

rHH/SC PSYC 3550 3.0 A(F) Creativity (Fall 2014)

Prerequisite:	Introduction to Psychology (min. Grade = C)
Classes:	Wednesdays 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Curtis Lecture Hall A
Professor:	Oshin Vartanian, Ph.D.
Office Hours:	Wednesdays 10:30-11:30 a.m. (235 BSB)
Teaching Assistant:	Niloufar Eshghi, M.A., Farah Budhani Dobani, M.A. (office hours by appointment)
Secretary:	Barbara Thurston, 283 BSB. Voicemail: 416-736-2100 x66253

Course Description:

An introduction to the psychological study of creativity, including modern theories of creativity, assessment of creativity, individual differences in creativity, creativity in the arts and sciences, the relationship between intelligence and creativity, and the neuroscience of creativity.

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

Oct. 1	First Term Test (20%)
Nov. 5	Second Term Test (20%)
Dec. 3	Hand in Term Paper in class (40%)
Dec. 9-22	Third Term Test during exam week (20%)

Course evaluation

1. Three multiple-choice tests: 20% each
2. Term paper: 40%

There will be no make-up exams. All grades are final and nonnegotiable.

Required Readings

1. Beginning with the class on September 17th, there will be two readings assigned for each lecture. The readings will be comprised of recent chapters and/or peer-reviewed journal articles relevant to the specific topic covered in that lecture. The readings will be made available in advance of each lecture on Moodle.
2. In addition, for certain classes you will be asked to read specific sections from the following book: Kusyszyn, I. (2014). *Creativity kit (14th Edition)*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press.

To maximize your learning and enjoyment of the course, it is strongly suggested that you attend the lectures having already read the material in advance. Please remember that you will be tested on all aspects of the information presented in this course outline, including all readings and lecture material.

WEEKLY CLASS OUTLINE**Wed. Sept. 10**

Defining creativity through assessment

Wed. Sept. 17

Modern theories of creativity

Wed. Sept. 24

Domain specificity in creativity: Arts and sciences

Wed. Oct. 1

First Term Test (20%)

Wed. Oct. 8

Intelligence and creativity

Wed. Oct. 15

Personality and creativity

Wed. Oct. 22

Motivation and creativity

Wed. October 29

No class

Wed. Nov. 5

Second Term Test (20%)

Wed. Nov. 12

Creativity and psychopathology

Wed. Nov. 19

Neuroscience of creativity

Wed. Nov. 26

Development of creativity

Wed. Dec. 3

Improving creativity

Hand in term paper in class (40%)

Dec. 9-22 (exam week)

Third Term Test (20%)

Term Paper Guidelines

You will be required to write a term paper for this course that will be worth 40% of your final grade.

The idea behind this term paper is to give you the opportunity to be creative—by formulating, suggesting, or generating a solution to a problem that is in need of a creative solution. The most widespread contemporary definition of creativity involves a process that leads to a novel and useful solution *within a relevant context*. According to the aforementioned definition, for your proposed solution to have merit it must be (a) novel, (b) useful within its context. Importantly, however, you must apply the knowledge that you have gained in this course to analyze the nature of the problem under consideration.

For example, you could decide to focus on the problem of school underachievement. In your paper you would first have to define what is meant by school underachievement (e.g., obtaining a grade that is lower than the average for that cohort, etc.). Next, you would analyze various factors that have been shown to be relevant to school underachievement (e.g., nutrition, intelligence, SES, motivation, etc.). Next, you would conduct a literature review of various approaches that have been used in the past to address the problem of school underachievement, in the process assessing their varying levels of success. You would end by proposing your creative solution, including a discussion of its potential advantages and disadvantages compared to other alternatives. Please note that some creative solutions are *de novo*—meaning that they represent seemingly brand new approaches to solving a problem. In contrast, other creative solutions might be hybrids or novel combinations of ideas that have existed individually before. Both varieties of solutions will be acceptable for this assignment. In addition, creative ideas also have the quality of elegance—defined as a combination of beauty, simplicity, efficiency, and ease of use or implementation. Ideally, your creative solution will also be elegant.

To maximize your enjoyment of working on this assignment, it is important to choose a topic that you feel passionate about. This will motivate you to think about it, and increase the likelihood of coming up with a creative solution in relation to it. Do not let the example above limit your universe of possibilities in relation to a good topic, which could touch on the domains of the arts, sciences, the environment, society, health, and the like. As you will learn in this course, finding the right problem to focus on is a major aspect of the creative process.

Please note the following:

1. You must make use of the available peer-reviewed literature in supporting your claims.
2. The paper must follow A.P.A (6th Ed.) publication guidelines.
3. The total word limit must be within the 2,000–3,000 range (including references).
4. You must include a minimum of 5 references to the literature.
5. **A hard copy of the term paper must be handed in on the assigned date. No electronic copy will be accepted via email or otherwise.**

These are 7 criteria based on which the term paper will be graded (out of 40):

1. Definition of the problem (0-5 points)
2. Analysis of the factors relevant to the problem (0-5 points)
3. Review of the background literature (0-10 points)
4. Novelty of the solution (0-5 points)
5. Usefulness of the solution (0-5 points)
6. Elegance of the solution (0-5 points)
7. Presentation according to A.P.A (6th Ed.) publication guidelines (0-5 points)

HOW TO DO WELL ON MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS

(Courtesy of Professor Kusyszyn)

A. Preparation

1. Do the assigned reading before each class.
2. Highlight the material, or underline it, or colour it, or illustrate it, or all of the above. Use any technique that will help you visualize and remember the material.
3. Learn all the highlighted material week to week. Never cram.
4. Learn the meanings of all technical terms in the readings.
5. Ask questions in class. The more questions you ask the more of the material you will remember.
6. Discuss the material with fellow students outside of class. (Try e-mail).

B. Writing the Test

1. When writing the test, do not answer each question in order. Answer the questions that are easy first, skip the difficult ones and come back to them later.
2. Read each question slowly and thoughtfully. The answer is often suggested by the wording of the question.
3. When concepts or terms appear in the question or in the alternatives, remember that it is the technical definitions that are implied, not common sense or English dictionary definitions.
5. Do not look for trick questions. There are no trick questions. Some questions are simply more technical than others and demand a deeper understanding of the material.
6. Don't copy wrong answers from the person sitting next to you.