

Social Work 604: Directed Studies Course
Creativity in Social Work with Women Harm Themselves
2007 September Semester

Instructor: Si Transken
Hours of class time: 39
Phone numbers of professor: 250-564-4753 or 250-960-6643
Best times to phone: weekends after 12:00
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*You come to me seeking knowledge; you want set formulas so that you can cling to them. I don't give you any. In fact, if you have any, I take them away! By and by, I destroy your certainty; by and by, I make you more and more hesitant; by and by, I make you more and more insecure. That is the only thing that has to be done. Osho. p. xii, **Courage, The Joy of Living Dangerously***

Course Description:

The student will use Linda M. Turner's, "Creativity - An Overview and Framework for the Social Work Practitioner" as a focus or lens through which to examine all the other assigned readings. The emphasis will be on the reading and summarizing of the articles and books mentioned in the reference list (below) and then linking these to Turner's analytical framework of creativity (forms of creativity in social work). The student will also continue to do a scholarly journal search of "creativity", in reference to service delivery, specifically women survivors of violence, that will be interwoven throughout the literature reviews of the above mentioned reference list.

Transdisciplinarity will be emphasized here (i.e. material from Education, Sociology, Women's Studies, First Nations Studies, Literature, etc. might be utilized). **Cultural Studies** is a body of knowledge which attempts to make these kinds of effective and creative webs of understanding and praxis. At the end of this course the student should have a deep, useful, focused understanding of why creativity is sometimes feared in professional practices (i.e. it is a difficult 'commodity' to track, monitor, control) and why creative service delivery is vitally important for the work that we do (i.e. changing the material world – or helping to change the inner psychic world is a profoundly creative endeavor!).

Learning Objectives:

At the completion of the course, the student will be expected to have:

- 1) Acquired an appreciation of the interrelationship between research and Turner's analytical framework - Forms of Creativity in Social Work
- 2) Learned how to critically read and evaluate other people's research
- 3) Made implicit and explicit linkages between/ among these themes of creativity and social work and the contexts of rural social work/ feminist social work/ First Nations social work, etc. These themes and contexts are those articulated in our social work program's mission statements and the university's mission statements.

- 4) Demonstrated some attempts to 'stretch and try on' more creativity (re thinking/ writing/ exploring, etc) in her/his assignments and tasks as a social worker.
- 5) Substantive linkages with the agreed upon thesis plan that was negotiated between Si and the Student (i.e. approximately another 20 pages of thesis text will emerge by the end of this course – these 20 pages may be the same 20 pages submitted elsewhere in this course or they may be an additional 20 pages of writing).

REQUIRED READINGS:

Acker, S., Black, E., Hill, T., & Transken, S. (1995). Research Students In Education And Psychology: Diversity and Empowerment. *International Studies In the Sociology Of Education*, 229-251.

B, S., Eylon, T., Ripsman Eylon, D., Tilleczek, K., & Transken, S. (2001). *Stress (Full Sister (Hood))*. Prince George: UNBC Copy Centre.

Baylis, C., Burton, A., Fraser, C., & Transken, S. (2002). *Outlaw Social Work (the unsecret poems and stories . . .)*. Prince George: Transformative Collectives.

Brzuzy, S., Ault, A., & Segal, E. A. (1997). Conducting qualitative interviews with women survivors of trauma. *Affilia*, 12(76).

Bryant, V., Dahl, P., Lane, L., Marttila, M., Transken, S., & Trepanier, C. (1999). *Battle Chant*. Ontario: Battle Chant Ink.

Denzin, N. (2003). *Performance Ethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics Of Culture*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Gilligan, C., Rogers, A.G., & Tolman, D.L. (Eds.)(1991). *Women, girls & psychotherapy: Reframing resistance*. Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press.

Gratz, K. L. (2006). Risk factors for deliberate self-harm among female college students: The role and interaction of childhood maltreatment, emotional inexpressivity, and affect intensity/reactivity. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 76(2), 238-250.

- Harned, M. S., Najavits, L. M., & Weiss, R. D. (2006). Self-harm and suicidal behavior in women with comorbid PTSD and substance dependence. *The American Journal on Addictions, 15*, 392-395.
- Haw, C., Hawton, K., Casey, D., Bale, E., & Shepherd, A. (2005). Alcohol dependence, excessive drinking and deliberate self-harm: Trends and patterns in Oxford, 1989-2002. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, 40*, 964-971.
- Herzog, D. B., Franko, D. L., Dorer, D. J., Jackson, S., & Manzo, M. P. (2006). Drug abuse in women with eating disorders. *International Journal of Eating Disorders, 39*, 364-468.
- hooks, bell. (1997) *Wounds of Passion*. New York: Henry Holt and Company Inc.
- hooks, bell. (1996) *Reel to Real: Race, Sex, and Class in the Movies*. New York: Routledge.
- Jordan, Judith. (Editor) (1997) *Women's Growth In Diversity: More Writings From The Stone Center*. New York: The Guildford Press.
- Jordan, J. (Ed.) (1991). *Women's growth in connection: Writings from the Stone Center*.
- Measelle, J. R., Stice, E., & Hogansen, J. M. (2006). Developmental trajectories of co-occurring depressive, eating, antisocial, and substance abuse problems in female adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Psychology, 115*(1), 524-538.
- Miller, D. (1994). *Women who hurt themselves: A book of hope and understanding*. NY: Basic Books.
- Peñas-Lledo, E., Fernandez, J-D., & Waller, G. (2004). Association of anger with bulimic and other impulsive behaviours among non-clinical women and men. *European eating disorders review, 12*, 392-397.
- Transken, S. (2002). Poetically Teaching/Doing Social Work. *Critical Social Work Journal*.

Turner, L. (1999). *Creativity - An Overview and Framework for the Social Work Practitioner*. *Canadian Social Work*, (1), 91-97.

You must also read the work of at least three thesis/MSW proposal graduates from our MSW Program. You will negotiate this selection with me asap in the semester.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Damianakis, T. (2001). Postmodernism, Spirituality, and the Creative Writing Process: Implications for Social Work Practice. *The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, (82), 23-33.

Eisner, E. (2002). *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*. New Haven: Yale University.

Gelfand, B. (1988). *The Creative Practitioner - Creative Theory and Method for the Helping Services*. New York: The Haworth Press.

Griffith, M. (1995). Opening Therapy to Conversations with a Personal God. *Journal Of Feminist Family Therapy*, (7), 123-139.

Grigsby, K. (1995). Determinism versus Creativity: A Response to Peile. *Social Work*, 706-707.

Hepburn, J. (1994). The Implications of Contemporary Feminist Theories of Development for the Treatment of Male Victims of Sexual Abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, (3), 1-18.

hooks, bell. (1994) *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.

Kahn, S. (1997). Leadership: Realizing Concepts Through Creative Process. *Journal Of Community Practice*, (4), 109-136.

Leavitt, R., & Pill, C. (1995). Composing a Self Through Writing: The Ego and Ink. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, (65), 137-152.

May, R. (1975). *The Courage to Create*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Noble, K. (1990). The Female Hero: A Quest for Healing and Wholeness. *Women & Therapy*, 9(4), 3-18.

Peile, C. (1993). Determinism versus Creativity: Which Way for Social Work? *Social Work*, (38), 127-134.

Sullivan, W. (1989). Community Support Programs in Rural Areas: Developing

Programs Without Walls. *Human Services in the Rural Environment*, (12), 19-24.

Szuchman, L. (2002). *Writing With Style - APA Style Made Easy*. Australia: Wadsworth - Thomson Learning.

Transken, S. (1994). Dwarfed Wolves Stealing Scraps From The Masters' Tables. *Alternate Routes*, 31-63.

Transken, S. (1995). Reclaiming Body Territory. *Canadian Research Institute For The Advancement Of Women*, (25), 1-35.

Transken, S. (1997). The Doors Are Shut And The Organizations Closed: Notes Exploring How This Story Unfolded. *Atlantis*, 62-72.

Transken, S. (1998). Organizational Activists And Immigrant Women's Groups: From Drowning To Swimming To Graceful River Rafting. *Refugee*, 10-31.

Uematsu, M., & Walz, T. (1997). Creativity in Social Work Practice: A Pedagogy. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, (15)*, 17-31.

Winslow, S. (1990). The Use of Ritual in Incest Healing. *Smith College Studies in Social Work, (61)*, 27-41.

On a case-by-case basis the student may renegotiated a required reading for an alternative reading.

In this course a new vocabulary and new micro-skills will be added to your professional and personal 'tool kit for survival' as a mindful, compassionate, effective clinician and advocate. My hope is that you will leave this course with a richer sense of your own competence as a producer and distributor of knowledge. You will be given many opportunities to cultivate your own complex ethical template and to internalize guidelines and question-clusters regarding your interest areas – although this is a reading course and you will be pursuing your own path I will do my best to link you with other students who have similar interests and I will do my best to link your personal 'quest' with the readings that I know of / have available to me (i.e. I'll send you things that come up as the semester goes forward).

Below is list of recommended readings you might want to ponder. They offer a summary of three important perspectives which link wonderfully with conversations about 'creativity'. These three bodies of knowledge are: **The Feminist Therapy Institute's insights, Jungian Therapy/Men's Healing Movement, and the work of The Stone Centre**. I invite you to experiment with these theories in a somewhat messy eclectic way. The insights from these three bodies of work might be blended with techniques/practices from expressive arts therapy, creative writing practices and other techniques/practices. These readings invite you to depthfully ponder the meanings of gender, ethnocultural background, class imprinting, etc. How might these readings further your commitments to engaging in ethical? Ethical practice means that an understanding of diversity is not only intellectually grasped but is also pragmatically practiced.

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The sound of breaking silence makes us understand what we could not hear before. But the fact that we could not hear doesn't prove that no pain existed.

- Dian Marino, p. 27, Wild Garden, Art, Education and the Culture of Resistance

A reading course is a brave undertaking! No one can do your learning for you. **You** are at the center of your learning journey. You are the owner of it. You are the beginning, the middle, and the end of that adventure. **This course is only here to affirm, nudge, and encourage you.** This course is intended to assist you in your journey by offering a witnessed space for brain-storming, reality checking, clarifying, self-motivation, and time-managing. It is necessary for you to enter this learning project with a solid sense of what interest areas impel you. It is expected that you will take risks, share, read the assigned material, engage the authors you are encountering – imagine them as creative caring respectful intellectuals, and try to have some memorable fun too in your 'conversations with them'. All the writers who have ever thought about creativity – and all the

practitioners who are out there right now bringing their creative passions and intentions to the work world and activist world – all of them are wishing you well. All of them are proud of you for committing to this course outline.

ANOTHER WAY TO MUSCLE UP AND GUIDE YOURSELF MORE EFFECTIVELY: SUGGESTIONS FOR JOURNALING EXERCISES.

Although it is not something you will hand in, it might help you to journal while you are doing this course. That journaling might assist you in deepening and integrating your new knowledge and raising new questions for you which will link with your thesis research and/ or your professional practice. The following is a handout I give to students who attend classes with me on campus and it might assist you in organizing what could be called ‘field notes’ that emerge from your initial scribbles and jots on pages as your reading and pulling all of this new information together. If you use this kind of a journaling process it might also help you feel more competently prepared for the oral exam.

EFFECTIVE INTEGRATIVE JOURNALING INVOLVES THE FOLLOWING :

It is concise, direct, focused, lean, **and** comprehensive. Your text has no wasted words. You have asked yourself before you’ve handed it in, “Are there any lines or words that I can delete because they do not deepen the messages I want to be sharing/exploring..?.”

It does not name people other than yourself. It uses created names or details to protect the confidentiality of classmates, clients, co-workers, etc.

It intelligently weaves together knowledge from past and present class lectures, class discussions, readings, the newspaper, poetry, etc.

It has about one page of footnotes/references for every two pages of journaling.

It demonstrates imaginative creative and practical grounded thinking and feeling that is **indirectly and directly relevant to our practice as social workers.**

It identifies problems you are working through and mindfully points toward the precise next steps you are taking with those problems (i.e. is not just a shallow statement, list, or rant of problems).

It demonstrates an active intent to find balance between personal and professional understandings and examinations of, the macro end of social work and the interpersonal or micro end of social work (i.e. speaks to both ends of the slinky image).

It makes innovative linkages (i.e. doesn’t just blindly or obediently repeat what you have been told by others). These linkages demonstrate a consciousness of the “rings up and down the slinky” (i.e. the sociological, his/herstorical, and all the rings down to the interpersonal of the

right now).

It sometimes shows your shadow side/ troubled heart/ emotional and intellectual confusion, etc. This often happens because we are a profession that advocates socialist ideas yet we are embedded within a capitalist system; we are a profession that advocates equality yet we are often instruments of social control against those who are oppressed...

It doesn't repeat itself from one entry to the next to the next; there is always a sense of movement (i.e. your first assignment of the semester and your third and your fifth should all have a differently textured sense of the struggles or problems or issues you are addressing).

It often has some elements of a passionate speech, a confession, or a testimonial but intelligently makes reference to the assigned readings, scholarly material from other contexts and times in your life, etc.

It often demonstrates some sense of vision, idealism, imagining of a better and different world.

It should usually demonstrate some sense of a vision or image of an eventual better different and bigger (or happier) you.

It has been proof read for spelling, tidiness, formatting, etc.

Next to diving into a new novel, play, or movie of my own, there are very few things as exciting to me as staring off a new batch of writers. I feel a deep happiness, a profound excitement, as the class gathers. I have been teaching now for two decades, and I can still remember specific rooms, the precise way the light fell across certain faces twenty years go. I remember, too, my feeling of a glowing secret certainty, what I knew that the class didn't: they would write and write well.

- Julia Cameron, p. 226, The Right to Write

One who is ready to go on the exploration called truth has to be ready also to commit many errors, mistakes – has to be able to risk. One may go astray, but that is how one arrives. Going many many times astray, one learns how not to go astray. Committing many mistakes, one learns what is a mistake and how not to commit it. Knowing what is error, one comes closer to what is truth. It is an individual exploration; you cannot depend on others' conclusions. Osho, p. 16, Courage, The Joy of Living Dangerously

Course Evaluation:

Assignments 1: 20 page Literature Review - due at 4:00 on May 28 in hardcopy and in email attachment in word or richtext. This assignment is worth 20% of the final grade.

Assignment 2: Literature Review - due June 25 at 4:00 in hardcopy and in email attachment in word or richtext. This assignment is worth 30% of the final grade.

Assignment 3: Literature Review - due July 30 at 4:00 in hardcopy and in email attachment in word or richtext. This assignment is worth 30% of the final grade.

The literature reviews will consist of a paragraph or two of summary of each specific reading and a one or two page summary linking all of the readings together. The assignment will be marked based on the depth of analysis, the integration of the readings, the extent of the creative engagement with them, and the clarity of focus demonstrated. It is expected that the readings will be linked in some way with your thesis research topic - as discussed beforehand. They will be mailed in hardcopy and forwarded by email in word or richtext. All the expectations which are mapped out in the handout 'My Messy Assumptions' will apply (except, of course, those that relate to protocols for in-class behaviors, etc.).

Final: Oral Exam - August 10, from 12:00 until 2:00 (or a time near to this which we will mutually negotiate). In the final oral exam I will ask questions about any of the readings which have been described in the above list of required readings. I will be using the assignments to guide my questions. I will primarily be looking to see how you will be forwarding your thesis journey with the readings (i.e. I may be asking questions about where you plan to go next with each of these readings, new learnings, considerations, questions, etc.). Somewhere during the semester we will do a 'mock oral exam' to assist you in your comfort and clarity about what this oral exam will involve. The oral exam is worth 20% of the final grade.

Signature of Professor: _____

Signature of Student: _____