



Psychology 312 Psychological Conceptions of Giftedness

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Office Hours: Mon/Wed: 11:30-12:30, Tues/Thurs: 3:00 – 4:00

Other times by appointment. Email me anytime: slewis@emory.edu

Course Description

This is a 4-credit-hour seminar examining the diverse conceptions of giftedness. We will study intellectual giftedness, the many different types of creativity, and even critically examine the evidence for ESP. The course will focus on issues of definition, designing effective educational systems, acceptance of the gifted by society, and the latest research findings.

The goal of the course is for you to finish with a greater appreciation for: 1) the complexity of these topics, 2) the challenges of integrating research findings into the design of superior educational systems, and 3) the degree to which culture shapes our beliefs about, and reactions to, giftedness in its many forms. The course will require considerable reading, critical analysis, and the willingness to participate in discussions.

Psychology 100 is required as a prerequisite.

During the semester we will be discussing such questions as: Is an I.Q. test a good measure of intelligence and should we place as much weight on I.Q. scores as we do presently? Is it better to underserve the gifted or the disadvantaged kids? Do the gifted have an obligation to give back to society? Is it a tragedy if a gifted person chooses not to achieve “great things”? Should gifted kids be allowed to skip grades? Is it better to segregate gifted kids in different classes or to keep them with the non-gifted kids?

Do you think that everyone is creative or only a few individuals? Are creative people significantly different from other people?

Is ESP real? If not what is it that these scientists are measuring? If ESP is real, how does it work? Why does discussion of ESP often cause such an emotional reaction in some people?

Class Organization

Attendance and Participation: Class attendance is required because part of your grade will be based on your participation in our class discussions. Everyone is expected to read, be prepared to discuss the current class day's articles, and to respond to specific discussion questions posted on Blackboard (Bb).

Required Texts:

1) Sternberg & Davidson (Eds), Conceptions of Giftedness, 2nd Edition, 2005.

2) Cropley, Cropley, Kaufman, and Runco (Eds), The Dark Side of Creativity, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

3) Sternberg, Jarvin, & Grigorenko, Explorations in Giftedness, Cambridge University Press, 2011

All of our other readings are available online through Oxford College Library's Reserves Direct.

Everyone needs to bring a copy of the day's readings to class along with the day's discussion questions or you may access them via an iPad or tablet. The readings may **not** be accessed via a laptop or phone while in class. If the cost of copying the articles is prohibitive for you, please talk to me about this. I can pair you with someone who is willing to share his/her copies of the readings.

Writing: Everyone is required to post to Bb a very brief, thoughtful reaction to the day's readings before every class. These Bb essays should reflect your thoughts about what the authors are saying, and should not be solely a summary of the main points. In addition, I will expect to read about the connections that you are making between what you are learning about giftedness and your experiences in your community placement (See TPSL below). Please keep in mind that your Bb essays take the place of quizzes and exams and therefore are important assessments of your learning. See "Guide to Writing Bb Essays" on our Bb class site for additional guidance on how to write these essays. Except for the days when you lead discussion, it is not an option to omit posting a Bb essay; you will lose 25 points off your final grade for every Bb essay not posted by the end of each grading period. Late Bb essays (e.g. posted after the due date/time) will also result in points off your grade. To get to our Bb site, go to <http://classes.emory.edu>, log in using your University Network ID and password, and look for your class section (either [PSYC OX-312: 10J](#) or [PSYC OX-312: 11J](#)). Later in the semester, you will have two longer writing assignments where I will ask you to apply what you have learned about leadership. These longer assignments will ask you to integrate all that you have learned from the readings and class discussions.

Leading Discussion: A team of two students will lead the class through a discussion of the day's readings on most class days. To facilitate this discussion, the team will post discussion questions on Bb before class. Each team member should be fully prepared to discuss all assigned readings for his/her assigned day. Everyone is responsible for reading these questions before class. Please think about with whom you would like to work. I will assign you the dates you will lead class sometime during the 2nd week of classes.

Theory-Practice/Service-Learning (TPSL): Ms. McLaughlin will pair you with a community agency such as a local school (taking into account your preferences and schedule), to provide service and to develop a greater understanding of giftedness. The benefits of TPSL are that you will be acquiring practical experience and knowledge about the ongoing challenges of educating diversely gifted children, while also meeting critical needs in the community. Since it is very important to follow through with any commitment you make to community partners, failure to honor this commitment will result in the loss of points from your final grade.

Grades: Your final grade will be based on the quality of: 1) **your participation and attendance** (16%), **your Bb essays** (32%), 3) **your team's leading of class discussion** (10%), 4) **one take-home exam** (30%), and finally 5) a **final integrative/summary assignment** instead of a final exam (12%) No outside research will be necessary to complete either the take-home or the final assignment. The maximum number of points possible is 500. You will receive an "A" if you earn a minimum of 450 pts., a "B" if you earn 400-449 pts., a "C" if you earn 350-399 pts., a "D" if you earn 300-349 pts., or an "F" if you earn less than 300 pts. See the **Information** section on our Bb site for more detailed information about calculating your grade at any point during the semester. Please remember that failure to honor your commitment to your community partner will result in a lowering of your grade. Also, remember to adhere to Oxford College's Honor Code at all times.

Although I have just finished making many statements about how you will be evaluated, I really prefer our primary focus to be on having good time learning about and discussing interesting ideas. I realize that is more likely to happen if you are not anxious about your grade so please don't hesitate to set up an appointment at any time if you would like to talk to me about your performance in the class.

Readings for September 2 and 4

See **Reading List** on our Bb site for a complete list of what we will read this semester. The readings will be from one of our texts or from articles on reserve. See <http://oxford.library.emory.edu/> and click on Course Reserves.

9/2- Tuesday - Ms. Crystal McLaughlin will talk to the class about TPSL placements - Finish 1st Day Exercise

◆ Sternberg, R.J., Jarvin, L., & Grigorenko, E.L. (2011) Chapter 1: What is Giftedness? pgs 1-13. In: Explorations of Giftedness

◆ Hunsaker, S. L. (1995) The Gifted Metaphor from the Perspective of Traditional Civilizations, pgs 255-265.

Bb essay on these readings due by class time (See Writing section above for details)

9/4 – Thursday

◆ Sternberg, R. J. (2001) Dr. Jekyll meets Mr. Hyde: Two faces of research on intelligence and cognition. In J. S. Halonen & S. F. Davis (Eds.), *The Many Faces of Psychological Research in the 21st Century*. E-Book: Society for the Teaching of Psychology.

♦Freeman, J. (2005) Permission to be gifted, pgs 80-97. In R. J. Sternberg & J. E. Davidson (Eds), *Conceptions of Giftedness*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bb essay on these readings due by class time