

Creativity in business: putting theory into practice

Start date 19 May 2023**End date**

21 May 2023

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ**Tutor** Dr Alex Carter**Course code**

2223NRX031

Director of ISP and LL

Sarah Ormrod

For further information contactinteng@ice.cam.ac.uk

Tutor biography

Alex is Academic Director for Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies at the Institute of Continuing Education. He is a Bye-Fellow at Fitzwilliam College. Alex was awarded his PhD in Philosophy by the University of Essex in 2015; his thesis explores some of the surprising aspects of Wittgenstein's views concerning freedom and fatalism. Before this, Alex studied Philosophy at the University of Wales, Swansea and the University of Bristol.

Alex's approach to teaching is to encourage students to feel the "pain of the problem" - to make plain the very real ways in which philosophical problems affect our lives. Accordingly, Alex is most keen to offer his support to philosophical projects that, not only inform contemporary debates, but actively affect change. Alex's ongoing research interests include Wittgenstein's later philosophy, the theology of Simone Weil and the philosophy of humour. He is currently researching the relationship between humour and creative practice via the concept of 'serious play'.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00 Dinner

20:30 – 22:00 Creativity in business: Why creativity? Why now?

22:00 Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30 Breakfast (for residents only)

09:00 – 10:30 Creativity Theory: key themes

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 Serious Play

13:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 Free time

16:00 Tea

16:30 – 18:00 Psychological safety and the learning zone

18:00 – 18:30 Free time

18:30 Dinner

20:00 – 21:30 Psychologising the workplace: pros and cons

21:30 Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30 Breakfast (for residents only)

09:00 – 10:30 Ideation and the Throne of Agony

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 More hands-on creative practice

12:45 Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

The course will allow you to:

1. Understand key aspects of creativity theory and creative practice;
2. Engage in ideation techniques and assess their (dis)advantages;
3. Apply creative practices in the workplace.

Content:

The course explains the difficulty and importance of fostering creativity in the modern workplace. Starting with why creativity and other 21st century soft-skills are so in demand, we will consider the psychological and pedagogical influence of technological changes. We will also explore the origins of our current thinking around creativity with a view to understanding why creativity is so hard to define. The Tutor's own tentative definition of 'creativity', as "Serious Play", will be introduced before being examined critically.

Moving on from considerations of what creativity *is*, we will begin to consider the practical benefits of creativity; both in encouraging personal growth and in delivering innovation. In particular, we will consider the role of psychological safety in driving ideation and providing employees with the chance to self-actualise. However, we must also consider the risks associated with psychologising the workplace, eg blaming individuals for any insecurities they might feel, and look instead to institutional changes where applicable.

In closing, we will put these insights into creativity to the test by engaging in creative practice of our own. In so doing, we will ask, "Is it really *creativity* we are trying to develop, or something else?"

Presentation of the course:

The course will involve brief lectures, followed by group discussion and workshops.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

1. Identify key aspects of creativity theory, history and practice;
2. Reflect critically on different creativity theories and creative practices;
3. Appreciate the risks and benefits of introducing creativity into the workplace;
4. Undertake specific ideation practices for personal growth.

Reading and resources list

Clark, Timothy R. *The 4 Stages of Psychological Safety: Defining the Path to Inclusion and Innovation*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2020

Csikszentmihalyi, M., 1991. *Flow*. København: Munksgaard.

Edmondson, A.C., 2018. *The fearless organization: Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth*. John Wiley & Sons.

Pope, R., 2005. *Creativity: Theory, history, practice*. Routledge.

Online resources:

[“You can’t teach creativity, but can you learn it?”](#) By Alex Carter

[“A Short History of Creativity”](#) by Alex Carter (Video)

[“5 Stages of creativity-- and how to create ideas that fascinate”](#) by Sally Hogshead