

Course Title	Mind, Creativity, and Imagination
Course Code	VSP508
Recommended Study Term	Term 1
No. of Credits/Term	3
Mode of Tuition	Sectional approach
Class Contact Hours	3 hours per week
Category	Elective
Prerequisite(s)	Nil
Co-requisite(s)	Nil
Exclusion(s)	Nil
Exemption Requirement(s)	Nil

Brief Course Description

This course offers an introduction to the notions of imagination and creativity from the point of view of contemporary philosophy of mind and of art. The first half of the course will focus on imagination, with an emphasis both on so-called ‘propositional imagination’ and on mental or sensory imagery. Propositional imagination (e.g., I imagine that I am a lighthouse keeper) is understood as a special form of more traditional propositional attitudes—like belief and/or desire. We will discuss different theories about the nature and functioning of imagination understood in this broad way. For example, how is the imagination like and different from belief? How does imagination connect with action? How does imagination function in our engagement with fictions? Mental or sensory imagery is the more traditional way to think about the imagination, but it has been recently overshadowed by propositional approaches to the (or a related) phenomenon. Here again we will spend some time looking at theories about the nature and functioning of imagination understood this way. For example, is sensory imagination fundamental to all imagination? What is the relation between imagery and perceptual experience? How does imagery function in our engagement with fictions? With our work on imagination as background, the second half of the course will be on creativity. We will first spend time considering how some contemporary philosophers and psychologists have analysed creativity. Second, we will consider creativity as it relates to imagination: is imagination necessary or essential to creative thought? Finally, we consider some theories of creativity in the arts, placing particular emphasis on the connection between creativity and value.

Aims

The course aims to:

- Introduce the students to some classic and contemporary theories of imagination and creativity;
- Enable students to draw connections to explore related scientific theories in psychology and cognitive science;
- Provide students with the intellectual resources to develop their own views on the value of imagination and creativity.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Discuss some theories of imagination and creativity;
2. Specify the connections between cognitive scientific research on imagination and creativity and the relevant philosophical literature;
3. Distinguish different ways that imagination and creativity have been theorised;
4. Specify the connections between imagination, creativity and the artworld.

Indicative Content

1. Imagination, representation, and make-believe
2. Imagination as a unique mental capacity
3. Mental imagery and perception
4. Imagination and fiction
5. Concepts and definitions of creativity
6. Imagination and creativity
7. Imagination, creativity, and the artworld
8. Creativity and value

Teaching Method

Sectional approach or lectures/tutorials. Lectures will introduce the course material (LO1, 3, 4). In class tutorials will provide the opportunity to critically assess the theories introduced in the lectures and specify the various connections between different theories of imagination and creativity (LO3). Writing term papers and participation in class discussion will help the students develop their own views on the topics of the course. In the sectional approach, the presentation of the course material will be shorter and immediately followed by class discussion (LO1, 2, 3, 4).

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Methods		
	Class Participation ¹	Two Research Essays ²	Final Exam ³
1. Discuss some theories of imagination and creativity;	✓	✓	✓
2. Specify the connections between cognitive scientific research on imagination and creativity and the relevant philosophical literature;	✓	✓	✓
3. Distinguish different ways that imagination and creativity have been theorised;	✓	✓	✓
4. Specify the connections between imagination, creativity and the artworld.		✓	✓

1. Students are expected to participate in classroom discussions and demonstrate good preparation – for instance, they will have to demonstrate adequate knowledge of the required weekly readings when called by the lecturer.

2. Students are required to write two research essays (1000 words each), one on issues in aesthetics and one on philosophy of art. The essays should reflect the students’ ability to explain the nature of several theories as well as the ability to argue for and against them.

Students can choose to substitute one of the essays with an in-class presentation (15-20mins, excluding Q&A).

3. A final exam, in which they will have to write short and long essay questions on the content of the course. Students will have to elaborate their views on the theories and works discussed in class.

Assessment Methods

Class Participation	20%
Research Paper I	25%*
Research Paper II	25%*
Final Exam	30%

* Students may decide to have an individual presentation in lieu of one (and only one) of the essays.

Indicative Schedule and Suggested Readings

Week 1 Introduction/history/basic concepts and questions

IMAGINATION

Week 2 Imagination, representation, and make-believe

Suggested readings:

1. Walton, K. (1990). *Mimesis as make-believe*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Chapter 1)
2. Currie, G., & Ichino, A. (2013). Imagination and make-believe. In B. Gaut (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to aesthetics* (pp. 320-329). New York, NY: Routledge.

Week 3 & 4 Imagination as a unique mental capacity

Suggested readings:

1. Currie, G., & Ravenscroft, I. (2003). *Recreative minds: Imagination in philosophy and psychology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. (Chapters 1 and 3)
2. Spaulding, S. (2016). Simulation theory. In A. Kind (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of philosophy of imagination*(pp. 262-273). London, England: Routledge.
3. Nichols, S., & Stich, S. (2000). A cognitive theory of pretence. *Cognition*,74, 115-147.

Week 5 & 6 Mental imagery and perception

Suggested readings:

1. Gregory, D. (2016). Imagination and mental imagery. In A. Kind (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of philosophy of imagination* (pp. 97-110). London, England: Routledge.
2. Nanay, B. (2016). Imagination and perception. In A. Kind (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of philosophy of imagination* (pp. 124-134). London, England: Routledge.

Weeks 7 & 8 Imagination and fiction

Suggested readings:

1. Gendler, T. S. (2000). The puzzle of imaginative resistance. *Journal of Philosophy*, 97, 55-81.
2. Radford, C. (1975). How can we be moved by the fate of Anna Karenina? *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes*, 49, 67-80.
3. Friend, S. (2016). Fiction and emotion. In A. Kind (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of philosophy of imagination* (pp. 217-229). London, England: Routledge.

CREATIVITY

Week 9 & 10 Concepts and definitions of creativity

Suggested readings:

1. Gaut, B. (2010). The philosophy of creativity. *Philosophy Compass*, 5, 1034-1046.
2. Boden, M. (2004). *The creative mind: Myths and mechanisms*, 2nd ed. London, England: Routledge. (Chapter 3)

Week 11 & 12 Imagination and creativity

Suggested readings:

1. Gaut, B. (2003). Creativity and imagination. In B. Gaut & P. Livingston (Eds.), *The creation of art: New essays in philosophical aesthetics* (pp. 148-173). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
2. Picciuto, E., & Carruthers, P. (2014). The origins of creativity. In E. S. Paul & S. B. Kaufman (Eds.), *The philosophy of creativity: New essays* (pp. 199-223). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Week 13 Imagination, creativity, and the artworld

Suggested readings:

1. Carroll, N. (2003). Art, creativity, and tradition. In B. Gaut & P. Livingston (Eds.), *The creation of art: New essays in philosophical aesthetics* (pp. 208-234). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
2. Currie, G. (2014). Creativity and the insight that literature brings. In E. S. Paul & S. B. Kaufman (Eds.), *The philosophy of creativity: New essays* (pp. 39-61). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Week 14 Creativity and value

Suggested reading

1. Gaut, B. (2018). The value of creativity. In B. Gaut and M. Kieran (Eds.), *Creativity and philosophy* (pp. 124-139). London, England: Routledge.

Important Notes

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>

Mind, Creativity, and Imagination
Research Paper (25%) Assessment Rubrics

Assessment Categories	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Pass (C)	Fail (F)
Knowledge of Course Material PA: 8/6/4/2/0	Knowledge goes substantially beyond what is expected of students in this course.	Essay/answer demonstrates knowledge of most important points; shows understanding of the basic philosophical positions and disagreements.	Some of the basic points are understood, but the student shows substantial misunderstandings.	Student's understanding deviates significantly from the positions discussed in class/ possibly fails to write on the assigned topic.
Argumentation and Originality PA: 8/6/4/2/0	Essay presents compelling arguments, shows understanding of important objections, and offers novel arguments or ideas that show a high degree of understanding.	Essay presents compelling arguments and shows understanding of important objections. Novel portions are less compelling or absent.	Arguments are often vague and impressionistic, or supported with dubious claims or fallacious modes of reasoning.	No discernible arguments/ no engagement with the ideas of the class.
Organisation PA: 5/4/3/2/0	Ideas are clearly arranged to allow easy	As before, but with slightly more mistakes in arrangement of ideas.	Essay seems to switch topics at points.	Total lack of organisational structure/ incomplete.

	understanding of their relations.			
Writing PA: 4/3/2/1/0	Flawless, engaging writing.	Occasional mistakes in grammar or spelling which do not interfere with comprehension.	Portions of the paper cannot be accurately assessed because of problems with the writing.	The content of the paper cannot be evaluated/ student is making little to no effort to complete the assignment.

The rubric of the final exam will vary depending on the number and difficulty of the examination. The relevant rubric will be included at the beginning of the final questions.

**Mind, Creativity, and Imagination
Final Exam (30%) Assessment Rubrics**

Assessment Categories	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Pass (C)	Fail (F)
Knowledge (Weight: 70%) 21/14/7/0	Demonstrates knowledge of all the relevant points, with a clear and accurate exposition.	Demonstrates knowledge of most relevant points, with a largely clear and accurate exposition.	Demonstrates only a limited understanding of the basic points.	Demonstrates very little understanding of even the basic points.
Argumentation (Weight: 30%) 7/4/2/0	Presents novel, compelling arguments with enough details.	Presents compelling arguments, with less novelty or some gaps.	Attempts to express an argument, but the result is unclear or messy.	Makes little or no attempt to present arguments.

Mind, Creativity, and Imagination
Class Participation (20%) Assessment Rubrics

Assessment Categories	Excellent (A) 20-16%	Good (B) 15-10%	Pass (C) 9-6%	Fail (F) 5-1%
<p>Participation and in-class discussion</p> <p>20/14/7/0</p>	<p>The student attends class regularly and <i>always contributes</i> to the discussion by raising thoughtful questions, analysing relevant issues, and demonstrating excellent preparation (e.g., knowledge of the assigned readings). The level of engagement with the course material is always excellent.</p>	<p>Attends class regularly and <i>sometimes contributes</i> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways. The level of engagement and preparation is good but not outstanding.</p>	<p>Attends class regularly but <i>rarely contributes</i> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways. The level of engagement and preparation is sufficient but could be significantly improved.</p>	<p>Attends class regularly but <i>never contributes</i> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways. The student is seldom engaged with the course material and the preparation for the lesson lacking in most cases.</p>