Instructor: Gregory W. Boller; Ph.D.
Phone1: 901.351.1407
Phone2: 901.678.2499
E-mail: gboller@memphis.edu
Office: FCBE 302-A
Facebook: gboller
LinkedIn: in/gboller

PLEASE READ THIS FIRST!! IMPORTANT COVID-RELATED INFORMATION!

Office Hours: This is a fully on-line class. Hence, the standard means for communicating with the instructor is via email, the Inquiries thread on the course elearn discussion board, social media, and/or phone/text messages. If you would like a face-to-face Zoom meeting, please contact me and we'll set up a convenient time.

Course Overview

Creativity and innovation are the lifeblood of any organization. And serious leaders must take responsibility for developing and fostering the creative, imaginative and innovative activities of their work teams. This course is designed with the understanding that creativity and innovation can be, and must be, taught and developed. Moreover, creativity and innovation are enormously complex and sophisticated human activities. As such, they are the focus of intense academic scrutiny and need to be studied as substantive topics in their own right.
Pre-Requisites/Co-Requisites

No prerequisites are required.

Required Texts (and Related Materials)

Books:


Articles:


Recommended Texts (and Related Materials)


Location of Course Materials

All course materials (lectures, discussion topics, news, etc.) are located on the eCourseware website.

Course Objectives

In this course, students’ learning will be directed toward three areas:

- **Theory and Knowledge** – This course provides ample content designed to improve student understanding about how and why people imagine & create; understanding about what enhances creativity; understanding about what impedes it.
- **Tools and Techniques** – This course provides a variety of novel tools and techniques designed to foster the students’ ongoing creativity development and learning. Some of these tools and techniques are focused on imagination & creativity, in general; other tools and techniques are focused on product ideation and design.
- **Application** -- The course features an opportunity to be part of a product ideation and design prototyping team. As a team, students will present their innovative ideation and design prototype results to the class for evaluation.

Fogelman College: Learning Outcomes for Your Degree

This course is designed to help you to meet the overall learning objectives for the MBA degree offered by the Fogelman College. You should take the time to become familiar with the overall learning objectives as a student in the MBA program:

[Assessment of Learning Goals for the MBA Program](#)

Course Methodology

This section of Creativity & Innovation is a fully online course and thus much of the learning will need to be self-managed and self-paced. This has the benefit of accommodating each student’s unique schedule and learning style. The class will begin
on August 17 (12:01am). Materials will already be loaded, and discussions started, on the course elearn site – please familiarize yourselves with the content and discussion threads asap. Please note that even though the course is asynchronous, there are specific deadlines for course deliverables. With your consent, I would also like to make time for synchronous meetings via Zoom. These meetings will be with project teams and for the purpose of being able to answer questions in real-time, and for me to assess your progress.

Professor’s Expectations

In general, you should assist the instructor in creating a positive, emotionally supportive environment for learning by staying engaged in the course and actively participating in all in-class and online assignments, projects, discussions and debriefs.

And in the interest of disclosure and openness (which are key elements in any culture dedicated to creativity and innovation), I thought I would share some common questions (and my responses) that students have asked me at the beginning of this class.

- “How will writing poetry or performing Shakespeare help me be successful as a leader in business?”

Using written and spoken language to shape meaning, to motive, to persuade, to compel, to inspire, to arouse passion and excitement, to teach, to mentor, to create visions, to convey, appreciate, admire, and celebrate the vicissitudes of human experience is what being a leader (of a company or any organization) is ultimately all about. When push comes to shove, your most important tool as a leader is your language. Poetic expression is a particularly liberating way to create new vocabularies (and thus meaning) with which we can describe our environment, each other, and our relationships therein. To approach our use of language in a poetic way is to open ourselves more to possibilities than settled certainties. And this is why I am particularly fond of encouraging students to develop a felicity with this genre of expression.

Public performances of creative expression are absolutely essential to your development as a leader. If you are uncomfortable with or incapable of creative expression, how can you possibly expect the same from the people you expect to lead?

For those of you familiar with International Paper, know that each year they send a group of elite employees in their advanced leadership development program for a week of intensive Shakespeare training at the famed American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, VA.

- “Straight up, what does it take to be successful in this course?”
That one is easy. Passion! Passion for learning, passion for self-exploration, passion for self-development, passion for discovery, and passion for creating experiences that you want to share with others.

Get engaged…be enthusiastic…be curious…be open to new experiences…interact with each other frequently!

**Student's Expectations**

In my role as your instructor, there are certain things you can expect from me including: a deeply thought-out, passionately inventive, and fully committed learning experience; same day responses to emails, texts or other inquiries; feedback on all work submitted within 3 calendar days.

**Grading and Evaluation Criteria**

In this course, students will be evaluated on three basic dimensions: Demonstrated progress in developing one’s self creatively (assessed through personal creativity assignments, the prototype presentation, and the debrief paper); felicity with creativity and innovation tools (assessed through demonstrated, active engagement in our collective learning, and class exercises); ability to apply creativity knowledge and tools toward forming and leading teams to solve practical innovation problems (assessed through Deep Dive project deliverables).

The specific point breakdown is as follows:

**Creative contributions:** 10%

**Personal creativity assignments:** 30%

**Deliverables for Deep Dive project:** 40%

- Written critique/deconstruction of selected product
- Edited video of your team conducting the brainstorming
- Spreadsheet of brainstorming ideas
- Prototype presentation to class

**Course debrief paper:** 20%

Here are my expectations for completing each of your graded assignments and projects:

**Creative contributions.** One of the keys to becoming more creative and innovative is to learn how to relax your own internal filters more often – you need to do less self-censorship and more interpersonal risk-taking with your ideas. Toward that end, you
will be graded on your demonstrated willingness to step forward and share your ideas, thoughts and visions (no matter how crazy you might initially think them to be) with everyone in the class. I don’t want to see anyone acting like a wallflower, and sitting silently while others contribute. I expect enthusiastic, frequent contributions to our in-class discussions. Additionally, I expect that you’ll complete the many assignments I’ll give with passion and a fiery dedication to learning. These assignments are, in part, intended to fuel discussion and debate.

**Personal creativity assignments.** One of the overriding goals of this course is to provide you with the incentive, opportunity, and impetus to jumpstart (or enhance) your own personal creativity development. Like any other vital human skill, creativity needs to be developed, exercised, and nurtured with serious dedication and focus. One of the keys to becoming more creative and innovative is to learn how to relax your own internal filters more often – you need to do less self-censorship and more interpersonal risk-taking with your ideas. Toward that end, you will be graded on your demonstrated willingness to step forward and share your creativity with others in a very public way. I have crafted two assignments that will give you an opportunity to stretch your imagination and move you out of your typical comfort zones.

Your first assignment, which is **due on August 31** is to pen an original poem about some experience that was particularly impactful to you in the last five years. The poem can either be free-verse or rhymed-verse, but should be clearly composed with an eye and ear to the poetics of language (i.e., it should not be prose). There is no length requirement, and you are also free to use whatever meter pattern and poetic form that best titillates your imagination. Please post your poem on elelearn in the discussion thread “Poems,” and in the poem dropbox so that I can give you feedback.

The keys to success with the poem assignment are as follows: 1) **Take the assignment seriously** and do the performance as if you were being graded on your creative and poetic writing ability. This assignment is, in part, about learning how to lose your conventional self by immersing yourself in the imagined possibilities of expressive, symbolic language. And you cannot derive the benefits I want you to derive unless you approach the performance in an earnest, contemplative manner. 2) Don’t submit your first draft just to “clear the deck” of this assignment. Do at least three drafts of your poem before submitting. Writing is re-writing; sorry, but that’s true. 3) Strive to be inventive with your language – use words and phrasings in extraordinary ways. “The cat sat on the mat” has the semblance of a rhyming structure, but just doesn’t cut it as poetry – strive to do much better than mere prose with rhymed end-of-line words.

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**Getting started with this assignment:**  
Poets.org has a great list of online resources! Check out their essays and links to other poets.

[Poets Online](https://poets.org)  

Try this site to hunt down some great poems written by others:

[Poem Hunter](https://www.poemhunter.com)
Since you'll also be working with Shakespeare this semester, you might try reading some his sonnets for inspiration.

**Sonnets at Open Source Shakespeare**

Sometimes, it's easier to begin (rather than just jumping into poetic writing) by penning your thoughts in prose. Then, start re-working them in poetic expression -- experimenting with the meter, the sounds of words, imaginative new phrasings and metaphors, and innovative rhyming schemes. Be patient. Keep re-writing...keep playing...keep experimenting.

In previous semesters, many students simply composed prose with some end-of-line rhymes. Not really poetry, is it? Think about using metaphors (or even similes). Don't be so literal. Make your audience work a bit to crack the code of your meaning. Create new phrasings of the ordinary that will rock our worlds! Be inventive with your use of language, not ordinary and conventional.

Please pay careful attention paid to meter -- rhythm. A fundamental truth of the human brain is that we are each wired to seek patterns in life (rhythm is obviously a pattern). Language that possesses a discernible, evocative rhythm will be more readily attended to and remembered than language that is not. And now you know a fundamental truth of persuasive communication! Experts in persuasive communication (e.g., marketing people) are serious students of poetic rhythms.

This assignment is complex. It takes a lot of work.

Challenge yourselves to move beyond prose with a few rhyming words.

Scansion is a method of examining the rhythmic structure of a poem. I tend to rely upon both syllabic count and accentual patterning in my own poetry, so my scansion will pick up both. Here is a link to a quick primer on scansion that you might find instructive:

**Scansion Primer from Purdue University**

Please remember to pay attention to punctuation in your poems. Punctuation tells the speaker (remember, poems are always meant to be spoken, not merely read) where to breathe. And breathing is a natural part of speaking rhythm, yes? Try different punctuations (ellipses [for trailing thoughts], colons [to make an introduction of thoughts or observations], semi-colons [for an elongated breath that's not as deep as a full stop], etc...). Play, experiment and have fun!

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Your second assignment, which is due in two parts (the first due on August 31, and the second due on September 14), is to learn a Shakespearean monologue (chosen for you by me), record yourself performing this monologue on video, post the video to an online server (either YouTube or Vimeo), and share a link to your video with the class on the discussion board thread "Shakespeare Monologues." You won't need any props or a specific costume. And your performance needs to be filmed in "medium close-up" (mid-chest to top of head). Each person's monologue is quite short -- only 12 - 16 (or so) lines, so this shouldn't be scary. Instead, it will be an amazingly sumptuous experience! You will be speaking/performing some of the most famous words ever written in all of human language. Your monologue must be memorized (this will be much easier than you think -- Shakespeare is beautifully written). You will need to research your character, the play, and the specific scene in which your monologue occurs. You're not merely speaking these words as yourself, but as another character with motivations and intentions that are likely quite different from what you have personally experienced before. Hence, empathy should be a key take-away from this assignment.

The keys to success with the Shakespeare monologue are as follows: 1) Take the assignment seriously and do the performance as if you were being graded on your acting ability. This assignment is, in part, about learning how to lose your conventional self by immersing yourself in the imagined experiences of another character, and then sharing those experiences in expressive presentation. And you cannot derive the benefits I want you to derive unless you approach the performance in an earnest, contemplative manner. 2) Thoroughly understand the meaning of all of the words that you are speaking, why you are speaking them, and the context in which they are spoken. This will require some research and some thought. Please write a one-page character summary that a) describes who you are playing, b) the setting and scene in which you are playing, c) what goals/objectives your character is trying to accomplish with his or her words in this scene. Please write this in your own words! DO NOT simply cut-and-paste material you found on the internet; I want this to be your own, original thinking. Please post this one-page character summary in the Shakespeare dropbox as well as in the Monologue discussion thread (this is the first part which is due on August 31). 3) Memorize your lines! Reading your lines from a script doesn't get you where you need to be to fully experience your character. Most of Shakespeare is written in verse, and his phrasings are often unfamiliar to modern ears. But they are beautifully rendered, and if you take the time to work with his words, I am confident that you will discover wonderfully new ways to use language in your own life. At the age of 51, I learned more than 1100 lines playing Richard III (and 300 of those lines I learned in a mere two weeks). If I could do all of those lines at the advanced age of 51, you (young as you are) can memorize 12 – 16 lines; seriously, you can! 4) Revel in the sound of Shakespeare’s words, and how they feel in your mouth. The Shakespeare canon is the genesis of modern English; you’re journeying back to the creative “mewling and puking” of your own language (see Jaques’ famous “All the world's a stage...” speech in A2/S7 of As You Like It for this reference) Savor your words; make them your own, and your audience will be astounded. 5. Memorize your lines! Trust me, it will be completely obvious to everyone if you read your lines from a cue card or from your computer screen. Don't embarrass yourself by not doing the work -- memorize your lines.

Please note: You must complete BOTH parts (the written character summary and the
shared video monologue) to receive credit for this assignment. There is NO partial credit for this assignment – all in, or nothing.

Getting started with this assignment:
The first step is to know your play, know your scene, and know your character. Don't just memorize a bunch words and expect that they'll sound like anything different than a word salad.

No Fear Shakespeare (No Fear Shakespeare) is helpful for a lot of people because they will provide you with a broad-brush “translation” of sorts. It's not perfect (in fact, there are a great many errors), but it will get you started.

Also try Shakespeare Navigators (Shakespeare Navigators). The notes are excellent and often give a lot of historical detail. They don't have all of the plays, so some of you will be out of luck with respect to this site.

The Folger Library (Folger Library) is an outstanding reference site for really digging into your scenes and character! This is a MUST visit for your preparatory work.

And don't forget Wiki for synopses and plot summaries.

Next, take a look at how professional actors play Shakespeare. Do a YouTube search for the terms Shakespeare and Globe. You'll see some outstanding clips of performances by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Globe Theatre in London. Now, don't try to copy their performances. Just listen to how they speak the words. One of the first things you'll notice is that they follow the punctuation -- you'll want to do the same thing.

While you're on YouTube, search "John Barton Playing Shakespeare." This is the definitive instruction -- every professional actor studies with the Barton method. You'll be able to glean some amazing ideas from this multi-part series.

Deliverables for Deep Dive project. This class is largely centered on learning specific techniques and methods to direct individual creativity in ideation practice that will result in valuable innovations. As leaders, you are (or will be) responsible for creating and leading high-powered innovation teams. And for this assignment, your class will be re-tasked as an innovation team on a Deep Dive (brainstorming and rapid product prototyping). Your class team is responsible for creating original, substantive improvements in a consumer (not B2B) product of my choice. The product choice this semester is a food product -- potato chips. Every year, Frito Lay runs a Do Us A Flavor competition for an innovative new potato chip flavor; the winner of the competition wins $1 million! Your ideation team will generate original, creative ideas to
improve consumer experiences with potato chips in ways not currently available. As a team, you will then be responsible for choosing one or more of these ideas, and building a prototype to present to the class for critique.

This Deep Dive is much more than an ordinary assignment; it’s an opportunity to craft a new business venture and reap financial rewards for you and your team. Just how far you want to take your educational experience in this class is entirely up to you!

Key deliverables include:

1. **Written critique/deconstruction** of the food category, potato chips, for your Deep Dive project. This is an analysis, from the consumer’s perspective, of the product’s weaknesses, limitations and problems. This analysis provides the justification for why innovative improvements in the product are needed. This analysis should be conducted in the anthropological tradition of ethnographic research; I expect to see photographic and/or video evidence, in addition to customer interviews. You will be graded on the extent to which you clearly identify, describe and document the issues/problems consumers have with the product’s status quo. Please post this in your team dropbox, and on the discussion thread, Deconstruction.

2. **Edited brainstorming video** (5 minutes maximum length and uploaded to YouTube) that shows the brainstorming session with your innovation team. Do not post a video longer than 5 minutes, because I will not watch it beyond the 5 minute mark (brevity and efficiency in communication is a skill we all need to practice). You do not need to add post-production elements like music or titles. But I do need to be able to see your brainstorming team, the environment in which you conducted your brainstorming, and how the session was facilitated. Moreover, I need to be able to clearly hear everyone speaking on the video. You will be graded on the extent to which I can clearly see (and hear) that your team is utilizing the brainstorming methodology taught in this class. Do not freelance your brainstorming methodology unless you wish your grade to suffer. Please post a link to your video on the discussion thread “Brainstorming” on elearn.

3. **Spreadsheet with ideas** generated during brainstorming (multiple rounds for each idea aspect), sorted by idea aspects, rounds and “stickiness” (these are concepts that you will learn in this class). Please do not submit a Word document or a .pdf; I require a spreadsheet of your brainstorming ideas – please use the template that I have already provided in the Content section under brainstorming. In brainstorming, we seek quantity of ideas and originality of ideas; quality gets assessed later during prototyping. You will be graded on the quantity and originality of ideas generated by your brainstorming team. For a project of this nature, with a brainstorming team comprising 4 - 5 talented, creative individuals, you should easily be able to generate several hundred unique product
improvement ideas using the methodology you learn in this class. Please post this in the team dropbox on elearn.

4. **Videotaped prototype presentation** (10 minutes maximum length) of selected product improvement prototype from the concepts generated by your ideation team. Your job is to present tangible representations (not finished products) of your ideation team’s most promising concepts for critical assessment and feedback from the class. This is a professional presentation, and I expect that you will be well-rehearsed, emotionally present, and command the screen with the language of leadership and executive presence. Business-appropriate attire is required. You will be graded on the **professionalism** with which you present your prototype, and the **degree to which your prototype clearly demonstrates an original improvement over the status quo**. Please note that if I can find previous versions of your prototype online with a Google search, you won't receive credit for this deliverable! Your prototype must be originally innovative!

**Course debrief paper.** To complete your course, you will write an individual debrief paper that reflects upon and distills meaning from your experiences. The debrief paper should be introspective and personally reflective (not a mere objective summary of events), and should be a minimum of 8 pages in length. In this paper, you should answer four fundamental questions. 1) What did I do particularly well in this course, and why? 2) What did I not do particularly well in this course, and why? 3) What did I learn about myself and other people while working on the assignments in this course? 4) What will I do differently on future innovation assignments, tasks and projects as a result of what I have learned from my experiences in this course? Remember, this is an individual debrief paper; you write it by and about yourself. While it is not intended to be read by anyone other than me, you are certainly free to share your paper with others in the class, if you wish. You will be graded on the completeness in which you address the questions above, and the **provocativeness** of your learning insights. Please post this paper in the debrief dropbox on elearn.

**Final Course Grades**

Final course grades are earned according to the following:

- 90 – 100 points A
- 80 – 89 points B
- 70 – 79 points C
- 65 – 69 points D
Course Topics

- The creative impetus
- Techniques for enhancing creative thinking
- Role of environments in organizational creativity
- Overcoming self-censorship
- The Deep-Dive methodology
- Rapid prototyping
- Deconstructing conventional brainstorming methods
- The third-third reconstruction of brainstorming techniques
- Performing creatively
- Recruiting ideation teams
- Types of innovation
- Sources of innovative ideas
- Innovation adoption characteristics
- The voice and mind of the customer
- Fundamentals of user-centered design
- Deconstructing existing designs
- Balancing aesthetics, functionality and idealized purpose in design
- Creating viable, innovative product designs from the customer/user's vantage
- Key challenges in managing "creatives"
- Collaborative High-Performing Teams
- Creativity Leadership

Deadlines and Deliverables

Shakespeare character summary due **August 31**
Original poetry assignment due **August 31**
Shakespearean monologue performances due **September 14**
Written critique/deconstruction due **October 12**
Brainstorming videos and spreadsheets due **October 26**
Prototype presentations due **November 9**
Course debrief papers due **November 17**

Final Exam Schedule

There is no final exam for this course. However, your debrief paper is due on November 17.
Course Policies

E-MAIL:

All students are required to maintain and access their University of Memphis (@memphis.edu) email account. You will receive all official course correspondence at this email account. Any inability to receive incoming mail in a timely fashion (e.g., not regularly checking your email, having a “full mailbox” condition, etc.) is the student’s responsibility.

Attendance:

You are mature adults in a graduate degree program, hence formal attendance will not be taken. However, you are expected to stay active and engaged throughout the academic term and keep up with the schedule of activities. Your full engagement in the class begins on the first day of the semester and should be maintained until the last assignment is submitted. For students receiving federal student loans, any lack of engagement in the course may be treated as non-attendance and potentially impact access to student loans in the future.

Academic Integrity:

As your instructor for this course, I assume that all students are performing their academic work consistent with all expectations for academic integrity on our campus, and the highest standards of ethical behavior. If you turn in work that is proven to be plagiarized or fabricated, you will immediately receive a failing grade for this course, and referred to the Office of Student Conduct at the University. Do not attempt to submit work that is not your own; the consequences for you, if you do, are severe.

The University of Memphis has clear codes regarding cheating and classroom misconduct. If interested, you may refer to the Student Handbook section on academic misconduct for a discussion of these codes. Note that using a “Solutions Manual” is considered cheating. Should your professor have evidence that using a “Solutions Manual” has occurred, he/she may take steps as described on the campus’ Office of Student Conduct website. If you have any questions about academic integrity or plagiarism, you are strongly encouraged to review the Fogelman College’s Website on Academic Integrity.

Late Assignments:

Assignments and projects are expected to be completed and submitted on or before their due date. Assignments and projects submitted past the deadline, without prior permission from the instructor, will receive zero credit. Please ask permission if you need extra time in which to complete an assignment!
Student Services

Please access the FCBE Student Services page for information about:

- Students with Disabilities
- Tutoring and other Academic Assistance
- Advising Services for Fogelman Students
- Technical Assistance
Gregory W. Boller (bio)

Greg is an Associate Professor of Marketing, and Interim Chairman of the Department of Marketing and Supply Chain Management. Greg holds BS, MS and PhD degrees in Marketing from Penn State University. In addition to marketing, his training includes psycholinguistics, rhetoric, and poetics. Greg has been at the University of Memphis since 1988, and teaches creativity & innovation, negotiation, global marketing strategy and philosophy of science.


Greg regularly conducts creativity, leadership, negotiation and communications training seminars for companies (e.g., International Paper, Hilton Worldwide, ALSAC/St. Jude, Baptist Memorial Hospital, FedEx, Southern Sun Asset Management, AutoZone, and Williams Sonoma) and executive development programs. He has served as an advertising consultant to the US Navy. Greg served as political research consultant to ABC News, the Foundation for National Progress, and the National Institute on Media and the Family. He also served as a lobbying strategy consultant for the National Hardwood Lumber Association and Family Business First.

In addition to his academic and consulting responsibilities, Greg is an enthusiastic member of the Memphis theatre community. Greg recently served as a member of the Theatre Memphis Board of Directors, and two terms as a member of the Germantown Community Theatre Board of Directors (was Board President during the 2004 – 2005 season). Currently, Greg is serving as a member of the Theatre Memphis Season Selection Committee and a Board Member with New Moon Theatre. Greg is a Teaching Artist at Playhouse on the Square where he teaches beginning and advanced adult acting. As an actor, Greg’s favorite roles include O’Brien in 1984, Stan in Sweat and C. P. Ellis in Best of Enemies (Circuit Playhouse), Kier in All Saints in the Old Colony (POTS at the Works), Claudius in Hamlet, Titus in Titus Andronicus, and Kent in King Lear (Theatre Works), Sec. McNamara and Sen. Easton in All the Way (Playhouse on the Square), Richard in Richard III and Stanley in A Streetcar Named Desire (Theatre Memphis), and Joe Keller in All My Sons (Germantown Community Theatre). Greg is currently filming a blues project with Piano Man Pictures, and doing Zoom Theatre with Playhouse on the Square and New Moon Theatre during the Coronavirus quarantine.

Greg is an avid (and eternally injured) tennis player, a struggling musician (he plays the guitar, didgeridoo and the djembe), and a vegetarian cook. Greg is married, and has two daughters.