



PSYCHOLOGY 175:

GENIUS, CREATIVITY AND LEADERSHIP

A General Education Course in the Social Sciences with Writing Experience

Room: 184 Young

Times: MWF 2:10-3:00 pm

Website: <http://simonton.faculty.ucdavis.edu/dean/teaching/course-websites/psc175/>

Instructor:

Dean Keith Simonton

TAs:

Helen Ku

David G. Weissman

Office Hours:

MWF 3:10-4:00 pm
(or by appointment)

W 3:10-5:10 pm
(or by appointment)

MW 12-2 pm
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GOAL

My task is to help you fully appreciate the nature of genius, achievement, talent, and giftedness. Special emphasis is placed on exceptional creativity and leadership. Political, military, economic, scientific, philosophical, literary, musical, and artistic genius will be examined from a diversity of theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary perspectives.

PREREQUISITES

Psychology 1 and 41, or equivalents, or consent of instructor.

GRADING

Your final grade is founded on the following evaluations:

- I. **Three Brief Assignments** (45% all told) – The midterm assignments are designed to guide you to the final and biggest assignment, your term paper, in which you will review the psychological research on a topic of your choice. Please note that the topic must fulfill two absolute requirements: (a) it must be relevant to some aspect of the course and (b) it must be a topic on which psychologists have conducted research.
 - A. **Title Page** (10%) – Here you will specify the important question that you will address in your term paper. It will consist of 1 typed title page (including a running head). The title should be highly descriptive of your topic.
 - B. **Title Page and References** (15%) – The latter bibliography will include the main sources you plan to use for your term paper. It must contain *at least* one scientific journal article, one book, *and* one chapter from an edited book - all *specifically* addressing your topic. In addition, to make sure that your review will be up-to-date, *most* of the publications must be published in the *last 10 years* and *at least one* publication must have appeared within the *last 2 years*. It will include 2 typed pages, counting the revised title page.
 - C. **Title Page, Abstract, and References** (20%) – The abstract summarizes the key points you plan to make with respect to your paper in no more than 120 words. In a sense, the abstract represents the first draft of your term paper, albeit a much-abbreviated one! The total will be 3 pages long, including the revised title page and references.
- II. **Term Paper** (30%) – Here you will provide a review of your chosen topic in terms of the central theories, methodologies, and empirical findings in psychological research. The paper will consist of a title page, abstract, main text, and references section, all not to exceed 10 one-sided typed pages. It should include at least one level of headings, at least one direct quotation, at least one paragraph seriation and at least one within-paragraph seriation. The same requirements that apply to the earlier assignments apply to the same sections of the term paper as well (e.g., up-to-date references).
- III. **Final Exam** (25%) – A take-home exam in which you will address a question that integrates the course material in lectures and assigned readings. The four possible exam questions are given on page 5 of this syllabus. The exam paper is to be no longer than 1,500 words in typescript. Title page, abstract, and references should not be used. Headings are optional.

All papers must be typed and double-spaced with 1 inch margins. All citations and references must be in the professional format of the American Psychological Association (APA). All papers are due at the beginning of the class period. Your papers will be *marked down 3 points for each day that they are late!* Thus, a paper that would have received 100 points but is one day late will earn 97 points. This rule is enforced to be fair to your fellow students, and so exceptions will be made only if special circumstances warrant, such as documented medical emergencies. In contrast, final exams are due at the scheduled time, and late exams *lose 3 points per hour*.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Simonton, D. K. (2009). *Genius 101*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

The following books contain chapters that you may find helpful in researching the topic of your term paper. Even when a volume is not available through the library, individual chapters or articles can often be downloaded from publisher websites (for a price). *None* of these potential readings are required, however.

Chan, J. & Thomas, K. (Eds.). (2013). *Handbook of research on creativity*. Cheltenham Glos, UK: Edward Elgar.

Couto, R. A. (Ed.). (2010). *Political and civic leadership* (2 vols.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Heller, K. A., Mönks, F. J., Sternberg, R. J., & Subotnik, R. F. (Eds.). (2000). *International handbook of research and development of giftedness and talent* (2nd ed.). Terrytown, NY: Pergamon.

Kaufman, J. C. & Sternberg, R. J. (Eds.). (2006). *International handbook of creativity research*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kaufman, J. C. & Sternberg, R. J. (Eds.). (2010). *Cambridge handbook of creativity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rumsey, M. G. (Ed.). (2013). *Oxford handbook of leadership*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Shavinina, L. V. (Ed.). (2006). *International handbook of giftedness*. New York: Springer.

Shavinina, L. V. (Ed.). (2003). *International handbook of innovation*. Oxford, UK: Elsevier Science.

Simonton, D. K. (Ed.). (2014). *The Wiley handbook of genius*. Oxford, UK: Wiley.

Runco, M. A., & Pritzker, S. (Eds.). (2011). *Encyclopedia of creativity* (2nd ed., 2 vols.). Oxford: Elsevier.

Other potentially relevant articles can be found in the *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, *Journal of Creative Behavior*, *Creativity Research Journal*, *Empirical Studies of the Arts*, *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *The Roper Review*, *Political Psychology*, *Leadership Quarterly*, *Scientometrics*, *Psychology of Music*, and *Music Perception*.

COURSE WEBSITE

To facilitate your comprehension of the lectures and your research for your papers, please feel free to consult the course website at <http://simonton.faculty.ucdavis.edu/dean/teaching/course-websites/psc175/>. This site includes the complete lecture outlines as well as suggested readings for each lecture (should you chose a topic from that lecture for your term paper). In addition, mostly for fun I included a page of links. Although most of these links are designed solely to wet your curiosity, some are useful for your library research needed for your term paper.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

<i>Topic</i>		<i>Lecture</i>		
I. Perspectives on Genius	A. Defining the phenomenon	1. Genius I: Definitions & manifestations		
		2. Genius II: Measurement		
	B. Studying the phenomenon	3. Laboratory experiments: Problem solving		
		4. Artificial intelligence & Computer simulation		
		5. Content analysis: Subjective & objective		
		6. Psychometric methods: IQ tests		
		7. Longitudinal studies: Terman's gifted children		
		8. Historiometric inquiries: Cox's 301 geniuses		
		9. Mathematical models: IQ & influence		
II. Attributes of Genius	A. The person	10. Creativity tests: CQ		
		11. Personality: Interview & assessment		
		12. Cognition: Integrative complexity		
		13. Motivation: Achievement, power, affiliation		
	B. The product	14. Madness vs. mental health		
		15. Age & achievement: Longitudinal changes		
		16. Lifetime output: Individual differences		
		17. Experimental aesthetics		
		18. Computer analysis of masterworks		
		III. Origins of Genius	A. Individual growth	19. Development I: Child prodigies & the gifted
				20. Development II: Family environment
				21. Development III: Education
				22. Development IV: Social context
			B. Situational influences	23. Genius vs. Zeitgeist I: Art
24. Genius vs. Zeitgeist II: Literature				
25. Genius vs. Zeitgeist III: Philosophy				
		26. Genius vs. Zeitgeist IV: Science		
		27. Genius vs. Zeitgeist V: Politics		
IV. Overview on Genius		28. Creativity & leadership: Final inquiries		

PAPER AND EXAM SCHEDULE

<i>Date</i>	<i>Due or Taken</i>	<i>Useful Pages in APA Manual</i>
#1: Title page	October 9	23-25, 41, 229-230
#2: Title page and references	October 26	198-205, 49-51
#3: Title page, abstract, and references	November 13	25-27, 41
Term paper; Final exam question discussed	December 4	62-65, 170-179
Final essay exam due (3:00 pm)	December 10	

Each time you turn in an assignment, please remember to attach on the back the graded assignment that was returned to you earlier (not all, but just the most recent). That allows us to evaluate how much you improved on your previous work. Failure to do so will result in a deduction of 3 points. This also applies to the term paper!

EXAM QUESTIONS

The subject for your essay final will be of the following issues:

- 1) *In this course we have been assuming that exceptional creativity and leadership define the two main manifestations of genius. To what extent does the term “genius” successfully provide a generic label for these two behavioral phenomena? Are there aspects of creativity and leadership which seem to reside beyond this broad categorization? And can you conjure up other domains of achievement or fame where the term “genius” might be reasonably applied and yet which do not seem to fall into the subcategory of either creativity or leadership? For example, what about those personalities who found major world religions? Or rock stars? Or chefs? (See Genius 101: pp. 11-45, parts of pp. 47-77, 107-134)*
- 2) *Each year the MacArthur Foundation awards handsome fellowships of \$625,000 to notable contemporary achievers in virtually any domain of activity. The press refers to these as the “genius awards,” and thus the recipients, besides being richer, become officially certified as geniuses. Let’s say that you graduate at the end of this year and start looking for a job, only to discover in the “want ads” that the MacArthur Foundation is seeking someone to help select the next round of geniuses. Having done well in Psychology 175, you decide you are a shoo-in for the job, but you realize that your application must include a well-formulated “position paper” in which you specify the criteria that you should use to decide whether someone is deserving of the award. What things would you look for? Any developmental experiences or personality traits? Any objective behaviors or social relationships? (See Genius 101: pp. 47-77; parts of pp. 79-105, 107-134, 161-195)*
- 3) *It is a national crisis: The President of the United States, in her State of the Union Address, has claimed that America has fallen behind the rest of the world in its per capita output of geniuses. This decline is evident in the poor showing of Americans among recent recipients of the Nobel Prizes as well as the dearth of first-rate leaders in industry and politics (herself excluded). The Congress in its infinite wisdom has therefore voted to use the entire budget normally granted the Department of Defense to launch a massive campaign to boost the U.S. percentage of world genius by the year 2050 A.D. Given that you did so well in Psychology 175 a decade ago, you are recruited by the President herself to assume command as the “genius czar.” Because money is no object, you initiate a massive program to make America rival the Golden Age of Greece. In particular, you.... (See Genius 101: pp. 79-105, 135-160; parts of pp. 47-77, 107-134, 161-195)*
- 4) *During the course of this class, we have examined genius, creativity, and leadership from a great diversity of methodological techniques and theoretical perspectives. Which of these approaches seem to be the most enlightening, which the least, and why? To what extent are some methodologies tied to certain theories whereas other methods seem relatively theory free? Which methods and theories are most suitable for studying just creativity? Which work best for investigating leadership? How possible is it for a psychology of genius to emerge that imposes one method and theory on all pertinent phenomena? Are there aspects of genius that are overlooked by all current methodological and theoretical frameworks? (See Genius 101: pp. 1-10, parts of pp. 14-22, 37-38, 50-56, 65-66, 95-102, 110-121, 163-167, 178-186)*

Therefore, I strongly recommend that you periodically review the lectures and your textbook readings in terms of these four broad integrative questions. In the course website I provide some advice on which lectures are most relevant to which of the four possible final essay questions.