

## **CreateLab**

### Looking Backward, Moving Forward (CISS 275) Spring 2022

Tuesday and Thursday 10:00-11:50

The Pit, O'Kane 37



### **Faculty:**

Mark Freeman, Department of Psychology, Beaven 331  
T 2-3:30, F 9-10:30, and by appointment

Dan Frost, Department of Spanish, Stein 407  
T 1-2:30, W 10-11:30, and by appointment

Lynn Kremer, Department of Theatre and Dance, O'Kane 469  
M 1:30-2:30, T/TH 12:15-1, and by appointment

Leslie Schomp, Department of Visual Arts, Millard Studios  
M, 12-1, T/TH 12:30-1, and by appointment

# CreateLab: Orientation and Focus

CreateLab is an experimental course that invites you, through lectures, performances, and collaborative projects, to explore your own creativity and imagination in the context of examining the theme of “Looking Backward, Moving Forward.” The course goals are lofty. We encourage you to: think creatively and deeply, take risks, articulate and tackle your fears, build and stand by your arguments, embrace ambiguity and vulnerability, sustain long-range project development, collaborate and commit to teamwork, honor process as well as product, and engage in doing even as you draw upon research and theory. We expect you to develop skill sets that will transfer to other classes and to your life beyond Holy Cross. The faculty are here to facilitate, instigate, provoke and support you along the way.

In keeping with theme of “Looking Backward, Moving Forward,” this year’s version of CreateLab carries the following description:

*In view of the pandemic and its painful consequences, lives senselessly lost to racial and ethnic violence, the troubled state of political life, and much more, this is an opportune time for taking stock of the past, orienting ourselves in the present, and moving forward, creatively, into the future. How shall we do so? What role can the arts play in the process, and how might we, members of the Holy Cross and Worcester community, be a part of it? By exploring these questions in the arts and beyond, this year’s offering of CreateLab seeks to deepen our understanding and appreciation of the creative process, the ways in which the arts can speak to the wider world, and the larger political, ethical, and spiritual concerns that inform creative work.*

In CreateLab, we will ask you to make things, take risks, express yourself in new ways, work on your own, collaborate with classmates and professors, attend cultural events, participate in workshops with visiting artists, take exploratory walks, and dig deep into the ideas you explore and the projects you pursue. If all of these are in play throughout the semester, the result will not only be a deepened appreciation of the creative process but the creative transformation of our very selves.

## Creative Etiquette

We are all vulnerable when we work on new things, and while out of that vulnerability can come powerful work, we must treat each other with respect, dignity, honesty, and care. Here are some important things to keep in mind:

- The work we do in CreateLab requires an attitude of open-mindedness, receptivity to new ideas and activities, and, perhaps most of all, curiosity. It also requires a willingness to take risks (and perhaps fail as you do), and a commitment to stretching your creative capacities.
- Our work also requires an attitude of welcome and hospitality. In carrying out creative work collaboratively, it’s essential to be open to others’ views and to truly listen to what they say and do. In this respect, creative work is much about attentive receptivity as it is about action.

- Do not shy away from offering your perspective on things. At the same time, recognize that many of us may be uncomfortable at any given time and do what you can to support your classmates as they try new things.
- As Questlove, one of our literary mentors this semester, puts the matter, recognize that collaboration is “a partnership in the truest sense” and that “collaborations work best . . . when there’s a mutual desire to see what the other side adds” (p. 102). So, do what you can to keep this desire in motion.

## Learning Goals

In keeping with CreateLab’s orientation and focus as well as the aspects of creative etiquette enumerated above, course goals include the following:

- Increased open-mindedness, tolerance of ambiguity, and willingness to take risks and explore uncharted intellectual and artistic territory.
- Increased capacity for both creative problem-solving and creative “problem-finding”-- i.e., an increased capacity to question given ways, to “think outside the box,” and to formulate new problems and solutions.
- Strengthening of one’s work ethic, the tenacity with which one approaches and seeks to work through creative challenges, and one’s resilience and perseverance in doing so. “When it comes to the process,” Questlove writes, “just persist, persist, persist. It has positive effects for your ideas” (p. 271).
- Strengthening of one’s respectful attitude toward others as well as one’s collaborative skills and capacity for engaging in creative and productive teamwork.
- Learning, developing, and employing a variety of brainstorming techniques and strategies in order to generate novel ideas, activities, and products across a range of different contexts.
- Developing communicative skills, including writing skills, oral presentation skills, and those skills required for creatively expressing and applying ideas, as evidenced especially in classroom participation and presentations.
- Developing one’s interest in the world of art and culture, including not only works of art, music, and theatrical performance but those forms of culture and creativity found in the fabric of everyday life.
- Crafting a “creative toolkit for life”--which is to say, a repertoire of skills, techniques, and habits of mind and being that will be of value both within and well beyond the confines of Holy Cross.

# **Expectations, Requirements, and Evaluation**

## **Attendance**

Class attendance is critical. Indeed, given that we will be doing a lot of group work – that is, work in which people will be relying on your presence and contribution – attendance is especially critical in CreateLab. Being to class on time is important too. If you are unable to attend or get there on time (for compelling reasons), please let one of the professors know ahead of time. For prolonged absences, we should receive communication from your class dean.

## **Special Events**

In addition to class attendance, students are required to attend Carol Frost’s presentation on February 16th and at least two additional outside-of-class events, mainly in the form of presentations and performances by visiting artists associated with the Arts Transcending Borders (ATB) program. For each of these special events, you will also be required to write and submit a reflective response (1-2 pages typed, single-space).

## **Engagement and Participation**

In addition to being physically present in CreateLab, you must be “experientially” present – by which we mean you must come to class prepared, you must be engaged in our shared work, and you must be an active participant in the various discussions, activities, and projects we pursue. There is no one way to be an engaged participant; some students are bound to be more vocal and “out there” than others. But engagement and participation are critical to the course’s, and your own, success.

## **Homework and “Homeplay”**

Throughout the semester, you will be given reading assignments as well as hands-on projects, both individual and group, both small and large. It is important to keep up with class readings and to be reflective and curious about the ideas they explore and the questions they pose. It is also important to carry out the assigned projects in a timely fashion and to submit them on time and in accordance with the instructions provided.

## **Course Requirements and Grading Criteria**

As much as we might wish to simply dispense with grades in a course like CreateLab, we need to assign them. We recognize that many of you may not have been asked to carry out creative work of the sort required in CreateLab for a grade before. We also are aware that you will bring different levels of expertise to the work we pursue as a function of your academic background and that the products you create may differ in quality as a function of the degree of expertise brought to them. Please be assured that our focus in CreateLab is more on quality of process than quality of product. In a related vein, please know that we will focus not on your existing expertise in some given domain as much as your attempts to develop it.

## Course Requirements

There are four sets of requirements for the course:

- Class attendance and class-time engagement and participation
- Classroom activities and projects, including the regular maintenance of a “Creative Notebook”
- Outside of class individual projects, including the “50-day” project
- Outside-of-class collaborative projects

The first two sets of requirements will account for approximately 50% of your grade (~20% for the first, ~30% for the second). The second two sets of requirements will also account for approximately 50% of your grade (~20% for the first, ~30% for the second once again).

## Grading Criteria

Many of the grading criteria have been considered already, some explicitly, some implicitly. They include the following:

- Class attendance and attendance at special events
- In-class engagement and participation
- Engagement and participation in outside-of-class projects
- Reflective — and regular — engagement with course readings as well as both in-class and outside-of-class projects, as recorded in the Creative Notebook

In terms of more “qualitative” criteria, they mainly have to do with the elements of creative etiquette and learning goals enumerated earlier. Please refer back to these to gain a clearer sense of what we will be looking for.

Although we hesitate to be overly precise about final grades, we can say the following, all of which is in keeping with the criteria set forth in the College Catalog:

In order to get a grade in the A range, you need to really be on top of your game throughout the semester. We mean this, again, less in terms of expertise and mastery than in terms of energy, passion, work ethic, integrity, and commitment.

For a B-range grade, you have to be “good” in terms of all these attributes and virtues, as manifested in the work you do.

For a C-range grade, you have to be “satisfactory” in these. Suffice it to say that, for any grade lower than a C, you really need to be slacking in some notable and visible way. These grades are comparatively rare in CreateLab and are easily avoided if you do what’s required and do it with some measure of energy and integrity. (So, please do so!)

## Required Texts:

Freeman, Mark. *Do I Look at You with Love? Reimagining the Story of Dementia*. (ISBN: 978-9004460584)

Frost, Carol. *Honeycomb*. In print or eBook edition. TriQuarterly Books; Northwestern University Press (<https://nupress.northwestern.edu/9780810127104/honeycomb/>) Discount code: FROST

Haupt Jennifer, ed. *Alone Together: Love, Grief, and Comfort in the Time of Covid-19* (ISBN 1771682280)

Questlove, *Creative Quest* (ISBN 0062670557)

# CreateLab: Basic Schedule

## Week 1                      Welcome to CreateLab!

1/25                      Introduction and “Taking the Temperature”

1/27                      Looking Backward, Moving Forward

- [The World We Want to Live in After COVID | The New Yorker](#)
- Haupt, selections on Canvas

## Week 2                      Rhythms of the Spirit

2/1                      **Handance** workshop with Glen Velez + Shane Shanahan (Hogan Ballroom)

- Questlove, *Creative Quest*: “Introduction,” “The Spark,” “Mentors and Apprentices”

7pm                      **Glen Velez + Handance: Excerpts from *Doctrine of Signatures***  
featuring Glen Velez, Shane Shanahan, and Yousif Sheronic  
Hogan Ballroom, 7pm

2/3                      “But I’m Not Creative!”

- Questlove, *Creative Quest*: “Getting Started,” “The Network,” “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle”

## Week 3                      Self and Beyond-Self

2/8                      Protest, Rebel, Revolt

- MF: *Do I Look at You with Love*: Intro, Chapter 2 (“Protest”)

2/10                      Attention, Surrender, Transcendence

- MF: *Do I Look at You with Love*, Chapter 3 (“Presence”)

## Week 4                      The Poetry of Being-With

2/15                      **Presentation and Workshop with Ian Bannon** (via Zoom)  
[TimeSlips Creative Storytelling - YouTube](#) (on Canvas)

**2/16**                      **Carol Frost presentation and interview** (via Zoom)

- Carol Frost, *Honeycomb*

- 2/17 The Challenge of Being Elsewhere
- MF: *Do I Look at You with Love*, Chapter 4 (“Dislocation”)
  - Frost, selected poems from *Honeycomb*

## **Week 5 Remembering, Forgetting, Seeing**

- 2/22 **Presentation and Workshop with Stephen DiRado**
- 2/24 Transience, Beauty, Precious Moments
- MF: *Do I Look at You with Love*, Chapter 5 (“Release”) and Chapter 6 (“Death, Dementia, and the Face of the Divine”)

## **Week 6 Finding Common Ground**

- 3/1 **Workshop with Maeve Gilchrist and Kevork Mourad**  
**In Progress: An Evening with Maeve Gilchrist and Kevork Mourad**
- 3/3 Check-in

# **SPRING BREAK**

## **Week 7 Moving Forward through Looking Backward**

- 3/15 Interesting project planned!
- 3/17 (same)

## **Week 8 “Forgotten” Pasts and Alternative Futures**

- 3/22 We’ll be watching and discussing a great film!
- 3/24 **The Sounds of Resistance: Storytelling as History Making  
Workshop with Las Cafeteras**
- Las Cafeteras: Bridging Music, Activism and Community**  
Hogan Ballroom, 7:30

## **Week 9 Finding and Making Art, Together**

- 3/29 **Workshop with Cyro Baptista at Worcester PopUp (?)**
- 3/31 We’ll have to see what Cyro brings us!



**Cyro Baptista and the Banquet of Spirits: Sounds of Community**  
April 3, 3:00, Jean McDonough Art Center (JMAC)

**Week 10 New Possibilities**

4/5 Time will tell!

4/7 Hard to say!

**IMAGINE: (aka Sneha Shrestha)**

**Week 11 Culture, Community, Creativity**

4/12 A project will be due!

**E A S T E R B R E A K**

**Week 12 Attention, Devotion, Practice**

4/19 50-day project presentations

4/21 We'll see!

**Week 13 Looking forward**

4/26 Something cool!

4/28 More of that

**Week 14 Presentations and Performances**

5/3 Prep time

5/5 Group project extravaganza

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**A couple of important notes:**

Depending on circumstances, classes may be recorded via Zoom. And we're supposed to add: "Duplication or redistribution of video capture recordings by any other party without the consent of the course instructor is prohibited." (So, don't do that!). More generally, given the fact that we're still living in COVID-world, we all need to be prepared to make adjustments—including Zooming—if needed.

There is much more to say about the course, about what's in this document (and what's not), and about how the semester will actually evolve. Some of it we know now. And some of it we

don't—which means that where, and how, the course goes will be a function of you, us, the visiting artists, goings-on in the campus community and wider world, and more. We look forward to the ride, and hope you do too!

## **Regarding Academic Integrity**

Here is what we want to say, in the simplest of terms: the work you do for this course must be your own. This doesn't mean that you can't draw on others' work or be influenced by it. What it means is that the product you create must reflect your efforts, your imagination. It will also involve a moral promise on your part—a promise that you must uphold and enact as you go about your work. Please familiarize yourself with the College's [Academic Integrity Policy](#). You are responsible for knowing the Policy and abiding by it. Academic integrity is not only about honesty, however. It is about preparedness for class, intellectual commitment, openness to new ideas, the capacity to listen to others, and much more. Let's work together to create the best possible learning environment.

## **Regarding Attendance and Excused Absences**

We expect you to attend class regularly and to fulfill all obligations of the course as outlined on this syllabus and discussed during class. Also, please read and abide by the College's [Student Attendance at Class and Excused Absence Policy](#).

## **Regarding confidentiality and mandatory reporting**

As instructors, one of our responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. We each have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to our role as your professor. It is our goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. Each of us will seek to keep the information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, any information that you disclose that addresses sexual misconduct or relates to a prior suicide attempt or an intention to attempt suicide requires our sharing that information with those on campus who are able to provide you with necessary resources.

Following the College's Sexual Misconduct Policy, we will share information about sexual misconduct with the College's Office of Title IX Initiatives. If you would like to talk to Title IX directly, they can be reached at 508-793-3336 or via email. For more information, please visit the [Sexual Respect and Title IX](#) website. If you would like to discuss the matter confidentially, you can contact the [Chaplains' Office](#), 508-793-2448; [Counseling Center](#), 508-793-3363; [and/or Health Services](#), 508-793-2276. Following the College's Suicide Protocol, if you disclose a prior suicide attempt or an intention or plan to attempt suicide, we will share that information with the Chair of our student CARE Team, who will engage in appropriate outreach.

## **Some Important Additional Information**

Regarding Accessibility Resources and Requests for Reasonable Accommodations: For the College policy, please check out [Requests for Reasonable Accommodations](#). For information regarding accessibility resources, you can do so through the [Office of Accessibility Services](#).

## **Textbook Affordability**

It is expected that you will have textbooks and other required class materials in order to achieve academic success. If you are unable to purchase course materials, please go to the [Financial Aid Office website](#) to contact a staff member, who will be happy to provide you with information and assistance. There are several options available for providing course materials to students at no or low cost, and we'll be glad to help in whatever way we can.

## **Holy Cross Academic Resources:**

[Academic Services and Learning Resources](#)

[Center for Writing](#)

[Writer's Workshop](#)

[Class Deans](#)

[Library](#)

## **Holy Cross Student Support Resources:**

[Counseling Center](#)

[Office of the College Chaplains](#)

[Health Services](#)

A comprehensive list of on-campus and online wellness resources is available [here](#).

Other sources of support include:

[Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)

[Office of Multicultural Education](#)