

**BUSINESS 257**

**CREATIVITY IN MANAGERS**

**SPRING, 2010**

**CONTACT**

My e-mail address is: [sjsu2006@earthlink.net](mailto:sjsu2006@earthlink.net).

Any e-mail sent to me should have your full name displayed as well as having Bus 257 in the subject line. I delete e-mails that I do not recognize before I download them from the server.

I will have office hours in conjunction with the class schedule at the location of the classes. Weekend classes will have office hours one hour after class.

**Read the whole outline carefully to help you prepare for the course. There are two books to read, a film to view, and a brief paper due prior to the first class. It is necessary to have you ready to work with creativity in the class.**

**YOU MAY STRUGGLE IN THIS COURSE IF:**

- You think creativity is some set of techniques that will provide an improvement in your effectiveness.
- You think creativity is mostly cleverness for different ideas.
- You strongly prefer the kind of course structure that gives you detailed, step-by-step direction and minimizes hazard for you.
- You think creativity is about being free to do whatever strikes your fancy.
- You lack appreciation for discipline.
- You avoid taking the challenge and responsibility for something that falls outside your comfort zone or pre-conceived notions.
- You have difficulty sustaining your energy to learn for eight hours.

**YOU MAY THRIVE IN THIS COURSE IF YOU WANT TO EXPERIENCE HOW CREATIVITY:**

- Is a major leap into a different way of thinking about and behaving in the world?
- Requires a passion for an idea and a willingness to face challenges to bring that idea into existence.
- Operates best in uncertain, complex, ambiguous, and uncharted situations.
- Necessitates an ability to operate from intention and exercise deliberate choice.
- Is often not supported in organizations and makes life difficult for those who seek it.
- Depends upon your taking the challenge and responsibility for something that falls outside your comfort zone or pre-conceived notions.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The learning objective of this course is to have creativity become a cornerstone of life, both personally and organizationally. This objective is achieved through the development of leaders to be adept at:

- Unlocking the inherent capacity for creativity within individuals.
- Fostering creativity to strengthen team productivity.
- Sustaining organizational processes that support creativity and removing organizational barriers to creativity.
- Channeling the creative potential of people toward competitive effectiveness.

## **PROCESSES**

To extract value from this course we will be challenged to work with an open mind. We will explore a wide variety and range of activities, experiences, ideas, and frameworks. These are designed to help each person enjoyably and seriously explore personal, team, and organizational creativity.

One of the biggest blocks to creativity is our paradigm of the world that often limits what we are able to observe and what we regard as legitimate or acceptable. Business school students are often blocked by a focus on results, impatience with process, a fixed set of beliefs about learning, and a need to evaluate, make judgments and come to conclusions.

Generating clever ideas is actually quite simple. The real challenge to creativity is staying with a situation long enough so that an insightful idea emerges to which you can commit yourself to take responsibility for the necessary action to bring the idea to fruition.

## **MAIN CREATIVITY TOPICS**

- Understanding the nature of creativity.
- Reconnecting with individual creative processes and capability and developing them further.
- Better understanding of how internal and external blocks hinder creativity and how to lessen the impact of those blocks.
- Experiencing working as a team that draws upon the unique contribution of each individual and works in a way that is creative and developmental to accomplish work that is truly value adding.
- Learning how to manage processes and environments in organizations that can draw upon the creative potential of all employees.

We may find ourselves working on several of these interrelated topics in a simultaneous rather than sequential manner through the course. The path that we will follow on this journey is dependent upon the people in the class and the pace that allows sufficient understanding of the activities, experiences, and frameworks that have been designed for the course.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

**All classes begin promptly at the scheduled time and will meet for the full length of time on the schedule. You will need to bring lunch with you as we will have a class related activity during the lunch hour on all four days. You are expected to arrive on time and stay for the entire class. You are expected to attend all scheduled classes. The only acceptable reason for missing any part of a class is a family emergency that requires your attention. If you have a business trip or any other conflicting activity, it is not a good idea to take the course at this time.**

Saturday & Sunday - 9:00am to 6:00pm, February 6, 7.

Saturday & Sunday - 9:00am to 6:00pm, February 27 & 28.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

**All assignments in this course are to be e-mailed as virus-free attached MSWord files on or before the due date and time. Your file should be double-spaced with both side margins set at 1.5" and using a 12-point font, preferably Times New Roman.**

**Assignment #1 – 15% of course grade. Due Date:**

Wednesday February 3, 6:00pm.

### **Assignment #1 Content – 4 to 6 Pages**

Read the following two books. Enjoy them; they are not textbooks. Do not spend more than two focused hours reading each book. Don't worry about detail or completely reading each book. I want you to get a strong impression on the perspective each book has for creativity.

**Michael Michalko - *Cracking Creativity***

**Michael Ray and Rochelle Myers - *Creativity in Business***

Rent (available on Netflix) or buy (available on Amazon) one of the films about the outdoor art projects of Christo & Jeanne-Claude. There are several choices:

5 Films About Christo & Jeanne-Claude:

Disc 1: Christo's Valley Curtain / Running Fence

Disc 2: Islands / Christo in Paris

Disc 3: Umbrellas

The Gates

### **Questions for Paper**

1. Contrast the perspectives on creativity from the two books. Compare them with your own experiences of how you approach creativity and the blocks you face to your creativity.
2. Describe the nature of creativity displayed in the film – how it compares with the perspectives from the books you described in the first question and what it reveals about creativity that is not in the books.
3. List significant questions about creativity that this assignment has put in your mind.

4. Write a one sentence definition of creativity that you have from completing this assignment.

**Assignment #2 – 45% of course grade. 18 to 22 Pages.**

An individual project that will be described in class with due date.

**Assignment #3 – 40% of course grade.**

A group project that will be described in class with due date and will have the following basic instruction – “create something of sustainable value for some other group of people.”

**LUNCHTIME DVD SHOWINGS**

There are six films of Yo-yo Ma titled “Inspired by Bach.” These are documentaries of artistic collaborations between Ma and different artists surrounding the theme of the Bach solo Cello Suites. We will view two of them during the first weekend. The second weekend may have two of the other DVDs or a different creativity experience.

**GROUND RULES TO ELIMINATE ENERGY DISTURBANCES**

A class is a place in which people are individually pursuing learning in a collective environment. There are many things that I regard as disruptive to the energy field needed to sustain that environment. That is why there are tight restrictions on attendance. There are a few other items that are important.

- Laptops, cell phones, PDAs, blackberries, iPods, MP3 players, game machines, etc. must be turned off and cannot be used during class sessions.
- Any form of plagiarism is unacceptable. Plagiarism is copying or paraphrasing any portion, even a single phrase, from another source without appropriate referencing.
- Students are expected to show initiative in contributing to the team by doing more than their share. I do not expect students to have to compensate for the poor effort of low performing team members.
- Active participation in class discussions keeps everyone awake. Make comments, ask questions, and even try to answer some questions.

**TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

The following statements only apply to my courses and are not general statements for any course. Other courses due to subject matter and learning objectives require different approaches.

- Developing intelligence is preferable to building knowledge or disseminating information. Think about the difference in considering a person well informed, knowledgeable, or intelligent.
- Depth is preferable to breadth.
- Concepts and ideas in these classes are easy to understand and remember. Completed learning only occurs when people act on what they know and when they have sufficient understanding of themselves to see how they react to their environment and are hindered in that application. Therefore, course projects always require students to do something with what they are learning.

- It is more important to focus on process than content, as process is dynamic and changing. This is equivalent to saying that 'how you do something' is more important than 'what you do.' It is also equivalent to saying that the statement 'the ends justify the means' is a despicable perspective and that, in reality, 'the means determine the ends,' so we work on the means