

FIRST YEAR PROGRAM/FALL 2007: SPRAGUE COLLEGE/FRPG 187Q

THE EXPRESSION AND PSYCHOLOGY OF CREATIVITY

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Course Description

What is creativity? Is it an inborn trait parceled out to the lucky few, or is it a process that all of us can tap into and develop in a meaningful way? How are the processes and products of science and art similar? This course will have both a rigorous intellectual component and a time-intensive experiential component. We will examine the philosophical roots underlying current conceptions of creativity, as well as delve into modern psychological theories concerning its wellspring and expression. Additionally, we will examine how structural elements such as gender, race, and ethnicity figure into the expression of creativity. Class format will include readings, group discussion, writing, and your personal engagement in selected art forms (such as creative writing, painting, photography, ceramics, drawing, performance, movement, etc.). You will participate in campus events and draw upon your own artistic experience as part of our collective inquiry into these issues. The emphasis will not be on expertise or the “final product,” but on the development of each student’s own creative process – non-artists are encouraged to apply! This course requires a serious time commitment on the part of the student.

Plenary and Seminar Sessions

All First-Year Colleges meet in **plenary** sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:10-11:40 a.m. in Piskor 10. Our **seminar** sessions will be held in the Griffiths Dance Studio (basement) and/or Valentine 208-209 on Tuesdays, 2:20-3:50. Generally speaking, plenary sessions will present material central to the collective work of the course; seminar sessions will provide for more specific inquiry and exercises. Your full participation in discussion and activities is expected in ALL sessions. Please let us know if you require any special assistance; we will be happy to work closely with you and the Office of Academic Services for Students with Special Needs.

Expectations for Participation

Like all courses, the success of this class depends on your willingness to participate. “Creativity” is an unwieldy concept, one that often fills people with equal parts of dread, awe and excitement. We will explore creativity from both intellectual and experiential standpoints,

and your participation is necessary to make this class challenging and meaningful, not just for yourself, but for your classmates as well.

The experiential side of this course requires a type of participation with which you may or may not be comfortable. “Leaping into the void,” “jumping in with both feet,” “thinking outside the box” – these are all metaphors for the kind of attitude you will need to adopt in this class. The crucial element of experiencing creativity in this FYP is “willingness to give your all to the process.” Suspending judgment, prior opinion, negative self-talk and doubt will undoubtedly help you discover new aspects of creativity and yourself. What we hope to help you learn in this class is how to adopt a seemingly paradoxical frame of mind in your creative endeavors (and life!): to approach a problem or task with the passionate, eager and open mind of the child, while also bringing to bear your adult intelligence, skills and analytical tools.

On a broader, more scholarly level, this course is central to your development as a member of an academic community. The exchange of ideas, making of connections, and willingness to consider new points of view are essential elements of learning in a liberal arts setting, and at St. Lawrence University you have the rare privilege to learn to cultivate and practice these habits of mind every day. In our FYP you will begin to learn the art of “peer review,” offering your insights, encouragements and constructive suggestions to your classmates as they present their ideas in class. You also will have the opportunity to present your own work, using what you learn about rhetoric, style and technique to enhance your presentations and increase your confidence in self-expression. As a member of your First-Year College, you are responsible for informed participation in the group’s endeavors in the plenary and seminar sessions and beyond.

Final Grade

- 10% ***Workshops, lectures, and events*** (Six 250-300 word critique/reflection papers submitted within one week of attendance; three of these will be required for the whole class, and three you can choose for yourself.)

- 10% ***Oral presentations*** (One collaborative YouTube 2-minute video; one 5-minute individual, more formal presentation at end of semester.)

- 25% ***Writing and creative projects*** (These include written papers and other forms of creative work. At least two short papers will be assigned, one of which will undergo a revision. You will have the opportunity to choose which pieces you want to submit toward your final grade.)

- 10% ***“Daily Practice” and “Collaborative Project”*** (Creativity as an everyday personal practice; creativity as a collaborative endeavor. You will help us define these two projects.)

- 10% ***Journal*** (You will be asked to keep a journal this semester. Bring your journal to class every day, for both plenary and seminar sessions. We will provide several journaling exercises, show examples of other student journals, and discuss the rewards of and obstacles to effective journaling.)

- 15% ***Final Portfolio and “Creative Culmination”*** (You will be asked to submit your work electronically on the course’s ANGEL site, including all written materials, revisions, reflection papers, as well as visual documentation of certain projects which will illustrate both the *process* of creativity as well as any final products. Even collaborative works should be well documented and included in your final portfolio. We will also ask you to write a final reflection paper on the work you did this semester, in which you will discuss your writing, oral, and other creative work. In addition, as a group, we will determine some sort of “creative culmination” in which you may present or perform your final project.)
- 20% ***Class Participation*** (Attendance, attentiveness, preparation, plenary and seminar discussions, group activities, peer review, etc.)

You must complete ALL the assignments—written, oral, visual, and any other form of communication—in order to pass the course.

For most films, readings, performances, and speakers, you will be asked either to prepare a short reflection paper or to answer questions on a worksheet. These papers and worksheets should be brought to class and used as a springboard for discussion on the assigned date.

Required Texts

- Paulo Coelho, The Alchemist
- James P. Davis, Writing with Sources
- Toi Dericotte, The Black Notebooks: An Interior Journey
- Cynthia Freeland, But is it art?
- Daniel Goleman et al., The Creative Spirit
- Guerrilla Girls, Bitches, Bimbos and Ballbreakers: The Guerrilla Girls’ Guide to Female Stereotypes
- Diana Hacker, Pocket Style Manual

Additional early readings (available on e-reserves and/or our ANGEL Web site)

- “Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility” from the Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2006
- “Rhetoric and Communication in the FYP: A Guide to Pedagogy and Learning Goals,” St. Lawrence University, 2006.
- Ayana Baltrip-Balaga, “The art of self-defense,” from Print, Mar/Apr 2006
- Vincent Cassandro and Dean Simonton, “Creativity and Genius,” from Flourishing: Positive Psychology and the Life Well-Lived, 2003
- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, “If we are so rich, why aren’t we happy?” from American Psychologist, 1999.
- Emory Douglas, “Revolutionary Art,” from the Black Panther Party’s Web site, www.itsabouttimebpp.com

- John Daido Looi, “The Still Point,” from The Zen of Creativity: Cultivating Your Artistic Life, 2004
- Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”

Films (we will watch and analyze several films, depending on interest and time availability)

- *Billy Elliott*
- *Shine*
- *Il Postino*
- *A Beautiful Mind*
- *Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy Working with Time*
- *Guerrillas in our Midst*
- *Mandala: The Sacred Circle of Vajrabhairava* with the monks of Namgyal Monastery

Class Structure and Activities

We will be inviting artists in various genres to class and arranging workshops and visits to studios as part of the course. We will also take several field trips, which will relate to more traditional types of artistic expression (art galleries, dance performances, poetry readings, etc.), and other novel applications of creative expression (such as Outward Bound-type ropes course challenges, nature art, yoga, and drumming). Early in the course you will create your own “working journal” in the Richard F. Brush Art Gallery in the Griffiths Arts Center. This journal will be more than a place for you to record your responses to our class activities; it will also be a place for you to experiment with new art forms and wrestle with your own ideas about creativity and its place in your life. Additionally, because an integral part of this class is dedicated to student collective participation and openness to exploring new directions, your ideas about topic areas and class discussions will be incorporated when possible. In view of this, we can only provide an approximate outline of our schedule. We will regularly update the syllabus every week or two and provide detailed information on upcoming activities and assignments. We encourage your input during the course of the semester, and certain projects will be defined by the class as we go!

Please note that all specific assignments noted here or in the updates—reading, oral presentations, written work, etc.--should be prepared before you come to class on the date indicated.

An approximate, working schedule for the first six weeks is below.

<i>Week/Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings/Writing Due</i>	<i>Activities/Trips</i>
1 Aug. 28 Aug. 30	Course Introduction Syllabus/Introduction Theory: the “4 Ps” of creativity	 Reading-Peggy McKintosh: <i>White Privilege</i> – on ANGEL Derricotte: <i>The Black Notebooks</i>	Aims and Objectives; expectations; class format Syllabus review; discuss semester’s projects; <u>Work on writing assignment</u> : the place of <i>race</i> in your life (due Sept. 11)
2 Sept. 4 Sept. 6	Journal-making Race (PERSON)	Black Panther reading for Gallery show Emory Douglas – revolutionary art; Ayana Baltrip-Balagas article about Douglas: <i>The Art of Self-Defense</i>	AM: make journals in class PM: interview a classmate about place of race in life; <i>Continuing work</i> : race writing assignment and YOUTUBE assignment. Discuss readings and this week’s writing assignment; <i>Continuing work</i> : YOUTUBE projects.
3 Sept. 11 Sept. 13	Race/class/gender I/You/Us Identity (PERSON)	Reading: Baumeister & Muraven: <i>Identity as adaptation to social, cultural and historical context</i> (e- reserves) *YouTube projects due in class. *Writing assignment due in class Afternoon: Gallery Reading -- Guerilla Girls: <i>Bitches, Bimbos and Ballbreakers</i>	Visitor: Natalia Singer in AM plenary Watch YouTube projects; Discussion- Baumeister <i>Guerillas in the Mist</i> video
4 Sept. 18	(PURPOSE) Art as communication Theories of aesthetics	Reading: Freeland: <i>But Is It Art?</i> Intro and Chapter 5.	<i>Writing Assignment: TBA</i>

	Sept. 20	No class.	<p>Reading: Savater: <i>Questions of Life</i>: Chapter 9: “The Shiver of Beauty” (er)</p> <p>Seminar: Reading: Goleman et al, <i>The Creative Spirit</i> preface and chapter 1 (pp. 8-51)</p>	
5	Sept. 25 Sept. 27	(PURPOSE) Purpose of creativity in art	<p>Reading: Freeland: <i>But Is It Art</i>, chapter 2: “Paradigms and purposes”</p> <p>Reading: Bohm, <i>On Creativity</i> , chapter 1: “On Creativity” (pp.---)</p> <p>Reading: Czikszentmihalyi, <i>Creativity</i>, chap. 13, “The Making of Culture”(er)</p> <p>Reading: Diamond: <i>Guns, Germs and Steel</i>, chapter 13, “Necessity’s Mother”(er)</p>	<p>Compare creativity in science and art</p> <p>Activity: science project</p>
6	Oct. 2 Oct. 4	(PURPOSE) Political Statements Sacred art and spiritual purpose		<p>Catch-up class if needed</p> <p>See Gallery collections and books</p> <p>Activity: political statement; <i>Interventionist</i> approach to billboards</p> <p>Seminar: film: Zen mandalas</p> <p>Visitor: Pete Bernard? Algonquian shaman</p>

First-Year Program Philosophy and Goals 2007-08

The First-Year Program (FYP) and First-Year Seminar (FYS) are the first steps in a four-year process of helping you meet the University's Aims and Objectives and the broader goals of a liberal education. The faculty of the FYP and FYS see themselves as partners and mentors in the process of working with you to acquire the intellectual habits of mind, the writing, speaking, and research skills, and the ethical self-reflexiveness that are at the core of a liberal education. The FYP and FYS will ask you to consider new perspectives on the world and your place in it and will challenge you to confront many of the hidden assumptions you bring to college with you. We hope to open you to new ideas, help you to see the complexity of the way in which knowledge gets produced and used in society, and encourage you to see yourself as an active contributor in making the world a better place. The course topics, the texts you will read, listen to, and watch, the in-class and out-of-class activities you will engage in, and the writing, speaking, and research assignments you will work on are all designed to introduce you to the depth of critical thinking and the quality and complexity of the communication skills that will be expected of you at SLU and as a citizen of an increasingly diverse society.

First and foremost among our goals are those related to your abilities as a communicator. The work of the FYP and FYS asks you to design and deliver written, spoken, performed and/or visual texts that demonstrate basic skills in the relevant modes of communication and with an increasing degree of rhetorical sensitivity. Our focus on "rhetorical sensitivity" means that we expect you to cultivate the awareness that all of your communication, whether formal or informal, involves having to make choices about your messages, whether written, spoken, aural or visual. To become a good communicator, you need to recognize that the creation of meaningful and powerful written, spoken, performed, or visual texts involves both a creator and an audience, and that therefore the voice you adopt in your communication, the audience you imagine yourself communicating to, and the social and ethical context of the content, matter a great deal in creating such texts. One important way to become a better communicator is to become a better critical reader, viewer, and listener, which is why we will ask you to engage challenging materials in a variety of forms and work with you to learn how to interpret them.

Learning to read, listen, write, speak, do research and/or perform well also requires feedback. As faculty, we submit our work for feedback from colleagues all the time, and giving and receiving constructive feedback from both friends and strangers is central to collaborative work in any field and is itself a form of critical thinking and learning. We further recognize that this feedback process is not linear and that good communication requires that you continually rethink, restructure, and revise your work in order for it to be your best. This is why we require that your writing, speaking, and performance assignments be "projects" that include preparatory exercises and multiple drafts or rehearsals, all of which ask you to continue to reflect critically on the choices you have made in the texts that you produce. Furthermore, we see all of these forms of communication as complementary and intertwined, which is why many of your assignments will ask you to integrate elements of the written, spoken, performed, and visual. Finally, developing good habits of critical inquiry and communication also means reflecting on the ethical dimensions of how your work represents that of others, thus one of our goals is to help you to understand both the nature of academic integrity and the social processes by which knowledge is produced and represented.

To ensure that the program is meeting its stated goals, all FYP and FYS syllabi are read by other faculty in the program to determine if they include a variety of assignments that foster the writing, speaking, research, and critical thinking goals of the program. All FYP and FYS courses have to be approved by faculty in the program before they are offered.