

# Active Imagination

## PSYC 7810-04

University of West Georgia  
(syllabus subject to change)

Spring 2018  
T 4:00 pm – 4:50 pm  
Melson 207

**Instructor:** Alan Pope, Ph.D.

**Office:** Melson 103

**Phone:** 678-839-0601

**Email:** [apope@westga.edu](mailto:apope@westga.edu)

**Office Hours:**

T 5:00 – 6:00 pm

W 2:15 – 3:15 pm

R 12:45 – 1:45 pm

& by appointment

***Bring your syllabus to class!***

### Course Description

*Active Imagination* denotes a collection of techniques that Carl Jung developed during a period of intense introspection in the years (1913-16) following his professional and personal break with Sigmund Freud. The essence of active imagination is to bring the conscious ego into dialogue with various aspects of the unconscious as mediated by one or more images, with the ultimate objective being to integrate the psyche in its totality. This course aims to provide sufficient theoretical and practical understanding of active imagination in order for students to develop and gain facility with their own inner exploratory work—the principle objective of this course. In addition to exploring the transformative potentials of active imagination, we will discuss the nature of dream work, compare it with active imagination, and utilize it as a support. We also will discuss active imagination's variations, limitations, and traps so as to help students tailor the technique to their particular needs and navigate difficulties that might arise.

### Course Objectives

- Through reflection assignments and a final project, students will demonstrate facility with inner exploratory work gained through the study and practice of active imagination.
- As reflected in these activities, students will demonstrate new self-understanding and be able to situation it within a larger theoretical context.
- Demonstrate through discussion and written reflection facility with the Jungian theoretical notions of active imagination and dream work, both theoretically and practically.

- Demonstrate through discussion and written work an understanding of image and imagination and its integral role in human development and transformation.

### **Required Texts**

Johnson, R. (2009). *Inner work: Using dreams and active imagination for personal growth*. New York: Harper & Row.

*Additional required readings will be posted on Course Den.*

### **Optional Recommended Text**

Chodorow, J. (Ed.) (1997). *Encountering Jung on active imagination*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

### **Class Format**

Class sessions will combine mini-lectures with discussion, personal sharing/presentation, and in-class exercises. Classes will be conducted in a contemplative manner as befits the practice of active imagination itself, and students will be asked to reflect before speaking (as opposed to speaking reflexively or reactively) with the intention of contributing to the overall learning of the group. In this sense, the classroom dynamic will constitute a process of collective (rather than simply individual) inner work. We will engage and reflect on this dynamic as the semester unfolds.

### **Course Requirements**

*Class participation and assigned work:* (50%)

Your regular, punctual attendance and mindfully engaged participation are vital to creating a successful learning community. Here are some guidelines/requirements for this aspect of the course (see also “Course Expectations” below).

- Because this course is largely participation-driven, you are permitted but one absence (equivalent to one full week of classes) for whatever reason during the course of the semester. Additional absences may result in a lower overall grade.
- Please come to class on time and stay until the end, barring emergency.
- Please bring the assigned reading materials to class so that we can refer to passages together. Also come prepared with questions or comments from the readings.
- During discussion, maintain an open and nonjudgmental stance toward others (and toward yourself).

- I will regularly offer exercises to be conducted outside of the classroom, which may include submitting a formal or informal written portion the following week.
- At regular points during the semester, students will offer a brief presentation of her or his own experiential work.

*Final Reflection Paper: (50%)*

On the last class period (April 24), you will submit a final paper that coalesces all that you have learned about the process of active imagination, both theoretically and experientially, with particular emphasis on how you have applied it to your own inner work. This paper will include presentation of a personal active imagination project. More details will come later in the semester.

*Optional Recommended Work: (Course credit, 0%; life experience, invaluable)*

Those students with strong interest and time are advised to do any or all of the following: maintain a dream journal, regularly practice automatic writing (to be discussed in class), read and write poetry, read mythological stories and fairy tales.

## **Course Expectations**

1. In order to facilitate a mindful and concentrated learning environment, please observe the following:
  - a. Be present for every class. (More than one absence for any reason during the course of the semester could result in a lower grade.)
  - b. Be on time.
  - c. Remain present once class begins, barring emergency.
  - d. Bring assigned readings to class, preferably in printed form.
  - e. Refrain from using your cell phone in class. Best is to turn it off.
  - f. Refrain from eating/snacking in class. See me if you have a medical or pragmatic need. Beverages are fine.
2. Unless otherwise specified, written assignments should be typed, printed, stapled, and turned in at the beginning of the class. Please keep a copy of your assignments. Late assignments will not be accepted.
3. If you must miss a class, please get new assignments or announcements from a classmate; if not possible, then you may ask me.
4. You are invited to visit me during my office hours; appointments are recommended.
5. I will reply to emails within 24 hours during the week and to weekend emails the following Monday (except for MLK day and Spring Break).
6. If you need any special accommodations, please notify me within the first two weeks of class.
7. The syllabus is subject to change. I will provide at least one-week's notice.
8. Diversity: This course honors diversity and inclusion. Please respect people of all backgrounds, sexual preferences, and gender identities.

9. Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty (such as plagiarism) naturally will not be tolerated in any form. Plagiarism is the misrepresentation of another's words or ideas as your own, whatever the source (e.g., print, electronic, verbal, et al.). All deliberate references to another person's ideas or words must be appropriately cited. At a minimum, an instance of plagiarism or other form of academic dishonesty (such as cheating on a test) will result in failing the course and will be reported to the administration for further disciplinary action. Please let me know if you have any questions as to what constitutes academic dishonesty.

## **Administrative Details**

### **Office Hours:**

Office hours (listed above) enable personalized discussion of course material or any other questions or concerns. You are advised to arrange an appointment in advance if possible.

### **Technological Resources:**

Audio-visual equipment (e.g., computer and overhead projector) will be used for Power Point and other video presentations. Course Den will be used as an electronic learning environment. The syllabus, handouts, and other communications will be posted via this means. Any electronic communication regarding grades can and *must* be had through Course Den.

### **Student Rights and Responsibilities:**

Please carefully review the information provided by the following link:

[http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common\\_Language\\_for\\_Course\\_Syllabi.pdf](http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf).

This file contains important information pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class. These statements are updated as federal, state, university, and accreditation standards change, so you should review this information anew each semester.

## **Class Outline**

*Please note:*

- The following reading list is subject to revision as the semester progresses. Occasionally additional readings may be assigned and placed on Course Den.
- Readings in italics can be found on Course Den.

### **January 9**

Introduction to Course

- *Syllabus*

### **January 16**

- *Chodorow, Introduction*

### **January 23**

- Johnson, “Waking Up to the Unconscious”

### **January 30**

- Johnson, “Inner Work: Seeking the Unconscious,” “Alternative Realities”

### **February 6**

- Johnson, “The Archetypes and the Unconscious,” “Conflict and Unification”

### **February 13**

- Johnson, “Approaching Dream Work,” “Step One: Associations”

### **February 20**

- Johnson, “Step Two: Dynamics”

### **February 27**

- Johnson, “Step Three: Interpretations”

### **March 6**

- Johnson, “Step Four: Rituals”

### **March 13**

- Johnson, “Defining and Approaching Active Imagination,” “Active Imagination as Mythic Journey”

### **March 19**

SPRING BREAK—No Class

### **March 27**

- Johnson, “The Four-Step Approach to Active Imagination,” “Step One: The Invitation”

### **April 3**

- Johnson, “Step Two: Dialogue,” “Step Three: The Values,” “Step Four: The Rituals”

### **April 10**

- Johnson, “Levels”

### **April 17**

- *Hillman, “Active Imagination: The Healing Art”*
- *Welwood, “Meditation and the Unconscious”*

**April 24**

- Final Reflections on the Course
- DUE: Final Reflection Paper assignment

***May your inner work this semester be fruitful!***