

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire” - Yeats

## **Green Sheet: Humanities One - ~~The Creative Mind~~ Creative Minds**

Winter 2026

*Instructor:* Salamander Breiter

*In-Person Drop In Hours:* Tuesdays from 10:30-12:20 in S55 + via Zoom by appointment

*E-mail:* breitersal@deanza.edu

*Website:* <http://www.deanza.edu/faculty/breitersal/>

**Description:** An introduction to the study of creativity in human life; its sources, development, social purposes, and role in culture change. Students analyze creativity as a central source of meaning and purpose in their lives as well as a development of their unique combination of human intelligences. Lives of creative people from all over the world are examined and contextualized. *This course is specifically designed to build commitment to civic and moral responsibility for diverse, equitable, healthy and sustainable communities. Students are expected to recognize themselves as members of larger social fabrics and to develop the abilities and motivation to take informed action for change.*

**Student Learning Outcome:** Synthesize critical thinking, imaginative, cooperative, and empathetic abilities as whole persons in order to contextualize knowledge, interpret and communicate meaning, and cultivate their capacity for personal, as well as social change.

**Student Learning Outcome:** Cultivate and demonstrate awareness of the power of creativity and the potential of the creative process through direct involvement

### **Required Texts:**

- *Originals* by Adam Grant  
ISBN: 978-0143128854
- *Big Magic* by Elizabeth Gilbert  
ISBN: 978-1594634727
- *The Creative Act* by Rick Rubin  
ISBN: 978-0593652886

\* *These books are available for short-term loan at the De Anza library*

**Welcome:** I am incredibly excited to work with all of you. I have designed a course for you that I believe will be meaningful and accessible and that you will be able to be successful in. Please do not be intimidated by the number of assignments, as they follow a very predictable pattern. There are 2 styles of assignments (experiential projects and personal reactions) and 1 type of monthly assessment. By the end of the first week, I am confident that you will have a deep sense of the potential for your success and the rhythm of the quarter. Please bring me your concerns and questions so that I can help you prepare for a positive learning experience.

 **Zoom:** Our live class meetings meet Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30 am-12:20 pm on Zoom. You are expected to attend these live class meetings. Our meetings will be recorded so that you will have access to content in the event that you have an emergency and are not able to attend the live class meeting. The links for the Zoom meetings and the recordings are both in the Zoom app on Canvas.

 **Canvas:** The reading and writing assignments in this class are arranged into easy to understand Canvas modules. All modules are published before the quarter begins. On the homepage and on the calendar, you will be able to see the format and rhythm of the course and within each individual assignment you will find instructions for the readings and specific explanations of my expectations for your writing.

## Assignments and Demonstrations of Learning:

*Experiments (400 points total):* You will complete 3 experiential projects over the quarter with an increasing level of challenge and points. These projects ask you to be more authentic in your “real” personal life by taking direct action to change things that matter to you. Each experiment is divided into two parts, Stage A (where you identify personal boundaries and limits) and Stage B (where you step out of your comfort zone and try something you have never done before). The stages of your experiments are due before most Monday class meetings. The general format for all of the experiments is similar, but topic/sphere of influence will change. You will be asked to self-score a portion of Stage B on each experiment to encourage your self-reflection. By the end of the quarter, you will be able to demonstrate your capacity to create social change. This is your opportunity to learn creativity by utilizing it in your life.

*Preparations/Reflections (300 points total):* Each week, you will have 2 types of weekly reading/writing assignments based on your life experiences, informed opinions, and personal perspectives related to each course reading, lecture, and discussion. The assigned readings for the week and the discussion preparations based on them are due before our Wednesday class meetings. Reflections about each of the lectures and each of the discussions for the week are due before midnight on Fridays. This process of preparation and reflection provides the intellectual backbone to our process of discourse and discovery in this course.

*Demonstrations of Learning (300 points total):* At the end of each month, you will reflect on what you have learned by making connections and finding intersections within the many topics and ideas from that month. Each of the three Demonstration of Learnings is worth 100 points. You will have the choice of writing a single essay or writing 10 short essays. I will always give you more prompts than you need to answer. I will give you about 5 days on your own time to complete the Demonstration of Learning and will leave time during live class for you to ask questions and make clarifications. The Final Demonstration of Learning will have a few comprehensive questions that we will prepare for together.

*Universal Design Flexibility Points/Extra Credit (100 possible points):* I believe that high expectations set in a foundation of support and encouragement lead to the best outcomes. I am a proponent of timeliness, particularly because most of your due dates precede conversations with your classmates. They will be relying on you to make informed contributions to their learning experiences. I also believe that extra-credit should not be used as a substitution for doing the meaningful labor of this course. That said, I understand that complications are a normal part of real life and that I can support your success in my class by having flexibility built into the course design. I believe that this flexibility can relieve a great deal of stress or anxiety when unanticipated events occur in your lives and that it can support your success by offering you opportunities to earn the grade that you deserve. For that reason, this course has 6 supportive flexibilities as foundations of its design.

- **First**, each of you will start the quarter with 50 points of “universal design flexibility points” in the grade book. This is my way of recognizing up front that many of you will experience personal and technological difficulties during the quarter and that having a little extra space to turn in a few assignments late (or to not be able to earn discussion reflection points when missing live class) without having to worry about your grade can make an important difference in your success this quarter. These flexibility points are used instead of extensions or alternate assignments. Requests for extensions or alternate assignments will not be granted.
- **Second**, the 30 points possible for the preparations/reflections for Week 1 are extra credit. This serves as a jump start to the quarter and encourages you to get reading and writing early. It also offers you the potential to go into week two with a large lead on

your good grade. Also, during week 9 of the quarter, I will offer an additional 20 point extra credit assignment related to role models (This optional extra credit will be due before midnight of Friday of finals week and will be listed in the week 12 module).

- **Third and Fourth**, the evaluation of your work in this class will be based on completion. This means that if you meet the assignment benchmark, you will earn full points on the assignment. These benchmarks will be described in detail during the first week of class and include a primary focus on thoughtful engagement and reflection based on your life experiences, informed opinions, and personal perspectives (AI cannot do this work for you). If you exceed the benchmark for the assignment, I will add an extra bonus point or two as an expression of my appreciation (This is the third flexibility). If you do not meet the benchmark for the assignment, I will provide feedback and you may resubmit the assignment one additional time for reconsideration (This is the fourth flexibility). Keep in mind that if the original submission was turned in late (see the fifth flexibility below) then the reduction will carry on to the resubmission AND if the original submission is identified as cheating then it will not be accepted for resubmission (This is coded in the gradebook as .5 points so that it is easily identifiable by you and by me). The cheating policy is described in detail below.
- **Fifth**, you can submit assignments late for a 10% reduction per day late until they reach 50% of the original possible points, which is where they will stay for the remainder of the quarter. This work can be turned in up until midnight of Friday of finals week and will NOT be accepted a second after that.
- **Sixth**, recordings are available for live class meetings that you absolutely must miss due to a life event. Otherwise, I expect you to attend our live Zoom meetings in order to participate in interactive conversations and discussions with your classmates. If you miss live class, you will not be able to earn the points associated with writing reflections about the discussions for that day. The “universal design flexibility points” mentioned above will cover some missed discussions but are not plentiful enough to cover your points if you miss class in a systematic or regular way. The recording for the live session usually populate in the Zoom app in Canvas within a few hours of end of the class.

*Reminder:* Please see the weekly modules and calendar in your Canvas account to see specific reading assignments, writing prompts and due dates related to each type of assignment or demonstration of learning.

### **Grading Scale:**

To keep the math relatively straightforward, I have designed this class to have assignments and exams that add up to 1000 points. Your grade at the end of the quarter will be based on how many points you have accumulated.

970+ = A+  
930+ = A  
900+ = A-  
870+ = B+  
830+ = B  
800+ = B-  
770+ = C+  
700+ = C  
670+ = D+  
630+ = D  
600+ = D-  
599 - = F

## **Names and Pronouns:**

I would love to learn how to pronounce each of your names. Please be patient with me and correct me if I pronounce your name incorrectly. I appreciate this deeply. I like to identify my students by their first name, and I hope you will call me by my first name as well. To ensure that your fellow students and I to use your correct pronoun, I would be thankful if you let me know your pronoun directly and list it next to your name in Canvas and in Zoom.

## **The Fine Print:**

*Expectations:* I expect you to be on time to class and ready to begin with your camera on at the start of our meetings. That said, I would rather have you arrive late than not at all. I know that this quarter will be a little bit wonky and we will all be doing our best to balance being at home with our families and potentially demanding work lives.

*Academic Freedom:* In higher education, academic freedom is foundational to scholarly inquiry. Academic freedom helps to create a space that allows everyone in the classroom to develop the essential skills of critical inquiry and to experience intellectual growth. Part of my academic freedom as a professor is to make thoughtful judgments about appropriate content and assignments to achieve the student learning objectives in this course (see p. 1 of this syllabus for those learning objectives). Part of your academic freedom as a student is to use your own critical thinking skills to evaluate the texts and ideas that we encounter in this space. Mutual recognition of academic freedom is what allows each one of us to learn and grow. This involves the freedom to discuss all relevant matters in the classroom. Educators have the autonomy to determine course content, teaching methods, and materials, including addressing challenging topics. Students have the freedom to explore controversial ideas and engage in creative work. This freedom to learn allows us to question and discuss diverse perspectives within the academic setting [[ASCCC](#)]. This ensures that both teachers and students can engage freely in the learning process.

Please read more about the De Anza Academic Freedom policy [HERE](#).

*Diverse Perspectives & Experiences:* As a human being, I have perspectives that are shaped by my personal identity, life experiences, and political and religious commitments. The same is true for all of you. There is no reason to expect that we all share the same worldview and, indeed, I am glad that we do not! I do not expect or require students to share mine. Your grade in this course will not be affected by any real or perceived differences in our identities, experiences, or political and religious commitments. My responsibility in this class is to support you in achieving the student learning objectives. You will be graded in this course in relation to those objectives.

*Mutual Respect:* During our Zoom class meetings, you are expected to act with professional courtesy and respect for people who are different than you. Academic discourse requires authentic opinions and honest perspectives that are balanced with deep respect for the life experiences and beliefs of others. I expect you to ensure that all students will feel safe to participate fully in our classroom.

*Rules For Recordings:* Recorded Zoom lectures are for your use only. They are an instrumental part of your learning experience in this course. You may not share/redistribute them in part or whole.

*Cheating Policy:* Your assignments in this class are all based on your life experiences, informed opinions, and personal perspectives. This means that everything you write should be from your own heart and mind. The writing in this course cannot and should not be written by artificial intelligence because no computer knows and understand who you are and what unique ideas you to bring to the conversation. Assignments that do not include your original thought will not be given any points. Please write in your own voice and do not have AI correct your grammar, as I do not assess grammar and it will not be part of your grade. Any work turned in that is not your own, whether is written by AI, plagiarized/copied, or represents the ideas of others will be considered cheating. Cheating one time will result in an automatic zero (coded with a .5 in the gradebook) for that specific item. For each subsequent instance of cheating, you will receive a zero (again coded as a .5) for this specific item and I will file an official student conduct report. For a more complete discussion of student conduct, please refer to De Anza's Academic Integrity page at [https://www.deanza.edu/policies/academic\\_integrity.html](https://www.deanza.edu/policies/academic_integrity.html)

*\* As a side note, your creative capacity is your greatest asset in a context in which your human skills/capacities can be replicated by another human being or a computer. Building your own authentic and unique knowledge and ability will ensure that you secure the job opportunities, advancement, and security that you deserve!*

*Course Changes:* I will not add any extra assignments or extra readings to your workload during the quarter. I will adhere to the due dates on your Canvas calendar and will not change them unless something significant occurs during the quarter. In the rare case that this occurs, I will notify you directly through e-mail.

### **Student Support and Resources:**

I understand that your success in this course will be dependent on many factors in your life. Please let me help you find any academic support or personal support you need. This might range from accommodations/disability support services, to tutoring/writing help/academic skills building, to psychological counseling or a wide variety of life needs. On my faculty website and on Canvas, I have created a series of links you can use to find open help-desk hours or to make appointments both on and off campus. If you are not sure which of the services you need, I am happy to show you how to get help during office hours.