Why is madness such a compelling topic? How is madness different from sanity? What does it mean to be ‘out of our senses’? How is creativity a form of madness? How have history and culture treated insanity as a creative state? Why are creativity, genius, and imagination often feared by society? What assumptions do we make about them? When do ‘normal’ individuals or societies start to look crazy? Have creativity and innovation become buzzwords, memes that lose their power to challenge and transform accepted ideas and beliefs? Through various works of culture and criticism, we will address the history, culture, and theory of madness and creativity in order to engage in the creative, often chaotic process of ‘thinking outside of the box’ of accepted cultural, social, and ethical norms of thought and behavior. Above all we hope students to gain appreciation of how “play . . . is the very essence of thought” and to open themselves to a more productive, compassionate understanding of how madness and creativity are necessary to the planet’s survival.

Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in any 1000-level or above “E” or combination of two 1000-level or above “F/G” courses from any department in the faculties of Arts and Humanities, Information and Media Studies (FIMS), or Music, or from the Department of Anthropology, the Department of History, the Department of Political Science, or permission of the Department.

REQUIRED TEXTS
(available at the Bookstore, unless noted otherwise):

La La Land. Dir. Damien Chazelle. Summit Entertainment, 2016 (screened in class)

The following readings will be posted to the OWL course site, or can be found at the following websites:


You are required to pay a fee to take Clifton Strengths assessment (currently $17) in order to write your Self-Assessment profile (below). If you’ve taken the test before, you’ll need to re-take it for this course. You should also consult a good dictionary and thesaurus (the Oxford English Dictionary is available online at Western Libraries) and writing and reference handbook, such as The Canadian Writers Handbook (Second Essentials Edition, 2017).


Course Outcomes and Learning Objectives

Students who complete the course successfully will be able to do any or all of the following:

- Think expansively and critically about issues discussed in class -- cultural, historical, philosophical, economic, political, social – and ask key questions about how these issues impact and influence one another.
- Analyze the critical and cultural importance and relevance of culture in reflecting and shaping how society views itself.
- Understand and appreciate the role history plays in shaping our views of madness and creativity.
- Think and write critically about madness and creativity from a variety of approaches and forms.
- Reflect upon these issues by applying them to your personal and professional situations.
- Organize and present ideas clearly and effectively in written assignments.
- Improve your ability to understand, organize, analyze, and articulate a broad range of data through a written report with a clear intent and clear structure supported by adequate evidence of research and reflection.
- Develop a critical understanding of what personality traits do or do not reflect your creative potential.
- Understand the complexities of human nature and motivation.
- Assess the role creativity has played and/or will play in your personal and professional development.
- Appreciate how reflection and writing are forms of civic engagement, and thus engines for social change.

ASSIGNMENTS/Due Dates

January 20 / Paper on Madness and Creativity (500 words; 2 pages) 10%
February 3 / Final Project Group proposal (mandatory; no grade assigned)
February 10 / Self-assessment profile (1000 words; 4 pages) 20%
March 2 / Mid-Term Test 20%
March 23 & March 30 / Group creativity assignment (due and presented in class) 40% **
Attendance 10%

** See Creativity and Madness Group Project Rubric on OWL site

Paper on Madness and Creativity (500 words): Due January 20

This assignment asks you to answer two questions: What do ‘madness’ and ‘creativity’ mean? How are they related to one another – or not? In answering these questions, you must make reference to two external critical, theoretical, or philosophical sources.

Self-assessment profile: Due February 10

During the first class (January 6) the Student Success Centre will instruct you about taking the Clifton Strengths assessment <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/252137/home.aspx>. Three weeks later (January 27) they will conduct an in-class workshop based on your test results. The test results and workshop will form the raw data to write your self-assessment profile. The following questions should form a template for writing your profile, but do not feel that you have to stick to this template religiously. Answer the questions in any order or fashion you see fit:

1) What were the results of your personality test?
2) How do they reflect your creativity/creative potential?
3) What role has creativity played in your personal, professional, or cultural development?
4) What role might it play in your future development?
5) What hidden or ‘mad’ aspects of your personality are not reflected in the test results?
6) How might these help or hinder your future creative development?

Mid-Term Test: Due March 2

The mid-term test will assess your understanding of class readings, lectures, and discussion; instructions to follow

Group Project: Due in class, along with class presentation, March 23 & 30

Your final assignment will be a group project that asks you to examine different types of personalities as they relate to the process of creative thinking as it informs the outcome of creative results and their products. This assignment invites you to be as creative as possible in harnessing your individual and group resources and potential. The outcome can take whatever form you see fit: video, dance, ensemble performance, website, blog, creative writing. We will provide a template for the organization, expectations, and evaluation of the project early in the term. To ensure equitable grading, the projects will be assessed both in terms of individual and group participation in both the process and outcome.
SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS

January 6  
**Introduction: What is creativity and madness?**  
Plato, *Ion*; The Revelation of John; Keith Sawyer, *Group Creativity*  
Brief overview of how to take the Clifton Strengths assessment  
Group exercise on madness and creativity—reflection of value of disciplines  
Formation of groups; explanation of final project and work of groups

January 13  
**Madness and insight: Catharsis and ancient theories of madness**  
**Required readings for this class:** Gardner, *Creating Minds* (chapter on Freud)  
Excerpts from Aristotle’s theory of tragedy (presented in class)  
Continuing with Keith Sawyer, *Group Creativity*

January 20  
**Madness and insight #2: finding your place in the world**  
**Required readings for this class:** Shakespeare, *King Lear*; Gardner, *Creating Minds* (chapter on Einstein)  
Early Modern conceptions of madness; Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (presented in class)  
Groups 1 and 2 to present discussion questions  
**DUE:** Paper on Creativity and Madness

January 27  
**Clifton Strengths assessment**

February 3  
**Can there be creativity after the madness of Auschwitz?**  
**Required reading for this class:** Wiesel, *Night*; Clips from Reifenstal, *Triumph of the Will* (viewed in class)  
Groups 3 and 4 to present discussion questions  
**DUE:** Final Project Group proposal

February 10  
**Madness and insight #3: I see dead things**  
**Required reading for this class:** Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (online); Gardner, *Creating Minds* (chapter on Graham); Copland, “The Creative Process in Music” (posted in OWL)  
The rise of psychiatry in the Romantic period (presented in class)  
Groups 5 to present discussion questions  
**DUE:** Self-Assessment Profile

February 17  
**READING WEEK**

February 24  
**1986/2017**  
**Required Reading for this class:** Atwood, *A Handmaid’s Tale*; clips from *A Handmaid’s Tale* (2017) (viewed in class)  
Groups 6, 7, and 8 to present discussion questions  
****Mid-Term Test questions published on OWL site February 27**

March 2  
**Madness, Genius, Creativity #1**  
**Readings for this class:** Gardner, *Creating Minds* (chapter on Stravinsky and Picasso)  
**Guest Speaker:** Dr. Mark Daley, Special Advisor to the President (Data Strategy), on “Computational Creativity: AI, Algorithms, and Artistic Agency”  
Groups 9 to present discussion questions  
**DUE:** Mid-Term Test

March 9  
Presentation by Diana Wu Brianna Capri DeSantis (40 minutes)  
*La La Land* in-class screening (2 hours, 8 min)

March 16  
**Madness and the sound of music:**  
*La La Land*, short introduction and discussion

March 23  
**DUE:** Group presentations in class, along with Individual and Group documents

March 30  
**DUE:** Group presentations in class, along with Individual and Group documents
GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Format and Writing: All written assignments must follow form and content guidelines outlined by the Modern Language Association (8th ed.). The easiest source for these guidelines is the OWL Writing Lab Online site at Purdue University: owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html
On this site you will find a sample research paper, which will show you what the formatting, Works Cited, etc. of your assignments should look like. We will evaluate assignments for grammar and style as well as content. We will give you guidance on solving writing problems where we find them. The Department of English and Writing Studies offers helpful writing courses (http://www.uwo.ca/writing), as does the Writing Support Centre at the Student Development Centre (http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/). See also: “Undergraduate Grading Criteria” on the Department of English website at: https://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/courses/pdf/UndergradGradingCriteria.pdf

Submitting Assignments: Upload all assignments through Dropbox in the OWL course site by 11:59PM on the due date.

Late Assignments: We grant extensions in the case of emergencies (i.e. family deaths) or illness, which requires medical documentation. Besides these cases, request extensions AT LEAST ONE WEEK BEFORE THE DUE DATE of any assignment. Late assignments not granted extensions will be penalized 2% per day, including holidays and weekends, up to 10 days, after which the assignment may not be accepted. Assignments submitted late without permission will be graded and returned without comments.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

English Department student information: www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html
Faculty of Music student information: https://music.uwo.ca/current-students/undergraduate/index.html

Pre-requisites:
Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Academic Integrity: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence that may entail serious penalties. See Western’s Scholastic Offences policy: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Academic Accommodation:
Students are responsible for making up any missed classes or assignments as soon as possible. In order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing more than 30% of the student’s overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation in the form of a completed and appropriately signed Student Medical Certificate (SMC) indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities, or the equivalent documentation for non-medical or compassionate grounds.

Students seeking academic consideration must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence, to clarify how they will be expected to fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence. Documentation, if required, shall be submitted to the Office of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (TC210).

Note that the new Self-Reporting Absence Portal may not be used for requesting academic relief for work worth more than 30%, or for Final Exams scheduled during the official examination period. The full policy is set out at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf
Statement on Mental Health:
“Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western
https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.”

E-mails: We respond to e-mails as quickly as possible. Remember that class e-mails are professional correspondences.

Readings, Attendance, Taking Notes:
We take weekly attendance. Doing readings, attending lectures, and participating in discussion are key to your success in the course. Where available we will post powerpoints to OWL, but you should also take detailed notes in class.

Classroom etiquette: laptops, wireless messaging devices, talking, etc.: Turn off all cellphones or wireless messaging devices during class. Only use laptops during class for class purposes. Talking during class other than to participate in discussion is rude and disrespectful to the class.