

The Power of Creativity
Winter 2016

Fridays 10 am - 12:30 pm
1/15/2015 - 2/5/2015
Gleacher Center

Instructor: Jason Cather

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Students seeking disability accommodations should contact or meet with the Director or Assistant Director for Student Disability Services (gmoorehead@uchicago.edu) or (lawsond@uchicago.edu) to initiate the accommodation process. The Director or Assistant Director will acquaint you with the required documentation, which should be submitted promptly. If a disability determination is made, your area Dean of Students will facilitate the implementation of approved auxiliary aids and services. For information regarding the Student Disability Accommodation process, visit: <http://disabilities.uchicago.edu>, or visit the office in room 234 of the Administration Building, or dial 773-702-776 or TTY 773-795-1186

Texts:

Blank journal or composition book (with at least 100 pages)
Other readings will be available electronically as PDFs.

Course Description:

This course will explore the idea of creativity. We will consider (1) the nature and history of the concept of creativity, (2) psychological and scientific explanations of creativity, (3) ways in which creativity is attained, identified, and quantified, and (4) effects of creativity and practices that cultivate creativity. Please contact the instructor in advance for the reading for the first class.

Weekly Topics and Readings:

Note: Readings are subject to change.

Activities: In preparation for our discussion on the fourth week, I am asking you to complete a daily writing exercise called *morning pages*. The idea of this activity is to write at least three pages on any topic (or no topic in particular) in your notebook or journal every single morning throughout the four weeks of the course. Since one of our topics will be how (or if) creativity can be cultivated, I want us to reflect on the results of this exercise in the fourth week. For more on morning pages, see this video on Julia Cameron's website: <http://juliacameronlive.com/basic-tools/morning-pages/>

In addition to your morning pages, there is a weekly activity that you may wish to try as well. For more on this, see this video: <http://juliacameronlive.com/basic-tools/artists-dates/>

Week 1: Nature and Origins of Creativity

(1/15) Stories about creating (available online as PDFs):

- *Daodejing*, translated in Boodberg (last paragraph and the translated chapter)
- *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, entire
- *Genesis*, chapters 1, 2, 11
- *The Gospel According to John*, 1:1-18

Alfred North Whitehead: *Modes of Thought*, chapter 1

Week 2: Psychological and Scientific Perspectives (1/22)

- Ken Robinson: TED talk https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity (20 min.)
- Peter D. Kramer. "What If?" in *Against Depression*. New York: Penguin Books, 2005 pp. 30-41
- Marin Reuter: "The Biological Basis of Creativity" in *Handbook for Teachers*.

Week 3: Recognizing, Measuring, and Attaining Creativity (1/29)

- Klaus K. Urban: "Assessing Creativity" in *Handbook for Teachers*.
- "Criteria and Examples of Lifetime Creativity Scales" in *Creativity Research Handbook, vol. 3*.

Week 4: Effects and Cultivation of Creativity (2/5)

- Alfred North Whitehead: *Modes of Thought*, epilogue
- Arthur Cropley: "Neglect of Creativity in Education" in *The Ethics of Creativity*
- Please bring your journal of morning pages to class for discussion.