

Winter 2020

Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30  
Online synchronous

Office: VAC 200C  
Hours: by appointment  
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: Registration in years 2-4 of a Department of Visual Arts Honours Specialization or Major, or permission of the Department.

: Creativity is a strange beast. In many ancient cultures it was a divine gift, oftentimes reserved solely for the divine. Today some believe it is possessed in some measure by all, while others hold it as a quality of genius alone. It is a concept that has been around so long that it has acquired too many meanings, shaped by so many cultural lenses, as to be almost meaningless. Yet creativity continues to fascinate many and has even managed to find its way today into the business world under several guises, design thinking being the most prominent. This course will attempt to chart a journey through creativity in two parts to provide as broad an image of the concept as possible.

: I will focus on how creativity has manifested itself in the arts, with a emphasis on the last 150 years, looking at examples from painting, design, sculpture, popular music, architecture, film, and literature. Topics will range from the use of chance in the paintings of Francis Bacon, cultural cross-fertilization in the photomontages of Hannah Höch, the absurd as a device in the literary work of Italo Calvino and the comedy of Monty Python, to technologically driven innovation in the music of the Beatles and the rise of digital art. We will explore various notions of creativity, including the Chinese concept of co-creativity, and the various studies that have attempted to pin-down scientifically what creativity is from the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research at the University of Cambridge to more recent neuroscience assessments.

: Through your dedicated reading of a single text on creativity selected from the list below, and the presentations you'll be making to the class on that text, as well as the dedicated reading of a text on creativity by your peers, and their presentations to the class, you'll be providing and provided with a wide array of studies on creativity ranging from the historical to the psychological with stops in the arts, philosophy, business, etc. There will be redundancies, overlap, boring bits, but overall, it should be interesting, enriching -- as for the boring parts, they won't last too long. I will be moderating all of these presentations, peppering them with my own, as noted above, and guiding our exploration into creativity to a conclusion without an end.

: The point of this course, beyond the obvious acquisition of knowledge of the topic we will be addressing over the term, is to have you engage in an open and active discussion of key historical and contemporary issues from the various perspectives offered by the authors we read, the course instructor, as well the thoughts of your peers on the topics addressed in class discussions. You should be able to critically engage with the works encountered in this course, both verbally and in writing, and both in a summary form and more expansively. The writing assignment will provide you with valuable editing skills, while teaching you how to summarize effectively your ideas on your chosen



: any assignment submitted late will be penalized 5% per day and will not be accepted 5 days past its due date. If there are medical grounds, then documentation must be provided to the Academic Counselling Office of your home Faculty for any missed graded component of the course worth 10% or more; for anything worth less than 10%, a make-up or mark re-assignment will be arranged.