


The background of the slide is a complex, abstract pattern. It features a dense network of thin, gold-colored lines that resemble veins or a web. These lines are set against a background of vibrant blue and purple hues. The colors are layered and blended, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is reminiscent of a microscopic view of a biological structure or a stylized, organic pattern.

# SOCIAL WORK, TRAUMA, & THE ARTS





DR. MEAGAN  
CORRADO



# CLASS 3: CREATIVITY AND DESTRUCTION

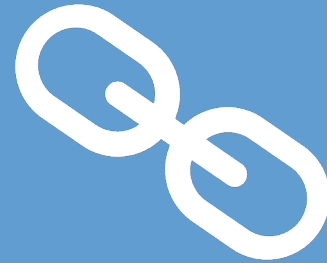
# SOCIAL WORK, TRAUMA, & THE ARTS

COURSE DASHBOARD

VIRTUAL ASYNCHRONOUS CONTENT



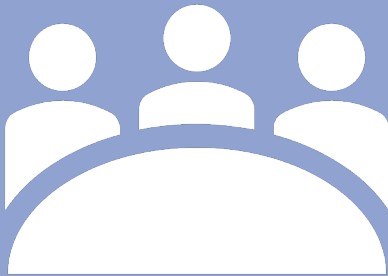
WEB LINKS



COURSE READING



"LIVE" VIRTUAL CLASS SESSIONS



WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS



STUDENT PROPOSALS



# Social Work, Trauma, & The Arts

Course Roadmap

INTRODUCTION TO TRAUMA

EXPLORATION OF CREATIVE  
ARTS APPROACHES

1

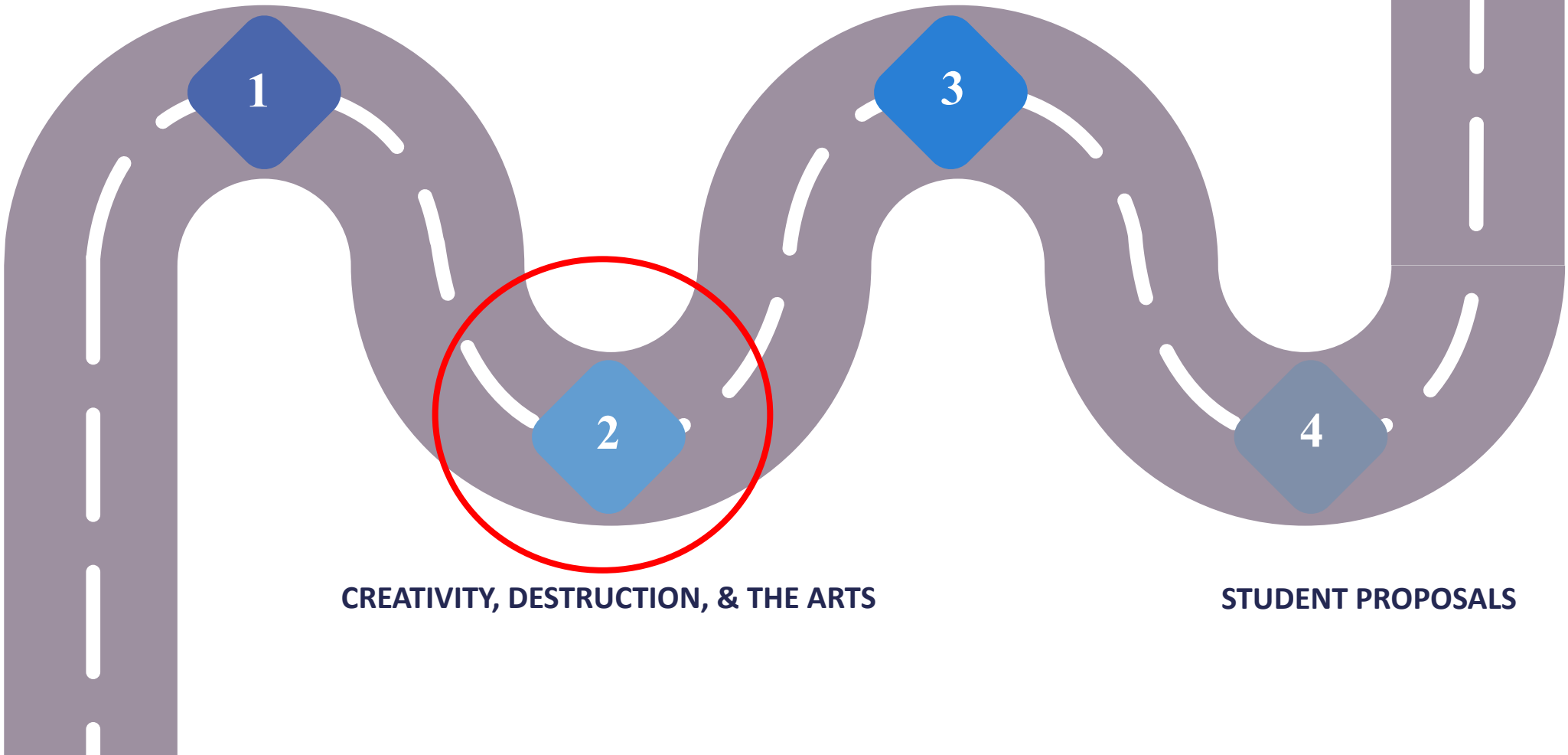
3

2

4

CREATIVITY, DESTRUCTION, & THE ARTS

STUDENT PROPOSALS





# AGENDA



Defining creativity

Why creativity matters for trauma survivors



# DEFINING CREATIVITY



# DEFINING CREATIVITY (ROTHENBERG)

“Being open-minded and flexible and arriving at useful or new solutions to work or living problems” (p 5).

“The ability to carry out any type of task- be it cooking or tennis, or everyday work- with a certain type of elegance and aesthetic grace” (p. 5)

“The ability to grow and develop and change oneself in relation to inner aims and outer reality” (p. 5)

“The production of something that is both new and truly valuable” (p. 5)

# DEFINING CREATIVITY

Weisburg defines creativity as “producing a novel response that solves the problem at hand” (p. 4).

Sternberg & Lubart add that something that is creative must be both “novel” and “appropriate” (p. 11). Novelty is defined as a quality that is “original,” “not predictable,” and “can provoke surprise in the viewer because it is more than the next logical step” (8 p. 12).

Sternberg & Lubart speak to the fact that creative things must provide a meaningful contribution to a question or problem at hand.

Goldberg states that the concept of salience is integral to the development of a definition of creativity. Salience speaks to something’s “importance or relevance” (p 71).



# CREATIVITY: PRODUCT OR PROCESS

- Rothenberg states, “Productivity- the mere turning out of large quantities of things is not the same as creativity...the result can be a large quantity of worthless material (p. 4)
- Winnicott (1971) adds, “Creativity is not an ‘acclaimed creation...[but] it is a coloring of the whole attitude to external reality.”
- Goldberg (2018) admonishes, “One should also keep in mind the difference between being ‘creative’ and being a member of a ‘creative profession’...Not every writer, painter, or musician is truly creative.”
- Winnicott (1971) states, “In a search for the self the person concerned may have produced something valuable in terms of art, but a successful artist may be universally acclaimed and yet have failed to find the self that he or she is looking for.”



---

## JANUSIAN THEORY

- Janusian theory is based in the mythical Roman god, Janus.
- Janus was the Roman god of doorways and archways (entrances and exits, peace and war).
- He is depicted as having two faces- each looking in a different direction.
- Janusian theory suggests that part of the creative process means living with opposing concepts. It defines creativity as the ability to allow contradictory concepts to co-exist in the same space without trying to fix it.











# CREATIVITY: INDIVIDUAL QUALITIES

- Amabile (1983) proposes that the creative person must have expertise, motivation, and innovative thinking.
- Westwood & Low (2003), who reference Feist (1999) state that the creative person exemplifies the following qualities: “openness, impulsivity, high achievement needs and low conscientiousness, non-conformity, skepticism, low affiliation needs, and introversion.”
- Rothenberg (1990) states that despite the other qualities highlighted in the literature as being essential characteristic of creative individuals, the primary feature of the creative person is motivation.

---

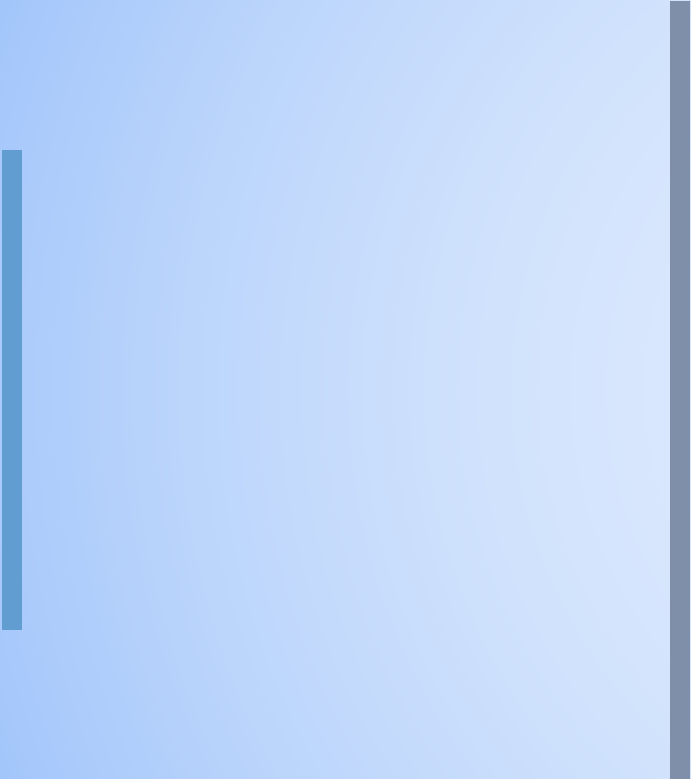
## CREATIVITY:A UNIVERSAL TRAIT

- Westwood & Low (2003) assert that it “is not a function of exceptional cognitive capabilities but is inherent in the normal generative capacities of everyone’s cognitive processes.”
- What does that mean? It means that every person has the cognitive ability to be creative. It means that every individual has the neurobiological foundation for creative thinking. It means that although our culture exalts the talents of an elite few, the capacity for creativity lives and breathes in every one of us.
- Winnicott (1971) speaks to the universality of creativity, “It is true that a creation can be a picture or a house or a garden or a costume or a hairstyle or a symphony or a sculpture [or] a meal cooked at home...The creativity that concerns me here is a universal, it belongs to being alive.”

# CREATIVITY:A UNIVERSAL TRAIT

- Winnicott (1971) says,“Even in the most extreme case of compliance and the establishment of a false personality, hidden away somewhere there exists a secret life that is satisfactory because of its being creative.”
- Sachs (1951) adds that aesthetics- the search for creativity, for beauty- is universal for every human being,“if we look around...we see people everywhere snatching bits of beauty, feeling that their life would become intolerable without it, like the prisoner’s life without the one beam of sunlight in his cell.”
- Winnicott (1971) adds that creativity can be exemplified in everything that we do. That there is no hierarchy for creativity; the creativity displayed in the simple activities of everyday life are worth just as much as the creative expression of a world-class performer. Winnicott states,“[Creativity] is present as much in the moment-by-moment living of a backward child who is enjoying breathing as it is in the inspiration of an architect who suddenly knows what it is that he wishes to construct.”



Two vertical lines are positioned to the left of the text. The first line is a thin teal line, and the second line is a slightly thicker grey line.

# WHY CREATIVITY MATTERS FOR TRAUMA SURVIVORS



**CREATIVITY ALLOWS TRAUMA  
SURVIVORS TO GRAPPLE WITH THE  
PARADOX OF CREATIVITY AND  
DESTRUCTION**



**CREATIVITY GIVES VOICE TO  
EXPERIENCES TRAUMA SURVIVORS  
DON'T HAVE THE WORDS TO EXPRESS**



**CREATIVITY GIVES TRAUMA  
SURVIVORS HOPE**

Creativity matters because it allows individuals- communities- to grapple with the uncomfortable paradox of creativity and destruction.

Trauma survivors have endured life-altering experiences.

Their narratives include fragmentation, loss of self, impaired relationships, changes in their mood, changes in their thinking. Yet at the same time, trauma survivors demonstrate incredible resilience.

Despite the harmful ways life has knocked them down, they find a way to get back up again. To survive.

## GRAPPLING WITH THE PARADOX OF CREATIVITY AND DESTRUCTION



# GRAPPLING WITH THE PARADOX OF CREATIVITY AND DESTRUCTION

- Winnicott (1971) and Nitsun (2015) both speak to the idea of “creative destruction.”
- This concept suggests that in order for something to be created, something else must be destroyed.
- Nitsun states of this phenomenon, “the threatened destructive ‘collapse’ may contain the seeds of survival and growth, generating and regenerating the constructive potential.”
- Sternberg & Lubart propose that we need barriers in order to create, “Creativity...thrives in the face of adversity. To be creative you need an obstacle to push against.”

# VOICING EXPERIENCES TRAUMA SURVIVORS CANNOT VERBALIZE

- Creativity matters because it gives voice to experiences that trauma survivors don't even have the words to express.
- Harris (2009) speaks of the concept of "speechless terror." Traumatic experiences leave individuals, families, communities speechless. The parts of the brain triggered in traumatic experiences prevent survivors from translating their experiences into words. And we need words to process what we have been through.
- As stated by Dr. Sandra Bloom (2011), creativity transforms "trauma and terror, pain and grief"..."into the joy of performance, the creation of beauty, the healing rhythms of dance and song, story and poetry. Not forgotten, but changed and changed together."

---

## INSTALLING TRAUMA SURVIVORS WITH HOPE

- Creativity matters because it gives trauma survivors hope. Hope that just as their creations can survive despite the barriers, challenges, and destruction that they endure, the trauma survivor themselves can also do the same. That although experiences have left them broken, confused, disoriented...although all of the broken pieces don't fit back together again, they can use them to create something new.
- Safan-Gerard (2018) states, "The artist has the courage to destroy because he trusts that he can ultimately make it right, and that the work will survive. At these moments, all the artist has is the courage to destroy in hopes that the creation survives."
- Rickman (1965) adds that "the immortal work of art...is living proof that the artist himself has stayed the course of havoc and has himself made life come out of dust and confusion."