

# COURSE SYLLABUS

## The Psychology of Art and Culture

**Course code:** PSY 280

**Term and year:** Winter 2026, January 7-27.

**Day and time:** AAU, Class 2.18, 17:00-20:45, January 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27.

**Instructor:** Dr Joseph Dodds

**Instructor contact:** [joseph.dodds@aauni.edu](mailto:joseph.dodds@aauni.edu)

**Consultation hours:** by appointment

|                        |          |                      |                                      |
|------------------------|----------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Credits US/ECTS</b> | 3/6      | <b>Level</b>         | Intermediate                         |
| <b>Length</b>          | 15 weeks | <b>Pre-requisite</b> | Introduction to Psychology           |
| <b>Contact hours</b>   | 42 hours | <b>Course type</b>   | HSC, PS, JC Elective<br>HUM Elective |

### 1. Course Description

This course introduces several psychological approaches, including psychological, psychoanalytic, psychosocial, and neuroscientific, to the study of art, culture, and society. Areas of application include film, painting, literature, art therapy, psychohistory, consciousness, dreams, surrealism, gender, ecology, and economics. This course is a required course for a range of further psychological and psychoanalytic courses at AAU, including Psychoanalysis and Art, Psychoanalysis and Society, the Psychology of Environmental Crisis, and The Psychoanalysis of Film. This course therefore serves as a foundation for and introduction to the key concepts, theories and approaches necessary for a deeper engagement in the psychoanalysis of culture, but also functions as a stand-alone course for all those interested in art, culture, psychology or society to understand the basic tools, concepts and approaches in this area.

### 2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Students will demonstrate abilities to apply definitions and main concepts of different psychological theories to explain and interpret different aspects of art, society, and culture.
- Students will learn theoretically and experientially about the clinical practice of art therapy.
- Students will provide evidence of their abilities to analyze, synthesize and evaluate the studied material through active participation in class.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast difference between the psychological and neuroscientific theories, outline the limits and controversies individual theories imply when describing the same phenomena.
- Students will select 2 theories of choice and in presentation and paper demonstrate their in-depth familiarity with theories' conceptual frameworks, and ability to apply those in interpretation of an artistic, cultural, social phenomenon of choice.

- Will demonstrate and defend their individual critical evaluation and critically review other fellow students' positions.
- Students will show active pursuit of in-depth discussions in seminars, ability to lead class debate, demonstrate attainment of interpretive psychoanalytic and neuroscientific perspectives applicable to a range of topics in art, society, and culture.

### 3. Reading Material

#### **Required Materials**

- Course materials will be available via NEO and [www.psychoanalysis.cz](http://www.psychoanalysis.cz)
- Quinodoz's *Reading Freud* Chapters 1-3
- Susan Budd: *The Shark Behind the Sofa: The Psychoanalytic Theory of Dreams*.
- Harry Trossman – *Towards a Psychoanalytic Iconography*.
- Susan Krauss Whitbourne: *The Essential Guide to Defense Mechanisms*
- Wendy Hollway: *Psychoanalysis in Social Psychological Research*.
- Solms and Turnbull: *The Brain and the Inner World*
- Mark Solms & Oliver. H. Turnbull: *What Is Neuropsychoanalysis?*
- David Edwards: *Psychoanalysis, Art, Art Therapy*.
- Danielle Knafo (1991) *Egon Schiele's Self-Portraits: A Psychoanalytic Study in the Creation of a Self*.
- Hyland, Boduszek and Kielkiewicz (2012) *A Psycho-Historical Analysis of Adolf Hitler: The Role of Personality, Psychopathology, and Development*
- Victor Daniels (2011) *The Analytical Psychology of Carl Gustav Jung*
- Glen Gabbard: *The Psychoanalyst at the Movies*.
- Joseph Dodds: *Artificial Group Psychodynamics*.
- Joseph Dodds: *Affective Finance - Psychoanalysis and the Economic Crisis*.

**4. Teaching methodology:** Lecture, class discussion, group work, presentations, etc.

### 5. Course Schedule

| Date        | Class Agenda  |
|-------------|---|
| January 7th | <p><b>Topic:</b> Intro to psychology of art and culture: Freud 1</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Art, Jokes, Dreams, Surrealism</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Required readings: Quinodoz's <a href="#">Reading Freud Chapters 1-3</a>. Susan Budd: <a href="#">The Shark Behind the Sofa: The Psychoanalytic Theory of Dreams</a>. Susan Whitbourne: <a href="#">The Essential Guide to Defense Mechanisms</a>.</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Analyse reading for discussion next week. Plus think about laughter and jokes in your own experience.</p> |

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| <p>January 8th</p>                              | <p><b>Topic:</b> Freud 2: Psychological structure, conflict. Visit to Cinema (The Man Who Fell to Earth).</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Psychological structure, conflict, aesthetics</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Nicola Glover's <a href="#">Psychoanalytic Aesthetics</a> (chapter 1, Freud). Harry Trossman – Towards a Psychoanalytic Iconography (Psyart Reader). Wendy Hollway: <a href="#">Psychoanalysis in Social Psychological Research</a>.</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Analyse reading for discussion next week. Plus draw/paint a dream. Plus prepare to discuss the environmental crisis and climate change from a psychological perspective.</p>   |
| <p>January 13th</p>                             | <p><b>Topic:</b> Freud 3: society, defences, climate change. Jung 1.</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Freudian applications to Climate Change. Intro to Jung.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Joseph Dodds (2021) <a href="#">The Psychology of Climate Anxiety</a>. Victor Daniels (2011) <a href="#">The Analytical Psychology of C G Jung</a>. David Edwards: <i>Psychoanalysis, Art, Art Therapy</i>. (Psyart Reader). Glen Gabbard (1997) <a href="#">The Psychoanalyst at the Movies</a>.</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Analyse reading for discussion next week. Plus watch film and prepare for discussion.</p>  |
| <p>January 14th<br/><b>Exam 1</b><br/>(30%)</p> | <p><b>Topic:</b> Jung 2, Psychological Film Analysis 1, Art Therapy 1. EXAM 1.</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Analysis of movie. Jung on Art and Culture. Art Therapy.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Don Butler: <a href="#">David Bowie - Integrating the Alien</a> (2016). Caroline Case and Tessa Dalley (2014) <i>The Handbook of Art Therapy</i> ch.5 (Psyart Reader). Solms and Turnbull: <a href="#">The Brain and the Inner World chapter 1</a>.</p> <p><b>Recommended Reading:</b> Luke Hockley (2001) <i>Cinematic Projections: The Analytical Psychology of C. G. Jung and Film Theory</i> (Psyart Reader)</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Decide on your topic for your final paper (due next week). Draw/paint a mandala.</p> |

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| <p>January<br/>15th</p>                              | <p><b>Topic:</b> Neuroscience 1.</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Introduction to the brain and perception</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Mark Solms &amp; Oliver. H. Turnbull (2014): <a href="#">What Is Neuropsychanalysis?</a> Johnson B and Flores Mosri D (2016) <a href="#">The Neuropsychanalytic Approach: Using Neuroscience as the Basic Science of Psychoanalysis</a>. <i>Front. Psychol.</i> 7:1459.</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Analyse readings and prepare for class discussion.</p>   |
| <p>January<br/>20th</p>                              | <p><b>Topic:</b> Neuroscience 2.</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Emotion, dreams, consciousness, neuropsychanalysis</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Knafo (1991) <a href="#">Egon Schiele's Self-Portraits: A Psychoanalytic Study in the Creation of a Self</a>. Hyland, Boduszek and Kielkiewicz (2012) <a href="#">A Psycho-Historical Analysis of Adolf Hitler: The Role of Personality, Psychopathology, and Development</a></p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Analyse readings and prepare for class discussion.</p>   |
| <p>January<br/>21st.</p>                             | <p><b>Topic:</b> Introduction to psychobiography and political profiling in art and politics. <b>Final presentation proposal due.</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> Focus on Egon Scheile and Adolf Hitler</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Paula Murphy (2005) <a href="#">Psychoanalysis and Film Theory part 1</a> (see <a href="#">part 2</a> here, not required.) Plus choice of film readings from the <a href="#">psyfilm course reader</a> (download to your computer, the additional password envyandplay is required to open it in your pdf reader).</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Analyse readings and prepare for class discussion.</p> |
| <p>January<br/>22nd.<br/><b>Exam 2</b><br/>(30%)</p> | <p><b>Topic:</b> Psychological Film Analysis 2. EXAM 2.</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Intro to psychoanalysis of films.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Joseph Dodds (2009) <a href="#">Artificial Group Psychodynamics</a>. Simon Clarke (2011) <a href="#">Culture and Identity</a>.</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Apply at least three of the approaches to film discussed in class to a favourite film.</p>  |

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| January 26th. | <p><b>Topic:</b> Psychosocial Approaches to Society and Culture. <b>Presentations 1.</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> Further developments of psychosocial theory in a contemporary context.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Joseph Dodds (2022) <a href="#">Ecopsychanalysis and Climate Psychology</a>. Caroline Case and Tessa Dalley (2014) The Handbook of Art Therapy ch.6 and 7 (Psyart Reader).</p> <p><b>Recommended Reading:</b> Joseph Dodds (2010) <a href="#">Affective Finance: Psychoanalysis and Economic Crisis</a>.</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Analyse readings and prepare for class discussion. Work on your final presentations and paper.</p> |
| January 27th. | <p><b>Topic:</b> Art Therapy 2. Conclusion of course. <b>Presentations 2.</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> Conclusion of the course, course discussion/integration, final art therapy practice.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Focus on your final paper.</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Complete your final paper.</p>  |

**6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)**

| <b>Assignment</b>                      | <b>Workload (hours)</b> | <b>Weight in Final Grade</b> | <b>Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes</b>  | <b>Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*</b> |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------------|---|---|
| Attendance, homework and participation | 75 hours                | 10%                          | Students are expected to join in and actively participate in class discussions and respond to other students presentations. This will include the overall participation as well as attendance. Students are expected to keep up with the readings and prepare for the discussions | 1, 2, 3.  |

|  |            |             |  |         |
|--|------------|-------------|--|---------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Exam                         | 25 hours   | 30.00%      | The first exam will cover the first half of the course take the form of assigned essays. The exam will take place in class. Students should show a high level of comprehension of the area involved and good analytical abilities. They are expected to show a good grasp of the theoretical issues and make a good case to support their argument.  | 1, 2, 3 |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Exam                         | 25 hours   | 30.00%      | The second exam will cover the second half of the course take the form of assigned essays. The exam will take place in class. Students should show a high level of comprehension of the area involved and good analytical abilities. They are expected to show a good grasp of the theoretical issues and make a good case to support their argument.  | 1, 2, 3 |
| Final Presentation and Presentation Proposal | 25 hours   | 30.00%      | The final presentation will be on a relevant (approved) topic of the students choice, and can be written alone or with one other person. Students should show a high level of comprehension of the area involved and good analytical abilities. They are expected to show a good grasp of the theoretical issues and make a good case to support their argument. Presentations take place in the last two classes. | 1, 2, 3 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                 | <b>150</b> | <b>100%</b> |  |         |

**7.**

\*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

## 7. Detailed description of the assignments

**Assignment 1:** Attendance, Presentation, Participation

### Assessment breakdown

| Assessed area   | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Reading, analyzing and recording main ideas, problems and questions |            |
| Posing relevant questions on readings in class                      |            |
| Mindful presence and thoughtful involvement in class                |            |
| Completing readings and other homework tasks and tasks in class     |            |
|   | 10 %       |

**Assignment 2:** Exam Essays

### Assessment breakdown

| Assessed area  | Percentage               |
|--|--------------------------|
| The two exams will cover thee sections of the course and include multiple choice, short answers and essays. To be done individually. |                          |
| Show a high level of comprehension of the area involved and good analytical abilities.   |                          |
| Demonstrate a good grasp of the theoretical issues   |                          |
| Make a good case to support their argument.  |                          |
|  | 60% (30% per exam essay) |

**Assignment 3:** Final Paper

### Assessment breakdown

| Assessed area  | Percentage |
|--|------------|
|  | 30%        |
| Final paper on the students own independent research into the psychology of art, culture or society. To be done on their own or with one partner (not more). |            |
| Demonstrating knowledge of concepts and essential issues, in writing   |            |
| Providing relevant discussion and examples   |            |
| Writing well-documented and well-argued essay  |            |
| Incorporate at least two different psychological approaches  |            |

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| Show good abilities of analysis, synthesis and application of theory to a relevant topic.     |  |
| Scholarly researched, referencing, and bibliography.  |  |
| Demonstrate ability to take an independent position and be able to defend their point of view |  |

## 8. General Requirements and School Policies

### ***General requirements***

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

### ***Electronic communication and submission***

The university and instructors shall only use students' university email address for communication, with additional communication via NEO LMS or Microsoft Teams. Students sending e-mail to an instructor shall clearly state the course code and the topic in the subject heading, for example, "COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question".

All electronic submissions are through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take-home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

**Use of AI such as Chat GPT is forbidden for the writing of their final paper and presentation. Its use will result in a failure of the course.**

### ***Attendance***

Attendance, i.e., presence in class in real-time, is expected and encouraged. However, the requirement that students miss not more than 35% of real-time classes is temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### ***Absence excuse and make-up options***

Should a student be absent from classes for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), s/he can submit to the Dean of Students an Absence Excuse Request Form supplemented with documents providing reasons for the absence. These must be submitted within one week of the absence. If possible, it is recommended the instructor be informed of the absence in advance. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if s/he submits an Absence Excuse Request Form along with the finalized add/drop form.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean of Students are entitled to make up assignments and exams provided their nature allows. Assignments missed due to unexcused absences which cannot be made up, may result in a decreased or failing grade as specified in the syllabus.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week of the date the absence was excused to arrange for make-up options.

**Late work:** No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

### **Electronic devices**

Electronic devices (e.g. phones, tablets, laptops) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information, etc.). Any other use will result in the student being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during tests or exams unless required by the exam format and the instructor.

**Eating** is not allowed during classes.

### **Cheating and disruptive behavior**

If a student engages in disruptive conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the class and shall report the behavior to the Dean.

Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misconduct, the exam or assignment will be failed and the student will be expelled from the exam or class.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Tutoring Center**

Plagiarism is “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work.” (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Random House, New York, 1993)

Turnitin’s White Paper ‘The Plagiarism Spectrum’ (available at <http://go.turnitin.com/paper/plagiarism-spectrum>) identifies 10 types of plagiarism ordered from most to least severe:

1. CLONE: An act of submitting another’s work, word-for-word, as one’s own.
2. CTRL-C: A written piece that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations.
3. FIND-REPLACE: The act of changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source in a paper.
4. REMIX: An act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together seamlessly.
5. RECYCLE: The act of borrowing generously from one’s own previous work without citation; To self-plagiarize.
6. HYBRID: The act of combining perfectly cited sources with copied passages—without citation—in one paper.
7. MASHUP: A paper that represents a mix of copied material from several different sources without proper citation.
8. 404 ERROR: A written piece that includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources
9. AGGREGATOR: The “Aggregator” includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.
10. RE-TWEET: This paper includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text’s original wording and/or structure.

At minimum, plagiarism from types 1 through 8 will result in a failing grade for the assignment and shall be reported to the Dean. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Allegations of bought papers and intentional or consistent plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU. If unsure about technical aspects of writing, students are encouraged to consult with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at: <http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/>.

**Use of AI such as Chat GPT is forbidden for the writing of their essays and final paper. Its use will result in a failure of the course.**

***Course accessibility and inclusion***

Students with disabilities are asked to contact the Dean of Students as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodations. Academic accommodations are not retroactive. Students who will be absent from course activities due to religious holidays may seek reasonable accommodations by contacting the Dean of Students in writing within the first two weeks of the term. All requests must include specific dates for which the student requests accommodations.

**9. Grading Scale**

| <b>Letter Grade</b> | <b>Percentage*</b> | <b>Description</b>  |
|---------------------|--------------------|---|
| A                   | 95-100             | <b>Excellent performance.</b> The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.  |
| A-                  | 90-94              |   |
| B+                  | 87-89              | <b>Good performance.</b> The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.  |
| B                   | 83-86              |   |
| B-                  | 80-82              |   |
| C+                  | 77-79              | <b>Fair performance.</b> The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.  |
| C                   | 73-76              |   |
| C-                  | 70-72              |   |
| D+                  | 65-69              | <b>Poor.</b> The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student's work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives. |
| D                   | 60-64              |   |
| F                   | 0-59               | <b>Fail.</b> The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.   |

**10.**

\* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by: Joseph Dodds. Date: 23 December 2025

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_