

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
Hugh Downs School of Human Communication
COM 194 - COMMUNICATION +
CREATIVITY

COURSE PHILOSOPHY AND DESCRIPTION:

Do you think of yourself as a creative person? What do you know about the act of creation itself? Are there ebbs and flows in your creativity? Is there something creative that you are putting off doing?

Many of us are able to recognize creativity in others, but struggle to unleash our own creative potential. We are often taught that creativity is fundamental to success, while simultaneously being conditioned to think inside, rather than outside of the box. How can we effectively engage alternative ways of understanding the world in an attempt to unlock our creativity? What role does communication play in the process of creative thinking and decision-making? How might we step outside of the box to creatively engage our social world? How might this creative engagement be used to better understand complex problems and enact social change?

This course is designed to help you explore and develop your own creative potential! We will engage in an exploration of human communication as a creative practice and a creative process.

This course places the practice and process of creative communication at the center of our learning. Through reading, discussion, lecture, activities, performances and play, we will examine how creative communication shapes our understanding of the social world, our relationships, and ourselves. We will find alternative, out of the box ways of applying creativity, exploring how creative communication can positively impact many aspects of our lives.

Our main objective in this course is to attend to the question:

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CREATIVITY IN MY LIFE?

To explore the aforementioned question fully and critically, we will work together to:

- understand the definitions and theoretical explanations of creativity and communication
- examine the intersections of creativity and communication
- examine how creative communication influences our identities
- examine creative approaches to the study of intrapersonal, interpersonal, intercultural, rhetorical and organizational communication
- experiment with creative communication in public spaces
- experiment with creative communication in digital spaces
- explore storytelling and performance as a creative and communicative process
- utilize group interactions in the synthesis of course material
- create a safe space for discussion, learning, experimentation and play

Questions to consider as we explore the potential of creative process and practice:

- What is creativity and how can we use it conceptually?
- How do we develop connections between creativity and communication?
- How might we express ourselves creatively?
- What does it mean to live creatively?
- What systems shape our understanding and definitions of creativity?
- How do these systems and definitions limit or inhibit our own creativity?
- How might creative communication assist us in understanding and solving complex social issues?
- Where is creative communication needed and valued most?

Because this is a process-driven, performance-based class, I have specific expectations about how you will participate and contribute to our learning environment. To succeed in this class, we (your instructor and your fellow classmates) expect you to:

1. Attend all class periods – and use class time productively to develop your ideas and projects
2. Carefully read course material when assigned, and use the readings to help inform your creative work
3. Commit to your group performances – both as a performer and a planner
4. Ask questions to clarify any confusion or address any anxieties you may be experiencing
5. Participate actively and thoughtfully in each and every creative project
6. Respectfully discuss concepts and ideas with your instructor and classmates
7. **Trust the process** – allow your work to improve, and challenge yourself to grow with each activity
8. Work to create a safe and respectful learning environment for all of us

As your instructor, you can expect that I will:

1. Arrive to class prepared, organized, and ready to encourage your creative ideas
2. Convey honest passion and enthusiasm for the work we are doing together
3. Strive to create a creative climate that is both engaging and safe
4. Respect each one of you as an individual person, a unique learner, and an instructor
5. Work to bridge the relevance of this material to your own lives and experiences

CONTACTING ME:

The best way to contact me is via email at lmark@asu.edu. Please put “COM 194” in the subject line. You are always welcome to stop by during office hours. If I have not replied to your email within 48 hours assume that I did not get your message and email again. You must have an ASU email account to ensure that emails will be accurately sent/received.

COURSE MATERIALS AND REQUIREMENTS:

- **Textbook** – available at the ASU bookstore or online with ASU libraries **Zig Zag: The Surprising Path to Greater Creativity** by **Keith Sawyer**, published by **Wiley**.
- **Additional readings posted to BB**
- **A journal** – for class and for outside work
- **A digital / phone camera** – must be able to take quality images and be able to upload these images to the internet or into presentation software and/or print for our class projects
- **Various “art” supplies needed to complete class projects** – expenses will vary and/or may be shared by group members (to be announced before each assignment)

GRADING AND POINTS: Individual Efforts (200 points)

Creativity Journal 80 points

Photo Essay 70 points

In class participation 50 points

Group Projects (300 points)

Breaking Scripts 70 points

Activity Lead 80 points

Problem Solving Ideation 150 points

TOTAL: 500 points

Grading Scale

| | | |
|----|------------|--------------------|
| A+ | = 100% | = 500 points |
| A | = 93-99.9% | = 465-499.5 points |
| A- | = 90-92.9% | = 450-464.5 points |
| B+ | = 87-89.9% | = 435-449.5 points |
| B | = 83-86.9% | = 415-434.5 points |
| B- | = 80-82.9% | = 400-414.5 points |
| C+ | = 77-79.9% | = 385-399.5 points |
| C | = 70-76.9% | = 350-384.5 points |
| D | = 60-69.9% | = 300-349.5 points |
| E | = 0-59.9% | = 0-299.5 points |

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments in this course are a mix of both individually produced work and group collaboration. Some group projects will be assessed in total, meaning every student in the group will earn the same grade. Some group projects have both group and individual assessment components. Note: Full assignment details will be given in class and posted to Blackboard prior to assignment due dates.

Active and Committed Participation: Attendance and active participation are required for this class. This is a hands-on seminar, which means if you are not here you are not engaging the material or contributing to the learning process. To help ensure quality participation, attendance will be taken. **Absences on project preparation days will result in a 10% grade deduction for your personal project grade. Missed performances will result in a zero for your personal project grade.**

Creativity Journal: Throughout the semester you will be creating responses to class readings and activities. These responses will include a running section of ideas and reflective written responses to weekly writing prompts as well as creative reactions to class ideas. Your journal will be reviewed twice during the semester for grading, and you may be asked to select and share an excerpt that you believe could be helpful to your classmates.

Activity Lead: In pairs or trios, you will lead an in-class activity that applies a set of rules from a practice, field of study or game to a new scenario. The goal will be to help your classmates apply out-the-box frameworks of thinking to familiar scenarios. The assignment includes a full write up of the set of rules, predicted applications to your chosen scenario, and a post-activity evaluation that incorporates classmate feedback.

Breaking Scripts: For this assignment you will choose a scenario, and violate expectations for behavior in your scenario of choice. You will need to work together in small groups to determine the cultural scripts associated with your chosen scenario, how your group will challenge these social norms and creatively present your findings to the class.

Photo Essay: For this assignment you will photograph various aspects of a cultural area/event and arrange the images into a photo 'essay'. Your essay will be presented digitally and uploaded to a class blog. You will be assessed on your visual presentation as well as how you link these photographs with text, which can include printed text from the event, text from cultural sources related to the area/event, and your own observations. You may choose to weave the text into your photographic presentation in addition to a 1-2 page, single spaced, typed explanation of your interpretation of the area/event.

Problem Solving Ideation: In small groups, you will select one communication problem generated from class brainstorms, and design and implement a persuasive installation that offers possible solutions, through a medium of your choosing. Assessment will include a write-up of the brainstorming and collaborative process and your assessment of your chosen solution.

GRADE APPEALS:

I have a 24-7 policy, which means you must wait 24 hours after receiving a grade and appeal within 7 days. I will not discuss grades on the day an assignment is returned. You must schedule an appointment with me to discuss your grade within one week of having received it. Come prepared with a written argument as to why you feel the grade does not reflect your work. This list should be clear, concise and focus on the work itself, and not issues relating to your personal life. I will review your argument in tandem with the assignment and reevaluate the grade.

COURSE POLICIES:

Late Work: Late work will **not** be accepted. No exceptions. All work, including presentations and written essays, are due on the scheduled due date. Assignments are considered late if they arrive after collection or presentation in class. Exceptions will only be made for DIRE, DOCUMENTED circumstances.

Documentation must be provided either before the absence or by the next class period after the absence. Makeup assignments will only be discussed after absences are confirmed and approved.

Late Students: This course is activity-based, which means we must make the most of our class time to ensure ample time for discussion and presentations. Therefore, you are to be in your seat and ready to start class on time. This is especially important on presentations days. Repeat tardiness will have a negative impact on your participation grade and may result in deductions to project grades as well.

I will not accept assignments via email. No exceptions. However, if you have specific questions about class or an assignment, please feel free to email me. I check email regularly. Due to volume, please allow 48 hours (during the school week – weekends are excluded) for a response to your message. A question posed the night before an assignment is due is not guaranteed a reply. Likewise, I request that you check your email regularly too, and respond to any messages I send to you with the same 24 hour consideration. Be certain to **put COM 194 in the subject line**, include your name in the message, and write respectfully to receive a response.

STUDENT CONDUCT AND CLASSROOM CLIMATE:

I want to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for everyone. In a communication class, it is *especially* important that we display respect for all members of the classroom and that we respect one another's beliefs, values and ideas. Racist, homophobic or other negative, exclusionary language will not be tolerated. Respect for differences in attitudes about identities and the cultural implications of various subjectivities are required. For additional information on The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication's policies on student conduct please visit <http://asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi201-10.html>.

Classroom Respect: Our goal is to create a supportive and cooperative learning environment in which differences can be expressed and explored, and where we can feel safe and supported while expressing our ideas.

LAPTOPS AND CELL PHONES:

The latest research suggests that focus, comprehension, recall of ideas, and information processing increase when students hand-write class notes and read from physical paper. During class, please take notes by hand, and make handwritten notes on printed readings. For information:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/03/science/whats-lost-as-handwriting-fades.html>,
<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/elements/2014/06/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom.html>, and <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/reading-paper-screens/>.

Many of us are irresistibly drawn to our electronic devices. In the classroom, put them away and turn off any buzzer, flasher, or vibrator that would be sensed by you, your classmates, or a member of the teaching team. If you are involved in an emergency situation in which you would like to request an exception to this policy, contact me before class begins and we can work something out.

If there is an activity in which use of the Internet will enhance our collective work, I'll alert the class.

OTHERWISE, PLEASE GO SCREEN AND KEYBOARD FREE. Failure to do so will result in either a warning or in a deduction in participation points. I will deduct participation points at my discretion.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences are strong proponents of academic integrity. Thus, we expect that all of your work will be original. Therefore, cheating on exams, quizzes, or other assignments will not be tolerated. If you choose to violate University standards for academic integrity, you will be subject to one of the following sanctions: failing the assignment, failing the class, receiving an XE for the class, which goes on your transcript denoted as a drop from a class for cheating, or being removed from the program.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Plagiarism is defined in this class as intentionally or unintentionally using another's work (including wording, phrases, or original ideas) without giving that person credit. Follow APA or MLA guidelines, and when in doubt, always cite your sources, including page or paragraph numbers! I will always collect reference pages for written work that requires sources, and if I find a discrepancy, I will take action. Cheating on exams or other assignments is strictly forbidden as well. The use of Internet "paper mills" or "files" in various organizations to which you may belong is a practice of which I am aware, and I will investigate and take action in any situation where a student engages in such unethical behavior. For further information, please consult the HDSHC's Academic Integrity Policy.

<http://humancommunication.clas.asu.edu/undergraduate/policies.shtml>

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS & SPECIAL NEEDS:

Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the Disability Resources for Students office by contacting them at 965-1234 or www.asu.edu/drs. Thereafter, you are invited to schedule appointments to see me during office hours to discuss accommodations. The following campus resources offer other forms of assistance: Writing Center (asu.edu/duas/wcenter), The Learning Resources Center (<http://www.asu.edu/vpsa/lrc/>), and Counseling/Consultation (http://www.asu.edu/counseling_center).

COURSE CALENDAR/READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

***The schedule is tentative and subject to change.**

WK 1: TH 08/17 Creating an 'Out of the Box' Classroom - What is Creative Communication?

Introduction to course philosophy, assignments, policies and each other

WK 2: T 08/22 + TH 08/24 ASK - Find your questions

Read: Kelley, Creative Confidence (p. 51-65)

Sawyer: The Introduction and the First Step: Ask (p. 1-48)

Journal: Take the self-assessment on p. 13-18 and reflect on the categories of this assessment and any discoveries/reactions from your result.

WK 3: T 08/29 + TH 8/31 LEARN – Challenge yourself, apply what you know to current situations

Read: Sawyer: Step Two Learn (p. 49-72)

Journal: Listen for the unstated, question everything

WK 4: T 09/5 + TH 09/7 LOOK - for new patterns and for valuable accidents

Read: Sawyer: Step Three Look (p. 73-100)

Journal: Start an Idea Box, and experiment with alternate choices

WK 5: T 09/12 + TH 09/14 PLAY – find the right box

DUE: TH Photo essays, present in class

Read: Sawyer: Step Four Play (p. 101-128)

Journal: Be a beginner again

WK 6: T 09/19 + TH 09/21 THINK – ideate and transform

T Breaking the Record – Talking about Breaking Scripts

Read: Sawyer: Step Five Think (p. 129-152)

Journal: How do you associate?

WK 7: T 09/26 + TH 09/28 Disrupting Cultural Scripts - Identity + Voice

T/TH: Present Breaking Scripts, papers DUE T

Journal: reflect on breaking scripts in small groups

WK 8: T 10/03 + TH 10/05 FUSE – find your trigger

T: Breaking script reflections

Read: Sawyer: Step Six Fuse (p. 152-172)

WK 09: T 10.10 - NO CLASS: FALL BREAK!

TH 10/12 – TBA

TH: JOURNAL 1 DUE

WK 10: T 10/17 + TH 10/19 CHOOSE – your approach

Read: Sawyer: Step seven Choose (p. 173-194)

WK 11: T 10/24 + TH 10/26 Activity Leads

WK 12: T 10/31 + TH 11/02 Activity Leads

WK 13: T 11/07 + TH 11/09 Activity Leads and analysis

WK 14: T 11/14 MAKE your move - Workshop for Problem Solving Ideations

TH 11/16 NO CLASS: NCA

Read: Sawyer: Step eight Make (p. 195-214)

WK 15: T 11/21 Workshop for Problem Solving Ideations

TH 11/23 NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING!

WL 16: T 11/28 + TH 11/30 Problem Solving in Action

TH JOURNAL 2 DUE

Sunday 12/3 Problem Solving Write ups DUE

FINAL EXAM PERIOD: Thursday, December 7th TBD