Who’s Got Talent?
DSC-OX 101Q 4
Instructor: Dr. Sharon Lewis
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Office Hours: Mon/Wed: 11:00-12:00, Tues: 2:30 – 3:30
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Course Description
This is a 3-credit-hour seminar examining the diverse conceptions of talent and giftedness. Who among us does not want to be seen as gifted or exceptionally talented? What leads to this designation? How is that some individuals appear to be more intelligent, more gifted, more talented than others? Is it the result of superior genes, an exceptional environment, or maybe some perfect combination of both? How has the concept of giftedness varied across cultures and time? Are we all gifted in some way or another? How does your culture, class, ethnicity, and gender affect whether you will be seen as gifted? For example, are Beyoncé and Einstein equally gifted? How would we assess this? Is the I.Q. test a valid measure of intellectual giftedness or has it outlived its usefulness? We will explore these questions and more in this course.

Taking this course will help you develop a greater appreciation for: the complexity of these topics, the challenges of integrating research findings into the design of effective educational systems, and the degree to which culture shapes our beliefs about, and reactions to, giftedness in its many forms. You will learn to use empirical evidence to support your arguments, to articulate your arguments clearly and persuasively, and to critically analyze research evidence. The course will require considerable reading, critical analysis, and the willingness to participate in discussions.

Class Organization
Attendance and Participation: Class attendance is required because part of your grade will be based on your participation in our class discussions. Everyone is expected to read, be prepared to discuss the current class day’s articles, and to respond to specific discussion questions posted on Canvas.

Required Texts:
3) Sternberg, Jarvin, & Grigorenko, Explorations in Giftedness, Cambridge University Press, 2011
4) de Waal, Frans (2016) Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?, New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.

All of our other readings are available online through Oxford College Library’s Course Reserves.

Everyone needs to bring the day’s readings to class along with the day’s discussion questions or you may access them via an iPad or tablet. The readings may not be accessed via a laptop or phone while in class. If the cost of copying the articles is prohibitive for you, please talk to me about this. I can pair you with someone who is willing to share his/her copies of the readings.
Writing: Everyone is required to post on Canvas a very brief, thoughtful reaction to each of the day’s readings before every class (Go to the Canvas site, look for DSC_OX 101Q – 4, and find Discussions.). These essays should reflect your thoughts about what the authors are saying and not simply a summary of the main points. See “Guide to Writing Canvas Essays” on our Canvas class site for additional information on how to write these essays. Your Canvas essays take the place of quizzes and exams and both the quantity and quality of your posts will be evaluated (Canvas grade = quality of essays grade multiplied by the % of times you have posted on time). If you fail to post on time, you will quickly and significantly lower your grade. Except for the day when you lead discussion, it is not an option to omit posting these essays. Failure to submit a post by the end of each grading period results in an additional loss of 25 pts. from your final grade (maximum penalty = 50 pts.). Later in the semester, you will have two longer writing assignments where I will ask you to apply what you have learned about giftedness. These longer assignments will ask you to integrate all that you have learned from the readings and class discussions.

Leading Discussion: A team of two students will lead the class through a discussion of the day’s readings on some class days. To facilitate this discussion, the team will post discussion questions on Canvas before class. Each team member should be fully prepared to discuss all assigned readings for his/her assigned day. Your task as a team will be to help us discuss the most significant findings from the day’s readings. If you like, you can also share other resources that you think might make this process more interesting or more informative (e.g., relevant activities, short videos, etc.). Everyone is responsible for reading the team’s questions before class. Please think about with whom you would like to work. I will assign you the date that you will lead class sometime during the 2nd week of classes.

Grades: Your final grade will be based on: 1) two participation and attendance grades (40 pts. each), two Canvas essay grades (80 pts. each), 3) your team’s leading class discussion (50 pts.), 4) one take-home assignment (150 pts.) and finally 5) a final integrative/summary assignment (60 pts.) instead of a final exam. The maximum number of points possible is 500. You will receive an “A” if you earn 450-500 pts., a “B” if you earn 400-449 pts., a “C” if you earn 350-399 pts., a “D” if you earn 300-349 pts., or an “F” if you earn less than 300 pts. See the Grade Information section on our Canvas site for more detailed information about calculating your grade at any point during the semester. Also, remember to adhere to Oxford College’s Honor Code at all times.

Although I have just finished making many statements about how you will be evaluated, I really prefer our primary focus to be on having a good time learning about and discussing interesting ideas. I realize that is more likely to happen if you are not anxious about your grade so please don’t hesitate to set up an appointment at any time if you would like to talk to me about your performance in the class.

Readings for Wednesday, September 4 and Monday, September 9
See Reading List on our Canvas site for a complete list of what we will read this semester. The readings will be from one of our texts or from articles on reserve. See http://oxford.library.emory.edu/ and click on Course Reserve.

9/4 – Wednesday - Finish 1st Day Exercise

9/9 - Monday