



School of Arts & Science

**MUSIC DEPARTMENT
MUSC 140 D01
The Creative Impulse
Fall 2020**

Course Outline

1. Instructor information

(a)	Instructor:	Daniel Brandes
(b)	Office Hours:	By Appointment
(c)	Location:	TBD
(d)	Phone Number:	
(e)	Email:	vcm.brandes@gmail.com
(f)	Website:	

2. Course description and Intended Learning Outcomes:

Students are lead through a process of self-discovery unlocking the creative process within the individual. Inspiration for creativity is drawn from a range of interdisciplinary sources. Cultural, sociological, and historical contexts for creativity are highlighted.

Upon completion of this course a student will be able to:

1. Discuss the creative impulse inherent in a variety of creative disciplines;
2. Harness with assistance the process of creativity from a non-music field to the creative process of making music;
3. Experiment freely with elements of diverse creative practices outside the context of music.

3. Required Materials:

Textbook:

There is no assigned textbook for this course. However, readings/recordings/videos/etc (hence forth referred to simply as “readings”) will be assigned over the course of the term.

Here are some recommended texts that deal beautifully with creativity and the creative process (some of our readings and assignments will be drawn from/inspired by these texts):

- a) Learning by Heart: Teachings to Free the Creative Spirit by Corita Kent and Jan Steward
- b) The Creative Habit by Twyla Tharpe
- c) Teaching and Learning as Performance Arts by Robert Fillou
- d) Grapefruit by Yoko Ono

Other Required Materials:

- a) Personal Notebook: your notebook should be brought with you to all classes (and everywhere else that you go in your day). Your notebook, which will contain class notes, responses/thoughts on readings and assignments, sketches and thoughts for your final project, and more. It is worth 20% of your grade. More on this below in section 5. Basis of Student Assessment
- b) Small group notebook: Each small group will have a shared notebook (Google Doc) in which to log attendance and notes for each week's meeting. Small group members will alternate taking notes. More on this below in section 5.

4. Course Content and Schedule:

It is my hope that the syllabus for this course will be a living thing—something that we will collaboratively build over the next 14 weeks. Given the existential *raison d'être* of the course—a *process of self-discovery unlocking the creative process within the individual*—I feel that for this class to truly come to life, it must *be* the creative impulse. This means that I do not fully know precisely what these next 14 weeks will look like as we together-journey into this process of (re)discovering what it is to be in creative relationship with the world.

This is an act of trust.

I am trusting in my abilities as a nimble and sensitive educator. I am also placing trust in your abilities to be a curious, engaged, and dynamic learner—I am trusting you to take ownership of your learning. This will mean seeking out your own materials, readings, sources, etc. on the topics we are exploring and bringing them to the table. I want you to be able to bring your passion, curiosity, and interest fully into this.

If we are truly in this thing together—engaged, enlivened, and sensitive to what we are trying to achieve here—than something. . .*something*. . .can and will transpire.

Having written that. Here is an outline of some topics to help guide us. However, we must be open to change, improvisation, and spontaneity as we move through this course together—allowing for inspiration and intuition to help guide us where we need to go.¹

WEEKS 1 — ENDLESS BECOMING

¹ Over the course of the term we will be hosting a series of guest artists who will present on their creative practices and their relationship with creativity. I have not included those in the course schedule. Due to our current situation with COVID-19, we will need to be flexible.

“To create means to relate. The root meaning of art is to fit together and we all do this every day. Not all of us are painters but we are all artists. Each time we fit things together we are creating—weather it is to make a loaf of bread, a child, a day.” ~ Corita Kent, visual artist and educator

“Creation ... both as an alternative to the orthodox power-discourse of creation from nothingness, and as a figure of the bottomless process of becoming” ~ Catherine Keller, theologian

TOPICS:

What is creativity? Contextualizing creativity as a process—a process of endless becoming—and as a practice. We will begin to reclaim creativity as something separate and distinct from only the making of artworks—understanding creativity as a way of being in (relationship with) the world.

- a) Cultivating your practice—learning to build a ritual/routine for your creative time; overcoming fears; dealing with distractions; finding your tools.
- b) Opening up to inspiration.

WEEK 2 — CREATIVE BODIES

“I am creative in the way I exist in the phenomenal world as I experience and live it with my moving and perceiving body and in the way I communicate my creative existence with other bodies in that world.” – Soon Ye Hwang, philosopher and educator.

This week will begin to lay some theoretical and foundational concepts for the two major arcs ahead (see below) which explore an embodied approach to creativity. We will examine and discuss how creativity is “a part of our everyday lived experiences, always including interactions with the bodily self, co-existing others, and the phenomenal world.” (Soon Ye Hwang)

WEEKS 3-6 — FROM HEARING TO LISTENING

“I find that a focused listening is both a holding on . . . and a letting go -not imposing my expectations, but letting myself be taken into whatever world is being created.

I love the intimacy of sound – the almost tangible textures of sound in my ear. The intimacy of how certain notes or sounds together can alter my state of being. The sheer presence of the invisible.” - Linda Catlin Smith, composer

Over these weeks, we will continue to examine what it is to enter into creative relationship with the world through our embodied experience and knowledge of creativity. The main focus will be on listening as a creative practice. Over these weeks will be examining the work of musicians, composers, and artists whose work inspires and invites deep and careful relationship with the sounding world.

WEEKS 7-9—FROM LOOKING TO SEEING ... FROM TOUCHING TO FEELING ...

“We don’t really know what already exists in the universe, so we have to be alert to see what we’ve not seen before. Look at something around and say, about whatever catches you eye:

I don't understand that object now.

We don't understand the fullness of everything, of anything. . . Matisse said that to look at something as though you had never seen it requires great courage.” ~ Corita Kent, artist

“I would touch with love each wounded place” ~ Anita Barrows, poet and psychiatrist

Over these two weeks we will shift our gaze from the sounding world to the visual and tactile world. Similar to our work in weeks 2-4, where we explored listening as creative practice, we will examine and engage with seeing and feeling as creative acts. We will explore a series of exercises and practices by the artist and teacher Corita Kent that are designed to help move from passive looking to deep, careful, and creative seeing.

On week six the proposals for your creative essay will be due.

WEEKS 10 and 11—LIFE WORK

“Art can impose on life in ways that improve life and that help the people living it become more sensitive to each other to their environment. It can challenge them to discover the extraordinary event buried under piles of everyday detritus.” – Michael Pisaro, experimental music composer/guitarist

“Art is a sharpening of one's life” – Robert Fillou, fluxus artist

The focus over these two weeks will be artists whose work challenges both our understanding of what art is/can be, as well as our presumptions of how we move through the world. There will be a particular focus on artists who challenge (attempt to break down) the usual boundaries between author and receiver—artists whose work invites, inspires, and activates creative response from the receiver.

TOPICS:

- a) The Fluxus art movement
- b) Yoko Ono, Japanese-American experimental and performance artist
- c) Emmanuelle Waeckerle—interdisciplinary artist and women of no fixed origin
- d) Manfred Werder

WEEKS 11 and 12—ALWAYS IS THE TIME TO LEARN HOPE

*“We know, we cannot keep
from knowing, that the earth is imperiled.
Yet the beauty of this place sears me to my core.*

I am a hewn log, a husk of cicada, a stone split open for light to enter.

Thousands of suns flaming in thousands of leaves.” – Anita Barrows, poet (from her book Testimony)

The focus of our conversations and work over these weeks will be examining the intersections between creativity, imagination, and hope. We will examine works that dare to imagine the world anew—and attempt to write that new world into being.

TOPICS:

- a) John Holloway, *Now Is The Moment to Learn Hope*
- b) Antoine Beuger—composer, flutist, teacher
- c) Anita Barrows—poet and psychotherapist
- d) Walter Brueggeman and Chatherine Keller—theologians
- e) Afro Futurism
- f) Eli Hirtle—Cree film maker and curator.

WEEKs 13 and 14—PRESENTATION OF FINAL CREATIVE ESSAYS

5. Basis of Student Assessment:

- (a) Weekly Creative Practice/Responses:30%. At the conclusion of each week’s class, I will be assigning a daily creative practice for the week. These will be designed to activate various modes of creative exploration. Given that many of these practices will not result in a tangible object that can be handed in for evaluation, you will be writing a short precis in which you reflect upon the practice and its impact on you. There will be an assigned structure for these précises that we will go over in class.
- (b) Creative Essay/Presentation: 15%. Each of you will develop and realize a creative work that reflects upon and responds to (in some way) the work we have done in this course. Think of this as a creative essay, in response to the course material. The medium, nature, etc. of the project is open but the concept needs to be approved by me no later than week 5 of the term. One-on-one check-ins will be scheduled over the course of the term to help ensure successful outcomes. At the final class of the term, each of you will present your creative project and use it to lead a group discussion. Additionally, there will be micro-presentations throughout the second half of term. These will be an informal opportunity for you to talk through your project, how things are going, challenges you are facing, moments of insight, panic, etc. In my experience, opportunities to talk through works in progress is extremely valuable
- (c) Weekly Small Group meetings/Group notebook: 5%. Each of you will be placed in to a small group of 3-4 fellow students from the class. The groups will meet once per week at a time scheduled by the group. During these weekly meetings you will have a chance to puzzle through weekly readings/assignments/practices together, discuss how the class is going, talk about individual projects, etc. Sometimes you may be assigned an exercise or invitation piece to realize as a group. Each group will keep a notebook (in the form of a shared Google Doc). Group members will rotate logging entries (1-2 paragraphs) each week summarizing that week’s meeting (who was there, what you discussed, etc). I will be checking-in on the Google Doc throughout the term.

- (d) Personal Notebook 20%: Your note book(s) will be your repository for everything. A place for serious play. To begin, all of your class notes will be kept in here. You will also be expected to keep thoughts, reflections, responses, etc to the weekly creative practices and readings. Just write everything (*everything*) down. Like, everything. General thoughts and musings...doodles...lists of things you've read and watched and listened to. Everything. At the end of term, when I read each of your notebooks, I should be able to trace and follow your journey over the 14 weeks of the term. Given our current situation of distance learning, there are various forms that this notebook may take. We will discuss some possibilities in class.
- (e) Attendance 10%. **Your attendance is essential to the success of this course—both in terms of your individual success (it will not be possible to pass this course if you do not attend out weekly classes) but also to the overall success of the course.**
- (f) Participation 20% In each class we will be engaging in group discussions, exercises, realizing art pieces, etc. Your presence and participation here matters. It matters a lot. It is everything. If I could, I would make attendance and participation worth 90% of the final grade.

Basically, your grade is going to come down to this: Did you show up? I mean *really show up*. Did you come to class? Were you engaged? Were you open to the process? Did you challenge yourself? Did you take this seriously? Did you put in the work? Did you take (a) risk(s)? If the answer to these questions are yes, then the grade will reflect that.

6. Grading System

(If any changes are made to this part, then the Approved Course description must also be changed and sent through the approval process.)

(Mark with "X" in box below to show appropriate approved grading system – see last page of this template.)

- Standard Grading System (GPA)
- Competency Based Grading System

7. Recommended Materials to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course

8. College Supports, Services and Policies



Immediate, Urgent, or Emergency Support

If you or someone you know requires immediate, urgent, or emergency support (e.g. illness, injury, thoughts of suicide, sexual assault, etc.), **SEEK HELP**. Resource contacts @

<http://camosun.ca/about/mental-health/emergency.html> or
<http://camosun.ca/services/sexual-violence/get-support.html#urgent>

College Services

Camosun offers a variety of health and academic support services, including counselling, dental, disability resource centre, help centre, learning skills, sexual violence support & education, library, and writing centre. For more information on each of these services, visit the **STUDENT SERVICES** link on the College website at <http://camosun.ca/>

College Policies

Camosun strives to provide clear, transparent, and easily accessible policies that exemplify the college's commitment to life-changing learning. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of College policies. Policies are available on the College website at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/>. Education and academic policies include, but are not limited to, Academic Progress, Admission, Course Withdrawals, Standards for Awarding Credentials, Involuntary Health and Safety Leave of Absence, Prior Learning Assessment, Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal, Sexual Violence and Misconduct, Student Ancillary Fees, Student Appeals, Student Conduct, and Student Penalties and Fines.

A. GRADING SYSTEMS <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/index.html>

The following two grading systems are used at Camosun College:

1. Standard Grading System (GPA)

Percentage	Grade	Description	Grade Point Equivalency
90-100	A+		9
85-89	A		8
80-84	A-		7
77-79	B+		6
73-76	B		5
70-72	B-		4
65-69	C+		3
60-64	C		2
50-59	D		1
0-49	F	Minimum level has not been achieved.	0

2. Competency Based Grading System (Non GPA)

This grading system is based on satisfactory acquisition of defined skills or successful completion of the course learning outcomes

Grade	Description
COM	The student has met the goals, criteria, or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.
DST	The student has met and exceeded, above and beyond expectation, the goals, criteria, or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.
NC	The student has not met the goals, criteria or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.

B. Temporary Grades

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/index.html> for information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

Temporary Grade	Description
I	<i>Incomplete:</i> A temporary grade assigned when the requirements of a course have not yet been completed due to hardship or extenuating circumstances, such as illness or death in the family.
IP	<i>In progress:</i> A temporary grade assigned for courses that are designed to have an anticipated enrollment that extends beyond one term. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course.
CW	<i>Compulsory Withdrawal:</i> A temporary grade assigned by a Dean when an instructor, after documenting the prescriptive strategies applied and consulting with peers, deems that a student is unsafe to self or others and must be removed from the lab, practicum, worksite, or field placement.