

# ***CREATIVITY***

## ***Nature & Nurture***

### **Professor:**

Vera P. John-Steiner

### **Prerequisite:**

Graduate standing.

**Course Website:** [www.unm.edu/~vygotsky/courses.html](http://www.unm.edu/~vygotsky/courses.html)

### **Required Texts:**

Csikszentmihalyi, M. Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention.  
Gardner, H. Creating minds.  
John-Steiner, V. Notebooks of the mind. (2nd edition).  
John-Steiner, V. Creative collaboration.  
Wallace, D., & Gruber, H. Creative people at work.  
Creativity: Nature & Nurture packet

### **Additional Sources:**

See also the excellent bibliographies in each of the assigned texts.  
Creativity Research Journal, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.  
Arnheim, R. Visual thinking.  
Davis, P., & Hersh, R. The mathematical experience.  
Stanislavski, C. An actor prepares.  
Sternberg, R. The nature of creativity.  
Vygotsky, L. Thought and language.

### **Rationale:**

We will examine creative processes and accounts of creators' experiences in the production of their work. We will look at motivation, patterns of interaction, and the socio-cultural context in which creative works are pursued. My intention is to deepen students' understanding of their own cognitive processes in or out of the pursuit of their own work, and to help them enrich their own learning and teaching activities.

### **Method of Instruction:**

Seminar format. Strong reliance on student contributions, demonstrations, and lectures.

### **Introduction: Systems Model and Domains of Creativity**

Csikszentmihalyi. Creativity. Chapters 2-3.

John-Steiner. Creative lives, creative tensions. (On website)

Moran & John-Steiner. Creativity in the making: Vygotsky's contemporary contribution to creativity and development. (On website)

Wallace & Gruber. Creative people at work. Chapters 1 & 2.

**Section I: Visual Thinking** John-Steiner. Notebooks of the mind. Chapter 4.

John-Steiner. Creative collaboration. Chapter 3.

Arnheim. Visual thinking. Chapter 6. (On reserve)

Gardner. Creating minds. Chapter on Picasso.

Wallace & Gruber. Creative people at work. Chapter 9 (Miller).

**Section II: Verbal Thinking**

Vygotsky. Thought and language. Chapters 4 & 7. (On reserve)

John-Steiner. Notebooks of the mind. Chapter 5.

Wallace & Gruber. Creative people at work. Chapter 11.

Gardner. Creating minds. Chapter on Eliot.

Csikszentmihalyi. Creativity. Chapter 10.

**Section III: Scientific Thinking**

Davis & Hersh. The mathematical experience. Chapter 4.

John-Steiner. Notebooks of the mind. Chapter 7.

John-Steiner. Creative collaboration. Chapter 2.

Wallace & Gruber. Creative people at work. Chapter 12.

Csikszentmihalyi. Creativity. Chapters 11-12.

**Section IV: The Languages of Emotion: Music, Dance, and Drama**

Choose any two from the following:

John-Steiner. Notebooks of the mind. Chapter 6.

John-Steiner. Creative collaboration. Chapter 5. (Also revisit Chapter 3 about Graham).

Gardner. Creating minds. Chapter on Stravinsky.

Funke & Booth. Actors talk about acting.

**Section V: Development of Creativity**

Feldman. "Giftedness as a developmentalist sees it."

Feldman. Nature's gambit. Part I. pp. 3-40.

Vygotsky. Mind in society. Chapter 7.

John-Steiner. Notebooks of the mind. Chapters 1 & 2.

Amabile. "Within you, without you: The social psychology of creativity, and beyond."

**Section VI: Theories of Creativity**

John-Steiner. Creative collaboration. Chapter 7.

Helson. "Creativity in women: Outer and inner views over time." )

Harrington. "The ecology of creativity."

Simonton. "History, chemistry, psychology and genius."

## ASSIGNMENTS

### Peer Examination:

A peer examination is designed to give you the opportunity to seek out and reflect upon an issue of particular importance to you. It is an opportunity to explore and develop ideas that are meaningful to you and also of interest to your partner. The process requires that you combine individual research and discussion/negotiation with a partner (chosen in class) over a three-week period. During this time you will generate what you consider to be a major question in creativity research. You and your partner will both be working on different issues; however, you will be formulating each of your questions collaboratively. The steps are:

- ◆ Select a partner from class
- ◆ Meet outside class with your partner to discuss and negotiation question/topic (each of you has a separate question).
- ◆ Inform professor of two questions/topics.
- ◆ Conduct research and prepare notes illustrating the development of your ideas.
- ◆ Bring notes on peer exam date to use in discussing question/topic with your partner.
- ◆ You and your partner each will be given 15 to 25 minutes to discuss your answers.
- ◆ Write a short summary (3-5 pages) of conclusions from peer exam, which is due a week after peer exam. All references to materials outside the course syllabus need to be noted.

### Suggestions for Final Paper:

The final paper is a case study of a creative person, using the formats from books used in class (see below). Your case study could be based on library research (biographies, autobiographies, printed interviews, etc.), interviews with a creative person, or examination of creative works, works in progress, notebooks, journals, etc. The best resource for structuring an interview with a living individual is in Appendix B of Csikszentmihalyi's Creativity. A student may also request special permission to choose a topic other than a case study.

#### Case Studies Formats

Descriptions are in Wallace & Gruber, and in Csikszentmihalyi's appendix. Examples include Wallace & Gruber, and VJS's Anaïs Nin.

#### Journals and Notebooks

The study of notebooks provides a particularly rich source of data and insights concerning the full development of thinking and working with words. The journals of Virginia Woolf, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Jean Rhys, May Sarton, and many others are relevant. There are also intensive interviews with writers, including the series published by the Paris Review, which make good reading for psychologists.