

English 2097B / Music 3854B: The Creativity of Madness / The Madness of Creativity



Mondays 1:30 – 4:30 PM | TC 204

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(Zoom or f2f)

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 “A/B” 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.

Antirequisite(s): [Music 3854A/B](#), [Music 3860A/B](#) or [English 2190F/G](#) if taken in the winter of 2015-15, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2019-20.

COURSE DELIVERY

Lectures will be delivered face to face, although lecture and Powerpoints notes and other materials will be posted on OWL.

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population. We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

REQUIRED TEXTS

(available at the UWO Bookstore, unless noted otherwise; alternate sources provided):

Dimaline, Cherie. *The Marrow Thieves*. Dancing Cat Books, 2017.

<https://www.dcbyoungreaders.com/the-marrow-thieves>

[https://www.amazon.ca/Marrow-Thieves-Cherie-](https://www.amazon.ca/Marrow-Thieves-Cherie-Dimaline/dp/1770864865/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=the+marrow+thieves&qid=1599326069&s=books&sr=1-1)

[Dimaline/dp/1770864865/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=the+marrow+thieves&qid=1599326069&s=books&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.ca/Marrow-Thieves-Cherie-Dimaline/dp/1770864865/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=the+marrow+thieves&qid=1599326069&s=books&sr=1-1)

McComb, C. (2020). *Productivity for Robots: How to (re)connect, get creative, and stay human in the new world*.

Shakespeare, William. *King Lear*. Ed. Stanley Wells. Oxford World Classics, 2008.

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

https://www.amazon.ca/Night-Elie-Weisel/dp/0374500010/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=elie+weisel&qid=1608729096&sr=8-3

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

Blake, William. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Posted as a .pdf to OWL; illuminated version found at:

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

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*. 2nd edition, Capstone Publishing, 2011, pp. 245-83.

REQUIRED

You are required to pay a fee to take Clifton Strengths assessment (currently \$17) 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.

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

January 23	Paper on Madness and Creativity (500 words; 2 pages)	10%
February 6	Final Project Group proposal	(mandatory; no grade assigned)
February 13	Self-assessment profile (1000 words; 4 pages)	20%
March 16	Mid-Term Test	20%
March 27 April 3	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; 2 pages): Due January 23

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 (1,000 words; 4 pages): Due February 13

During the first class (January 11) the Student Success Centre will instruct you about taking the Clifton Strengths assessment <<https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/252137/home.aspx>>. Three weeks later (**February 1**) 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 13

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 27 & April 3

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 9** Introduction: What is creativity and madness?
Plato, *Ion*; *The Revelation of John*
Brief overview of how to take the Clifton Strengths assessment
Group exercise on madness and creativity—reflection of value of disciplines
Formation of groups; explanation of final project and work of groups
- January 16** Madness and insight: Catharsis and ancient theories of madness
Required readings for this class: 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/>
PLUS McComb (2020)—pp. i-4, 13-19, 21-37.
Excerpts from Aristotle's theory of tragedy (presented in class)
Continuing with group exercise on madness and creativity—reflection of value of disciplines
Groups 1 and 2 to present discussion questions
- January 23** Madness and insight: Finding your place in the world
Required readings for this class: Shakespeare, *King Lear*; Robinson, K. "Learning to be Creative." *Out of Our Minds*. 2nd edition, Capstone Publishing, 2011, pp. 245-83.
Early Modern conceptions of madness
Groups 3 and 4 to present discussion questions
DUE: Paper on Creativity and Madness
- January 30** **Clifton Strengths Assessment Workshop**
- February 6** Madness and insight: I see dead things
Required reading for this class: Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (online); McComb (2020) pp. 43-65.
The rise of psychiatry in the Romantic period (presented in class)
DUE: Final Project Group proposal
- February 13** 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 5 and 6 to present discussion questions

DUE: Self-Assessment Profile

February 20 **READING WEEK**

February 27 Indigenous Creativity

Required Reading for this class: Dimaline, *The Marrow Thieves*

Groups 7 and 8 to present discussion questions

**** Mid-Term Test questions published on OWL site February 27 Due March 16**

March 6 Madness and the sound of musicals
La La Land (screen in class)

March 13 Madness and the sound of musicals

Required Reading for this class: McComb (2020) pp. 71-79, 89-93, 95-109, 117-122, 125-129.

La La Land (Discussion)

Group 9 and 10 to present discussion questions

DUE on March 16: Mid-Term Test

March 20 Madness, Genius, Creativity

Required Readings for the class: Themes of those who had an impact on their disciplines (Freud, Einstein, Graham, Picasso, Stravinsky)—posted on OWL; McComb (2020) pp. 135-141, 149-154, 169-180, 189-194, 203-206.

Group 11 and 12 to present discussion questions.

March 27 **DUE: Group presentations in class, along with Individual and Group documents**

April 3 **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 (8th 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

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/forms/grading_rubric_general.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

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

Pre-requisites:

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

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.

ACCOMMODATION POLICIES

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students are responsible for making up any missed classes or assignments as soon as possible. The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Faculty of Music Office of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (TC210) or Faculty of Arts and Humanities Office of the Associate Dean, Academic (UC2220A) together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. Students are directed to read the Senate policy on accommodation for medical illness at the following website for further details regarding requirements and procedures for the supporting documentation:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Academic Consideration for Missing Work (<10%):

In cases where students miss work that is worth less than 10% of the total course grade (ie. two or fewer assignments) due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if documentation is voluntarily submitted to the Associate Dean's office and the Associate Dean grants an accommodation, then the missed assignment(s) or quiz(zes) will be discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course. If documentation is not voluntarily submitted then the missed assignment(s) will receive a grade of zero. Students who have been denied accommodation by an instructor may appeal this decision to the Associate Dean's office but will be required to present appropriate documentation.

Academic Offences:

Submission of work with which you have received help from someone else (other than the course instructor or TA) is an example of plagiarism, which is considered a major academic offence. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, as found at:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

All students must write assignments in their own words. When taking an idea or passage from another author, students must acknowledge their debt by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing (footnotes or citations). Plagiarism is a major academic offence. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Mental Health & Wellness

Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to the Health and Wellness at Western page (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or to go to the Wellness Education Centre located in UCC room 76. Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in UC11 or to click on the green "I Need Help Now" button on the Health and Wellness page above.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Students work with Accessible Education Western (AEW, formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar. <http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>

Contingency Plan

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online at the discretion of the course instructor.

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence:

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, either recently or in the past, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca or call 519 661-3568.