

Syllabus

CrCrTh 612, Seminar in Creativity

Theme: Creative Realization of Ideas

Summer 2019

Ben Schwendener, Instructor <ben@gravityarts.org>

The course is directed to center the student on framing the question: ‘What do **you** want to create for *yourself* and your students?’ – and then actualizing the product, in real life. Schwendener facilitates dialogue and discussion of elements and structure used in the creative process of each of the individual class participants and in the unique products themselves. Projects are presented at the ending classes.

“An understanding of the objective nature of the elements available in one’s art is essential in manifesting one’s inherent creative abilities.” – Ben Schwendener

We will meet Thursdays 6 – 9pm on Zoom, starting May 30, although this can be flexible so as to accommodate everyone’s schedules. The address of the Zoom conference for our class meetings is: <https://umassboston.zoom.us/j/518141938>

Private one-on-one meetings with the instructor are set up with the instructor as needed.

Note: Topics I – XVII are covered in the first 3-4 weeks of the course. This is a ‘dialogue-based’ curriculum that will center on each individual’s progress on his or her unique product.

I. FINAL PROJECT: “What do you want to create, for yourself and for your students?” Identifying a central aim, and purpose for a completed creation.

II. Your personal Bio—creating and/or updating.

III. The history of George Russell and the *Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization*. The LCC explains how the elements of music behave; it gives the student a “Language”—a “Language behind the music,” or a “Language behind your thoughts.” The LCC opens up music possibilities in a new and holistic way.

IV. Intuitive knowledge and the uncovering of new ideas.

V. The understanding of physical laws and their effect on creative processes; application of the definition of “Scale” to the various educational and artistic disciplines of class participants. Objectivity in Art: “What defines objective materials/components in a given (artistic) discipline?”

VI. “Vertical” and “Horizontal” forces in music and their broader implications.

VII. Explaining and discussing the “breakdown into elements” as it can relate to final projects.

VIII. Topic: Creativity as an art of choice. “The Real Frank Zappa” book and the compositional process.

- IX. Formal Design Modes and the development of ideas (within time and space).
- X. Thematic Elements—individual “Vertical” elements combined make up a “Thematic (Centering) Element” that may be used in the design of the final project.
- XI. Dialogue, review and expansion of introductory material.
- XII. Sharing of tentative final project by each student, applying concepts of “elements” and “Scale”.
- XIII. Interpretations of customized education: discussion of a general definition, along with private and corporate models of implementation. Creation by a group through sensitivity to individual strengths and weaknesses.
- XIV. Creative processing challenges in teaching children and adults. Individual diagnostics. Classroom dynamics and the challenges they present. “How do you inspire self-motivation?”
- XV. Continued sharing and dialogue of student’s tentative Final Projects.
- XVI. Music and the “Law of Correspondences.” John Coltrane’s *Giant Steps* and the equilateral triangle: “Objective Art” — the Pyramids conveying the message of the “Law of Three” / active, passive, neutralizing, etc. “*What is, or could be termed ‘Objective Art’?*”
- XVII. Defining “Aim.” Contributing something uniquely your own. XVIII. Creativity and the “reactive” process. Discuss Robert Fritz’s *The Path of Least Resistance*. XIX. Presentations of individual term projects (usually takes at least two entire class sessions).
- XVIII. Presentations of individual term projects concludes. XXI. Summary and (if online virtual) high fives.

We may depart from this succession of topics, but the idea of working to complete a project of your choice using the concepts and principles covered above remains as the central aim.

Texts

Schwendener, Ben, ‘**Organic Music Theory**’, Arlington, MA: The Pumping Station (2017)

*This may be ordered directly from instructor (quickest for delivery) or via [the Publisher’s bookstore](#) , where a [PDF](#) is available.

Fritz, Robert, ‘**The Path of Least Resistance**’, NY: Random House, Fawcett Columbine (1989)

Makiguchi, Tsunesaburo, ‘**Education for Creative Living**’ (translated by Alfred Birnbaum, Edited by Dayle M. Bethel), Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press (1989)

Werner, Kenny, ‘**Effortless Mastery**’, New Albany, Indiana: Jamie Aebersold nJazz, Inc. (1996)

Zappa, Frank (with Peter Occigrosso), ‘**The Real Frank Zappa Book**’, NY: Poseidon Press/ Simon& Schuster (1989)

Other suggested references (optional):

Kelley, Thomas, '**The Art of Innovation**', NY: random House (2001)

Schwartz, Richard C., '**Internal Family Systems Therapy**', NY, The Guilford Press (1995)

McGilchrist, Iain, '**The Master and his Emissary**', New Haven, Yale University Press (2019)

Grading

Grading is based on active participation, and successful completion and presentation of Final Project/Product. There will be a mid-course assessment based on planning and progress of creative product.