

Winter 2016 | Department of English & Writing Studies, Don Wright Faculty of Music | Western University, London, Ontario
English 2091G / Music 3860B: The Creativity of Madness / The Madness of Creativity



Tuesdays 2:30 – 5:30 PM, TC205

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For the poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in her until she has been inspired and is out of her senses . . . when she has not attained to this state, she is powerless and is unable to utter her oracles. - Plato, *Ion*

New thoughts generally arise with a play of the mind, and the failure to appreciate this is actually one of the major blocks to creativity. Thought is generally considered to be a somber and weighty business. But . . . creative play is an essential element in forming new hypotheses and ideas. Indeed, thought which tries to avoid play is in fact playing false with itself. Play, it appears, is the very essence of thought. - David Bohm and F. David Peat, *Science, Order, and Creativity*

Why is madness such a compelling topic? How is madness different from sanity? What does it mean to be 'out of our senses'? How is creativity a form of madness? How have history and culture treated insanity as a creative state? Why are creativity, genius, and imagination often feared by society? What assumptions do we make about them? When do 'normal' individuals or societies start to look crazy? Have creativity and innovation become buzzwords, memes that lose their power to challenge and transform accepted ideas and beliefs? Through various works of culture and criticism, we will address the history, culture, and theory of madness and creativity in order to engage in the creative, often chaotic process of 'thinking outside of the box' of accepted cultural, social, and ethical norms of thought and behavior. Above all we hope students to gain appreciation of how "play . . . is the very essence of thought" and to open themselves to a more productive, compassionate understanding of how madness and creativity are necessary to the planet's survival.

Prerequisite(s): This is a non-essay course open to all students beyond Year One; it is cross-listed between Music and English.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the Bookstore, unless noted otherwise):

Blake, William. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

<http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive/copy.xq?copyid=mhh.c&java=yes>

Shakespeare, William. *King Lear*. Ed. Stanley Wells. New York: Oxford World Classics, 2000.

Sophocles. *Oedipus Rex*. In *Greek Tragedy*. Ed. Shomit Dutta. Trans. E. F. Watling. London: Penguin, 2004.

Sweeney Todd. Dir. Tim Burton. Dreamworks, 2007 (screened in class)

Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. Trans. Marion Wiesel. New York: Hill & Wang, 2006.

The following readings will be posted to the OWL course site, or can be found at the following websites:

Copland, A. (1953). *What to listen for in music*. New York: Penguin Books.

Chapter three: The Creative process in music (pp. 20-32).

Deresiewicz, William. "The Death of the Artist." *The Atlantic Monthly*. January/February 2015.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/01/the-death-of-the-artist-and-the-birth-of-the-creative-entrepreneur/383497/>

Foucault, Michel. "The Birth of the Asylum." *Madness and Civilization*. New York: Vintage Books, 1965. 241-78.

- Gardner, H. (1993) *Creating Minds: An Anatomy of Creativity Seen Through the Lives of Freud, Einstein, Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Graham, and Ghandi*. New York: Basic Books, A member of the Perseus Books Group.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy*. Ed. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs. Trans. Ronald Speirs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 14-19, 46-53, 112-16.
- Plato. *Ion*. Trans. Benjamin Jewett. <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/ion.html>
- The Revelation of John. The New Standard Version of The Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. 222-36.
- Robinson, K. (2011). *Out of our minds: Learning to be creative*, (2nd ed.). West Sussex, United Kingdom: Capstone Publishing Limited (a Wiley Company).
Chapter 10: Learning to be creative (pp. 245-283)
- Sawyer, R. K. (2012). *The Science of human innovation: Explaining creativity* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
Chapter 2: Conceptions about creativity (pp. 15-36).
Page 89–Chart reflects stages of creative thinking
Chapter 10: Cognitive neuroscience and creativity (pp. 204-207).
- Webster, P. W. (2002). Creative thinking in music: Advancing a model. In (T. Sullivan & Willingham, L, eds.). *Creativity and music education* (pp. 16-34). Edmonton, AB: Canadian Music Educators Association National Office.

You are required to pay a fee to take the Majors PTI assessment (\$15) in order to write your Self-Assessment profile (below). If you've taken the test before, you'll still need to re-take it for this course. You should also consult a good dictionary and thesaurus (the *Oxford English Dictionary* is available online at Western Libraries) and writing and reference handbook, such as *The Little Brown Compact Handbook* (10th ed.).

Course Outcomes and Learning Objectives

Students who complete the course successfully will be able to do any or all of the following:

- Think expansively and critically about issues discussed in class -- cultural, historical, philosophical, economic, political, social – and ask key questions about how these issues impact and influence one another.
- Analyze the critical and cultural importance and relevance of culture in reflecting and shaping how society views itself.
- Understand and appreciate the role history plays in shaping our views of madness and creativity.
- Think and write critically about madness and creativity from a variety of approaches and forms.
- Reflect upon these issues by applying them to your personal and professional situations.
- Organize and present ideas clearly and effectively in written assignments.
- Improve your ability to understand, organize, analyze, and articulate a broad range of data through a written report with a clear intent and clear structure supported by adequate evidence of research and reflection.
- Develop a critical understanding of what personality traits do or do not reflect your creative potential.
- Understand the complexities of human nature and motivation.
- Assess the role creativity has played and/or will play in your personal and professional development.
- Appreciate how reflection and writing are forms of civic engagement, and thus engines for social change.

ASSIGNMENTS

Paper on Madness and Creativity (500 words; 2 pages; due in class January 19)	10%
Self-assessment profile (1000 words; 4 pages; due in class February 9)	15%
Take-Home Mid-Term Test (due in class March 1)	15%
Comparative paper (1250 words; 5 pages; due in class March 15)	15%
Group creativity assignment (due and presented in class, April 5)	35%
Attendance	10%

Paper on Madness and Creativity (500 words; due in class January 19)

This assignment asks you to answer two questions: What do 'madness' and 'creativity' mean? How are they related – or not? In answering these questions you must make reference to two external critical, theoretical, or philosophical sources.

Self-assessment profile (1,000 words; due in class February 9)

On January 12 the Student Success Center During will come to class to instruct you about taking the Majors Personality Type Inventory (Majors PTI -- <http://majorspti.com/what-is-the-pti/>). Three weeks later they will conduct an in-class workshop based on your test results. The results and workshop are the raw data to write your self-assessment profile. The following questions offer a template for writing the profile. Answer them in any order or fashion you see fit.

- 1) What were the results of your personality test?
- 2) How do they reflect your creativity/creative potential?
- 3) What role has creativity played in your personal, professional, or cultural development?
- 4) What role might it play in your future development?
- 5) What hidden or 'mad' aspects of your personality are *not* reflected in the test results?
- 6) How might these help or hinder your future creative development?

Take-Home Mid-Term Test (due in class March 1)

The mid-term test will assess your understanding of class readings, lectures, and discussion. Questions will be posted to the OWL course site by **Friday, February 26**.

Comparative Paper (1250 words; due in class March 15)

This paper builds upon the insights gathered in the first two assignments by asking you to do a comparative analysis of one person studied in the course (this can be a figure from a fictional text or someone in real life we are considering in the course) and one person whom you see as exemplifying creativity in your own field of study or interest, whatever that happens to be. Again, the following questions should form a template for writing your paper, but do not feel that you have to stick to this template religiously. Answer the question in any order or fashion you see fit. Besides these considerations, your paper should develop a well-reasoned argument for your comparison.

- 1) Why have you chosen these two characters/individuals for comparison?
- 2) What aspects of creativity do they represent and exemplify?
- 3) What aspects of madness or creative excess might these individuals represent and exemplify?
- 4) How are they both similar to and different from one another?
- 5) How are these individuals role models (or not) for either your or society's creative development?

Group Project (due in class, along with class presentation, April 5)

As the term goes on we will discuss contemporary theories of individual and collaborative forms of creative process. In light of these theories, your final assignment will be a group project that examines different forms and personalities of thought and activity that inform the creative process and its results. This assignment invites you to harness your individual and group creative resources and potential. The outcome can take whatever form you see fit: video, dance, ensemble performance, website, blog, creative writing. In due course we will provide a template for the organization, expectations, and evaluation, which will be based on individual and group participation in both the process and outcome.

Attendance

We will take weekly attendance. Missing more than 2 classes will affect your final Attendance grade.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS:

January 5	<u>Introduction</u> Plato, <i>Ion</i> ; <i>The Revelation of John</i> Webster (2002) Creative thinking in music: Advancing a model Sawyer (2012) page 89; stages of creativity Brief historical overview Group exercise on madness and creativity
January 12	<u>Madness and insight #1: a boy should love his mother</u> Read: Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Rex</i> ; excerpts from Aristotle's theory of tragedy (found in an Appendix at the back of <i>Greek Tragedy</i>); Sawyer (2012) Conceptions about creativity (Ch. 2); (Ch. 10, pp 204-207) Ancient theories of madness Brief overview of how to take the Majors PTI
January 19	<u>Madness and insight #2: the family that stays together . . .</u> Read: Shakespeare, <i>King Lear</i> ; Nietzsche, from <i>The Birth of Tragedy</i> Early Modern conceptions of madness DUE: Paper on Creativity and Madness
January 26	<u>Madness and insight #3: I see dead things</u>

Read: Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*; Foucault, "The Birth of the Asylum"
The rise of Romantic psychiatry; re-read *Ion* and *The Revelation of John*

February 2 Majors PTI workshop

February 9 Can there be creativity after the madness of Auschwitz?

Read: Wiesel, *Night*

In-class clips from Reifenthal's *The Triumph of the Will* and Michael Jackson's *History*

Clips of *Dad rocks*—dads living through child rock stars (Jackson, Mozart)—creating madness

DUE: Self-Assessment Profile

February 16 READING WEEK

February 23 *Sweeney Todd*, lecture followed by in-class screening

**** Mid-Term Test questions posted to OWL by Friday, February 26**

March 1 Serial killers, capitalism, and the sound of music

Sweeney Todd

DUE: Mid-Term Test

March 8 Madness, Genius, Creativity #1

Read: Gardner (1993), Stravinsky, Graham

March 15 Madness, Genius, Creativity #2

Read: Deresiewicz, "The Death of the Artist"; Gardner (1993), Picasso

DUE: Comparative Analysis

March 22 The Creative Process of Madness/Sanity/Necessity

Keith Sawyer, *Group Genius*

Kelley and Littman, *The Ten Faces of Innovation*

Robinson, K (2011), *Learning to be creative* (Ch. 10)

March 29 The Madness/Sanity/Necessity of the Creative Process

Read: Copland (1953), Ch. 3, *The creative process in music*

April 5 **DUE: Group presentations**

GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Format and Writing: Submit all written material in 12 point font on 8.5" x 11" paper, double-spaced and 1" margins. Number each page in the top right corner with your name followed by the page number, as in "Smith 9." Do not include a title page. The top left of your first page you should include a) your name and student number; b) your TA's name; c) course title; d) essay submission date. After this, include the assignment's title, centred. We will evaluate assignments for grammar and style as well as content. We will give you guidance on solving writing problems where we find them. The Department of English and Writing Studies offers helpful writing courses (<http://www.uwo.ca/writing>), as does the Writing Support Centre at the Student Development Centre (<http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/>).

Documentation, Submitting Assignments, Late Assignments: Cite primary and secondary material in your assignments according to the method of documentation used in your home department – usually MLA, APA, or the Chicago Manual. Submit hard copies of assignments directly to us in class, and be sure to keep backup copies until you receive your final course grade. We grant extensions in the case of emergencies (i.e. family deaths) or illness, which requires medical documentation. Besides these cases, request extensions AT LEAST ONE WEEK BEFORE an assignment's due date. Late assignments not granted extensions will be penalized 2% per day, including holidays and weekends, up to 10 days, after which the assignment may not be accepted. Assignments submitted late without permission will be graded and returned without comments.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Regulations governing Term Work, Exams, Faculty Office Hours, Academic Relief (appeals, petitions, complaints), and other matters, consult "Information for Students" at: <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergrad/info-for-students.html>

Academic Offenses: STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE DEFINITION OF PLAGIARISM, CHEATING, AND OTHER FORMS OF ACADEMIC FRAUD, AND THE PROCEDURES AND PENALTIES FOR DEALING WITH IT. The UWO Academic Handbook states: "Scholastic offenses are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offense, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf." You should also consult the Department of English guidelines: <http://www.uwo.ca/english/site/undrgrd/info.html>. If there is any part of these guidelines about which you are unclear, please consult your instructor or tutorial leader for more information.

Plagiarism and Plagiarism Checking: Students must write their essays in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage, from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence. The UWO Academic Handbook states: "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. The use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western University and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

Academic Accommodation: Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office **of their home Faculty** and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medicalform.pdf>. The full policy is set out here: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

E-mail correspondence: We will respond to e-mails as quickly as possible, usually within a 24-hour period during the term. Remember that e-mails about class matters are *professional* correspondences.

Readings, Taking Notes:

Doing the week's readings, attending lectures, and listening to/participating in discussion are key to your success in the course. Where feasible we will post our powerpoints to OWL, but you should also take detailed lecture notes.

Classroom etiquette: laptops, wireless messaging devices, talking: No cellphones or other wireless messaging devices are to be used during class. We assume laptops will be used during class for the sole purpose of taking notes. If we find evidence of extra-curricular laptop use bothering other students or interfering with lectures or discussions, we'll have to ban laptop use. Except for the purpose of asking questions or class discussion, talking during class is rude and offensive, *and it vexes us*.