

# Chemistry 328: Genius and Madness

Spring 2011

**Instructor:** Prof. Kevin Range

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**Office:** Ulmer 417

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**Meetings:**

- Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00AM–12:15PM in Ulmer 225
- Saturday, February 26<sup>th</sup>
- Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup>
- Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2:00PM–3:50PM in Ulmer 225
- Friday, May 6<sup>st</sup>, 8:00AM–9:50AM in Ulmer 225

**Office hours:**

- Monday, 2:30PM–4:00PM
- Tuesday, 9:00AM–10:00AM
- Wednesday, 9:00AM–10:00AM
- Thursday, 9:30AM–10:30AM
- Friday, 10:00AM–11:00AM
- *and by appointment*

**Course website:** [www.lhup.edu/krange/courses/chem328/](http://www.lhup.edu/krange/courses/chem328/)

**Description:** Throughout history, genius and madness have often been linked. Recent research indicates that personality traits and brain structures associated with creative minds in the arts and sciences are often shared with those considered “insane”. This seminar will examine the scientific contributions of history’s greatest scientists, with a particular eye towards those brilliant scientific minds that were afflicted with some degree of “madness”, from the suicidal (e.g., Ludwig Boltzmann, Paul Ehrenfest), to the quirky (e.g., Richard Feynman).

The majority of this course will consist of student led discussions on the work of noted scientists. Participants in this seminar will first and foremost expand their knowledge of science, while improving their public speaking, critical thinking, and rhetorical skills.

**Presentations:** The majority of your grade in this class will be based on two oral presentations to the class about an important scientist. Each presentation should last 35 minutes, *including the time you will lead the class in discussion.*

The presentations should inform the class about the chosen scientist and their work. It is vital that you cover both aspects (the scientists and their work). The main purpose of this course is to further your knowledge of science, so presentations lacking discussion in this area will be severely penalized.

To aid you in the creation of your presentations, especially in the understanding and explanation of the science, you are required to meet with me at least one week before the date of your presentation. You should bring a working draft of your notes/presentation to this meeting and be prepared to discuss your topic and any questions you may have with me. Failure to meet with at all before your presentation will incur a 10% penalty on the grade for that talk. A late meeting, i.e., one occurring less than one week before you talk, will incur a 5% penalty on the grade for that talk.

On or before the day of your presentation, you are required to email me a Portable Document Format (PDF) copy of any visual aids you display during your talk via the projector. Late PDF's will incur a 5% penalty on the grade for that talk. You will not receive a grade for your talk until I receive your PDF. Talks for which no PDF is received by May 1, 2011 where one is required will receive a grade of "E".

Presenters that do not fill their 35 minute time slot with an informative presentation and insightful class discussion will be severely penalized. Failure to give a presentation when scheduled will result in a grade of "E" for the course. Computer malfunction not an excuse for failing to give a presentation. Proper backup practices and use of the technology services available at Lock Haven and on the Internet should allow you to access a relatively recent copy of any data you may need from nearly any computer at anytime.

**Class participation:** A large part of your grade in this class will be based on your participation in in-class discussions. Your class participation grade will be based on the insight, preparation, and intelligence revealed by your comments and questions. Therefore, to excel in this class, come to class each day prepared for insightful and intelligent conversation with intelligent, insightful, and prepared peers.

**Attendance:** Attending all class meetings is strongly encouraged. Unexcused absence from seminar will result in your final grade being lowered by 5 percentage points. E.g., if you miss 2 classes you will be docked 10 percentage points and the highest grade you can get in this class will be an "A-" (90%); if you miss 8 classes, you will be docked 40 percentage points and will almost certainly earn a grade of "E". Failure to give a presentation when scheduled will result in a grade of "E" for the course. Excused absences must be acceptable and verified by LHUP.

**Student responsibilities:** You are expected to complete all assignments on time, with academic integrity, and in the manner instructed. You are expected to come to class prepared. Failure to meet these responsibilities will have a detrimental effect on your grade. Failure to give a presentation when scheduled will result in a grade of "E" for the course. Assignments that are the product of unethical conduct will receive a grade of zero. For further discussion of academic integrity see the *Student Handbook* ([http://www.lhup.edu/stulife/student\\_handbook/index.htm](http://www.lhup.edu/stulife/student_handbook/index.htm))

**Grades:** Your final percentage grade will be the weighted average of all of your coursework:

Participation	1 <sup>st</sup> Talk	2 <sup>nd</sup> Talk
35%	30%	35%

Your final letter grade will be computed from your final percentage grade using the fairly standard set of brackets to the right. In the event that there are few or no students in the top bracket (>93%) the instructor *may* adjust the brackets to give a more meaningful distribution of letter grades. Such adjustments will *never* result in a lower letter grade than that obtained from the brackets below.

**Percentage to letter grade conversion table**

A	93–100	C+	77–79
A-	90–92	C	73–76
B+	87–89	C-	70–72
B	83–86	D+	67–69
B-	80–82	D	60–66
		E	<59

**Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to discuss requests for reasonable accommodations with the professor at the beginning of the semester. In order for accommodations to be provided, your disability must be verified by Disability Services for Students.