



ART/PSYC 250: Art Therapy

Course Syllabus

Fall Semester 2026

Instructor: Philippa Stannard, MFA, ATR

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisites: none

Class Meeting Days & Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:30-2pm

Office Hours: by appointment after a class

Course Type: Standard Course

Course Fee: USD\$60

Course Description

Art therapy uses different forms of creative expression to help people explore and transform feelings, thoughts, and ideas. It can help to process and cope with emotional issues as well as facilitate self-awareness, understanding, healing, and well-being. Art therapy can be especially useful for people who find it difficult to talk about their thoughts and emotions.

In this course, students will examine theories and models of art therapy from an international and cross-cultural perspective. Through discussion of readings, sharing of experiences, group work, and art therapy activities, students will increase their understanding of the history, theory, practice, and applications of art therapy in various settings.

This course is of particular interest for students majoring in Psychology, Communications, Art, Human Development, Special Education, Disability Studies, and Occupational Therapy. Students who commit to this course should keep an open mind, be motivated to actively learn, and be flexible. No artistic aptitude or background is expected or necessary.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

Below are the course's learning outcomes, followed by the methods that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- *Develop* recognition and deeper understanding of non-verbal communication. (Class discussion, art therapy activities, written reflections, journals.)
- *Evaluate* personal beliefs, values, and judgements about health and wellness. (Class discussion, journal, written reflections.)
- *Improve* communication skills. (Oral report and written paper, class discussion, journal)
- *Explore* the history, theories, and applications of art therapy. (Readings, lectures, and art therapy activities,, written paper and oral report)
- Gain hands-on experience with the creative process as an approach to therapy and healing. (Art therapy activities)
- *Describe, analyze, reflect, and evaluate* their experiences of art therapy. (Journal, class discussion, written reflections)

Course Materials

Books

Malchiodi, C. (2007). *Art Therapy Sourcebook*. McGraw Hill Professional. New York

Assessment

Attendance	10%
Journal	15%
Written Discussion Questions on Readings	15%
Class Participation	15%
Oral Report	15%
Art Therapy Activity	15%
Quizzes / Tests	15%

Grading

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute's default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late). Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero. Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% - 89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Please note: decimal numerals between 1-4 are rounded down while 5-9 are rounded up: e.g., expect 89.4 to be 89.0 while 89.5 to round up to 90.

Course Requirements

Grades are based on the following criteria.

Attendance (10%)

Attendance is an essential part of this course. You are allowed 2 unexcused absences per course without penalty, per Institute policy. If you attend all the other meetings, you will receive 10% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

Journal (15%)

Journal reflections help students solidify their understanding of the course materials, offer them an opportunity to explore the in-class activities further, and facilitates self-reflection. Students will utilize a creative journal throughout the course to facilitate self-reflection and the art therapy activities. They will be provided at the beginning of the semester. The journal will include individual pieces, drawing, painting, collage, photos as well as written reflections on each project, the readings, and hands-on exercises. Journals are, for the most part, self-guided in terms of content. However, at times, specific indications for journal entries or activities will be

given in conjunction with your reading. See Moodle for more indications. Students will not be graded on their artistic skill, but rather on the thought process and effort invested in their artwork and writings. Students are expected to complete a page a day for the duration of the semester. Journals will be checked at mid-term as well as at the end of the semester. As journals may be quite personal, the professor will not be reading them word for word. The journal check is to simply evaluate the time and energy you have put into it. Please bring your journals to class together with your bag of personal art supplies. We have time during class to work on them.

Written Discussion Questions and Responses on Readings (15%)

For each reading assignment, students will prepare two discussion questions based on the reading. Please post these questions in the appropriate Forum located in Moodle. We will use these as a springboard for our lively class discussions. The second half of the semester we will be posting not only two discussion questions, but also replying to two discussion questions posted by other students.

Participation in Class Discussions (15%)

Students are expected to come to discussions thoroughly prepared by completing readings, reviewing materials, and formulating thoughtful questions or contributions. In addition, students should engage actively in discussion by listening attentively, contributing insightful comments, asking relevant questions, and responding thoughtfully to peers.

Oral Report and Art Therapy Activity (30% of your grade)

Each student will choose and research an application, method, and project in which art therapy is used. They will give a presentation to the class highlighting their interest in the chosen topic. Finally, students will create and lead an art therapy activity (different from the activities done in class) based on their chosen subject. The idea here is to have reports and presentations for the first half of the class, and an art therapy activity for the second half of the class. You are in charge of making sure that your presentations and activity(ies) last for the whole class time. I don't mind if we get done 10 minutes early, but ending class 45 minutes early is not OK. You might want to have an extra activity planned in case you have extra time. A full prompt is available on Moodle.

Oral Report (15%)

The Oral Report will be given to the class as a visual presentation. Students should explain the application, its history, and different approaches or methods used with the given topic. Please share a case study: Explain the context, background, and how art therapy was used to help. Please include photographs of the work that was made during the art therapy case study if possible. Please upload your presentation as a Google Doc (not a PDF) to the link provided in our Google Drive folder at the top of our Moodle class page. Ensure that all sharing permissions (EDITOR) are granted so that you can access your presentation from my account.

Art Therapy Activity (15%)

You will research, create, and lead an Art Therapy Activity with your classmates. The Art Therapy Activity should be related to your subject, application, or method that you have chosen. It should be different from the art therapy activities that we have done previously. Please consult the art therapy books in the library to get ideas for activity.

Quizzes (15%)

The quizzes will be on Moodle and are not timed. Students can take the quiz as many times as they like, with the recorded grade an average of all quiz attempts. There will be a combination of *technical*, *methodological*, and *content questions*. The content questions will help students zoom in on the most important ideas of the readings. The technical questions will help students learn the class's policies and administrative procedures. The methodological questions will test on skills that will pop up every week, like finding an author's argument and assessing sources.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected and mandatory for classroom times and co-curricular activities. The first two absences per course due to illness will be considered excused "sick days" and do not require medical documentation. To receive additional excused absences due to illness, students are required to see a local physician or request a letter from an Institute-approved doctor documenting they should be excused from class for illness.

Unexcused absences will adversely affect a student's academic performance and will result in a reduction of the student's final course grade by 2% per absence up to a maximum of 10%. Excessive unexcused absences may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the number of

absences or late arrivals for each course, and to ask the instructor when in doubt.

If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important. Missing a mandatory field trip for a course, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff in a timely manner, will lower the students' grade by half a letter grade (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Legitimate reasons for an excused absence or tardiness include death in the immediate family, religious observances, illness or injury, local inclement weather, and medical appointments that cannot be rescheduled.

Absences relating to illness may be excused by the Director, but only if a medical certification is provided.

Students who request an approved absence to observe a religious holiday must submit a formal request to the Institute's Director within one week after the add/drop period when course schedules, including any field trips, are finalized. No exceptions will be made after this deadline.

Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

Tardiness Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes punctually. Any student arriving up to 15 minutes late or leaving up to 15 minutes earlier than the scheduled class end time will be marked as tardy. Each incident of tardiness (late arrivals to or early departures from class) is 0.5% off the final grade. However, should a student arrive more than 15 minutes late or depart more than 15 minutes before the conclusion of the class, it will be recorded as an absence.

Students are also expected to remain in class during the time of instruction except for a reasonable amount of time to use the restroom. Students who leave class and do not return during the class session will receive an unexcused absence or late penalty.

Academic Integrity

All forms of cheating (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and plagiarism (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

Utilizing ChatGPT or other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the generation of content submitted by a student as their own as part of any assignment for academic credit at the Institute constitutes a form of plagiarism.

Should the Institute become aware of a student's use of such platforms and services, the student will be subject to the same consequences and judicial proceedings as are in place for plagiarism (defined above).

Classroom Policy

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be turned off before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices (e.g., ear buds) cannot be used during class lectures and discussions.

Laptop/Smartphone Policy

An ever-increasing body of research shows that open laptops and telephones in the classroom create distraction (both visual and auditory) for those using them and those around them. You can type faster than you can write, and as a result you end up processing less when you're simply typing notes. For this reason, students are asked to keep computers and phones away and use a regular notebook. There are three exceptions: 1) if you have an accommodation; 2) if you make an office hours appointment with me to discuss the use of a computer; 3) if we have an in-class tutorial about online research tools.

Communication Outside of Class

I prefer talking face-to-face about assignments and other questions as I know that method of communication is richer and can address things I can't 'read' in an email. That said, when you have questions, first check the

Moodle site and the syllabus, as many are answered there. I check and respond to emails on weekdays between 10am and 4pm. It might take me 72 hours to respond to an email so it's often best to come see me before or after class. I'm also happy to make an office hours appointment.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

WEEK 1

What is Art Therapy?

Meeting 1 *Review syllabus, course expectations*

Meeting 2: *Laboratory: Name and Symbol*

Readings for the week:

Cathy Malchiodi, Chapter 1 *What is Art Therapy?*

Journal

Written reflection in your journal on laboratory

WEEK 2

Process not product

Meeting 1 *Discussion and reflection on Chapter 1*

Meeting 2: *Laboratory: Music and Mood*

Readings for the week:

Cathy Malchiodi, Chapter 2 *Art Therapy: Drawing on the Past and Present* and

Chapter 3 *Getting Started: Drawing from Within*, 2007

Pettinari, G. 2019 *The 'Art Madness Debate in Italy' and the life story of Antonio Tolomei*. Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences, Cambridge University Press.

https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/7787740B4BE9DCC89582B768B0F51AF7/S2045796019000258a.pdf/art_and_madness_debate_in_italy_and_the_life_story_of_antonio_tolomei.pdf

Journal

Written reflection on art therapy activity

Complete your Personal Art History Questionnaire in your journal

Complete Image Awareness Activity in your journal

WEEK 3

History of Art, Therapy, and Art Therapy

Meeting 1 *Discussion and reflection of Chapter 2*

Meeting 2: *Laboratory: Collage*

Readings for the week:

Cathy Malchiodi, Chapter 4 *Creativity: Drawing on Process*

Chapter 5 *Setting Up: Drawing on Environment and Materials*

Journal

Written reflection on art therapy activity

Complete Creativity Questionnaire from your reading in your journal

WEEK 4

Drawing from Within

Meeting 1 *Discussion and reflection of Chapter 3*

Meeting 2: *Laboratory: Group Portraits*

Readings for the week:

Cathy Malchiodi, Chapter 4 *Creativity: Drawing on Process*

Chapter 5 *Setting Up: Drawing on Environment and Materials*

Journal

Written reflection on art therapy activity

Complete Creativity Questionnaire from your reading in your journal

WEEK 5

What is Creativity? Environment and Materials

Meeting 1 *Discussion and reflection on Chapter 4&5*

Meeting 2: *Laboratory: Ink and String Scribbles*

Readings for the week:

Cathy Malchiodi, Chapter 6 *Spontaneous Art: Drawing Out Imagery*, 2007

Journal

Written reflection on art therapy activity

Choose an art therapy activity from your reading to do in your journal

WEEK 6

Spontaneous Imagery

Meeting 1 *Discussion and reflection on Chapter 6*

Meeting 2: *Laboratory: Scribble Technique and Creative Writing*

Readings for the week:

Cathy Malchiodi, Chapter 7 *Using Art to Express Feelings: Drawing on Loss*, 2007

Viganò C, 2019 *The “State of The Art” of Art Therapy in Psychiatry: Reflections on International Evidences and Italian Experiences*. Journal of Complementary Medicine and Alternative Healthcare

Journal

Written reflection on art therapy activity

Choose an art therapy activity from your reading to do in your journal

Semester Break

WEEK 7

Art Therapy, Trauma, and Loss

Meeting 1 *Discussion and reflection on Chapter 7*

Meeting 2: *Art Therapy Activity: Feeling Map; Coloring Emotions*

Readings for the week:

Cathy Malchiodi, Chapter 8 *Art Making and Illness: Drawing a Picture of Health*, 2007

Testoni et al. 2020 *Social Support in Perinatal Grief and Mothers’ Continuing Bonds A Qualitative Study With Italian Mourners*. Journal of Women and Social Work

Journal

Written reflection on art therapy activity

Choose an art therapy activity from your reading to do in your journal

WEEK 8

Art Making, Health and Illness

Meeting 1 Discussion and reflection on Chapter 8

Meeting 2: Art Therapy Activity: Body Map

Readings for the week:

Cathy Malchiodi, Chapter 9 *Art Therapy Groups: Drawing Together*

Chapter 10 *Working with the Art Product: Drawing on Meaning*

Dionigi and Gremigni, 2017. *A combined intervention of art therapy and clown visits to reduce preoperative anxiety in children*

Journal

Written reflection on art therapy activity

Choose an art therapy activity from your reading to do in your journal

WEEK 9

Art Therapy Groups, Drawing on Meaning

Meeting 1 Discussion and reflection on Chapter 9&10, Art Therapy Activity: Clay Art Therapy Activity

Meeting 2: Art Therapy with Families

Case Study & Discussion

Art Therapy Activity

Journal

Written reflection on art therapy activity

Readings for the week:

Case studies on special topics

WEEK 10

Special Topics:

Meeting 1 Art Therapy with Families

Case Study & Discussion

Art Therapy Activity

Meeting 2: No Class CAPSTONE TRIP, Happy Thanksgiving

Readings for the week:

Cathy A. Malchiodi, *Art Therapy with Families and Couples*, Handbook of Art Therapy, 2011.

Paula Howie, *The Universality of Grief and Loss*, Using Art Therapy with Diverse Populations, 2022.

WEEK 11

Special Topics

Meeting 1 Art Therapy and Substance Abuse

Case Study & Discussion

Art Therapy Activity

Meeting 2: No class

Readings for the week:

Elizabeth Holt and David Kaiser, *The first Step Series: Art Therapy for Early Substance Abuse Treatment* 2009

Paula Howie, *Cultural Considerations of Eating Disorders Through Art Therapy* Using Art Therapy with Diverse Populations , 2022.

Pyart, L, - *Snapshot of Practice Art Therapy in Hospice The Florence Experience in Italy*. The International Handbook of Art Therapy in Palliative and Bereavement Care 2019

WEEK 12

Special Topics

Meeting 1 *Art Therapy and Eating Disorders*

Case Study & Discussion

Art Therapy Activity

Meeting 2: *Art Therapy with the Visually Impaired*

Case Study & Discussion

Art Therapy Activity

Readings for the week:

Paula Howie, *Art Therapy as Treatment Choice for Autism Spectrum* Using Art Therapy with Diverse Populations , 2022.

Dafna Regev, *Art Therapy for Blind Students or with Severe Visual Impairment* 2022

WEEK 13

Final Classes, Final Exams, & Special Academic Events

Meeting 1: *Art Therapy and the Autism Spectrum*

Case Study & Discussion

Art Therapy Activity

Readings for the week:

Paula Howie, *Cultural Consideration of Eating Disorders Through Art Therapy*, Using Art Therapy with Diverse Populations, 2022.