**UGS 303 Creative Problem Solving**

Instructor: Larry Speck

Time: TTh 12:30-2:00pm

Place: FAC 21

Office hours: TTh 2:00-3:00pm in GOL 4.142B

**Prerequisites**

None, satisfies requirement for Signature Course.

**Educational Objectives**

1. To establish a perspective on the role of creative problem solving in contemporary society as both an engine for economic development and a means for personal satisfaction and accomplishment.
2. To learn mechanisms for improving individual creative problem solving capabilities through greater understanding of case studies in a variety of disciplines.
3. To stimulate a propensity to approach a broad range of problems of everyday life and a broad range of career opportunities with greater creativity.
4. To encourage a lifestyle and pattern of lifelong learning that will enable a continuous growth of creative problem solving capabilities.

**Educational Approach**

This will be a reading/looking/listening/thinking course. It will follow a fairly conventional lecture format supplemented by extensive outside reading and discussion in sections. Most presentations will be illustrated by slides that will be posted on the website.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation will be drawn from performance in five areas. (1) Eight “Think Sheets” will be required based on readings throughout the semester. Students can choose any eight of the twelve opportunities for “Think Sheets” noted in the Course Outline. “Think Sheets” will count 20% of the course grade. (2) Two quizzes and a final exam will be given. Each will count 15% of the course grade for a total of 45%. (3) One 6-8 page Research Paper and oral presentation of the material therein will be required which will count 25% of the course grade. (5) Class participation (both in the lectures and in discussion sections) will account for 10% of the course grade.

**Required Texts**

Readings will be assigned from supplement available at Speedway Printing in Dobie Mall.

**Special Notes**

In Research Paper, if words or ideas are not your own, you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism. Laptop computers can only be used in class with special permission. Discussion sections may have field trips that go beyond the classroom. Extra lectures may be assigned outside of normal class time.

**Students with Disabilities**   
Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

**Religious Holidays**  
Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day.



**Course Outline**

**Week #1**

January 19 Introduction/Course Outline

January 21 Ten Terms

Read Ch. 1 (pp. 1-17) in *The Rise of the Creative Class* by Richard Florida (in supplement) by Jan 21

**Week #2**

January 26 No class—replaced by special activity.

January 28 Historical Perspective

Read Ch. 2 (pp. 21-43) in *The Rise of the Creative* Class by Richard Florida (in supplement) by Jan 28

Think Sheet #1 due in sections.

**Week #3**

February 2 What is a Creative Age Like?

February 4 The Absence of Creative Problem Solving—Easter Island

Read Ch. 2 (pp. 79-119) in *Collapse* by Jared Diamond (in supplement) by Feb 4

Think Sheet #2 due in sections.

**Week #4**

February 9 The Presence of Creative Problem Solving—Tikopia

February 11 The Presence of Creative Problem Solving—Tokugawa Japan

Read Ch. 9 (pp. 277-308) in *Collapse* by Jared Diamond (in supplement) by Feb 11

Think Sheet #3 due in sections.

**Week #5**

February 16 Designing an Economic System for America

February 18 Lessons from Alexander Hamilton

Read Ch. 17 (pp. 332-361) in *Alexander Hamilton* by Ron Chernow (in supplement) by Feb 18

Think Sheet #4 due in sections.

**Week #6**

February 23 Creating a Geographical Vision for America

February 25 Lessons from Thomas Jefferson

Read Ch. 4, 6 (pp. 51-8, 68-79) in *Undaunted Courage* by Stephen E. Ambrose (in supplement) by Feb 25

Think Sheet #5 due in sections.

**Week #7**

March 2 Quiz #1

March 4 Ten New Terms

**Week #8**

March 9 The Women Who Redefined Man

March 11 Lessons from Jane Goodall

Read Ch. 5 (pp. 194-211) in *Jane Goodall* by Dale Peterson (in supplement) by Mar 11

Think Sheet #6 due in sections.

**Week #9** Spring Break

**Week #10**

March 23 Developing Wireless Communication

March 25 Lessons from Guglielmo Marconi

Read selections from *Thunderstruck* by Erik Larsen (in supplement) by Mar 25

Think Sheet #7 due in sections.

**Week #11**

March 30 Projecting a Theory of Relativity

April 1 Lessons from Albert Einstein

Read Ch. 4, 5 (pp. 50-106) in *Einstein* by Walter Isaacson (in supplement) by Apr 1

Think Sheet #8 due in sections.

**Week #12**

April 6 Lessons from Norman Bel Geddes

April 8 Lessons from John Stevens

Read Ch. 17 (pp. 459-489) in *The Path Between the Seas* by David McCullough (in supplement by Apr 8

Think Sheet #9 due in sections.

**Week #13**

April 13 Inventing an Infrastructure for New York City

April 15 Lessons from Robert Moses

Read Ch. 12 (pp. 207-240) in *The Power Broker* by Robert A. Caro (in supplement) by Apr 15

Think Sheet #10 due in sections.

**Week #14**

April 20 Developing a Vaccine for Polio

April 22 Lessons from Jonas Salk

Read Ch. 6, 7 (pp. 92-127) in *Polio* by David M. Oshinsky (in supplement) by Apr 22

Think Sheet #11 due in sections.

**Week #15**

April 27 Quiz #2

April 29 Lessons from Joel Salatin

Read Ch. 10, 11 (pp. 185-225) in *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* by Michael Pollan (in supplement) by Apr 29

Think Sheet #12 due in sections.

**Week #16**

May 4 On Conventional Wisdom

Read Ch. 5 (pp. 147-188) in *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell (in supplement) by May 4

May 6 Conclusions

**Final to be scheduled by University**.