Course Title:
Creative Problem Solving

Course Number:
HR 5073-490

Course Description:
Challenges of living and working in the 21st century make it particularly important to develop adaptable and flexible thinking. The accelerating pace of change calls for new responses. This course explores the nature of creativity (four themes) and creative problem solving from individual, group, organizations, and societal perspectives. A framework for creative problem solving (CPS) based on more than four decades of theory, research, and development is presented blending scholarly inquiry (theory) and real-life application (practice). Particular attention is given to defining and identifying problems, types of problems, productive thinking (thinking creatively and critically, creative problem solving, tools and techniques, conceptual blocks, a purpose-driven language for CPS, the “heartbeat” of CPS, case studies (stories), and design and customization of CPS for your personal and professional use. Get ready to stretch your creative muscles.

Course Dates:
January 2-April 30, 2014
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: December 4, 2013

Site Director:
This is a three-credit hour online course. Please see your local Site Director or e-mail our online site coordinator at aponline@ou.edu

Professor Contact Information:
Course Professor: Kay Ham, MHR
Mailing Address: 504 Clearview Dr.
Norman, OK  73072
Telephone Number: (405) 321-6928 (daytime CT please. If I don’t answer, leave your name, call back number, and reason for your call and I will return the call as soon as I can.)
E-mail Address: k.ham@ou.edu
Virtual Office Hours: Please contact the professor for this information.
Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail to students during the above listed Virtual Office Hours and other methods by arrangement.

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:
Student materials are available at the OU Follett Bookstore located at 1185 Asp Avenue; Norman, OK. Orders can be placed online at www.oklahoma.bkstr.com. Faxed orders may be placed 24 hours a day at (405) 325-7770. Representatives are available by phone at (405) 325-3511 or (800) 522-0772 (toll-free) or E-mail at 0831mgr@fheg.follett.com from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday; and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday (CST). Summer hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday (CST). (Text prices are available online.)


3. Materials posted on the OU Desire to Learn (D2L) system: Details concerning course assignments, due dates, and grades can be found on D2L. Access D2L at [http://learn.ou.edu](http://learn.ou.edu); enter your OU NetID (4+4) and password, and select course to access material. Please contact your local Site Director if you require assistance.

Note: Follett is the Advanced Programs contractual textbook provider. Should text changes become necessary after publication of the course syllabus, Advanced Programs will facilitate text returns/refunds only for texts purchased through Follett.

**OU E-Mail:**

All official correspondence from distance learning instructors will be sent only to students’ ou.edu address.

**Online Learning Resource Center:**

The Online Learning Resource Center of the University of Oklahoma’s College of Arts and Sciences Online Program is here to serve you and assist you with any questions, problems, or concerns you may have. For assistance go to [http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/](http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/) or contact us by telephone at: (405) 325-5854 or Email: casonline@ou.edu

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. define creativity, different types of problems, creative problem solving (CPS), creative thinking and critical thinking (productive thinking), and conceptual blocks;
2. integrate concepts of creativity and creative problem solving within individual, group/team, organizational, and societal/cultural contexts;
3. identify and describe stages in the CPS process and practice with various CPS tools and techniques; and
4. apply the CPS framework introduced (content/process) to a student identified problem or issue flexibly and successfully.

**Assignments, Grading, and Due Dates (also see D2L):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Topics Covered</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1:SCPS Chap. 1 &amp; 2; Adams Chap. 1-5</td>
<td>Setting the Stage; Problem identification; Heuristic for problem solving; Attitude, Characteristics, Environment; Blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2: SCPS Chap. 3-6, Adams Chap. 6 &amp; 7</td>
<td>Creative Problem Solving Framework, Language, Tools, and Techniques – PRACTICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3: SCPS Chap. 7-10</td>
<td>Planning Overview and Key Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4: SCPS Chap. 11; Adams Chap. 8 &amp; 9</td>
<td>Design and APPLICATION of CPS –Individual, Group, Organizational Level</td>
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</tbody>
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**Class introductions:**

Go to the discussion forum, “class introductions”, and introduce yourself to your classmates. Tell us your name, something about your background, and whatever else you would like us to know about you. Include a comment or question about your interest in creative problem solving. **Due: During Unit 1 Not graded.**

**Jumpstart your brain:**

Three fun exercises to free your brain and get you thinking creatively, without using your texts. Total length: 2-3 pages. **Submit as one document in 3 parts.**
a. **Aha!** Brainstorming Activity (Empty the Glass): A glass of water is placed on a card table. Write down at least 10 ways to empty the glass without touching it or knocking it over, OR create and write down 10 new names for a light green paint color, OR write down 10 new ways to hold shoes on feet.

b. **A Stroke of Genius:** Think of a time or situation when you came up with a unique idea or solution to a problem (personally or professionally). There probably has been a time in the workplace when you had a creative idea. In about one double spaced page, discuss the incident and your thoughts on the outcome(s), e.g., reactions of other people, your learning, rewards, importance, etc.

c. **Eureka!** 1) Cite and write a definition for serendipity, 2) describe one historical event, e.g., an invention that had something to do with serendipity, and 3) has anything serendipitous ever happened to you? Personally, professionally, or both? Describe and explain this event(s). **Due January 12 Value 5 points** (Source: Creative Problem Solving: A Step-by-Step Approach, Harris, R.A., 2002)

**Idea Trap:**

Students keep a written diary akin to an inventor’s notebook, a writer’s journal, or an artist’s sketchbook. An entry should be made each day of ideas, insights, images, novel musings, seeing ordinary things in new ways, extraordinary happenings, personal discoveries, creative notions, reactions to readings, reflections on personal use of concepts learned or thoughts relating to creativity. Some students find that writing is easiest in the morning and that one tends to remember dreams when first awakened. Thoughts will come to you throughout the course of your day, too. Be ready to capture them. It has been said that, “palest of ink is better than sharpest of memory” (Chinese Proverb). They are important because they belong to you!

The journal itself will not be turned in to me. However, the content will be important for you personally and will be useful as you continue the course. This means that your Idea Trap can be hand-written and drawn in or typed. It is your preference. The important thing is to record something every day. Write on! **Due date: N/A (ongoing) Value: not graded**

**Unit 1 Essay:**

Choose a topic from those provided in D2L, write a paper of about 3-4 double spaced pages. **Due: January 26 Value: 15 points**

**Midterm Project-Creative Practicing & Essay:**

**One document in 2 parts.**

**Part 1** – Creative Practicing: Use the Adams text as your guide. As you read the text, take time to practice the exercises, games, puzzles, and problems. As you work through the text, choose any 20 of the activities to document in the format of a log. Include the name of the activity, description of activity and process, why you chose it, indication of where you were, time of day, what you learned about creativity and/or problem solving, and how you can apply the learning personally and/or professionally. You will then prepare a 1 page report summarizing your overall creative practicing experience.

**Part 2** – Essay: In about 3 - 4 pages, (1) Write an overall description of types of blocks to creativity as explained by Adams, and (2) address which creative roadblock is the biggest barrier to your creative thinking. Outline and discuss a strategy for overcoming this conceptual block. **Due: February 23 Value: 25 points**

**Article Briefing:***

From an academic journal or professional publication, choose an article related to the course concepts (creativity, problem solving, innovation, etc.) Critique and summarize the article in 1 double spaced page, including your reflective commentary about it. Cite the article at the end of the paper. **Due: March 23 Value: 5 points**
Application Paper:
You will plan, design, develop, and work through a personal or professional issue or problem using heuristic, concepts, tools, techniques covered in your texts. Problem solving stages and concepts should be clearly identified. The completed paper will be 10-12 double spaced pages, plus cover sheet and reference page. APA style is preferred. Due: April 20 Value: 40 points

Discussion Forum:
At least one discussion question for each unit will be posted on the discussion board. You will respond to a minimum of 2 questions during the course, more if you choose. This will give everyone an opportunity to share those good ideas! Due: Ongoing…final submission due by April 20. Value: 10 points total

Grading:
This is a letter graded course: A, B, C, D, or F. A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jumpstart your brain</td>
<td>January 13, 2014</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1 Essay</td>
<td>January 26</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Project</td>
<td>February 23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Briefing</td>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Paper</td>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Notice: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.

Policy for Late Work:
Please contact the professor regarding his/her policy for late work

Attendance Policy:
In addition to interaction via Desire2Learn and E-mail contact, students are required to contact the instructor via E-mail or telephone BEFORE the beginning of the course term for an initial briefing. Although physical class meetings are not part of this course, participation in all interactive, learning activities is required.

Student assignments and student/instructor communications will be conducted via Desire2Learn, although students may contact the instructor via telephone, postal mail, e-mail, or fax as needed

Incomplete Grade Policy:
A grade of “I” is not automatically assigned, but rather must be requested by the student by submitting to the instructor a “Petition for and Work to Remove an Incompleted Grade” form. An “I” can never be used in lieu of an “F” nor can an “I” be assigned because of excessive failure to participate in class activities.

Technical Support Information:
If you experience technical problems, contact Information Technology by visiting their website at: http://webapps.ou.edu/it/ or contacting them by telephone at: (405) 325-HELP (4357).

Procedures for Completion of Course Evaluation:
Upon completion of the course students should go to the Advanced Programs Distance Learning webpage and click on the applicable semester link under “Course Evaluations” which will direct them to the evaluation. The evaluation will take approximately five minutes to complete. Completion of the online evaluation is an important tool allowing Advanced Programs to gain information and student feedback for improvement of courses.
Your responses will be kept confidential. They will be reviewed by the department and only supplied to the professor once grades for the course have been submitted.

**Important information you should know about online courses:**

- To sign on to Desire2Learn (D2L), log in using your 4+4 and your OU network password (note that this is the same 4+4 and password that you use to access your OU email). Once you are logged in, please look for “My Courses,” locate your course and click on it. Remember to check your course site on D2L every day.

- Students enrolled in online courses may be required to take the CAS student orientation in Desire 2 Learn. To take the orientation, sign-on to D2L and then click on “Self Registration” at the top left corner of the page. Information about and instructions for the orientation can be found at [http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/public/students/orientation.htm](http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/public/students/orientation.htm)
POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Note: Attendance/absences do not apply to online courses. However, participation in all course activities is extremely important to student success in online courses.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution’s policy regarding “I” (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy. Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any “I” (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on “financial aid probation.” If the “I” grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student’s Financial Aid may be suspended make the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Honesty

Honesty is a fundamental precept in all academic activities and …[you] have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty. Academic misconduct in any form is inimical to the purposes and functions of the University and is therefore unacceptable and is rigorously proscribed. Academic misconduct includes:

- cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; assisting others in any such act; or attempting to engage in such acts.

All acts of academic misconduct will be reported and adjudicated as prescribed by the student code of the University of Oklahoma. All students should review the Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity

Accommodation Statement

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your local OU Site Director.

Course Policies

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course.

Copyright

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: http://www.goou.ou.edu/
INSTRUCTOR VITA
Kay Ham, MHR

Education
- Master of Human Relations University of Oklahoma
- Bachelor of Education University of Oklahoma

Current Positions
- Adjunct Faculty, Department of Human Relations and College of Liberal Studies
- Advanced Programs Professor since 2008

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses
- Conflict Resolution
- Organizational Behavior
- Organizational Change and Development
- Creative Problem Solving

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest
- Use of dialogue in conflict resolution
- Forgiveness and reconciliation
- Human interaction in organizations
- Effects of stress in organizations

Major Professional Affiliations
- Association for Conflict Resolution
- Association for Training and Development
- Oklahoma Association of Mediators and Arbitrators
- Society for Human Resource Management
- National Issues Forums