schedule a brief meeting (about 15 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: Each student will schedule an appointment with me to discuss the book’s contents. The topic of your book might be the topic you pick for your review paper; however, it is ok to write your review paper on an entirely different topic.

### **Creativity Project (25 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.

### **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 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.

### **Jan 5 Introduction to the psychology of imagination**

#### **Jan 7 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

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### **Jan 12 Virtual worlds**

Blascovich, J., & Bailenson, J. (2012). *Infinite reality: The hidden blueprint of our virtual lives*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. Chs. 1 & 4.

Yee, N., Bailenson, 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.

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

### **Jan 14 Social robots (Guest lecture by Naomi Aguiar)**

Kahn, P. H., Gary, H. E., & Shen, S. (2013). Children's social relationships with current and near-future robots. *Child Development Perspectives*, 7, 32-37.

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.

**Reaction Paper #1 is due.**

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**Jan 5-16** Meet with professor to discuss paper topic and receive a book.

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**Jan 19** **Martin Luther King Day –no class meeting or office hours**

**Jan 21** **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**

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

Creativity project: Your character overcomes a challenge

**Reaction paper #2 is due. This paper should be focused on the chapter by Paul Harris.**

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**Jan 26** **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.

**Jan 28** **Anthropomorphism**

Waltz, A., Cacioppo, J., & Epley, N. (2010). Who sees human? The stability and importance of individual differences in anthropomorphism. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5, 219-232.  
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 #3 is due**

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**Feb 2** **Magical thinking**

Hood, B.M. (2009). Would you willingly receive a heart transplant from a murderer? Ch. 7 in *The science of superstition: How the developing brain creates supernatural beliefs* (pp. 167-196). Harper Collins: New York.

Newman, G. E., Diesendruck, G., & Bloom, P. (2011). Celebrity contagion and the value of objects. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38, 215-228.

**Feb 4** **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.

Creativity project: Your character has a stunning success  
**Reaction Paper #4 is due.**

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**Feb 9                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).

**Feb 11                Mind wandering and mental time travel**

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*, 30, 299-313.

Creativity project: Final assignment to be completed outside of class and emailed to professor by Feb 13.  
**Reaction Paper #5 is due.**

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**Jan 26 – Feb 13** Meet with professor to discuss book

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**Feb 16                Music and imagination (Guest lecture by Jenny Mendoza)**

Koutsoupidou, T., & Hargreaves, D. (2009). An experimental study of the effects of improvisation on the development of children's creative thinking in music. *Psychology of Music*, 37, 251-278.

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

**Feb 18                Creativity**

Runco, M. (2014). Cognition and creativity. Ch. 1 in *Creativity: Theories and Themes: Research, Development and Practice 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* (pp. 1-38). Elsevier: San Diego CA.

You will receive a review paper by another student to review.

**Reaction Paper # 6 is due.**

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**Feb 23                Creativity and the performing arts: How to save the world and lose all respect for yourself (Guest lecture by Dr. Brian McWhorter, UO School of Music)**

Readings to be announced.

**Feb 25                Creativity continued**

Runco, M. (2014). Enhancement and fulfillment of potential. Ch. 12 in *Creativity: Theories and Themes: Research, Development and Practice 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* (pp. 335-388). Elsevier: San Diego CA.

**Reaction Paper #7 is due.**

**Peer review is due.**

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**March 2            Creativity and mental health**

Runco, M. (2014). Health and clinical perspectives. Ch. 4 in *Creativity: Theories and Themes: Research, Development and Practice 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* (pp.109-144). Elsevier: San Diego CA..

Andreasen, N. C. (1987). Creativity and mental illness: Prevalence rates in writers and their first-degree relatives. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 144, 1288-1292.

You will receive the peer review of the first draft of your review paper.

**March 4            Autism and imagination**

Roth, I. (2007). Autism and the imaginative mind. Ch. 13 in I. Roth (Ed.) *Imaginative minds* (pp. 277-306). Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK.

**Reaction paper #8 is due.**

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**March 9            Neurological disorders of the imagination**

Ramachandran, V. S. (2012). The tell-tale brain: A neuroscientist's quest for what makes us human. Chs. 1 & 2. WW Norton & Company: New York.

**March 11          Imagination and emotion**

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.

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

**Reaction paper #9 is due.**

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**March 18          Final draft of review paper is due.** (Note: There is no final exam for this course.)  
**(12:15 pm)**

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