General Info

Arts Transcending Borders (ATB) is a new initiative funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to infuse the arts across disciplines, the campus, and our Worcester Community. We are certainly “Asking More” of the arts than we have in the past.

CreateLab is an outgrowth of Arts Transcending Borders. Students will be challenged to think outside the box of conventional learning, thereby complementing the goals of ATB. This new course is an innovative pedagogical experiment intended to engender imagination and innovation among Holy Cross students by fostering creativity outside the confines of disciplinary boundaries, enriching student learning and growth in all areas of study.  Operating free from the constraints imposed by the traditional classroom setting, students who participate in CreateLab will be required to produce imaginative projects that serve to integrate learning.  The course is trans-disciplinary in conception and multidisciplinary in scope. In line with the Mellon Grant goals, it is designed to teach students to be risk-takers, use resourceful thinking and, most of all, collaborate on creative work.

Our theme this year is Time, Memory, and Identity. Mark Freeman and Leah Hager Cohen drafted this document to help guide us through this year.

**Time, Memory, and Identity**

“To create, and in creating be created.”

*- Jules Lequier*

Who are we, and how do we become who we are? We are products of the past, determined by our histories. Yet we’re also creators of the past, shaping memories from the vantage of the present. We might speak of “clock” time, flowing toward an unknown future, and “narrative” time, oriented toward a partially known past –for our grasp of the past is ever-shifting, the meaning of previous events continually transformed by new experiences, rewritten again and again as episodes in an evolving story.

This is the great mystery of identity. Given our fluctuating understanding of the past, can we ever know the true story of our lives? To what extent are such stories fictions? How do these stories bear upon our identities? Are we our stories, composed of the imaginative fabric of narrative? What becomes of identity when this fabric is frayed, as in cases of trauma or profound memory loss? Is it possible to preserve identity in the face of such challenges? Are there other, non-narrative ways of experiencing identity? How crucial is it, ultimately, that we possess a sense of identity?

These questions, traditionally the province of fields such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, and neuroscience, are ripe for exploration through music, theatre, literature, design and visual art. CreateLab will draw on all these fields to approach the puzzle of time, memory, and identity. Combining theory with collaborative, experiential practice, we will interrogate old certainties in hopes of illuminating new understandings – not only of ourselves but of the very questions to be asked. The process is daunting, since the act of creation inevitably entails loss: of our comfortable moorings, the status quo, even what we might think of as our selves. The process is enticing, too, inviting us to traverse uncharted territory and re-imagine the very nature of our lives.

A shorter quote from me:

Many of us tend to think of specialization as the road to success. Arts Transcending Borders (ATB) and CreateLab, a new class designed as an outgrowth of ATB is challenging students and faculty to think more broadly and to embrace the unknown.

In other words, to risk and to “Ask More” of ourselves. We come together to ask more questions, to ask for more cooperation, to ask for more inventive problem solving, to ask for more open mindedness, to ask for more curiosity and to ask for more permission to admit ignorance.

To “Ask More” is exciting and scary for those of us involved in ATB and CreateLab.