

TCU-in-Scotland: Zen of Creativity

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This is the syllabus for *TCU-in-Scotland: Zen of Creativity* (PSYC 40513). This is a course about creativity, and here is your first lesson. Consider the following Haiku, written by me:

Red yucca,
Tumbling white clouds,
Pale blue sky,
Texas!

Kilted rock,
Eternal green grass,
Uisge beatha,
Alba!

What is the lesson? (Hint: Anyone can write mediocre poetry, but is it *creative*? Is it creative *genius*?)

Readings

There are three texts:

- Dean Keith Simonton. *Origins of genius: Darwinian perspectives on creativity*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 1999 [You should read pretty much the whole thing, you will need it for the discussions and the essay questions.]
- David Daiches, Peter Jones, and Jean Jones, editors. *A hotbed of genius: The Scottish enlightenment 1730–1790*. University of Edinburgh Press, Edinburgh, UK, 1986 [If you have trouble obtaining your own copy, let me know, and I can make copies available to you — you should read at least the introductory chapter on The Scottish Enlightenment and then the chapters on Adam Smith, David Hume, and James Hutton.]

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- Robert L. Heilbroner, editor. *The essential Adam Smith*. W. W. Norton, New York, 1986 [This is a secondary reading; you would benefit by reading portions Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *Wealth of Nations*.]

You should read all of *Origins of Genius*, and then the indicated chapters from *A Hotbed of Genius*. Try to do this *before* you depart for Scotland. You may also want read parts of *The Essential Adam Smith*: I recommend Parts I–VI of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and Book I of *The Wealth of Nations*, plus any one of the remaining four books.

Assignments

You can earn points in four ways:

- *Short Essays*: Six short essay topics are listed below. Each essay (750–1,000 words) will be worth 10 points.
- *Participation*: While in Scotland, you will receive three participation grades, one for each week of the program. Your grade will be determined by your *informed* contribution to class discussion. Each weekly participation grade will be worth 10 points.
- *Journal*: Your journal will be graded once each week while in Scotland. Your journal grade will be determined in a manner similar to your participation grade, based upon your reading, class discussion, and reflections. Each weekly journal grade will be worth 10 points.
- *Scrapbook*: After the trip you can turn in a scrapbook, which will be worth 10 points.

You will need 90 points for an A, 80 points for a B, and so on. If you do the math, you will see that there are several ways to earn a good grade. If you are an active, informed participant, and turn in a quality scrapbook, you can earn a good grade by writing only three of the essays. However, if you are not prepared when you arrive in Edinburgh, you will most likely have to write all, or nearly all, of the essays in order to earn a good grade. You can do as many of the essays as you wish before the trip, but I wouldn't recommend doing more than three or four.

Essay Topics

Each essay should be clearly written, and should be 3–4 pages in length (750–1,000 words). When writing these essays, your guide should be Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*. You may submit drafts to me for feedback.

1. Summarize the Darwinian perspective on creative genius described in Simonon's *Origins of Genius* (especially in Chapter 1).

2. Discuss James Hutton's explorations of "the dynamic earth" in light of the material in Chapter 2 of Simonton's *Origins of Genius*.
3. Discuss Adam Smith's explorations of moral philosophy and economic behavior in light of the material in Chapter 2 of Simonton's *Origins of Genius*.
4. Identify psychological characteristics of the "magnificent seven" (especially Smith, Hume, and Hutton) that correspond to the material in Chapter 3 of Simonton's *Origins of Genius*.
5. Identify developmental experiences of the "magnificent seven" (especially Smith, Hume, and Hutton) that correspond to the material in Chapter 4 of Simonton's *Origins of Genius*.
6. Discuss the productive careers of the "magnificent seven" (especially Smith, Hume, and Hutton) corresponding to the appropriate section in Chapter 5 of Simonton's *Origins of Genius*.

