University of Massachusetts at Boston
College of Advancing and Professional Studies
Critical & Creative Thinking Program

Syllabus

CRCRTH 630: Criticism and Creativity in Literature and the Arts

Fall 2017, hybrid format (Class #7801 online, #7300 face-to-face);
Mondays, 4:00-6:45pm ET, September 11 – December 11, 2017
Location: UMass Boston, Wheatley Hall 4th Floor, Room W04-170
Online: Zoom web conferencing at tiny.cc/CCT630

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Course Format

Instructor-led, hybrid course, with weekly meetings at UMass Boston and through web conference for online students.

The courses uses a UMB wikispaces wiki, where all "real-time" content is maintained, such as links to materials and other information used during class meetings, as well as all reference documents related to the course.

Catalog Description

Expression and evaluation, freedom and discipline, creative production and its critique-how do these dualities relate to visual and verbal imagination as they are demonstrated in literature and the arts? Specific strategies for eliciting imaginative work in these areas are demonstrated, as are specific strategies for evaluating imaginative works. Finally, this course focuses on ways of helping others (including children) to develop these skills and utilize these strategies effectively.

Notes about Preparation Assumed for this Course

This course has no formal prerequisites. Students may enter the course with some interest in developing the course topics toward a specific application in teaching, organizational work, or personal projects, but this need not be well-defined by the start of the course.

Course Overview

This course uses a project-based learning approach, based on the model of the Collaborative Exploration, to help students explore the development of creative work not only as an expression of the author's creativity, but also in terms of the process and product as sources of inspiration for creativity. Anyone interested in the use of literature or the arts as a basis for extending our thinking will find the

course the most valuable and are encouraged to register, including educators, writers, organizational and community leaders, artists, scientists, and activists.

We will explore the research on creativity and criticism in literature and the arts as it informs how we enhance our disposition for self-directed lifelong learning and guide others in workplaces and schools toward creative and critical thinking. Our themes will include the concept of story in helping to scaffold teaching and learning, developing imagination around literature and artistic work that is created for, and by, both children and adults, and examine ways that literature and the arts form a basis for creatively examining and commenting on cultural and social issues.

Students in the course will develop a series of assignments that each capture key principles connecting literature and the arts to creative thinking with room to develop these according to one's professional and personal interests. The kinds of formats possible for projects include but are not limited to some of the following:
- Curriculum unit/lesson plans
- Evaluation of literature or artistic work
- Sketch/storyboard for children or teens (or a script for a theater production/screenplay)
- Multimedia or interactive literature
- Creativity or life design guide for children, teens, or adults
- Manifesto related to creative lifelong learning

Key questions to be explored may include some of the following:
- How does the reading/viewing of literature and the arts have a potential to inspire our own creative thinking (perhaps as it relates to broader areas of our work, education, and lives)? How can art and art criticism provide a basis for broader creativity of others, especially those who don't strongly identify as creative professionals, skilled artists, or other "creative types"?
- How does the creation of literature and the arts have a potential to inspire our greater potential in work or life? (Consider both our examination of the creative process of others, or our own creative process).
- How does the development of "story" engage storytellers and observers to see creative potential – to open up paths of development, learning, and purpose not previously acknowledged?
- How might the integration of literature and the arts provide a complementary source of creative thinking in teaching (especially in cases of subject matter where this is not obvious)? How might teachers and non-teachers alike support others (including young people) in the design of their lives, and lifelong learning?

Texts and Materials

Readings for the course will be provided, although students will need to identify one or more pieces of literature/creative works in the arts for use toward independent projects, to be discussed during the course.

Online students will also need a technology setup for online meetings (microphone and speakers/headphone, and webcam). Students are required to use a reliable Internet connection (i.e., please use a wired connection to a physical router rather than a wireless connection).

Key Links

Course wiki (central source for all course materials; requires login with your umb.edu account):
http://crcrth630.wikispaces.umb.edu

Academic Calendar (for courses offered through Critical and Creative Thinking/College of Advancing and Professional Studies; please note registration/drop/withdraw deadlines):
http://www.umb.edu/academics/caps/credit/fall/calendar

Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, you will have:

1. Identified key themes that connect literature and/the arts to the personal creative process.
2. Produced a collection of writings and creative products that exemplify the key principles and established possibilities/plans for adapting these key principles to one's own personal, professional, or educational practices.
3. Developed an understanding of issues that arise in project-based learning and established tools for addressing ambiguous, ill-defined questions that come up in this approach.
4. Developed written reflections to examine how creative works from literature and/or the arts can extend critical and creative thinking around issues of personal, professional, and/or educational change.

Weekly Schedule

This course is a hybrid format, meaning that there are on-campus meetings where those enrolled in the online section participate via web conference (using Zoom web conferencing) during each meeting. Our class time is Mondays from 4:00-6:45 pm ET. Students are expected to attend on campus or online consistently throughout the semester based on the section in which they are registered, unless there is prior arrangement with the instructor.

Important note: in exception to the requirement stated above, this class uses a blended format, so in a few of the weeks, class starts at the usual time, but we use a whole-group dialogue process to discuss current themes and readings for the first part of the class, and then the rest of the class period is left for conferences or independent work. In these dialogue-only weeks, students who usually attend class on campus may join online instead. Please see the full schedule below.

Week	Date (Mondays, 4:00-6:45pm ET)	Summary of Expected Topic/Themes
1	**September 11** *Regular meeting*	Course Orientation, and Introduction; Exploring Personal Relationship with Literature/Arts and Creativity Introduction to Theme 1: Everyone Can Be a Creative Thinker
2	**September 18** *Regular meeting*	Key Questions around Criticism and Creativity
3	**September 25** *Dialogue: meet online*	Dialogue on Readings + Conferences
4	**October 2** *Regular meeting*	Ways of Seeing; Theme 1 Work-in-progress presentations Introduction to Theme 2: Stories to Scaffold Creative Learning
	October 9 *No Class - Holiday*	
5	**October 16** *Regular meeting*	Stories, Metaphors, and Identity
6	**October 23** *Regular meeting*	Reflective Self-assessment Understanding Stories and Complexity, Diagramming/Mapping
7	**October 30** *Dialogue: meet online*	Dialogue on Readings + Conferences
8	**November 6** *Regular meeting*	Theme 2 Work-in-progress presentations Introduction to Theme 3: Designing for Life
9	**November 13** *Regular meeting*	Literature and Arts as Preparation/Imagining Life
10	**November 20** *Regular meeting*	Literature and Arts in Support of Creative Thinking and Social Change
11	**November 27** *Dialogue: meet online*	Dialogue on Readings + Conferences
12	**December 4** *Regular meeting*	Theme 3 Presentations, Manifestos for Thinking
13	**December 11** *Regular meeting*	Taking Stock, and Extending the Course, including Theme 3 Presentations continued if needed

Assessment and Requirements

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS:

All assignments must be submitted electronically as **.pdf** or **.doc/x** files, unless prior arrangement has been made with the instructor. Documents submitted in other formats may be returned to you to be converted before submitted. Please see the course wiki for specific submission procedures.

GRADED REQUIREMENTS:

Written assignments and presentations (60% of grade):
- **W1(a, b, c):** Written/Creative Products (3 items, 8 points each).
- **W2:** Work-in-progress presentation corresponding to Written/Creative Products (3 items, 3 points each).
- **W3(a, b, c):** Literature/Arts Reflection Journal connecting literature/arts to personal experience with weekly entries (3 items, 5 points each).
- **W4:** Reflective Self-assessment (based on examination of overall progress made through journal entries) (1 item, 2 points)
- **W5:** Manifesto for Creative Living and Lifelong Learning (1 item, 10 points).

Total possible: 60 points
Certain written items may require revisions based on instructor feedback to be considered complete.

Participation Items (33% of grade):
- **P1:** Prepared class attendance, including completion of readings and contributions to discussions (15 points).
- **P2:** Completion of brief weekly homework assignments/exercises (10 points).
- **P3:** Peer commentaries (2 items, 3 points each).
- **P4:** Instructor conference (1 item, 2 points).
- **OPTIONAL P5:** Permission to share pieces of your work as examples for future generations of the course and preparation for sharing (up to 3 points as determined by instructor).

Total possible: 33 points (+ up to 3 optional for P5)

Quality Contributions Rubric (7% of grade):

Beyond the points achieved for the written assignments and participation, additional points come from the following rubric based on the instructor's own evaluation:

2 = did this quite well; met expectations consistently
1 = generally met the minimum expectation, but with some room for improvement
0 = not a particular strength of mine for this course

Quality Statement	0	1	2
1. Assignments submitted by the due date (where the combined total days late of all written submissions is <= 10)			
2. A Literature/Arts Reflection Journal that shows thoughtful reflection as you connect ideas about creativity from literature and arts to your own experience and potential for practical use. Journal entries show a building of your thinking over time where you seek to make your own reasoning clear and avoid broad or general statements that don't include supporting explanations, and you show consideration for any instructor feedback on early submissions. Appropriate choices of creative works in the literature or arts as your source material.			

3. Initiative taken in keeping up with the course, making up for missed sessions, and seeking out clarification around the course process and expectations in a timely way when you are not clear about something.			
4. Commitment to supporting others in the class; includes contributing to the class as a community of learners and offering substantive peer commentary (during class meetings or through written assignments) that stimulates thinking beyond superficial praise or reactions. Appropriate contributions to class discussion that stay on track of the current topics.			
5. Written/Creative Products that are well-structured, organized, and serve as a foundation for practical extensions beyond the course term. Includes well-organized presentations.			
6. Written work is almost entirely free from mechanical, grammatical, formatting, and spelling errors, uses consistent academic standards, and is presented professionally.			
7. Participation in the course shows a constructive spirit toward helping us understand how to improve the running of a hybrid course, and participation includes some willingness to experiment with, and patience for, new or imperfect technologies as we engage in-person and virtually.			

Add rubric scores and divide by 2 for total points to be added to Written Assignment and Participation Item points above.

GRADING

Overall points are converted to letter grades as follows: The minimum grade for A is 93 points, for A- is 87, for B+ is 80, for B is 74; for B- is 67; for C+ is 61; and for C is 50 points.

POLICY ON LATE AND INCOMPLETE WORK

Please note that instructor feedback will be returned within one week on all written assignments submitted by the due date. In most cases, items that submitted on time and containing some substantial work but that do not meet the requirements will be returned with comments to revise and resubmit, and you can resubmit assignments multiple times if needed to receive full credit. There are no official extensions given on any written work. Late or incomplete assignments are accepted, but instructor comments may be returned more than a week later or in some cases, not at all. Written assignments will receive up to half-credit if received up to a week late, and no credit if received more than a week late (although feedback will still be returned if and when possible).

Overall points are converted to letter grades as follows: The minimum grade for A is 93 points, for A- is 87, for B+ is 80, for B is 74; for B- is 67; for C+ is 61; and for C is 50 points.

Reflective Practice Portfolio

This only applies to students in the Critical and Creative Thinking MA Program: The Reflection Journal or Manifesto are appropriate and recommended for inclusion in the program's required Reflective Practice Portfolio. Other options might also be acceptable based on directions taken to fulfill your project.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the course, you will be asked to complete an anonymous, online course evaluation (http://bit.ly/CCTEval) as required by the Critical and Creative Thinking program. Note that the question in the evaluation referring to a statement of synthesis about the course as a whole may be shared widely, so that the instructor, the program, and other parties may appreciate the course's strengths and weaknesses and contribute more effectively to continued development.

Accommodation Statement

Sections 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 offer guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center (617-287-7430). The student must present these recommendations to each professor within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of the Drop/Add period.

Syllabus Version

September 2017; This syllabus is subject to change and updated versions may be distributed after the course begins, but the workload expectations will not be increased after the semester starts.