

Seminar in Creativity -- Personal and Professional Applications

Summer 2015

MW

6-9 PM (Online)

Contact Information

Instructor: Orin C. Davis, Ph.D.

Office Hours: By appointment only

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Sources

In Genius (Seelig, 2009) ISBN: 0062020706

Disrupt (Williams, 2010) ISBN: 0137025149

Rework (Fried & Hansson, 2010) ISBN: 0307463745

101 Creative Problem-Solving Techniques (Higgins, 2006) ISBN: 1883629052

Zig Zag: The surprising path to greater creativity (Sanyer, 2013) ISBN: 1118297709

Little Bets: How breakthrough ideas emerge from small discoveries (Sims, 2011) ISBN: 1439170428

Other readings on electronic reserve

Course Description

This course delves deeply into the theory and practice of promoting creativity, using a specific theme, such as invention and innovation, humor, realizing creative aspiration, building creative communities, as a focus for the readings, discussions, class activities, and semester-long student projects. The course materials, which are drawn from a variety of sources to match the instructor's specialty, student interests, and evolving trends in the literature, include biographies, intellectual histories, psychological studies, educational research, the popular media, guest speakers, and outside mentors.

Course Theme for Summer 2015: Personal and Professional Applications

What does it mean to be creative? How do we apply our creative capacities in our daily lives and in the workplace? In this course, we will discuss what it takes to be creative as individuals, employees, and team members, and consider how the contexts in which we are creative can help or hinder the process. This course will be a combination of self-exploration and the development of business acumen and leadership capabilities.

Course Objectives

- Understand the nature of creativity and become conversant with the science underlying it
- Identify opportunities for creative thinking and personal development
- Develop a sense of one's strengths, talents, and creative capacities
- Assess the workplace milieu and other contexts with respect to promoting creative production
- Foster a creative atmosphere for others

Communication

I will post course materials and announcements on the wiki (<http://crrth612-su.wikispaces.umb.edu/>). You are required to check the wiki regularly (at least 4 times per week). *You are responsible for being cognizant of all course announcements.*

Please remember that you are responsible for knowing how to attend the online course punctually and with limited technological glitches. Go to <http://cct.wikispaces.umb.edu/OnlineGuideStudents> for guidelines. ***Also note that this course is synchronous and requires all students to attend at the time listed.***

School Cancellations

In the event of a school cancellation, we will resume class as usual on the next scheduled class day. Changes to the class schedule will be discussed during the first class meeting following the cancelled class.

Code of Conduct

The University's Student Code of Conduct (http://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/code) exists to maintain and protect an environment conducive to learning. It sets clear standards of respect for members of the University community and their property, as well as laying out the procedures for addressing unacceptable conduct. Students can expect faculty members and the Office of the Dean of Students to look after the welfare of the University community and, at the same time, to take an educational approach in which students violating the Code might learn from their mistakes and understand how their behavior affects others.

It is your own responsibility to understand and abide by UMass's [Student Code of Conduct](#), which includes the university's academic honesty policy. Please note that failing to observe this policy can result in severe penalties ranging from a 0 on an assignment, to failing the course, to being expelled from the university.

Accommodations

Sections 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 offer guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center (287-7430). The student must present these recommendations to each professor within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of the Drop/Add period.

Course Requirements and Grading

Class Participation: This is a course rooted in thoughtful discussion and consideration of the material. Ergo, it is incumbent upon you to be prepared *at all times*. Class participation is a major part of the course, and will require that you be active and engaged at each meeting, in addition to occasionally leading class discussions. You will be graded as a function of the depth, thoughtfulness, and activity of your participation. In order to do this, you need to be attentive, and to make substantive statements that go beyond merely [dis]agreeing and/or providing an example of your own experience. You need to explain your line of reasoning and show why the example is relevant. At minimum, constructive commentary requires analysis of the sources to defend a contention. Better is insightful performance that leads the listener to new insights and ideas through complex arguments that are rooted in the interplay and analysis of multiple sources. Often this requires a thesis, a discussion of the caveats to the thesis, and a resolution (synthesis) that indicates when the thesis does and does not apply. A good guideline is to make sure you have spoken substantively at least 2-3 times per class. Class participation is 20% of your final grade!

Personal Prospectus: Throughout the course, there will be a project to do during class that you will do either solo, in pairs, or in groups. You will be building a personal prospectus that is a reflection on how the class material applies to your life. Each class, you will start the process in concert with your classmates and the instructor, and you will develop it at home into a full-fledged proposal for how you will be living your life with respect to your job. This is a difficult task, and you should *not* underestimate the amount of time it will take. We will spend about half of each class on the project, and you are expected to provide *at least* the same amount of time at home. ***You will compile your class projects into one document that will be submitted at the end of the semester*** (~25-30 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman). This assignment is suitable for inclusion in the [Reflective Practitioner's Portfolio](#).

Peer Review: In addition, at the end of each week (Friday at 5 PM EASTERN), you will submit your draft to another student, who will provide a detailed review of the work you did on the project(s) of that week. The reviewer will write up *at least* one page (double-spaced) of comments that will be returned to you by the end of the day Sunday (before midnight EASTERN) with an electronic carbon-copy to the professor. This will be graded on the following scale:

- 1: Submitted, but insufficient
- 2: Submitted and complete, but limited discussion
- 3: Submitted and complete, sufficient discussion
- 4: Submitted and complete, provides a deep review
- 5: Submitted and complete, provides and deep review and gives actionable and insightful tips

These six review scores will be summed.

Overview of the Grading

Participation:	20%
Personal Prospectus:	50% (10 parts x 5% each; all parts graded with the final prospectus)
Peer Review:	30% (6 reviews x 5% each)

How to Succeed in This Course

I would like very much for all of you to be successful in this course and to enjoy the learning experience. To that end, these are my recommendations for doing well in my course:

- While the course calendar is six weeks, keep in mind that *this is the equivalent of a semester-long course*, and the workload is assigned accordingly. You have no space to fall behind, so it is imperative that you keep up and stay on top of the assignments.
- Remember the following adage: prepare for at least twice as long as the schedule hours of the course. Since there are 6 hours of class per week in this course, you should devote about 12 additional hours per week to preparing for this course.
- Read the chapters before attending lecture. Lectures and projects are prepared with the assumption that you have read the material assigned for that day. That is, *you are seeing this material for the second time*.
- Keep up with the projects, the upgrades, and the peer reviews. Budget *at least SIX HOURS* per week outside of class to work on your prospectus (~5 hours) and peer-review (~1 hour), and leave the rest for readings.
- Remember that, although the workload in this course is high, you are going to be going through rapid self-development and learning a great deal. To that end, also make sure that you take space to reflect! You are advised to find a reflection partner with whom you can have a chat outside of class once per week.
- Email me if you have questions, but try to solve the issue yourself, first. When you email me, I will want to know how you have attempted to answer the question so that I may guide you more effectively. Remember, *try to solve it yourself*, and then email me if you cannot do so.
- Bring your passion! This is a very exciting subject, and I encourage you to dive in fully.

Course Calendar

Class 1: I, Innovator

Who are we? How can/do we see ourselves as innovators?

Review of Syllabus

Serious Introductions (prepare one for the first class; [instructions here](#))

The “Itch” and Making Meaning

Readings: Fried & Hansson (Ch. 1-3), Wrzesniewski (2003)

Project: Craft your personal mission statement. Consider what itches you and which innovations you want to create.

Class 2: Strengths and Personal Creativity

DO BEFORE CLASS: VIA Strengths (take at viame.org)

DO BEFORE CLASS: Reflected Best Self exercise ([instructions](#))

The complex/creative personality

Flow and creativity

Readings: Excerpts from Csikszentmihalyi (1996)

Project: Provide a diagnostic of your strengths, creative capabilities, and the complexity of your personality.

Class 3: The 21st Century Organization

What is the context in which we create/innovate?

Organization vs. Organizing

Globalization

Organizational Structure

Theory X vs. Theory Y Management

The relationship between structure and strategy

You, Inc.

Readings: Rousseau (1997), Donaldson in Locke (2000), Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001),

Wrzesniewski, Dutton, & Debebe (2003)

Discussion: What is the proper structure, strategy, and management style for an innovative company?

Project: Plot your career trajectory in light of your mission statement and itches. What is your value proposition?

Class 4: The Nature of Creativity

What is creativity anyway?

Myths of creativity

Componential model of creativity

4C model of creativity

Factors affecting creativity

Readings: Hennessey & Amabile (2010), Kaufman & Beghetto (2009)

Discussion: Apply the two models of creativity to the day-to-day creative projects that people encounter at work.

Project: What are the conditions that enable me to be creative?

Class 5: Introduction to Creative Problem Solving

How do we solve problems? (Part 1)

CPS

Disruptive hypotheses

Readings: Williams Ch. 1-3 (including intro); Higgins Ch. 1 & 2; Seelig, Intro & Ch. 1

Project: Reinvention. What affects your creative processes?

Classes 6-7: Looking Around

How do we scan the environment for ideas?

Individual and group techniques for developing and evaluating ideas

Readings: Sawyer Ch. 1-3 (including intro); Higgins Ch. 3-5; Seelig Ch. 2-4

Project: Select some innovation challenges, generate hypotheses for scratching your itches, and discuss ways to develop them.

Classes 8-9: Crafting Stories

How do we develop, select, and sell our ideas?

Idea selection

Proposing and branding ideas

Readings (class 7): Sawyer Ch. 4-6 (class 7); Seelig Ch. 5-7; Sims Ch. 4-6 (optional)

Readings (class 8): Sawyer Ch. 7; Williams Ch. 4-5, epilogue; Higgins Ch. 6-7

Project: Develop a story around your innovation challenges and ideas, start making selections.

Class 10: Making the Rubber Meet the Road

How do we actually make things happen?

When things go wrong

Making and prototyping

Readings: Sawyer Ch. 8, conclusion; Seelig Ch. 8-11; Higgins Appendix 1; Sims Ch. 7-8 (optional)

Project: Create proposals for tasks you would do.

Class 11: Progress!

Small wins

The Progress Principle

Creativity under the gun

Readings: [Amabile & Kramer \(2011\)](#); [Amabile & Kramer \(2007\)](#); Sims (Ch. 1-3); Weick (1984)

Project: Create schemata for ensuring progress, taking little bets, and finding small wins.

Class 12: Start Me Up!

Connecting yourself to a company

Finalizing your narrative

Finding your mojo

Readings: Sims (Ch. 9, 10), Fried & Hansson (Ch. 4-7), articles from Liz Ryan (posted on wiki)

Project: Finalize your proposal for You, Inc.

Class 13: Q&A

Everyone bring in a question to discuss about the next steps to take to apply what you learned in the course

The syllabus is subject to change at any time with notice from the instructor, but the workload will not increase after the semester starts.

If you have a documented learning disability, please inform the instructor so that accommodations can be made.

Bibliography

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