

ART280 VA: Approaches to Creativity

Fort Hays State University

College of Art, Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Art and Design

Instructor Molly Koehn

Course Information:

3 credit hours | Spring 2026 | Virtual | No Course Prerequisites

Instructor Information:

Molly Koehn

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Email is the best contact method. I will return all correspondence within 48 hours.

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Text

The required textbooks for this course are:

- Gilbert, Elizabeth. **Big Magic: Creative Living beyond Fear**. Riverhead Press: New York 2015.
- Pink, Daniel. **A Whole New Mind**. Riverhead Books, Penguin Group: New York, 2006.

FHSU Catalog Description

A general education course for non-art majors, discussing the importance of creativity in all fields of study and its place within society today.

Course Description

This course is called *Approaches to Creativity*. I like to call it “Approaching Creativity”; it’s a more active phrase. Approaching means we are moving towards something, and in this case, we are actively trying to be more creative and actively engaging in creativity, instead a mere observer.

In this course, we will explore how you can be more creative in your own life, community, and career. Each student will be required to read the required text and complete visual and written assignments each week to help explore how to be more creative. This will be a hands-on course that requires peer discussion and reflection.

Course Objectives

1. Discover how personal reflection, observation, cultural background, and knowledge influence visual awareness.
2. Create self-reflective hands-on projects that use photography and will be posted to discussion boards.
3. Identify contemporary artists that address identity, cultural, environmental, social activism, and community awareness in their work.
4. Compare and contrast personal visual work with fellow students' work in the form of short essays.
5. Discuss personal interpretations of reading assignments on discussion boards.
6. Recognize connections with your peers regarding identity, culture, environmental, social activism, and community awareness.
7. Develop a creative community project that will provide art experiences and help underserved or under recognized community members.

Technology Expectations

For hands-on-projects, students will be required to take photographs with a digital camera or phone and load those images onto the computer. When uploading photos, make sure that the actual photo shows up and not just a link to the photo. Links make it difficult for other students to view your photos. If you have problems with this, put all your photos into a word document and upload the document to the post.

Teaching and Learning Methods

For most units there will be two presentations. The first presentation will highlight artists in a lecture format. The second presentation will introduce the assignment. Please review both presentations and complete reading assignment before beginning your assignment.

Tutoring Assistance

There is a lot of essay writing in this course. Grammar and organization of your essays will play an important role in the grading process. If you need help you may access Smarthinking, a virtual tutoring service. Please check out this link for details:

<http://www.fhsu.edu/virtualcollege/smarthinking/>.

Writing Assistance

The Writing Center is another wonderful resource at FHSU. The Writing Center wants to help you know how to make your writing assignments better (AND less painful)! The Writing Center features trained writing consultants who can help you with all aspects of your writing projects during 30-minute face-to-face or online appointments, and it's **FREE**. Come early, come often, and be happier for it.

Make an appointment through their online system using the instructions at <http://fhsu.mywconline.com> —preferably well before the due date of your paper! The Writing Center Hours are M-TH: 9:00 am – 8:00pm and FRI: 9:00 – 2:00pm. For special requests and sessions, email WritingCenter@fhsu.edu or Lisa Bell at lkbell@fhsu.edu *

FHSU Helpful Resources and University Policies

Please review the FHSU Helpful Resources and University Policies folders in the Course Information module that include academic honesty, students with disabilities, Title IX and technology needs. Make sure you read this information.

Rules

1. Late assignments will not be accepted.
2. All assignments must be your own work. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in a 0 on the assignment.
 - You must take your own photographs. You may not use pictures found on the Internet, taken by others, or generated by AI.
 - You must write your own words. The use of AI to generate answers is not allowed in this course.
3. Photographs must be taken during the course of the semester. **Do not use old photos!**
4. To get as much as you can from this class please follow the [guidelines and rubrics](#) for each assignment.

Grades

Grades will be based on the following:

Please follow the rubrics posted on Blackboard, especially when it comes to the Essays.

Exemplary (A, 90-100):

- Followed the assignment.
- Included all information required.

- High skill in composition, subject matter and concept of photographs or essay.
- Excels in organized and well-written essays.
- Demonstrates highly proficient creativity and originality.
- Exhibits strong growth.

Accomplished (B, 80-89):

- Followed the assignment.
- Included all information required.
- Proficient skill in composition, subject matter and concept of photography or essay.
- Proficient skill in writing and organizing essays.
- Demonstrates proficient skill in creativity and originality.

Competent (C, 70-79):

- Did not include all information required.
- Moderate skill in composition, subject matter and concept of photography or essay.
- Moderate skill in writing and organizing essays.
- Demonstrates moderate skill in creativity and originality.

Novice (D, 60-69):

- Did not include all information required.
- Beginning level skill in composition, subject matter and concept of photography or essay.
- Beginning level skill in writing and organizing essays.
- Demonstrates beginning level skill in creativity and originality.

Unsatisfactory (U, 59 and below):

- Did not complete assignment.
- Turned in assignment late.
- Plagiarized photographs. Did not follow instructions.
- Writing is poor and not organized. Use of incomplete sentences and misspelled words.
- Did not attempt to be creative or original.

Timeline	
ART280 VA: Approaches to Creativity	
Spring 2026	
<i>The dates given are due dates. All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. CST.</i>	
Introduction	
Tuesday, January 20	Class Begins
Monday, January 26	Introduce yourself on Discussion Board (10pts)
	Syllabus Quiz (10pts)
Unit 1	
Monday, February 2	Read Big Magic: Chapters 1-3
	Self-Portrait Lecture
	Post Self-Portrait Photos to Discussion (100pts)
Monday, February 9	Discussion Board Reflection (20pts)
Unit 2	
Monday, February 16	Read Big Magic: Chapters 4-6
	Metaphor Lecture
	Post Essay to Blackboard (100pts)
Monday, February 23	Discussion Board Reflection (20pts)
Unit 3	
Monday, March 2	Read A Whole New Mind: Part 1, Sections 1-3
	Culture Lecture
	Post Essay to Blackboard (100pts)
Monday, March 9	Discussion Board Reflection (20pts)
Unit 4	

MARCH 16-20 SPRING BREAK	
Monday, March 23	Read A Whole New Mind: Part 2, Sections 4-5
	Environment Lecture
	Post Beauty and Repulsion Photos to Blog (100pts)
Monday, March 30	Discussion Board Reflection (20pts)
Unit 5	
Monday, April 6	Read A Whole New Mind: Part 2, Sections 6-7
	Social Activism Lecture
	Post Essay to Blackboard (100pts)
Monday, April 13	Discussion Board Reflection (20pts)
Unit 6	
Monday, April 27	Read A Whole New Mind: Part 2, Section 8
	Community Lecture
	Post to Unit 6 Discussion Board (100pts)
Unit 7	
Monday, May 4	Read A Whole New Mind: Part 2, Section 9
	Lecture and Assignment
	Post Comments on Discussion Board Part 2 (100pts)
Unit 8	
Monday, May 11	Final essay (200 pts)