

FIMS 9625 Creative Work

Winter 2023

FNB 4110

Tuesdays, 1:30-4:20pm

Instructor: Sarah Smith

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Office hours: online, by appointment

In accordance with the overall objectives of the PhD in Media Studies, this course aims to contribute to the study of the social, cultural, economic and political forces at play in the convergence of media, technologies, and industries.

Course Description

Creative work has an uneasy relationship with labour. Careers in the arts, culture, and media industries are increasingly seen as a desirable way for individual workers to find personal fulfillment and as a means of reinvigorating post-industrial economies. But, is it so straightforward? This course addresses developments in creative work and contemporary society through examination of scholarship on culture, creativity, and labour. Topics include the creative industries, affective labour and visibility labour, as well as precarious work, gender, and inequality. The course also addresses creative approaches to scholarship by exploring debates in research-creation and arts-based research. The course literature draws from a range of disciplinary sources, including communication studies, cultural studies, and sociology, amongst others. Through exploration of these methods and literature, students will gain an understanding of diverse approaches to creative work and have the opportunity to reflect critically on their own experiences and knowledge of labour. Students will also gain an appreciation for case studies in the fields of, inter alia, fashion and design, visual art, and digital media work. As part of learning about research-creation, students will engage with creative methods in their course assignments. Experience is not required. Instead, the emphasis is on the process and the student's engagement, not the outcome. As such, students are encouraged to experiment with new approaches and reflect on their success or failure.

This course is organized as a face-to-face seminar with one asynchronous module, which means that student learning will take place synchronously and asynchronously. We will meet weekly as a group for synchronous discussions according to the class schedule. During the week that we do not meet, students will advance their learning asynchronously, accessing course content via OWL.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

1. Identify and explain how discourses about creativity shape expectations around work.
2. Discuss key terms and concepts in the literature on creative work.
3. Create an effective presentation to share a creative method with the class.

4. Undertake independent research to assess the literature pertaining to a specific topic within the field of creative work.
5. Explain research-creation and reflect on their own successes and failures in undertaking a research-creation project.

Class Schedule

**Please pay attention to any updates to this schedule (these will be announced in class and posted on OWL)*

January 10, 2023: Introduction to Creative Work

Read:

Leary, John Patrick. (2018). "Creative (adj., n.); Creativity (n.)." In *Keywords: The New Language of Capitalism* (pp.52-57). Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood.

Hawkins, Harriet. (2017). "Body: Embodied Creativities and Creative Labours." In *Creativity*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, p. 26-69.

January 17, 2023: Creativity & Labour

Read:

Siciliano, Michael L. (2021). "Conflicting Creativities." In *Creative control: the ambivalence of work in the culture industries* (pp. 28-56). Columbia University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.7312/sici19380>

McRobbie, Angela. (2016). "Unpacking the Politics of Creative Labour." In *Be Creative: Making a Living in the New Cultural Industries* (pp. 33-59). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Kong, Lily. (2020). "From cultural industries to creative industries and back? Towards clarifying theory and rethinking policy." In *Handbook on the Geographies of Creativity* (pp. 54-72). Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781785361647.00007>

January 17, 2023: Research-Creation in Practice

**Guest Speaker: Dr. Amanda White*

Read:

White, Amanda. (2018). "Plant Radio." In *Why look at plants?: the botanical emergence in contemporary art*. Eds. Aloï, Picard, C., & Davis, L. Brill.

Chapman, Owen & Kim Sawchuk. (2012). "Research-Creation: Intervention, Analysis and 'Family Resemblances.'" *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 37(1), 5–26.
<https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2012v37n1a2489>

SSHRC. Research-Creation. Definitions of Terms. Online: <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/definitions-eng.aspx#a22>

Please review the speaker's website to familiarize yourself with their projects:
<https://amandawhite.com>

January 27, 2023: Deadline – Keyword Assignment

January 31, 2023: Debates in Research-Creation

Read:

Loveless, Natalie. (2019). *How to make art at the end of the world: a manifesto for research-creation*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781478004646>

Springgay, Stephanie. (2022). “Imponderable Curricula: Living in the Future Now.” In *Feltness: Research-Creation, Socially Engaged Art, and Affective Pedagogies* (pp. 55–79). Duke University Press.

February 7, 2023: Inequality & Creative Work

Read:

Alacovska, Ana & Rosalind Gill. (2019). De-westernizing creative labour studies: The informality of creative work from an ex-centric perspective. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 22(2), 195–212. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877918821231>

Close, Samantha & Cynthia Wang. (2020). “International Platforms, International Prejudice in the Platformization of Crafting.” *Social Media + Society*, 6(3), 205630512094069–. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120940691>

Duffy, Brooke Erin. (2016). “The romance of work: Gender and aspirational labour in the digital culture industries.” *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 19(4), 1–17.

February 14, 2023: Workshop - Creative Methods & Tools

**Deadline: Creative Method Assignment*

Reading Week: February 20-24, 2023

**No class or office hours this week*

February 28, 2023: Visibility & Affective Labour

Read:

Arvidsson, Adam, Giannino Malossi & Serpica Naro. (2010). "Passionate Work? Labour Conditions in the Milan Fashion Industry." *Journal for Cultural Research*, 14(3), 295-309. doi:10.1080/14797581003791503

Abidin, Crystal. (2016). "Visibility labour: Engaging with influencers' fashion brands and #OOTD advertorial campaigns on instagram." *Media International Australia*, 161(1), 86-100. doi:10.1177/1329878X16665177

Poell, Thomas, David B. Nieborg & Brooke Erin Duffy. (2022). "Labor." In *Platforms and Cultural Production* (pp.109-131). Polity Press.

March 3, 2023: Deadline – Proposal

March 7, 2023: Art Work

Read:

de Peuter, Greig. (2020). "Organizing Dark Matter: W.A.G.E. as an Alternative Worker Organization." In *Organizing Equality*. Pre-publication version of the chapter available online: https://culturalworkersorganize.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Organizing-Dark-Matter_-W.A.G.E.-as-Alternative-Worker-Organizati.pdf

Cliche, Danielle. (1996). "Status of the Artist or of Arts Organizations?: A Brief Discussion on the Canadian Status of the Artist Act." *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 21(2). <https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.1996v21n2a939>.

Gerber, Alison. (2017). "The Work of Art." In *The Work of Art: Value in Creative Careers* (pp. 11-29). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

March 14, 2023: Portrait of Resistance (Asynchronous Module)

*No synchronous class this week, module to be completed online and on your own time

Watch:

(2013). *Portrait of Resistance: The Art and Activism of Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge* (72:00). Directed by Roz Owen and Jim Miller.

Read:

de Peuter, Greig, & Nicole Cohen. (2015). "The Art of Collective Bargaining: An Interview with Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge." *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 40(2). <https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2015v40n2a2994>

March 21, 2023: The Politics of Demand: Working, Utopian, and Directional Demands

Read:

Weeks, Kathi. (2011). "Working Demands: From Wages for Housework to Basic Income." In *The problem with work: feminism, Marxism, antiwork politics, and postwork imaginaries* (pp. 113-150). Duke University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822394723>

Weeks, Kathi. (2011). "The Future is Now: Utopian Demands and the Temporalities of Hope" in *The problem with work: feminism, Marxism, antiwork politics, and postwork imaginaries* (pp. 175-225). Duke University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822394723>

Trott, Ben. (2010). Walking in the Right Direction? In *What Would it Mean to Win?* PM Press.

March 24, 2023: Deadline – Annotated Bibliography

March 28, 2023: Indigenous Storytelling and Media Representation

**Indigenous Learning Bundle: module materials provided via OWL*

Chitty, S.M. (2022). Indigenous storytelling and media representation [Digital curriculum module]. In Maatookiiying gaa-miinigoowiziying (Sharing our gifts). Western University.

Read:

Simpson, Leanne. (2011). "Resurgence in our Political Relationships." In *Dancing on our turtle's back: stories of Nishnaabeg re-creation, resurgence and a new emergence*. Arbeiter Ring Publishing eBOUND.

Decter, Leah, & Carla Taunton. (2022). "Embodying Decolonial Methodology: Building and Sustaining Critical Relationality in the Cultural Sector," In *Unsettling Canadian Art History* (pp. 86-111). McGill-Queen's University Press.

April 4, 2023: Creative Spaces

Read:

Merkel, Janet. (2019). Curating Strangers. In R Gill, A. Pratt, T. Virani (Eds.), *Creative Hubs in Question: Place, Space and Work in the Creative Economy* (pp.51-68). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Davies, Sarah R. (2017). How Do Hackerspaces Work?. In *Hackerspaces: Making the Maker Movement* (pp. 43-59). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Ring, Jessica. (2020). "Making Makerspaces Work: How Feminist Makers Reconcile with the Logics of Entrepreneurialism and "Passionate Work" within Canadian Makerspaces." In *Craft Entrepreneurship*, eds. Annette Naudin and Karen Patel. Rowman & Littlefield.

April 11, 2023: Conclusions & Reflection

Deadline – Research-Creation Project

Course Materials

All required course materials will be made available online via OWL and Western Libraries. The instructor will also ask students to consult supplementary materials for further information on case studies for specific classes. These materials will all be accessible remotely and will include digital images, websites and diverse media sources. Links to relevant online materials will also be provided via OWL.

Assignments

Keyword: 10%

This assignment requires you to create a definition for a keyword that is relevant to the study of creative work. Your definition will be informed by relevant scholarship and creative practice. These keywords will be shared amongst the class and contribute to a larger study document for the term. Assignment instructions will be distributed via OWL and the assignment is due on January 27, 2023.

Creative Method: 20%

This assignment requires you to introduce a creative method (approach, tool, or technique) to the class and provide a one-page summary of the method for distribution to the class. Additionally, you are required to write a short response paper assessing the use of this creative method. Assignment instructions will be distributed via OWL and the assignment is due on February 14, 2023.

Proposal: 5%

In this proposal you will outline your chosen topic for the annotated bibliography, as well as your plans for the research-creation assignment. This assignment provides a starting point for instructor feedback and support on your project. Assignment instructions will be distributed via OWL and the assignment is due on March 3, 2023.

Annotated Bibliography: 30%

This assignment requires you to identify and explore a particular area of the literature to produce an annotated bibliography of scholarly sources addressing a specific stream of thinking or topic

in creative work. This annotated bibliography will be accompanied by a short overview of the topic. Assignment instructions will be distributed via OWL and the assignment is due on March 24, 2023.

Research-Creation Project: 20%

One of the goals of this course is to allow you to gain competency in research-creation and creative methods. This assignment requires you to design and undertake an appropriately scaled research-creation project. Each student will have the opportunity to discuss and workshop their proposed project. Assignment instructions will be distributed via OWL and the assignment is due on April 11, 2023.

Attendance & Participation: 15%

This class is organized as a seminars, requiring student attendance and participation. To have a successful class each student must come to class having completed all of the assigned readings and prepared to actively engage in discussion with their classmates. In each class you will be required to comment critically on the readings and supplementary material, ask questions, and exchange ideas. You are also expected to initiate discussion and recognize the shared responsibility for creating an open dialogue in each class.

Enrollment Restrictions

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in Media Studies and Library and Information Science, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

Course Policies

Health/Wellness Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Accessible Education Western (AEW)

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with **Accessible Education Western (AEW)**, a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both **AEW** and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These

accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Statement on Student Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner respectful of the instructor and fellow students. A reminder that our class course environment (online and in person) should be treated as a public space and students should comport themselves accordingly. Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Respect other people's time and bandwidth – so contribute valuable comments rather than “noise.”
- Express yourself clearly and respect the views of others.
- Use proper and respectful language and refrain from any off-color jokes, insults, or threats.
- Challenge ideas rather than the person who offer the ideas. When you challenge an idea, do so respectfully and with the goal of increasing everyone's knowledge.
- Adhere to the same standards of behaviour online that you follow in real life and in a real classroom.

All students are expected to, at minimum, ensure their engagement in the learning environment is respectful, polite, and appropriate. During all class-related activities, whether synchronous or asynchronous, students are expected to engage in respectful and courteous communication.