

Humanities I: Creative Minds

De Anza College, Summer 2024 Online Version

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Office Hours: ZOOM Wednesday 12:30-2:30 pm

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of creativity in human life, its sources, development, social purpose, and role in culture change. Students analyze creativity as a central source of meaning and purpose in their lives as well as a development of their unique combination of human intelligences. Lives of creative people from all over the world are examined and contextualized. The course builds commitment to civic and moral responsibility for diverse, equitable, healthy and sustainable communities. Students engage themselves as members of larger social fabrics and develop the abilities and motivation to take informed action for change.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcome: Synthesize critical thinking, imaginative, cooperative, and empathetic abilities as whole persons in order to contextualize knowledge, interpret and communicate meaning, and cultivate their capacity for personal, as well as social change.

Student Learning Outcome: Cultivate and demonstrate an awareness of the power of creativity and the potential of the creative process through direct involvement.

Additional Challenges and Outcomes

This course is designed to introduce students to a variety of ways of experiencing, understanding, interpreting, and creating their social worlds. Through a diversity of readings, introspective discussions, and community-consciousness building activities, students will gain the tools to reflect upon contemporary socio-political issues, as well as hone their critical reading and writing skills. Creative thinking, activities, and people from a variety of geographic, identity, and temporal locations are examined.

Students examine many perspectives—including their own and beyond—on creativity and varieties of interpretive methods and lenses.

Students engage in interpretive, written, and direct action towards the ends of individual and community justice-based change.

Guiding Questions

1. What are some of the various ways in which humans act creatively within societal constraints? How have people responded creatively to practical issues? What can a history of idea teach us about the present?
2. Is human nature good, evil, or nonexistent?
3. What influences our perceptions and opinions?
4. How are ideology and economics connected?
5. How are art and politics intertwined?
6. How is history influential, and how do past issues affect current situations?
7. How—and in what ways—do cultures change?
8. What role does conformity play in contemporary U.S. culture, and what are the ways in which people resist or break out of conformity?
9. What is multiculturalism, and how does it function?

Required Texts: As we are reading excerpts from many authors, all readings for this course will be in PDF electronic format and freely accessible to all enrolled students (per legal fair use).

Grades & Best Practices

Grades for this course will be determined through following factors:

Response Paper (~500 words, Due 07/10): 25%

Midterm Paper (~800-1200 words, Due 07/17): 25%

Final Paper (~2000-3000 words Due 08/08): 40%

Class Participation (Weekly Discussion Posts, 2 points each): 10%

Included in the class participation grade will be active engagement in our class interactions in-person and online. This includes respectful and thoughtful, and civil debate, raising questions related to the material, and/or attending office hours. You will get the most out of the class if you stay caught up on your reading, listen to lectures in a timely manner, attend all class meetings, and actively participate by respectfully listening to others and contributing ideas of your own to class and our community discussion board. Each week, I will pose a topic for the discussion board, and **you must post on the discussion for at least once per week for weeks 2-6**. In other words, with the exception of the first week, each week of the quarter you should plan to post a response of 200-300 words to the discussion on our class Canvas site. Proper preparation is a necessity for high quality discussions, as well as for high quality grades. All the paper assignments are listed on the Canvas module.

Each week follows a unit module is set up as following:

1. Assigned readings for you to complete independently.
2. Recorded reading guides to listen to at your leisure.
3. (optional) Office Hours
4. Discussion Post of 200-300 words.

Students in need of support services

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your support letter from DSPS to me as soon as possible, preferably within the first week of class. You may contact this campus office by phone at (408-864-8753) or online at <http://www.deanza.edu/dsps/> If you are more comfortable with me assisting with this process, I am happy to help.

Citation in Papers

You may utilize either MLA or Chicago style citation formats. Please make sure that whichever format you decide to use, you use consistently and correctly. Failure to cite correctly constitutes plagiarism. We will review proper citation briefly in class.

Academic Integrity

Familiarize yourself with the College's principles, policies, and procedures regarding breaches of academic integrity (<https://www.deanza.edu/about/missionandvalues.html>). All students will be held to these standards. For additional information on academic integrity, please see: <http://www.deanza.edu/studenthandbook/academic-integrity.html>. If you are unsure about anything that you read on this website, or what is acceptable or not acceptable in completing assignments for this course, please ask me. If you cheat, I will have no choice but to report you and impose the academic penalty of failure in the class.

Weekly Schedule: ALL READINGS ARE ON CANVAS

Week 1: Introduction (no readings)

Week 2: Ancient Foundations

Week 2 Readings:

Selections from:

Tao Te Ching

The Diamond Sutra

Plato's Republic

The Handbook of Epictetus

Week 3: Modernity & Morality

Week 3 Readings:

Selections from:

Kant's Metaphysics of Morals

Mill's Utilitarianism

Nietzsche, multiple text selections

Week 4: Economics, Labor, and Ideology

Week 4 Readings:

Marx & Engels, *The German Ideology*, (pp. 146-175)

Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Chap. 5

Althusser, Louis. "Ideological State Apparatuses" (pp. 1-60)

(Optional, selections from Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* & Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality Part Two*)

Week 5: Identity and Demands for Equality

Week 5 Readings:

Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. (pp. vii-xviii)

N. Fraser, *Redistribution or Recognition*, (pp. 1-26)

Butler, *Gender Trouble* (pp. 2-8, 144-150, and 183-203)

Munoz, *Dis-identifications* (pp. 1-29)

Week 6: Identity, cont.: Culture, Industry, Performance

Week 6 Readings:

Horkheimer & Adorno, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" (pp. 94-136)

Taibbi, "Ten Rules of Hate," from *Hate, Inc.*

(copy/paste URL: <https://taibbi.substack.com/p/chapter-1-part-ii-the-ten-rules-of>)

*****FINAL PAPER DUE VIA ONLINE SUBMISSION August 8th.**

Course Assignments

First Response Paper Assignment: Many ancient texts outline paths to morality and debate the various worth of different moral ideas. In Plato's *Republic*, we are presented with a philosophical question (presented by Glaucon) about whether it is more preferable to be just and good or to merely appear to be so. Which do you think is better and/or more advantageous, appearing good or being good? (~500 words, DUE 07/10 ONLINE)

Midterm Paper Assignment: Now that you are familiar with several traditions of moral and cultural thought, it is time to begin to build *your own* moral system for *yourself*. Choose one *contemporary* moral debate, explain all sides, and make your own original argument for how you would resolve this issue. Contained in your argument should be a discussion of how your proposed solution relates to your overall moral, cultural, and/or political beliefs. (~800-1200 words, DUE 07/24 ONLINE)

Final Paper Assignment

Choose one of the following prompts and address in ~2000-3000 words.
(DUE 08/10 ONLINE):

Prompt One

One of the great moral questions of our time is the racist drug war and mass incarceration. Some folks have called for significant reform in the institutions of police and prisons, while others go further and call for the abolition of one or both. You may focus in on any or multiple of the following key questions: What are the moral implications of the so-called “criminal justice system?” What moral weight do we give to law (and law enforcement) and do you find this acceptable? Are there any *moral* justifications for the state to put humans into cages or even to execute them? Why or why not? What role(s) has the media played in affecting public imagination about policing and prisons? Can we critique the idea of “just punishment” or reimagine different ways of approaching justice?

Utilizing **two assigned texts** from class, as well as **two additional texts** from Michelle Alexander, Simone Browne, and Angela Davis, argue which of these approaches (reform or abolition) seems most appropriate to you regarding the prison industrial complex. You may also utilize outside sources.

Prompt Two

Much has been made recently of political polarization and raging culture wars in the U.S. and beyond. Obviously, this is a complex issue with many contributing factors. George Packer's text "The Four Americas" (<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/07/george-packer-four-americas/619012/>) attempts to outline what he claims are the four primary American political identities in play today: Just America, Smart America, Real America, and Free America. Each represents a mindset, and identity, and a set of policy preferences that--by in large--its adherents support. What do you think of his framing? Do you agree with his assessments that these different paradigms often contribute to our talking past each other, eschewing compromise, and doubling down on our 'echo chamber' ideologies? Do you find yourself identifying with (or identifying against) one or more of these descriptions? Or do you think he overstates this conflict, and you think that compromise and cooperation are actually more attainable than he thinks? What are the moral implications of continued social/cultural conflict vs. reconciliation? Can/should we even imagine the

latter? Respond in an argumentative essay in which you analyze multiple sides of this debate, take a position and defend it, and utilize relevant examples to make your case.

Your final paper should be in 12 pt. font (Times New Roman, Times, or Ariel), and double-spaced with 1” margins. You must utilize Packer and at least two assigned readings from class, but may also use other sources of your own choosing and properly cite sources (use MLA or Chicago citation style). Please see the grading rubric online and avail yourselves to the ways in which your writing will be evaluated.