

**English 2190G / Music 3854B: The Creativity of Madness / The Madness of Creativity**



**Mondays 1:30 – 4:30 PM, Talbot College 204**

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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):** At least 60% in any 1000-level or above “E” or combination of two 1000-level or above “F/G” courses from any department in the faculties of Arts and Humanities, Information and Media Studies (FIMS), or Music, or from the Department of Anthropology, the Department of History, the Department of Political Science, or permission of the Department.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

(available at the Bookstore, unless noted otherwise):

Atwood, Margaret. *A Handmaid’s Tale*. McClelland and Stewart, 2011.

Blake, William. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. <http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive/copy.xq?copyid=mhh.c&java=yes>

Gardner, Howard. *Creating Minds*. Basic Books, 1993.

Shakespeare, William. *King Lear*. Oxford World Classics, 2000.

*La La Land*. Dir. Damien Chazelle. Summit Entertainment, 2016 (screened in class)

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

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

Copland, A. “The Creative Process in Music.” *What to Listen for in Music*, Penguin Books, 1953, 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/>

Plato. *Ion*. Trans. Benjamin Jewett. <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/ion.html>

*The Revelation of John*. *The New Standard Version of The Bible*. Oxford University Press, 1988, pp. 222-36.

Robinson, K. “Learning to be Creative.” *Out of Our Minds*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Capstone Publishing, 2011, pp. 245-83.

You are required to pay a fee to take the Majors PTI assessment (currently \$15) in order to write your Self-Assessment profile (below). If you’ve taken the test before, you’ll 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 Canadian Writers Handbook* (Second Essentials Edition, 2017).

## **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/Due Dates**

<b>January 20</b> / Paper on Madness and Creativity (500 words; 2 pages)	10%
<b>February 3</b> / Final Project Group proposal	(mandatory; no grade assigned)
<b>February 10</b> / Self-assessment profile (1000 words; 4 pages)	20%
<b>March 20</b> / Mid-Term Test	20%
<b>March 30 &amp; April 6</b> / Group creativity assignment (due and presented in class)	40% **
Attendance	10%

\*\* See Creativity and Madness Group Project Rubric on OWL site

### **Paper on Madness and Creativity (500 words): Due January 20**

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

### **Self-assessment profile: Due February 10**

During the first class (January 9) the Student Success Centre will instruct you about taking the Majors Personality Type Inventory (Majors PTI -- <http://majorspti.com/what-is-the-pti/>). Three weeks later (January 30) they will conduct an in-class workshop based on your test results. The test results and workshop will form the raw data to write your self-assessment profile. The following questions should form a template for writing your profile, but do not feel that you have to stick to this template religiously. Answer the questions 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?

### **Mid-Term Test: Due March 2**

The mid-term test will assess your understanding of class readings, lectures, and discussion; instructions to follow

### **Group Project: Due in class, along with class presentation, March 30 & April 6**

Your final assignment will be a group project that asks you to examine different types of personalities as they relate to the process of creative thinking as it informs the outcome of creative results and their products. This assignment invites you to be as creative as possible in harnessing your individual and group resources and potential. The outcome can take whatever form you see fit: video, dance, ensemble performance, website, blog, creative writing. We will provide a template for the organization, expectations, and evaluation of the project early in the term. To ensure equitable grading, the projects will be assessed both in terms of individual and group participation in both the process and outcome.

## SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS

- January 6**      Introduction: What is creativity and madness?  
Plato, *Ion*; The Revelation of John; Keith Sawyer, *Group Creativity*  
Brief overview of how to take the Majors PTI  
Group exercise on madness and creativity—reflection of value of disciplines  
Formation of groups; explanation of final project and work of groups
- January 13**      Madness and insight: Catharsis and ancient theories of madness  
**Required readings for this class:** Gardner, *Creating Minds* (chapter on Freud)  
Excerpts from Aristotle's theory of tragedy (presented in class)  
Continuing with Keith Sawyer, *Group Creativity*  
Groups one and two to present discussion questions
- January 20**      Madness and insight #2: finding your place in the world  
**Required readings for this class:** Shakespeare, *King Lear*; Gardner, *Creating Minds* (chapter on Einstein)  
Early Modern conceptions of madness; Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (presented in class)  
Groups three, four and five to present discussion questions  
**DUE: Paper on Creativity and Madness**
- January 27**      **Majors PTI workshop**
- February 3**      Madness and insight #3: I see dead things  
**Required reading for this class:** Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (online); Gardner, *Creating Minds* (chapter on Graham); Copland, "The Creative Process in Music" (posted in OWL)  
The rise of psychiatry in the Romantic period (presented in class)  
Groups 6 and 7 to present discussion questions  
**DUE: Final Project Group proposal**
- February 10**      Can there be creativity after the madness of Auschwitz?  
**Required reading for this class:** Wiesel, *Night*; Clips from Reifental, *Triumph of the Will* (viewed in class)  
Groups 8 and 9 to present discussion questions  
**DUE: Self-Assessment Profile**
- February 17**      READING WEEK
- February 24**      1986/2017  
**Required Reading for this class:** Atwood, *A Handmaid's Tale*; clips from *A Handmaid's Tale* (2017) (viewed in class)  
**\*\* Mid-Term Test questions published on OWL site February 27**
- March 2**      Madness, Genius, Creativity #1  
**Readings for this class:** Gardner, *Creating Minds* (chapter on Stravinsky)  
**Guest Speaker:** Dr. Mark Daley, Special Advisor to the President (Data Strategy), on "Computational Creativity: AI, Algorithms, and Artistic Agency"  
Groups ten, eleven and twelve to present discussion questions  
**DUE: Mid-Term Test**
- March 9**      *La La Land*, short introduction, followed by in-class screening
- March 16**      Madness and the sound of music:  
*La La Land*
- March 23**      Madness, Genius, Creativity #2  
**Readings for this class:** Gardner, *Creating Minds* (chapter on Picasso); Deresiewicz, "The Death of the Artist" (online); Robinson, "Learning to be creative" (posted to OWL)  
Final reflections on creativity and madness
- March 30 & April 6**      **DUE: Group presentations in class, along with Individual and Group documents**

## **GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS**

**Format and Writing:** All written assignments must follow form and content guidelines outlined by the Modern Language Association (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). The easiest source for these guidelines is the OWL Writing Lab Online site at Purdue University: [owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide.html](http://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html). On this site you will find a sample research paper, which will show you what the formatting, Works Cited, etc. of your assignments should look like. 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/>). See also: "Undergraduate Grading Criteria" on the Department of English website at: <https://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/courses/pdf/UndergradGradingCriteria.pdf>

**Submitting Assignments:** Upload all assignments through Dropbox in the OWL course site by 11:59PM on the due date.

**Late Assignments:** 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 THE DUE DATE of any assignment. 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**

English Department student information: [www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html](http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html)

Faculty of Music student information: <https://music.uwo.ca/current-students/undergraduate/index.html>

**Academic Integrity:** Students must write their essays and assignments 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 that may entail serious penalties.** See Western's Scholastic Offences policy: [www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading\\_189](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_189).

**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 necessary form and further information regarding this policy can be found on the UWO Student Services website. The full policy is set out at: [www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf) Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [MentalHealth@Western](mailto:MentalHealth@Western) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. See [Academic Calendar](#) for more details.

**E-mails:** We respond to e-mails as quickly as possible. Remember that class e-mails are *professional* correspondences.

### **Readings, Attendance, Taking Notes:**

We take weekly attendance. Doing readings, attending lectures, and participating in discussion are key to your success in the course. Where available we will post powerpoints to OWL, but you should also take detailed notes in class.

**Classroom etiquette: laptops, wireless messaging devices, talking, etc.:** Turn off all cellphones or wireless messaging devices during class. Only use laptops during class for class purposes. Talking during class other than to participate in discussion is rude and disrespectful to the class.