

**PSYO 480N / 508A**  
**Special Topics in Psychology: The Creative Process**  
**2024-2025 Winter Term 2 Syllabus**

**Professor:** Dr. Liane Gabora

**Location:** Online through Canvas

**Day & Time:** Tuesdays, 2:00 PM – 4:50 PM

**Professor Contact Information:**

Please contact me through Canvas Email (It goes straight through to my UBC email inbox)

Note: you must put PSYO480N or PSYO 508A in subject line or else I may not respond

Office hours: Tuesdays 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM, or by appointment

**Readings**

Each week the reading will consist of either a chapter of the book I am writing titled *Dawn of the Creative Mind: The Origin and Evolution of Culture and Innovation*, or a creativity-related reading chosen by a fellow student and shared with the class as per the instructions below.

**Prerequisites**

Six credits of 200-level psychology. PSYO 317 may be helpful but it is not required. If you do not have the prerequisites please speak with the professor at your earliest convenience. Students who remain in the course without written consent of the professor will fail the course.

**Course Description and Objectives**

This course provides in-depth exploration of the interplay of internal and external factors involved in the creative process. Course content will be tailored to the interests and/or creative pursuits of individuals in the class, but it is anticipated that this year we will focus on (1) how creative thinking works, (2) the transformative nature of creative practise for individuals, groups, and society at large, and (3) the implications of AI for creative professions, and the question of whether AI is genuinely creative. It is hoped that by the end of the course students will possess a deeper understanding of how the creative process works, how it can be studied, how psychological theory can inform creative activities, and how creative activities can be beneficial in formal therapeutic / clinical settings and beyond.

**Format**

Each week (more or less) will focus on a different aspect of the psychology of creativity and/or creative therapies. Your participation in class discussions is expected. Each class will consist of one or more of the following:

- (1) **Presentation** on your own creative practice, or that of some other person, or on creativity of a specific AI program
- (2) Student-led summary, ‘deep dive,’ and **discussion** of a chapter from *Dawn of the Creative Mind* or another reading on creativity. (Make sure you’ve done the reading and are ready to participate!)
- (3) Occasionally, a **lecture** given by the Professor, or a guest speaker
- (4) Occasionally, a **game or activity** that explores your creativity as individuals or groups

**Evaluation for 480N**

**Presentation:** 40% (May include a class activity)

**Deep Dive:** 35% (May include a live or recorded performance by a creator)

**Class Participation:** 25% (Insightful discussion and commentary)

**Evaluation for 508A**

**Presentation:** 30% (May include a class activity)

**Deep Dive:** 30% (May include a live or recorded performance by a creator)

**Class Participation:** 20% (Insightful discussion and commentary)

**Take-home Final Exam:** 20% (Comprehensive; Given out last day of class; due 1 week later)

## Presentations

Presentations provide an in-depth discussion and/or demonstration of the creative process of a particular creative person or group, with an emphasis on what is *transformative and meaningful* about the creative work. It's great if this creative person is yourself! However, the person can also be (a) someone creative you know (e.g., a friend, neighbour, teacher or professor, family member, or someone in your community), (b) a particular generative AI program, or (c) a creative person that you don't know personally, with the option of inviting them as a guest speaker in our class. (*You can use this as an opportunity to get to know that creative person you've long admired, and possibly meet them online!*). Presentations may include a class activity (but only if it is directly relevant). *You may do the presentation with a partner, but if you do it with a partner, include your partner in all communication with me, and both of you must be present for the presentation*, although it is ok if only one person does the actual presentation (so long as the other person does something else to make up for it). Suggested duration: 15 to 20 minutes per person, followed by question and answer.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Find someone (possibly yourself!) who engages in a creative practise in any field or aspect of their life, or whose creative work you find compelling. (Polymaths are a particularly interesting choice!)
- Tell us what made you choose that creator
- Provide a short demonstration of their creativity: a reading of their fiction, performance of their music, a dance they choreographed, an invention they came up with, a taste of their cooking... (approximately 5 minutes)
- Tell us about their creative process: what drives and inspires them, how they found their 'voice,' how their creative practise makes them feel (both during and after), how their creativity has changed over time, and anything else that you deem relevant for that creator (approximately 10-15 minutes). You can include a video or interview of the person, or even invite them to talk to us over zoom
- Add a title slide with the title and your name and student number, as well as slide numbers, and a slide that provides the reference for any source materials you may have drawn from for the presentation)
- Proofread your presentation to ensure that it is free of spelling and grammatical errors
- It is advisable (if possible) to do a practise run-through (ideally with an audience of one or two people)
- Before your presentation, upload it to the Discussions section of the class website

In case you can't think of anyone, consider doing a presentation on someone who has been a previous guest speaker for this class (when it was organized a little differently). Previous guest speakers (listed alphabetically) include:

- Computer scientist and artificial intelligence researcher, Joscha Bach: <http://bach.ai/>
- Musician and artist, Hollan Holmes: <http://www.hollanholmesmusic.com/>
- Artist and seaweed expert, Josie Isalen: <https://www.josieiselin.com/>
- Comedian, David Kopp:  
[https://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/Rick and Friends/Stop thinking and do it says David Kopp/](https://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/Rick_and_Friends/Stop_thinking_and_do_it_says_David_Kopp/)
- Novelist, Screenwriter, and Creative writing Professor, Maureen Medved,  
<https://vucavu.com/en/artists/m/maureen-medved>
- Physics Professor and Science fiction writer, Robert Scherrer, <https://my.vanderbilt.edu/robertscherrer/>

## EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR PRESENTATIONS

CONTENT (Counts for 85% of mark; note that each point below is not necessarily weighted equally)

1. Did we get an understanding of the <b>creator's output</b> and perhaps <b>personal style</b> ?	
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2. Did we get an understanding of the creator's <b>creative process</b> and did this inform our understanding of how the creative process works?	
3. Did we get a sense of what drives the creator, i.e., what the <b>source</b> of their creativity is?	
4. Did we learn about <b>transformative impact</b> of creative practise on creator (or their audience?)	
5. Did we learn about how creative practise <b>adds meaning</b> to life of creator (or their audience?)	
<b>6. Organization:</b> Is it structured in a logical, coherent manner?	
7. Was the content provided in a way that your classmates could appreciate and understand?	
8. Was the content meaningful, fun, interesting, or enjoyable?	

STYLE (Counts for 15% of mark; note that each point below is not necessarily weighted equally)

1. Was the presentation engaging?	
2. Were any presentation materials stimulating and well laid out? Creative? Straightforwardly understandable? Cluttered? Does the text stand out against the background? Is it legible?	
3. Were materials and presentation style appropriate given the content?	
4. Did the speaker come across as genuine and passionate about the topic?	
5. Did the presenter look down all the time or was eye contact made?	
6. Did the speaker speak quickly, slowly, or at a speed that is easy to follow?	
7. Did the speaker speak loud enough to be heard clearly by all?	
8. Did the class appear to enjoy it and learn from it, and did it inspire discussion?	

### Deep Dives

Deep Dives give you the opportunity to really delve into the particular aspect of the creativity that is the focus of your chosen chapter or article, and then use that as a springboard for exploring something touched upon by the chapter or article that is of particular interest to you. It should cover the main points of the chapter or article, then focus on some aspect of particular interest, and then inspire discussion, because discussion will generate exposure to different perspectives and thereby refine understanding (and enable us to get to know each other). Suggested duration: 15 to 20 minutes per person, followed by question and answer period, and discussion.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read over the Table of Contents for *Dawn of the Creative Mind*.
2. Pick a chapter of interest to you that will serve as the Reading for your Deep Dive. Alternatively, you can choose a scholarly article on the creative process, a creative therapy, the transformative impact of creativity, the evolution of creativity, or machine creativity) published in a peer-reviewed journal in the last five years. Articles can be found using Google Scholar, PSYC-info, or on the website of a creativity scholar.
3. If you choose an article then send it to me as an attachment, and once I have approved it, make it available to the other students in class, using the Discussions feature on Canvas (or any other method that works for you)
4. Read the chapter or paper, jotting down your initial thoughts and impressions, and then organize your notes, ensuring they capture the most salient points, and write out what you plan to say. Your Deep Dive should include, in the following order:
  - a. Summary of the chapter or paper,
  - b. Deep dive into something the chapter or article sparked you to wonder or think about,
  - c. Questions for discussion that you pose to the class
  - d. (Optional, include only if relevant) A game or activity
5. Have fun with it, and make it fun for the class. Your goal here is to stimulate scintillating discussion! **Note:** *The Deep Dive takes the place of the Position Paper in previous years in which this class was taught. You do not have to submit a written version of your Deep Dive.*

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR DEEP DIVES

CONTENT (Counts for 85% of mark; note that each point below is not necessarily weighted equally)

1. Were the <b>most important points</b> in the chapter or article covered in the <u>summary</u> ?	
2. Did the chapter or article serve as a departure point for elaborating— <b>deep diving</b> —on one (or more) particular subtopic(s) of interest?	
3. Was there evidence of <b>knowledge and understanding</b> of the relevant theory and research?	
4. Was it explained in a logical, comprehensible manner?	
5. Was there evidence of <b>deep, independent thinking</b> about the material in a manner that is clear, penetrating, nuanced, and objective?	
6. <b>Organization</b> (Is it structured in a logical, coherent manner? Does each point build on or follow naturally from the one that preceded it?)	
7. Is the research presented <b>critically</b> ; did the presenter evaluate pros and cons of the arguments or method used, or suggest directions for further research?	
8. If experimental results are presented, are they presented in <b>sufficient detail</b> that we understand how the researchers came to their conclusions?	
9. Did it inspire meaningful and insightful <u>discussion</u> ?	

STYLE (Counts for 15% of mark; note that each point below is not necessarily weighted equally)

1. Did the speaker come across as genuine and passionate about the topic?	
2. Did the presenter look down all the time or was eye contact made?	
3. Did the speaker speak quickly, slowly, or at a speed that is easy to follow?	
4. Did the speaker speak loud enough to be heard clearly by all?	
5. Were any directions given in a manner that was easy to understand and follow?	
6. Was it engaging? Did the class appear to enjoy it and learn from it, and was the learning process <b>fun / interesting / meaningful / enjoyable</b> ?	

After a Presentation or Deep Dive, I give feedback and a tentative letter-grade mark (e.g., in the A range), but I do not show the numerical mark to the student until after everyone has presented.

### Grading Practices

Faculties, departments, and schools reserve the right to scale grades in order to maintain equity among sections and conformity to University, faculty, department, or school norms. Students should therefore note that an unofficial grade given by an instructor might be changed by the faculty, department, or school. Grades are not official until they appear on a student's academic record.

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=3,41,90,1014>

### Policy Concerning Late Assignments or Missed Exams

Not showing up for your Presentation or Deep Dive is problematic because it requires that time slots be juggled around to reschedule you, and your classmates will have done the reading and prepared questions based on the topic they expected would be covered. For this reason, if the date for your Presentation or Deep Dive is missed and no doctor's note is provided, the mark will be reduced by 3% for each calendar day (or part thereof). The earliest you could do your presentation or deep dive will be at the next class, one week later, there is no guarantee it will be possible to squeeze you in on that day. Therefore, you will have, at a minimum, 21% deducted from the final mark. If a student anticipates missing assignment (including a Presentation or Deep Dive) or exam due to illness or some other reason, I **MUST** be contacted beforehand, and you will be required to provide a doctor's note before alternative arrangements

will be made. If I am not available, leave a message that includes your reason and a phone number where you can be reached. Failure to do so may mean that you will not be allowed to sit the exam or receive a mark for that component. All students who miss or plan to miss a scheduled final examination will be sent to the office of the Associate Dean, Curriculum, and Students.

### **Policy Concerning Computers**

This section blocked out since the class is online this year, but I still recommend you turn social media off during class time. ~~Computers are allowed in the classroom on a tentative basis. If I see or hear of anyone using their computer for Facebook, email, or anything other than taking notes, the privilege of using a computer in class will be taken away for everyone. Computers are absolutely not allowed during in-class exams.~~

### **Final Examinations**

Except in the case of examination clashes and hardships (three or more formal examinations scheduled within a 24-hour period) or unforeseen events, students will be permitted to apply for out-of-time final examinations only if they are representing the University, the province, or the country in a competition or performance; serving in the Canadian military; observing a religious rite; working to support themselves or their family; or caring for a family member. Unforeseen events include (but may not be limited to) the following: ill health or other personal challenges that arise during a term and changes in the requirements of an ongoing job. Further information on Academic Concession can be found under Policies and Regulation in the *Okanagan Academic Calendar*  
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=3,48,0,0>

### **Academic Integrity**

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences. A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the policies and procedures, may be found at <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>. If you have any questions about how academic integrity applies to this course, please consult with your professor.

### **UBC Okanagan Disability Resource Centre**

The Disability Resource Centre ensures educational equity for students with disabilities and chronic medical conditions. If you are disabled, have an injury or illness and require academic accommodations to meet the course objectives, please contact Earllene Roberts, the Diversity Advisor for the Disability Resource Centre located in the University Centre building (UNC 214).

Contact: UNC 214 \* Phone: 250.807.9263 \* Email [earllene.roberts@ubc.ca](mailto:earllene.roberts@ubc.ca) \* Web: [www.students.ok.ubc.ca/drc](http://www.students.ok.ubc.ca/drc)

### **Ombuds Office**

The Ombuds Office offers independent, impartial, and confidential support to students in navigating UBC policies, processes, and resources, as well as guidance in resolving concerns related to fairness.

UBC Vancouver Ombuds Office email: [ombuds.office@ubc.ca](mailto:ombuds.office@ubc.ca) \* Web: [www.ombudsoffice.ubc.ca](http://www.ombudsoffice.ubc.ca)

## UBC Okanagan Equity and Inclusion Office

UBC Okanagan is a place where every student, staff and faculty member should be able to study and work in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. UBC prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of the following grounds: age, ancestry, colour, family status, marital status, physical or mental disability, place of origin, political belief, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or unrelated criminal conviction. If you require assistance related to an issue of equity, discrimination, or harassment, or to get involved in human rights work on campus, please contact the Equity and Inclusion Office. Contact: UNC 216

Phone: 250.807.9291 \* Email: [equity.ubco@ubc.ca](mailto:equity.ubco@ubc.ca) \* Web: [www.equity.ok.ubc.ca](http://www.equity.ok.ubc.ca)

## Health & Wellness

At UBC Okanagan health services to students are provided by Health and Wellness. Nurses, physicians and counsellors provide health care and counselling related to physical health, emotional/mental health and sexual/reproductive health concerns. As well, health promotion, education and research activities are provided to the campus community. If you require assistance with your health, please contact Health and Wellness for more information or to book an appointment. Contact: UNC 337

Ph: 250.807.9270 \* email: [healthwellness.okanagan@ubc.ca](mailto:healthwellness.okanagan@ubc.ca) \* Web: [www.students.ok.ubc.ca/health-wellness](http://www.students.ok.ubc.ca/health-wellness)

## The Walk-In Wellness Clinic

The Walk-In Wellness Service provides brief (up to 30 minutes) mental health appointments provided by student clinicians every Tuesday and Thursday from 10 AM to 3 PM. This is a brief-intervention service, where clients are permitted to 1-3 sessions per academic term. It offers in-person and virtual appointments to anyone over 13 years of age that is a resident of British Columbia. If you require mental health support, or wish to discuss options for mental health resources in the community, please contact the UBCO Interprofessional Clinic at **ASC 167** book an appointment.

Phone: 250-807-8241

Email: [ipc.ok@ubc.ca](mailto:ipc.ok@ubc.ca)

## Safewalk

Don't want to walk alone at night? Not too sure how to get somewhere on campus? Call Safewalk at **250-807-8076**. For more information, see: [www.security.ok.ubc.ca](http://www.security.ok.ubc.ca)

## Student Learning Hub

The Student Learning Hub is your go-to resource for **free** learning support—now **online** and flexible to meet your remote learning needs! The Hub welcomes undergraduate students from all disciplines and years to access a range of supports that include **tutoring in math, sciences, languages, and writing**, as well as **dedicated learning support** to help you develop skills and strategies for **academic success**. Don't wait—successful learners access support early and often. For more information, visit [students.ok.ubc.ca/hub](http://students.ok.ubc.ca/hub) or contact [learning.hub@ubc.ca](mailto:learning.hub@ubc.ca).

## Academic Integrity Pledge in an Online Learning Environment

Upon registering for this class, all students are bound by the [student declaration](#):

*I hereby accept and submit myself to the statutes, rules and regulations, and ordinances (including bylaws, codes, and policies) of The University of British Columbia, and of the faculty or faculties in which I am registered, and to any amendments thereto which may be made while I am a student of the University, and I promise to observe the same.*

For further information please refer to the calendar statements about [Academic Honesty and Standards](#), specifically:



*Academic honesty is essential to the continued functioning of the University of British Columbia as an institution of higher learning and research. All UBC students are expected to behave as honest and responsible members of an academic community. Failure to follow the appropriate policies, principles, rules, and guidelines of the University with respect to academic honesty may result in disciplinary action.*

*It is the student's obligation to inform himself or herself of the applicable standards for academic honesty. Students must be aware that standards at the University of British Columbia may be different from those in secondary schools or at other institutions. If a student is in any doubt as to the standard of academic honesty in a particular course or assignment, then the student must consult with the instructor as soon as possible, and in no case should a student submit an assignment if the student is not clear on the relevant standard of academic honesty.*

## Schedule

Each person's name should appear once in the **Presenter column**, and once in the **Deep Dive column**. It is **your** responsibility to ensure that this is the case by **Jan 21<sup>st</sup> at the absolute latest**.

**To determine your Presentation date:** See which topic in the Topics column is the closest match to your presentation topic. To book your spot, give me your name, and the date for that topic. For example, if your topic is 'How my personality is reflected in my creative work,' you see that personality is covered on Jan 28, so sign up as a presenter for Jan 28. There can only be max two presentations per day, so if there are already two names there, choose a nearby date. If there is something related to creativity that you would like to present that doesn't fall cleanly into one of these topics, check with me, and if it can work as a presentation topic, we'll create a spot for you.

**To determine your Deep Dive date:** Read the chapter descriptions in the document titled 'Dawn of the Creative Mind – Expanded Table of Contents' to see which chapter is of greatest interest to you. Look for that chapter in the Readings column and find the corresponding date. To book your spot, give me your name and tell me the chapter title and number. Alternatively, find a scholarly paper on creativity using Google Scholar and we'll find an appropriate slot for your Deep Dive based on the topic of your paper. If your Deep Dive is not from a chapter of *Dawn of the Creative Mind*, you are responsible for finding and sharing a **reading** on your topic and sharing it not just with me but with the rest of the class via the Discussions section of Canvas at least five days prior to your Deep Dive.

Two people can do a presentation or deep dive together if they wish, but there cannot be more than one presentation on the exact same topic. (Two presentations on related topics is fine.)

For more information on Presentations and Deep Dives, see above.

Date	Topic	Reading	Presentation	Deep Dive
Jan. 7	Go over syllabus; Introduce topic; example of a Presentation; organize schedule	Table of Contents of <i>Dawn of the Creative Mind</i> (available under Readings on Canvas Homepage)	Dr. Gabora	None
Jan. 14	Second Life  Intro to research on creativity	Familiarize yourself with Second Life: <a href="https://secondlife.com/">https://secondlife.com/</a>  Chapter 1. Creativity: An Interdisciplinary Odyssey	Guest speaker: Philip Rosedale, inventor of Second Life!	SPEAKER(S):
Jan. 21	How ideas reflect the way we understand and structure the world	Chapter 2. Minds and Worldviews: The Dwelling Place of Unborn Ideas	PRESENTER(S):	SPEAKER(S):
Jan. 28	Creativity and personality; motivation; individual differences and uniqueness	Chapter 3. Inkings, Inspirations, and Insights  Chapter 4. The Bearers of Creative Ideas	PRESENTER(S):	SPEAKER(S):

Feb. 4	Concepts and their interactions	Chapter 5: Quantum Cognition and Ideation	PRESENTER(S):	SPEAKER(S):
Feb. 11	The unfolding of an idea; how an idea reveals itself to the creator; steps in the cultivation of a creative work  Musical creativity; artistic creativity; creative writing	Chapter 6. Honing Theory  Chapter 7. Empirical Evidence for Honing Theory	PRESENTER(S):	SPEAKER(S):
Feb. 18	SPRING BREAK			
Feb. 25	Art therapy, music therapy, etc.; Psychotherapy as a creative process	Chapter 9. Why Creativity is Transformative and Therapeutic	Possible guest speaker: Kirthana Ganesh, Advanced graduate student in Clinical Psychology  PRESENTER(S):	SPEAKER(S):
Mar. 4	Creative ideas in one mind that build on existing ideas generated by other minds	Chapter 10. Cultural Lineages and Webs  Chapter 11. Culture as an Evolutionary Process	PRESENTER(S):	SPEAKER(S):
Mar. 11	Creativity and competition	Chapter 12. Darwinian Conceptions of Cultural Evolution	PRESENTER(S):	SPEAKER(S):
Mar. 18	Cooperative creativity including large-scale creative projects such as bands, orchestras, theatre, and film	Chapter 13. Cultural Evolution through Self-Other Reorganization	Dr. Gabora  PRESENTER(S):	SPEAKER(S):
Mar. 25	The origins of creativity; prehistoric creativity; historical instances of creativity	Chapter 14. The Early Origins of Creative Culture  Chapter 15. The Origins of Distinctively Human Culture	PRESENTER(S):	SPEAKER(S):
Apr. 1	Creativity & consciousness	Chapter 16. Implications for Consciousness	PRESENTER(S):	SPEAKER(S):
Apr. 8	Generative AI: Dall-E, GPT4, Sora, Claude, etc.  Creating a sustainable world  Last thoughts; tie up loose ends; Hand out final exam	Chapter 17. Creativity, Artificial Intelligence and Humanity's Future  Optional: <a href="https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/mindblogging/202212/how-to-get-from-ai-tools-to-ai-selves">https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/mindblogging/202212/how-to-get-from-ai-tools-to-ai-selves</a>	PRESENTER(S):	SPEAKER(S):