Syllabus: Fall, 2017

UN561.01 Creativity and Human Development

Prof. John Dacey
Stokes Hall 363S

Office hours: Thursdays 11:00 - 12:00 p.m. and on my Canvas site: https://bostoncollege.instructure.com/courses/1577980
Home phone: Evenings 7:30 - 8:00 (Really important calls only, please), 781-861-1072

The best path to becoming a more creative thinker is to learn how creative people think. When you do, you cannot help but emulate the process, because consciously and unconsciously, you will want to. There is a genetic component, but nevertheless, everyone is able to become more creative.

This course will help you understand how creative people think, believe and feel. Your job will be to compare yourself to these descriptions, note the ways in which you are like them, and admit the ways in which you are not. You did not become a senior at Boston College without being above average in creativity, as well as in intelligence. Therefore you have already made progress toward being a more effective thinker and problem solver.

In this course, you will look at your life retrospectively (up to now) and prospectively (in the future), with a distinct emphasis on what role your creative ability has played and will play. These two analyses will be achieved through writing two papers (each at least eight to 10 pages long). In the first, you will identify an “unresolved childhood conflict (UCC).” UCC’s are often the result of decades-old incidents, typically long-forgotten. They tend to be the culprit when it
comes to anxiety disorders, depression and other such psycho-social maladies. You will report on your effort to resolve a UCC.

In the second paper, you will anticipate how your creative abilities might affect the rest of your life. Both papers will be explained more fully in class. The major focus of this course is to help you become more authentic, through a variety of strategies for being more creative in all you do. Finally, in these two papers, you will need to ascertain how and whether you want spirituality, broadly defined, to assist you in your quest. These two papers will each account for 25 percent of your grade.

Another 30 percent will derive from a semester-long creativity project in which you will use all of your imaginative powers to design something (a product, an activity, an artistic endeavor, etc.) that you hope will benefit society. You will learn more about how to do this as the semester goes on.

The remaining 20 percent of your grade will depend on the quality (not quantity) of your contributions to the whole class, as well as to small group discussions. Each will take place each week and will be based on the several readings assigned for that week.

Here is how the small group discussions will work:

There will be four groups of four to five students. Each week, a different group member will be responsible for bringing a least three thought-provoking questions for each of the readings assigned for that day, and will lead the discussion of them. You should combine your group’s answers into one file, typed by another group member as an electronic file (this role also rotates). After class, that person will email the group’s answers to everyone in the class at un56101f@bc.edu. You should read these emails to see how other groups handled the
assignment. I will be reading and grading each file, and recording that grade in each student’s personal file on the website.

Here’s the main point: everyone in the group gets the same grade for each week’s product. That means that if you don’t do the readings (and take notes), you will let your group down. Also, I will be observing the discussions and I will see who is participating. If you fail to do your share, your group’s grade will suffer.

As to large groups, I will lead the first two. After that, pairs of students, chosen randomly, will lead the discussions. They will decide on the questions to be discussed, and will randomly call on students to answer their questions. Every two weeks, you can see your grade for participation in large and small group discussions by looking at the grade book on Canvas.

NB: No computers or cell phones visible in first half of class.

Required Texts


Supportive Texts


**Date & Session Assignments**

**August 28**  
First class – Introduction (Prepare before first class)

*Assignments*

- Dacey/Lennon 1¹
- Nature of Human Nature (U1)
- Shield (U1)
- After class: Interview the most successfully creative person you can find. Ask that person, “How do you do it? What is the secret of your success as a creative person?” Take notes.
- A Letter to Dad (U1)

#1

*Class topics for discussion*

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¹ Although not specified, *Class topics for discussion* always includes readings in *Assignments* from one of the Dacey books
Infallibility of the professor

Getting to know my socks

Introduction to the course

“Do Schools Kill Creativity?” – Sir Ken Robinson (ted.com/talks/ken_robinson)

Your creative ability: it’s higher than you think! How this class will raise it significantly!

Sept. 7 No class.

14 A History of the Concept of Creativity; Finding Your Own Muse (a hypnotic meditation)

Assignments:

Fill out My Creative Progress Tracker (U2)

Read or listen to Freud (U2 – etc.)

Dacey: A History of the Concept of Creativity

#2

Class topics for discussion:

Freud lecture: (Sample topics for discussion: Sex = main motive in life? 3 functions of psyche? Five stages? Oedipus and Electra?)

Dacey/Lennon 2: A History of the Concept of Creativity (Sample topics for discussion: 3 eras, religious vs. genetic vs. biopsychosocial)

Finding Your Own Muse (a hypnotic meditation)

Creative person interview: Meet with your group and discuss what you learned from your interview with your partners. Decide which of your findings you want to teach the class, then do so. Email to everyone a one-page group paper on the most
important generalizations you can make about a creative person’s methodology.
(Name your group’s members)

21 Creativity Theory

*Assignments:*

Read or listen to Erikson, Part 1 (through Stage Four – U3)

Dacey/Conklin Chapters 1 and 2

Take test(s) -- https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/

Presentation on Creative Innovations in Firefighting and Emergency Care – think of one question

Robert Frost poem – “The Road Not Taken”

#3

*Class topics for discussion:*

Erikson lecture Part 1

What’s Frost’s inside humor? Why creative?

What is a creative person like?

Theories of how creativity works

Questions for creative Fire Chief Dan Stewart

28 Creative Thinking and Your Family’s Life Style

*Assignments:*

Read or listen to Erikson Part 2 (Stage Four through Stage Eight)

Dacey/Lennon 3

#4 The Spirituality of Love
Class topics for discussion:

Erikson lecture Part 2

Magic Country Picker

What Country Am I?

Oct. 5 Creative Thinking and Your Social Milieu

Assignments:

Read or listen to Skinner


#5

Class topics for discussion:

Skinner lecture

Discuss Flow - Csikszentmihalyi

Torrance model of creativity

Jackson and Messick’s Model

Problem-solving -- scavenger hunt around campus with cell phones
12 The Sociohistorical Causes of Significant Bursts of Creativity (such as the American Revolution)

Assignments:

Read or listen to Bandura
Dacey/Lennon Ch. 4
Better Method of Classroom Control (BMCC)

#6

Class topics for discussion:

Bandura lecture
BMCC
Dacey/Lennon 4.
Informal class evaluation
Popsicle stick bridges (Olympics of the Mind)
(First paper due - prospective)

19 Characteristics and Values of Creative Thinkers

Assignments

Read or listen to Piaget lecture
Dacey/Lennon 5 and 7
View authenticity video by Brown, “The Power of Vulnerability.”
youtube.com/watch?v=iCvmsMzlF7o

#7

Class topics for discussion:
Piaget lecture

Dacey/Lennon 5 and 7

Class interview with Tim Lindgren, BC technology specialist, on the most creative applications of the Internet

Write a haiku poem

26 Alternative Class (#8)

Nov. 2 Strategies Creative Thinkers Typically Use

Assignments:
Read or listen to Frankl lecture
Dacey/Conklin strategies paper
Dacey theory of CPS

#9

Class topics for discussion:
Frankl lecture
Dacey/Conklin strategies
Dacey theory of CPS
Brainstorming on term projects
The Meaning of Life at person is.

9 The Central Role of Self Control

Assignments:
Read or listen to Maslow lecture
Dacey/Lennon 6
Dacey self-control study in the schools
The Meaning of Life

#10

Class topics for discussion:
Maslow lecture
Dacey/Lennon 6
Dacey self-control study in the schools
Discuss The Meaning of Life
"The neutron bomb" game

16 Creative Problem Solving

Assignments:
Read or listen to Jung lecture
Dacey/Lennon 9
Reflective listening (True Feelings)
Brown - Each discussion group reads one quarter of this book.

#11

Class topics for discussion:
Jung lecture
Dacey/Lennon 9
“Speed dating”: form in groups of two to discuss a specific question, proposed by class. After three minutes, the odd-numbered persons move onto the next even-numbered partner, and continue discussion. Repeat four times
In your group, decide what you want to teach the rest of the class about your quarter of Brown. Decide who will act as the teacher for your group. Teach your part of the book to the rest of the class.

Reflective listening

Black magic game

Six volunteers to make term project presentations on 11/30?

23  Thanksgiving – no class

30  The Art of Creativity

Assignments:

Read or listen to Fromm and Buddhist psychology lectures
Dacey/Lennon 10 and 11

Second paper due – unresolved crisis

Five volunteers make term project presentations – see instructions below.

#12

Class topics for discussion:

Dacey/Conklin 7 and 9

Dacey/Lennon 10 and 11

Discuss: “What does your neighborhood tell you about your values? How do you know?”

Dec. 7 Study day
Presentations of Remaining Creative Projects

15 minutes (sharp!) per person. Turn in all materials used and a one-page description of why it is creative.

Creativity of presentation itself counts for 20%, content of ideas, 80%. Practice before class!

Food?

Happy Holidays!

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