Anonymous end-of-semester evaluation of CrCrTh 602 Spr '10 online
Profile Report

Date Published: 06/17/2010

Response 85057649

Survey Page 0

1. Start with an evaluation of yourself
Think about your personal goals in taking this course -- Did you achieve them?
How would you have proceeded differently if you were doing this course again?
What have been your major personal obstacles to learning more from this course?

> Taking this course was my main reason to get engaged within this critical and creative program. I was not sure honestly what to expect; probably to gain a strong awareness of the creative process and I've gained a strong comprehensive understanding of it, and way more.
> My main difficulty was the load of readings in the first part of the semester, although I don't complain about knowledge learn from it, next time I'll try to use the month before the starting of the course to read a bit ahead

1. Self-evaluation (continued)
What have you learned about what you have to do to make an online course about creative thinking stimulating and productive?

> engaging the students, giving them enough freedom in the material to be able to each of them find interests (personal, or professional), feel involve in a process and progressive achievements; community feeling built between the students

2. General Evaluation of course
What was special about this course (+positive and/or -negative)?
How did the course meet or not meet your expectations?
In what ways do you think this course could be improved?

> Plus: extremely well organized in order to experience ourselves the creative process while learning on a cognitive way the way it works and while leaving us enough space to move around the course a bit our own way
> The course was both reach and beautifully done, we can feel the amount of work it must have required to built it. I wouldn't change anything at this moment

2. General evaluation (continued)
In what ways did your attitude to doing the course change through the semester?
How does it compare with other graduate courses?
What would be your overall recommendation to prospective students?

> Well there are some very constructive feedback provided each week beside every assignments it helped a lot to understand what could have been expected and also to understand where to improve myself. This course was very demanding and providing, its true that it did not give me so much time for the other course, neither to do much outside the course

3. Evaluation in relation to the course description
Read the course description/goals below.
Comment on how well the goals expressed in the syllabus were met.
Make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

(From course catalog)This course seeks to increase the participants' understanding of creativity, to improve their creative problem-solving skills, and to enhance their ability to promote these skills in others, in a variety of educational settings. Students participate in activities designed to help develop their own creativity and discuss the creative process from various theoretical perspectives. Readings are on such topics as creative individuals, environments that tend to enhance creative functioning, and related educational issues. Discussions with artists, scientists, and others particularly involved in the creative process focus on their techniques and on ways in which creativity can be nurtured.

I believe that each of those goals were met. It allow both us to get engaged into the creative process till completion, problem solving skills, etc, looked from various wide and focused angles as well as gave us many tools to foster it for ourselves and for others if we would be interest to do so within workshops , etc.

4. Synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs)
Building on your comments from Qs 1-3, compose a synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) evaluating this course. (Imagine readers who might not be willing to wade through all the answers to Qs 1-3, but are willing to read more than simply the numerical averages of standard course evaluations.)
Please make comments that help the instructor develop the course in the future and that enable some third party appreciate the course's strengths and weaknesses.
Among other things you might comment on the overall content and progression of classes, the session activities, and the use of web-based technology to support the learning in the course.

This course organized such a way that it allows you as an individual to be engaged within a full creative process, with a benefit and progressive outcome.
You first start with the understanding of the benefit to self actualize, to be aware our your own personal creative potential and provides you the necessary tools, techniques and strategies to put into action the knowledge gained within the course immediately and hopefully permanently
You'll feel involved and transformed for the better along the semester like you probably never did within such a short time

Anonymous end-of-semester evaluation of CrCrTh 602 Spr '10 online
Profile Report

Date Published: 06/17/2010

Response 85430586

Survey Page 0

1. Start with an evaluation of yourself
Think about your personal goals in taking this course -- Did you achieve them?
How would you have proceeded differently if you were doing this course again?
What have been your major personal obstacles to learning more from this course?

This course made me START to proceed with my goals. Up until then, I was only thinking about things.
If I were to do this course again I would be better prepared. It wasn't until the middle of the course that I actually organized all of my assignments into files.
Personal obstacles were mostly family issues.

1. Self-evaluation (continued)
What have you learned about what you have to do to make an online course about creative thinking stimulating and productive?

I learned to be involved.

2. General Evaluation of course
What was special about this course (+positive and/or -negative)?
How did the course meet or not meet your expectations?
In what ways do you think this course could be improved?

The difference between this and other courses: This course was fun to take. We went through processes as a child would (scribbles, etc.). We also learned that there is a process to research creative thinkers.

2. General evaluation (continued)
In what ways did your attitude to doing the course change through the semester?
How does it compare with other graduate courses?
What would be your overall recommendation to prospective students?

I took it more seriously as the course went on. The materials were organized in a way to understand what was needed and when they were due.
My recommendation to prospective students is to organize your materials as soon as possible. It is not difficult, but you do have to pay attention and do the assignments as requested.

3. Evaluation in relation to the course description
Read the course description/goals below.
Comment on how well the goals expressed in the syllabus were met.
Make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

(From course catalog)This course seeks to increase the participants' understanding of creativity, to improve their creative problem-solving skills, and to enhance their ability to promote these skills in others, in a variety of educational settings. Students participate in activities designed to help develop their own creativity and discuss the creative process from various theoretical perspectives. Readings are on such topics as creative individuals, environments that tend to enhance creative functioning, and related educational issues. Discussions with artists, scientists, and others particularly involved in the creative process focus on their techniques and on ways in which creativity can be nurtured.

Sounds good to me.

4. Synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs)
Building on your comments from Qs 1-3, compose a synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) evaluating this course. (Imagine readers who might not be willing to wade through all the answers to Qs 1-3, but are willing to read more than simply the numerical averages of standard course evaluations.)
Please make comments that help the instructor develop the course in the future and that enable some third party appreciate the course's strengths and weaknesses.
Among other things you might comment on the overall content and progression of classes, the session activities, and the use of web-based technology to support the learning in the course.

This course made me START to proceed with my goals. Up until then, I was only thinking about things.
If I were to do this course again I would be better prepared. It wasn't until the middle of the course that I actually organized all of my assignments into files.
Personal obstacles were mostly family issues.
I learned to be involved. The difference between this and other courses: This course was fun to take. We went through processes as a child would (scribbles, etc.). We also learned that there is a process to research creative thinkers.

I took this course more seriously as it progressed. The materials were organized in a way to understand what was needed and when they were due.
My recommendation to prospective students is to organize your materials as soon as possible. It is not difficult, but you do have to pay attention and do the assignments as requested.

Anonymous end-of-semester evaluation of CrCrTh 602 Spr '10 online
Profile Report

Date Published: 06/17/2010

Response 85890405

Survey Page 0

1. Start with an evaluation of yourself
Think about your personal goals in taking this course -- Did you achieve them?
How would you have proceeded differently if you were doing this course again?
What have been your major personal obstacles to learning more from this course?

> I set a personal goal to take a class outside my degree program that exposed me to artisits, writers, etc. These are not people I'm typically with in my own program, so I wanted to expand my horizons in order to become better at my own profession. I wouldn't have proceeded any differently - I really struggled through some of the exercises but came out better for it in the end. My major personal obstacles were that I am very process-oriented and like everything just so, and I sometimes had difficulty with the ambiguity of the subject.

1. Self-evaluation (continued)
What have you learned about what you have to do to make an online course about creative thinking stimulating and productive?

> As in all other online classes you have to get involved in the class. This is not new to me, though - I am getting a degree in instructional design so adult learning is something all of us in the program have been exposed to for some time.

2. General Evaluation of course
What was special about this course (+positive and/or -negative)?
How did the course meet or not meet your expectations?
In what ways do you think this course could be improved?

> I loved the exercises we had to do, even though they were very hard for me sometimes. Both professors seemed to have great command of the subject matter which makes such a difference in a class.
>
> I think the only thing I'd do to improve this course is to take advantage of the spring break. We worked straight through and even a week later than one of my other classes, and I think a break from this type of class is imperative. In adult learning in the classroom, especially when slogging through something new, one of the first things we learn is to take frequent breaks so the learner has time to rest the mind and absorb. This class was pretty intense and I felt myself burning out with six weeks left to go. With that spring break I don't think I would have experienced that burnout.

2. General evaluation (continued)
In what ways did your attitude to doing the course change through the semester?
How does it compare with other graduate courses?
What would be your overall recommendation to prospective students?

As I went through the course I felt more and more confident in my abilities as a creative person. It's very different than any of the other courses I've taken, which I very much appreciated. My recommendation to students would be to take this course, no matter your area of study. EVERY area of study requires creative thinking, and I benefitted hugely from being in class with people so different from me. In my degree classes we have differences but we are all in adult learning in one form or another, and I don't think you get the same exposure as you do when you join a class with artists and writers.

3. Evaluation in relation to the course description
Read the course description/goals below.
Comment on how well the goals expressed in the syllabus were met.
Make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

(From course catalog)This course seeks to increase the participants' understanding of creativity, to improve their creative problem-solving skills, and to enhance their ability to promote these skills in others, in a variety of educational settings. Students participate in activities designed to help develop their own creativity and discuss the creative process from various theoretical perspectives. Readings are on such topics as creative individuals, environments that tend to enhance creative functioning, and related educational issues. Discussions with artists, scientists, and others particularly involved in the creative process focus on their techniques and on ways in which creativity can be nurtured.

Met perfectly! Don't have much more to say about it.

4. Synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs)
Building on your comments from Qs 1-3, compose a synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) evaluating this course. (Imagine readers who might not be willing to wade through all the answers to Qs 1-3, but are willing to read more than simply the numerical averages of standard course evaluations.)
Please make comments that help the instructor develop the course in the future and that enable some third party appreciate the course's strengths and weaknesses.
Among other things you might comment on the overall content and progression of classes, the session activities, and the use of web-based technology to support the learning in the course.

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Anonymous end-of-semester evaluation of CrCrTh 602 Spr '10 online
Profile Report

Date Published: 06/17/2010

Response 86618651

Survey Page 0

1. Start with an evaluation of yourself
Think about your personal goals in taking this course -- Did you achieve them?
How would you have proceeded differently if you were doing this course again?
What have been your major personal obstacles to learning more from this course?

My goals upon enrolling in this course were quite measured. My experience with creativity classes has been quite mixed. It seems that the results are polar -- either very poor or very good. I surpassed all goals I set for this class.

1. Self-evaluation (continued)
What have you learned about what you have to do to make an online course about creative thinking stimulating and productive?

I've had significant experience with online classes and learned quickly that the best way for me to be successful is be aggressive in the completion of assignments. I also performed fairly extensive research into topics that particularly interested me. That helped keep me engaged throughout the semester.

2. General Evaluation of course
What was special about this course (+positive and/or -negative)?
How did the course meet or not meet your expectations?
In what ways do you think this course could be improved?

This is a very easy question to answer. The most significant positive factor in this course was the instructors. Delores and Luanne are both dedicated educators. I've never felt that I had more personal attention from instructors regardless of the course format. There is an obvious love of their subject and of their students that Delores and Luanne demonstrated throughout the course. I don't purport to speak for the entire class, but for myself, and I can honestly say that I love them in return.

2. General evaluation (continued)
In what ways did your attitude to doing the course change through the semester?
How does it compare with other graduate courses?
What would be your overall recommendation to prospective students?

I became more engaged as the course progressed. This was due significantly to the engagement shown by Luanne and Delores. I've taken 20 or so graduate courses and I would rank this course among the top 2 or 3. I would recommend this course to students without reservation.

3. Evaluation in relation to the course description
Read the course description/goals below.
Comment on how well the goals expressed in the syllabus were met.
Make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

(From course catalog)This course seeks to increase the participants' understanding of creativity, to improve their creative problem-solving skills, and to enhance their ability to promote these skills in others, in a variety of educational settings. Students participate in activities designed to help develop their own creativity and discuss the creative process from various theoretical perspectives. Readings are on such topics as creative individuals, environments that tend to enhance creative functioning, and related educational issues. Discussions with artists, scientists, and others particularly involved in the creative process focus on their techniques and on ways in which creativity can be nurtured.

I consider the goals as met very well. There was a very effective balance of theory and practice. The diverse media formats kept the materials interesting and alive.

4. Synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs)
Building on your comments from Qs 1-3, compose a synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) evaluating this course. (Imagine readers who might not be willing to wade through all the answers to Qs 1-3, but are willing to read more than simply the numerical averages of standard course evaluations.)
Please make comments that help the instructor develop the course in the future and that enable some third party appreciate the course's strengths and weaknesses.
Among other things you might comment on the overall content and progression of classes, the session activities, and the use of web-based technology to support the learning in the course.

There is absolutely no way to separate the success of this course from our instructors. Delores and Luanne have a great gift for making each of their students feel important, secure and supported. The UMass CCT program is very fortunate to have these dedicated faculty members.

Anonymous end-of-semester evaluation of CrCrTh 602 Spr '10 online
Profile Report

Date Published: 06/17/2010

Response 86773913

Survey Page 0

1. Start with an evaluation of yourself
Think about your personal goals in taking this course -- Did you achieve them?
How would you have proceeded differently if you were doing this course again?
What have been your major personal obstacles to learning more from this course?

> I had wanted to apply one or more principles learned in this course to my own ESL research. To date, this goal has not been reached, but it might be in the future. I didn't take every exercise as seriously as I could have, at times fighting the feeling that the exercise was not worthy, or that I had already spent more time than I had wanted to. A lack of sufficient time to thoroughly do every activity was an obstacle.

1. Self-evaluation (continued)
What have you learned about what you have to do to make an online course about creative thinking stimulating and productive?

> Give it time and attention.

2. General Evaluation of course
What was special about this course (+positive and/or -negative)?
How did the course meet or not meet your expectations?
In what ways do you think this course could be improved?

> Although overall I found this course valuable and useful, I would like to mention four ways I think it can be improved.
> 1. Make it less demanding. Over 100 pages of readings, writing responses, reading and commenting on the responses of others, watching a lecture, watching videos, doing creativity exercises, and writing a journal are too much for a single week, as was common for the course's first week.
> 2. Make directions clearer. At times the directions got overly complicated. I had to reread them several times, and was at times asked for explanations by classmates who were confused. The aims could be reached with more succinct directions, or just explained clearer. Examples might help at times.
> 3. Improve the platform. The software is clunky. It wasn't awful, but in 2010 it can be much much better. Perhaps small group Skypes instead of whole class meetings.
> 4. Although the content often pointed out the importance of internal motivation, and the limitations if not counterproductivity of external motivation, to my mind, the requirements were often written out in typical "top down" language. 'You MUST hand in the assignment by...' 'No late papers will be accepted' 'You are required to...' Perhaps the course could be made pass/fail. This would be more appropriate given the content. Also, instructors could invite us to do assignments rather than demand and require them. I feel this should always be the case, but especially for a grad course where most are taking it, presumably, for personal development. We're motivated in deepest ways, generally. I hope the instructors can reflect on this distinction between language that invites and language that demands and requires.

2. General evaluation (continued)
In what ways did your attitude to doing the course change through the semester?
How does it compare with other graduate courses?
What would be your overall recommendation to prospective students?

> I got a bit frustrated with the amount of time it took. It was more demanding than my other online UMASS course. Still, due to the fascinating content, I would recommend this course to students.

3. Evaluation in relation to the course description
Read the course description/goals below.
Comment on how well the goals expressed in the syllabus were met.
Make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

(From course catalog)This course seeks to increase the participants' understanding of creativity, to improve their creative problem-solving skills, and to enhance their ability to promote these skills in others, in a variety of educational settings. Students participate in activities designed to help develop their own creativity and discuss the creative process from various theoretical perspectives. Readings are on such topics as creative individuals, environments that tend to enhance creative functioning, and related educational issues. Discussions with artists, scientists, and others particularly involved in the creative process focus on their techniques and on ways in which creativity can be nurtured.

> Perhaps more emphasis on creative individuals and a little less emphasis on creativity research. Some of the latter is probably necessary but explorations of creative individuals (along with Creativity is Forever readings) is more likely to help participants become more creative.

4. Synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs)
Building on your comments from Qs 1-3, compose a synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) evaluating this course. (Imagine readers who might not be willing to wade through all the answers to Qs 1-3, but are willing to read more than simply the numerical averages of standard course evaluations.)
Please make comments that help the instructor develop the course in the future and that enable some third party appreciate the course's strengths and weaknesses.
Among other things you might comment on the overall content and progression of classes, the session activities, and the use of web-based technology to support the learning in the course.

> Even the evaluation form is too demanding! The course really had fascinating, relevant content, that looked at creativity with breadth and depth as well as compassionate, enlightened endeavors such as microfinance. As for the negatives, I'll repeat what I wrote above:
>
> Although overall I found this course valuable and useful, I would like to mention four ways I think it can be improved.
> 1. Make it less demanding. Over 100 pages of readings, writing responses, reading and commenting on the responses of others, watching a lecture, watching videos, doing creativity exercises, and writing a journal are too much for a single week, as was common for the course's first week.
> 2. Make directions clearer. At times the directions got overly complicated. I had to reread them several times, and was at times asked for explanations by classmates who were confused. The aims could be reached with more succinct directions, or just explained clearer. Examples might help at times.
> 3. Improve the platform. The software is clunky. It wasn't awful, but in 2010 it can be much much better. Perhaps small group Skypes instead of whole class meetings at times would be interesting.
> 4. Although the content often pointed out the importance of internal motivation, and the limitations if not counterproductivity of external motivation, to my mind, the requirements were often written out in typical "top down" language. 'You MUST hand in the assignment by...' 'No late papers will be accepted' 'You are required to...' Perhaps the course could be made pass/fail. This would be more appropriate given the content. Also, instructors could invite us to do assignments rather than demand and require them. I feel this should always be the case, but especially for a grad course where most are taking it, presumably, for

personal development. We're motivated in deepest ways, generally. I hope the instructors can reflect on this distinction between language that invites and language that demands and requires.

Anonymous end-of-semester evaluation of CrCrTh 602 Spr '10 online
Profile Report

Date Published: 06/17/2010

Response 89151623

Survey Page 0

1. Start with an evaluation of yourself
Think about your personal goals in taking this course -- Did you achieve them?
How would you have proceeded differently if you were doing this course again?
What have been your major personal obstacles to learning more from this course?

> Yes, I think I achieved my personal goals in taking this course. I had set out planning to accomplish three things: 1) to study the connections between creative writing pedgogy and literary theory, 2) learn more about how to better and more efficiently research, and 3) to fulfill the requirements for a "Lit course" for my MFA program. I think the major personal obstacle that I overcomed this semester was being realistic about how much time I could assign to my project. There is always so much I want to study, to learn, to research, to accomplish, to change, and I'm only one person, and there is only so many hours in the day. I think this course actually helped me learn to prioritize my time a little bit and pick and choose between the things I wanted to do. Instead of reading every intersting article and book, I rated them according to priority and read only those that were most relevant to my research.

1. Self-evaluation (continued)
What have you learned about what you have to do to make an online course about creative thinking stimulating and productive?

> I think I am a naturally self-motivated person; however, I think the hardest thing about an online course is figurig out a way to simulate that sense of community with your peers. Peer share was a useful tool for feedback, but it didn't give me that immediate sense of community. What I actually found the most helpul was when I began jumping on the WIMBA sessions early and talking with my classmates about any course questions we had--or about our projects--or even just asking them personal questions. I liked feeling connected to the other students in the class. The breakout room discussions also served to establish this sense of report and community with the other students.

2. General Evaluation of course
What was special about this course (+positive and/or -negative)?
How did the course meet or not meet your expectations?
In what ways do you think this course could be improved?

> I like how the class was focused on the phases of the research process rather than on the production of a single product. Because the focus of the course was shifted from product to process, I felt like I learned a lot more--gained a lot more researching techniques and tools to add to my toolkit. If the course had been focused on the production of a product, I would have simply used my "tried and true" tactics and not branched out. I like being exposed to new ways of thinking and acting. Not all of the activities worked for me, but I will definitely utilize the ones that did.

> As I suggested at the beginning of the course, I felt the course materials and directions

were spread out in a lot of different locations: blackboard, the assignment checklist, the syllabus, the wiki spaces, not to mention all of the different links attached to each of these sites that had even more detailed directions. I think I had to spend three full weeks orienting myself in the course, trying to figure out what we were supposed to do when. Even toward the end of the course, for every assignment, when I downloaded the directions, I often drew them from three different locations, and they all gave slightly different instructions as to how to complete the assignment.

I know a lot of my classmates had some of the same issues. At the beginning of the course, most of us had a hard time figuring out what we were supposed to do. My suggestion was to include everything on blackboard, and put (inbed) some of the information back onto one page, removing the links. I like that we were introduced to new technologies--I'm not arguing against the wiki page, for example. I think it's great that we learn these new tools. I just think all of the directions for assignments and other course requirements should be in one easily accessible location and one location only. On that location, it could also explain how and when and why a student would use the wiki page.

2. General evaluation (continued)
In what ways did your attitude to doing the course change through the semester?
How does it compare with other graduate courses?
What would be your overall recommendation to prospective students?

I would highly recommend this course to any of my peers. I think the "phases of research and engagement" are relevant to studcents in any field of graduate study. One remarkable thing about this course is that it's purpose is to help students achieve their own goals more effieciently. Any student would benefit from taking this course.

3. Evaluation in relation to the course description
Read the course description/goals below.
Comment on how well the goals expressed in the syllabus were met.
Make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

(From course catalog)This course seeks to increase the participants' understanding of creativity, to improve their creative problem-solving skills, and to enhance their ability to promote these skills in others, in a variety of educational settings. Students participate in activities designed to help develop their own creativity and discuss the creative process from various theoretical perspectives. Readings are on such topics as creative individuals, environments that tend to enhance creative functioning, and related educational issues. Discussions with artists, scientists, and others particularly involved in the creative process focus on their techniques and on ways in which creativity can be nurtured.

My understanding of creativity and my ability to problem-solve has increased in so many ways over the course of this semester. With every activity presented in this course, my mind has been expanded, and I've been challenged to look at my topic and process in a new light. Through my research project this semester, I was able to look at a problem that has been facing the English Studies curriculum for decades and to think of new and creative ways in which to solve the issue--AND my process in arriving at my conclusions was also creative.

4. Synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs)
Building on your comments from Qs 1-3, compose a synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) evaluating this course. (Imagine readers who might not be willing to wade through all the answers to Qs 1-3, but are willing to read more than simply the numerical averages of standard course evaluations.)
Please make comments that help the instructor develop the course in the future and that enable some third party appreciate the course's strengths and weaknesses.
Among other things you might comment on the overall content and progression of classes, the session activities, and the use of web-based technology to support the learning in the course.

This course is relevant and applicable to any graduate student who wishes to explore and examine the many ways in which to research and engage with a subject of interest. The course assignments and activites are unique, creative, and challenging, and students are introduced to a glorious new web of tools--bot technical and hueristical--that allow them to

research and act more efficiently and creatively.

Anonymous end-of-semester evaluation of CrCrTh 602 Spr '10 online
Profile Report

Date Published: 06/17/2010

Response 96154645

Survey Page 0

1. Start with an evaluation of yourself
Think about your personal goals in taking this course -- Did you achieve them?
How would you have proceeded differently if you were doing this course again?
What have been your major personal obstacles to learning more from this course?

1.   Self Evaluation

Personal Goals

My main personal goal was to learn new ways to solve some of my repetitive & or historical problems, mistakes, & improve (& make more interesting or less uninteresting) my general modus operandi in life. I have earlier reflected a lot to have understood the core nature of these problems, so using creative techniques to help solve such problems would not have meant not addressing the structural issues, or in not taking a "systems" or end to end kind of a thorough approach. For the structural issues, I've been taking in regular therapy, off line. The course was important for me to develop a more uninhibited & risky way of being. I suppose I was looking for some kind of validation to experiment being in an environment where non-conformity was okay, & judgement (if or when delivered) was done judiciously, with care & empathy.

Courtesy, Professor Gallo's artful scaffolding, I achieved these complementing personal goals to quite a large & satisfying extent.

My professional (academic) goals were to learn a new topic, of which I've until enrolment in this course, had only faddish, weak-sensed or low order knowledge & understanding. I also wanted to begin to learn the various theories & approaches to creativity. I wanted to learn – really, to get facile with – the nuances of, & with the special vernacular associated with the teaching of creative thinking, & also of finding ways, techniques & tools to help enhance a creative disposition or creative being-ness in my potential students, & myself. I achieved this part of my goals too. I find myself lucky to be enrolled right now (back to back) in the UMBOS CCT summer course titled "Seminar in Creativity". This course will likely give me a chance to address the lingering questions, lack of clarity, & unfinished gestalts on some issues & concepts I have from 602.

My deeper intellectual goals evolved from within the course, & as a result of it I became quite absorbed in pondering over the scant scholarly work available on Eastern notions of creativity. In the back of my mind I now also have an inchoate interest in developing (researching) a kind of Pakistani 'creatology' of some sort. But I doubt if this will precede my more humble journey of first identifying my own creative processes, the factors & conditions which best encourage & enhance the processes, & its' enabling mental constitution & disposition. In this I'm fairly sure that my preferred, natural & unforced gravitational mediums are likely to be writing, narrative therapy, teaching, research & consulting. Several serendipitous discoveries were also made along the duration of the course (& after it too), & I see these as more than just the icing on the cake. I won't go into these. I achieved or got aligned to achieving these goals as well.

I also wanted to see how I handle & manage the pressures of a graduate level course, & to observe & experience the particular nuances of a course that's delivered in & through an on-line, distance based platform. This was important not only to help me litmus-test my ability to take the balance of courses towards the Certificate & the M.A. in CCT, but also in my aspirations to go even beyond that stage. I have plans to pursue an MPhil & or a PhD in the due course of time, though most probably not through an on-line & or distance medium. I also found that the emphasis on writing in the online environment vis-a-vis journaling, etc. suits my learning style very much. But at the same time, it also makes me wonder what it might be that I'm missing by not being in a full time campus presence.

I also took the course in order to fulfil degree completion requirements for the Certificate & eventually for also the M.A. in CCT.

What would I do differently if repeating this course?

Mainly, I'd make more time for meta-reflection on some aspects of the course, & for more general self reflections; perhaps to make connections with other domains & to check how much & how well I understood the matter. By mid-term I was fairly clear about what in particular was 'really' exciting me about the course; it was all that I did not know or did not know enough about. I should have thought about that a lot more than I did, & should have used the convenient access I had to the instructors to bounce off 'my' specific inquires / FAQs to those excellent resources. I also ought to have worked on my inability to be concise in my journals & diaries (well, everything!); I really should have put this up as a bumper sticker reminder on my lap & desk tops! But I'm learning.

I'd also be a lot more cognizant about articulating & reflecting upon my own creative process to see if I follow any generic methodology & approach, of problem solving, issue & scenario framing, & also of just 'being'. I'd make it a point to put penultimate conclusions on my own process at the end of the term, which I think nee
d not be required for sharing with the instructor though that would be beneficial to me. It would have given me a nice 'before & after picture' & would have forced to have left me with at least the making of a list of issues to be tackled in future. I did do this piece granularly but not in a detailed & or deep way.

Personal Obstacles

Prior to the course, I had read this book titled Conceptual Blockbusting: A Guide to Better Ideas by James L. Adams, & several other such genres of texts for a course I took in the teaching & learning of critical thinking with the Foundation for Critical Thinking & The Moral Critique Group in California (www.criticalthinking.org). In addition, I've been in weekly therapy for at least 5 years, & have done a year-long certificate course in Humanistic Therapy. So I was fairly aware of & up the curve on a number of my personal blocks, blind spots, baggage, etc. Despite this (acute) awareness, several tricky blocks surfaced during the course, & I don't know how to quite label these. I think my instructor would concur when I say that a lot of these, fundamentally, had to do with my historical background, especially the formative environment in which I grew up & with 11 years of schooling in Pakistan. It's a developing country which does not place any premium to liberal thinking. Infact, it dis-incentivizes it - though this is beginning to change - but that change is still {2010} wreathed into & is as a part of a complicated one-step forward, two steps backwards, sideways... kind of a volatile imbroglio).

1. Self-evaluation (continued)
What have you learned about what you have to do to make an online course about creative thinking stimulating and productive?

I B.   Self-Evaluation (How to make an on-line course in creative thinking stimulating & productive for me)

For me, I would have liked a lot more freedom in choosing my end of term paper & presentation. I would prefer to have had done two research writing projects & would have had no problems in mapping these into presentations for delivery & discussion in WIMBA. Having said this, I'm not at all disappointed with what I did do, but I think my learning would have been deeper & greater had I more freedom to choose the nature of the projects. These could have been evaluated against the same rubric used for the projects that were instituted by the instructors. It would also have been nice to have face to face WIMBA & or Skype calls; that might have been useful practice for someone like me who is generally shy of audiences & of presenting.

By the way, the comments made by Professor Delores throughout the course ought to be framed somewhere; mine will be in my study. I think she really made untiring & consistent efforts to understand my postings & assignments, cull out my gaps, & help me through these. At times I felt I was being led by the angelic image or visual I have of 'a' Florence Nightingale. Excellent scaffolding! She did not rob (rescue) me out of the several difficult processes which were triggered by some of the exercises we did. Instead she nurtured me through these processes with great empathy, & skills of a maestro therapist, I'd say. Please note that I would have commented all of the same, even if I did not get an 'A', which I just found out. I'm most impressed by her, & would feel very privileged if I had a chance to do another course with her.

2. General Evaluation of course
What was special about this course (+positive and/or -negative)?
How did the course meet or not meet your expectations?
In what ways do you think this course could be improved?

2.   General Evaluation of Course

Positive Special

I think such a loaded & demanding (but not complex form a student perspective at least) course could not possibly have been conducted as successfully as it was, had it not been for Professor Delores's very mature & experienced levels of scaffolding, genuine & authentic engagement with all & everything to do with the course & its participants. She was also very ably assisted by Professor Witkowski. So I think one clear specialty of the course were the instructors, their detailed, hands-on engagement with not just me, but I am fairly sure all other participants in the course as well. I mean she/they made time not only to just comment on but also to track my progress on several personal issues which I managed to bring into the context of the course.

Negative Special

I've tried thinking about this one, but cannot come up with anything.

Did the Course Meet My Expectations?

Not only did it meet my above-stated goals, it exceeded my expectations.

How could the course be improved?

I really don't know. I think I got so much more out of it than I had goaled & expected that I really cannot think of anything substantive.

2. General evaluation (continued)
In what ways did your attitude to doing the course change through the semester?
How does it compare with other graduate courses?
What would be your overall recommendation to prospective students?

2B.   General Evaluation

 in Attitude

I'm a great deal more confident about taking risks & being myself from where I started this course. The fact that I'm not ashamed to admit this at the ripe old age of 44, is, or in my view, ought to be, evidence of this claim. It's given me enough in terms of excitement & some unanswered questions & loud thoughts that I opted to take the on-line "Seminar in Creativity" course this summer (2010) with UMBOS as part of the CCT offering. I'm also much clearer about why I think this is a core course, apart from its obviousness. I suppose it's one of those courses with which people or at least I, make so many faddish associations. It was good to have this challenged, broken down, and updated with facts.

Comparison with other graduate courses

There's generally a lot of what the doctor had ordered for me at this stage in all aspects of my life. But I don't think any doctor has helped me as much as through this course as 'Doctor' Delores Gallo.

The course had the right level of stretch/demand for me; in fact I was unable to do a few exercises despite personal/self best efforts, hints from the instructors & having viewed the works of others. But that was not because there was more work involved in those exercise; it was because I just was not getting it! And, although, generally the work load was much greater than other graduate courses I've taken, this did not bother me about 602, because it was all very enjoyable and well conducted by the instructors. You could see the experience and maturity of the instructors. I feel so because at one point I tried to frame a hypothetical course in creativity targeted at high school students, and it surprised me to know how difficult that was.

Recommendation to other prospective students

If you are doing this course merely to fulfil degree requirements for the CCT, then you will be pleasantly surprised, or shocked, as the case may be depending on your attitude.

If you are a foreign (non-American, 'alien') student (or a life-long learner) who comes from a suppressed society & are not in denial about it, then this course may overwhelm you with an almost encyclopaedic volume & quality of knowledge, skills & abilities. Look nowhere else. True exhilaration lies here, or perhaps also in bungee jumping.

If you are suffering from psychosis – well, then you won't really know that – but just as well, you should take this course. It will confirm your fantasy that it's okay to be this way, & that the way the DSM IV defines psychosis probably should not be changed; let them bask in their teddy conspiracy.

If you are a minimum effort person, something in the category of a person who just wants to 'minimally fulfil' grad requirements, then that's fine to. Just be ready to change that (blasé) state of mind with which you might have earlier chosen this course. But then you may also want to closely monitor the course withdrawal date.

3. Evaluation in relation to the course description
Read the course description/goals below.
Comment on how well the goals expressed in the syllabus were met.
Make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

(From course catalog)This course seeks to increase the participants' understanding of creativity, to improve their creative problem-solving skills, and to enhance their ability to promote these skills in others, in a variety of educational settings. Students participate in activities designed to help develop their own creativity and discuss the creative process from various theoretical perspectives. Readings are on such topics as creative individuals, environments that tend to enhance creative functioning, and related educational issues. Discussions with artists, scientists, and others particularly involved in the creative process focus on their techniques and on ways in which creativity can be nurtured.

3.   Course Description

Course objectives met/not met

Given the course description, the goals of the course were met properly, exactly & in totality, & as mentioned earlier, my expectations were exceeded.

Suggestions on how to better meet the course objectives

While not many or terribly substantive, I think these suggestions have been made by me elsewhere in this document. But to repeat, one of the main ones for me: I'd say, I would have preferred more latitude to do my projects in a different way. I would have wanted the projects to be aligned along a more heavy research orientation. And though I sense that there is lesser published material (in English?) available on Eastern notions of creativity, I feel the course could perhaps have referenced a list of such works.

4. Synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs)
Building on your comments from Qs 1-3, compose a synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) evaluating this course. (Imagine readers who might not be willing to wade through all the answers to Qs 1-3, but are willing to read more than simply the numerical averages of standard course evaluations.)
Please make comments that help the instructor develop the course in the future and that enable some third party appreciate the course's strengths and weaknesses.
Among other things you might comment on the overall content and progression of classes, the session activities, and the use of web-based technology to support the learning in the course.

4.   Synthetic Statement

There could have been many ways to frame & teach this course on the theories & applications of creativity, its associated specific type of thinking being a core theme. The comprehensive and holistic approach taken by the instructors has to be commended, as should be their delivery and management of the most minute of details. At no point should you feel lost or saturated. The content is relevant and applicable to a wide range of possible reasons for wanting to do such a core course on creativity. The choice of mandatory and recommended texts/books (including other sources) and supporting materials (a lot of it) are relevant and current. The assignments need care and attention to detail, including lots of thinking and writing. Subtly implicit in the course is a wonderful personal process, but this may only become lucidly apparent to those with a keen eye for, & interest in, self-introspection.

Please do not be overwhelmed by the amount of work, as most of it is 'fun' and very interesting.

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Karachi, Pakistan