GCIN2002 Commercializing Creativity: A Cultural Critique

Course Instructor:
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Lecture: Monday, 12:30 pm - 2:20 pm, CPD-2.16

Course Content

The overall aim of the course is to understand how creativity works in practice in different business situations in the creative industries. Lectures and readings will thus focus on different forms of cultural production – advertising, book publishing, ceramics, design, fashion, film, food and music – and analyse how those concerned view the concept of ‘creativity’, how they put it into practice, and how they bring different values (many of them not immediately connected with creativity as such) to bear on its evaluation. The course’s disciplinary emphasis will be on social anthropology and its methodological emphasis on participant-observation (often called ethnography) in order to understand the social processes that go into creativity, on the one hand, and fashion magazines, films, pots, perfumes, and ads as the products of those processes, on the other.

There is one required text, Exploring Creativity, which presents theoretical analyses with ethnographic cases of different creative practices. There is also a recommended text, The Business of Creativity, which argues for two main premises underpinning creative practices: one is the affordances that both enable and constrain creativity; the other is the values that underpin it. Course lectures will examine such notions as symbolic markets in which creativity and cultural production takes place; the craftsmanship that is a prerequisite for creativity; and the evaluation of creativity as shown in the bestowal of prizes and awards. As such, the course examines the intricate and mutually sustaining links between culture and the economy.

The course can be broadly defined as falling into three complementary intellectual streams.

1. The first of these focuses on creative practices in business. It takes a number of different business situations – the publishing of a historical novel, development of a fashion brand collection, an advertising campaign, and so on – to examine the extent to which creativity is, or is not, brought into play in production by different creative industries. It also asks who is creative at what points in the production process.

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1 The course outline is adapted from the course syllabus developed by Professor Brian Moeran when he taught the course for the Global Creative Industries Programme at HKU.
2 The course outline has been revised due to the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus. Special arrangements have been made to cope with the unexpected situation. The course outline should be read together with the ‘course arrangement and assessment guidelines’ document.
2. The second stream is comparative and makes use of material from Europe, the United States and the Asian region to examine similarities and differences in concepts of what is and is not ‘creative’ in a particular form of cultural production. Is ‘creativity’ a universal concept? Or is it culture-bound?

3. The third stream is methodological and seeks to examine the extent to which qualitative research based on intensive, long-term, participant-observation takes us beyond the standard political discourse of ‘creative industries’ in which creativity is never defined, but is taken as a given.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Diagnose the challenges facing those involved in creative processes in different forms of cultural production
- Analyse and apply the theories of affordance and values outlined in the required and recommended texts;
- Describe the parts played by each of the main players in, for example, advertising production, product line design, cultural exhibitions, and fashion magazine editing, as well as by those participating in the awarding of prizes with their knock-on effect in a creative world.
- Think constructively about the complex relationship between culture and the economy.

Teaching methods

Lectures, seminars and case studies

Assessment

Assessment will be by participation (30%) and written assignments (70%). Further details can be found in the separate ‘course arrangement and assessment guidelines’ document.

1. **Participation (30%)**: You are expected to attend lectures and seminars. You will be asked to complete tasks to mark your attendance and participation on Moodle. You are also expected to participate in lectures and seminars by asking intelligent questions and answering questions put to you by the teacher and engage in discussions.
2. **Written assignments (70%)**: You will be asked to complete two written assignments consisting of short essay questions. Each assignment accounts for 35% of your total mark. The written assignments will be used to assess your understanding of the key concepts and theories outlined in the required and recommended texts.

   Deadlines of submitting written assignments (on Moodle):
   First written assignment: **14 April 2020, Tuesday, 17:00 (HK time)**
   Second written assignment: **19 May 2020, Tuesday, 17:00 (HK time)**

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### Course Texts

There are two texts for this course: one is compulsory; the other recommended.

1. The **compulsory set text** is:

2. The **recommended text** is:

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### Course Schedule

**Subjected to changes**

#### Week 1: Course Introduction (January 20)

**Required**


[http://psychology.csusb.edu/facultyStaff/docs/BeghettoKaufman2007_toward_a_broader_conception_of_creativity_A_Case.pdf](http://psychology.csusb.edu/facultyStaff/docs/BeghettoKaufman2007_toward_a_broader_conception_of_creativity_A_Case.pdf)
Additional
Brian Moeran et al. 2015 “Opinions: All about creativity.” Journal of Business Anthropology 4 (2): 228-297. Especially the “Zig-zag” essay by Keith Sawyer. [link to article]

**Week 2: Lunar New Year (January 27)**
No Class

**Week 3: What is Creativity? (February 3)**
**Required**

**Additional**
Joyce R. Robinson 2010 “Webster’s Dictionary definitions of creativity.” On Line Journal of Workforce Education and Development 3 (2), Summer. [link to article]

**Week 4: Constraining (or Affording) Creativity (February 10)**
**Required**
**Set Text:** Introduction, especially pp. 12-32.
**Recommended Text:** Chapter 1, “Circuits of affordances,” pp. 35-59.

**Additional**
Kyung Hee Kim 2007 “Exploring the interactions between Asian culture (Confucianism) and creativity.” Journal of Creative Behavior 41 (1): 28-53. [link to article]

**Week 5: Class Suspension (February 17)**
No Class

**Week 6: Class Suspension (February 24)**
No Class
Week 7: Framing Creativity and Improvisation (March 2)

Required


Additional


Week 8: Conceptualizing Creativity (March 9)

Required


Week 9: Foundation Day (March 16)

No Class

Week 10: Manufacturing Creativity (March 23)

Required


Additional

Yoshitaka Mori 2009 “J-Pop: From the ideology of creativity to DiY music culture.” Inter-Asia Cultural Studies 10 (4): 474-488.
Week 11: Seminar I (March 30)
Sub-class A (12:30pm to 1:20pm)
Sub-class B (1:30pm to 2:20pm)

Week 12: Evaluating Creativity (April 6)

Required

Week 13: Easter Monday (April 13)
No Class

Week 14: Organizing Creativity (April 20)

Required
Set Text: Shannon O’Donnell 2013 “Reconceiving constraint as possibility in a music ensemble,” pp. 96-120.

Additional

Week 15: Managing Creativity (April 27)

Required

Additional

**Week 16: Ranking Creativity (May 4)**

**Required**

**Set Text:** Chris Mathieu and Marianne Bertelsen 2013 “Evaluation in film festival prize juries.” In Brian Moeran and Bo T. Christensen (eds.) *Exploring Creativity: Evaluative practices in innovation, design, and the arts.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 211-34.

**Set Text:** Bo T. Christensen and Jesper Strandgaard Pedersen 2013 “Restaurant rankings in the culinary field,” pp. 235-259.

**Set Text:** Timothy de Waal Malefyt 2013 “Celebrity status, names, and ideas in the advertising award system,” pp. 191-210.

**Additional**

**Recommended Text:** Chapters 10 and 11, “Judging artworks” and “The politics of evaluation,” pp. 217-245.

**Week 17: Seminar II (May 11)**

Sub-class A (12:30pm to 1:20pm)

Sub-class B (1:30pm to 2:20pm)