**What does it mean to be creative? How can we become creative? How do we come to think independently? What have you learned about the world through your experiences in and out of school? How can we improve the world through what we learn? How do prior experiences impact who we become as individuals and how we see the world?**

* “The brain is always going to go for the easiest thing first. It takes the path of least resistance. Creativity emerges when we get off the path of least resistance. All of the good ideas are in there, but we have to dig deeper, and try something new” David Eagleman in *The Creative Brain*
* “The principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after.” from John Dewey’s *Experience and Education*
* “We came then near the river. We spent a long time walking about the noisy streets flanked by high stone walls, watching the working of cranes and engines and often being shouted at for our immobility by the drivers of groaning carts. It was noon when we reached the quays and, as all the labourers seemed to be eating their lunches, we bought two big currant buns and sat down to eat them on some metal piping beside the river. We pleased ourselves with the spectacle of Dublin’s commerce—the barges signalled from far away by their curls of woolly smoke, the brown fishing fleet beyond Ringsend, the big white sailing-vessel which was being discharged on the opposite quay. Mahony said it would be right skit to run away to sea on one of those big ships and even I, looking at the high masts, saw, or imagined, the geography which had been scantily dosed to me at school gradually taking substance under my eyes. School and home seemed to recede from us and their influences upon us seemed to wane.” “An Encounter” by James Joyce’
* “We see and imagine at the same time” “Why Science Is Not Enough: Only through our imagination can we know the world” by John Lukacs
* "There is nothing small or cramped about wisdom.  It is something calling for a lot of room to move.  There are questions to be answered concerning physical as well as human matters, questions about the past and about the future, questions about things eternal, and things ephemeral, questions about time itself ... questions about the soul"  
  Seneca, "On Liberal and Vocational Studies"
* “Yet if the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, “tradition” should positively be discouraged. We have seen many such simple currents soon lost in the sand; and novelty is better than repetition… No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists …The past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past” T.S. Eliot “Tradition and the Individual Talent”

**Stories** week of 2/3

Read, watch, or listen to a personal narrative or interview of a creative person and present a summary to the class.

**Conversation** week of 3/2

Record an interview or conversation about a creative person’s experiences, perspective, opinions, and/or understanding of what it means to be creative. Create a podcast – it should be at least 5 minutes long.

**Politics** week of 4/6

Read an essay about a political or social topic concerning a creative solution to a problem and present a summary to the class.

[science, health, psychology, climate change, engineering, politics, policy, law, taxes, social issues, violence, abuse, alcohol, drugs, family, religion, convention, gender identification, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, immigration, justice, economics, business, poverty, work, money, status/class, greed, mobility, culture, democracy, language, healthcare, criminal justice]

**Art** week of 6/1 and 6/8

Present on what you consider a great act of creativity.

[sports (recreation, entertainment); media (webpage, photojournalism, documentary, television, movies, comedy, technology); art (painting, music, literature, memoir, children's book); personal (object, person, art); science (discovery, invention, formula), antique, souvenir, award, religious piece, family member, friend, public figure, organization, institution, charity, anything you created or skill you have, architect, building, city, country, religion, place, etc. (with prior approval)]

**Final Video Essay**  due 6/15

How does it feel to graduate? What have you learned? What kind of future do you want? What have you realized about creativity and how to imagine the best possible future?

Write a single-spaced one-page philosophical response, and then create a media presentation using an audio recording of your essay, video clips, text, and/or images.

ALSO: quote yourself (using a quote from your reflection essay), put your name on it, and print it out on an 8.5x11 inch piece of paper. This quote will be put on display in the hallway.

Teacher guidelines:

The questions and quotes about creativity guide every discussion, but the idea is to digress and just keep asking great questions about the world we live in. Connect the ideas from the readings to the literature in the course whenever possible. It’s a project about creativity and inspirational and revolutionary ideas.

Each part of the project (Stories, Conversation, Politics, Art) starts with researching and reading or listening to a choice text or podcast for at least one class period. Students may also pick from the list of essays and podcasts at the end of this document.

After reading or listening, students should summarize their essay or podcast to the class. They may read a passage from the source out loud. The teacher then asks questions that extend the contents of the essay or podcast to the literature in the course, modern political issues, or human behavior. The main objective is to think about improving society and finding solutions to our world’s problems. Th teacher facilitates the conversation, offers thoughts, and maintains a balanced, moderate, and positive approach when dealing with sensitive issues. Teacher must model a discourse of respect for all points of view.

Students can keep a journal and write down their thoughts after the conversations. They could reread that journal before creating their final digital essay.

**Questions for interview/podcast:**

What does it mean to be creative? How can we become creative? How do we come to think independently? What have you learned about the world through your experiences in and out of school? How can we improve the world through what we learn? How do prior experiences impact who we become as individuals and how we see the world?

EDUCATION/GROWING UP

Where did you grow up and go to school? What was your hometown like?

Who were your close friends? What were they like?

What was school like? Did you enjoy it? Did you enjoy learning? Did you do any independent reading? Who was your favorite teacher? least favorite? any influential coaches or leaders?

Was there a moment where you decided what is was that you wanted to do for the rest of your life?

Where did you enjoy living the most and why did you enjoy living there?

What subjects did you enjoy in school and why did you enjoy them?

If you could change our education system, what would you change?

What organizations or clubs did you belong to and how did they influence you?

WORK

What jobs did you work growing up? What did you learn from working those jobs?

Why did you decide to pursue your career?

Where do you work? Can you describe the main operations or function of your company, organization, or workplace? What is a typical workday like?

What do you hope to accomplish at your job?

Why did you pick your major? How did you come to work at your current job?

RECREATION/CULTURE

What did you do on the weekends for fun?

What music, sports, and movies did you like?

Did you attend any memorable concerts or performances?

What public figures (artists, politicians, religious leaders, etc.) inspired you?

FAMILY/RELATIONSHIPS

What was your family life like? What hardships did you experience? What were the most joyful experiences of your life?

Can you tell any stories about people who had a positive influence on your life?

Can you tell any stories about people who had a negative influence on your life?

Where have you travelled? Do you remember any specific experiences from your travels?

Did you have any meaningful relationships (romantic or platonic) growing up? How did they impact your life?

What was the most amazing thing about having a family? What was the most challenging thing?

How did religion or spirituality play a role in your life?

PERSPECTIVE/PHILOSOPHY

What advice do you have to offer based on your work and life experiences?

What is your outlook on life and human relationships?

What problems face America and our world? How can we solve those problems?

What do you love about our country and our world? What do you dislike?

How has technology changed the world and how will it change the world in the future?

What is the most pressing political issue of our time?

How can one be a happy person?

What have you learned over the course of your life?

What do you see as the meaning and purpose of life?

Personal Narrative

Podcasts

TED Radio Hour “Why We Hate”

Love + Radio “44 Years” solitary confinement

StoryCorps “Little Kids, Big Problems”

StoryCorps “Ghetto Life 101”

StoryCorps “Too Much Hurt”

StoryCorps “A Parents Job”

Radio Diaries and Radiotopia “Last Witness: Surviving the Tulsa Race Riot”

Radio Diaries and Radiotopia “Under the Radar” immigrant

Essays

The Sun Magazine

Narrative Magazine

Mike Rose “Blue-Collar Brilliance”

Lars Eighner “On Dumpster Diving”

Jonathan Kozol “Fremont High School”

“Learning to Write” Benjamin Franklin

Scott Russell Sanders “Under the Influence”

“Why the Reckless Survive” Melvin Konner

Maya Angelou “Graduation”

Caroline Bird “College is a Waste of Time and Money”

William Zinsser “College Pressures”

Nancy Mairs “On Being a Cripple”

Frederick Douglass “Learning to Read”

Eudora Welty “Clamorous to Learn”

John Holt “How Teachers Make Children Hate Reading”

Joey Franklin “Working at Wendy’s”

Zora Neale Hurston “How It Feels to Be Colored Me”

Videos

“Girls in Chess”

“The Hands We Cannot See”

“Giving Artists With Disabilities a Space to Thrive”

“Before the Storm” riding on bikes

“Little Nora (The Banjo Prodigy)”

“The Tables” ping pong

“To the Right” Alaska Native

“Dial-a-Ride” the elderly on a bus

Political Essays/Podcasts

Podcasts

Radiolab “Translation” translation in language and science

Radiolab “Eye in the Sky” technology and surveillance

Invisibilia “Reality” how reality is a construction

Invisibilia “The Other Real World” about “Inspire Somalia”, a reality TV show

Invisibilia “Future Self” hypnosis in school

Invisibilia “Our Computers, Ourselves” technology and identity

Invisibilia “The Callout” punk rock and feminism

Invisibilia “Entanglement” quantum mechanics and emotion

TED Radio Hour “The Unknown Brain”

TED Radio Hour “Rethinking School”

Serial, Season 3 Episode 5 “Pleas Baby Pleas” journalist allowed to record in a courthouse in Cleveland

Freakonomics “Ten Ideas to Make Politics Less Rotten”

Hidden Brain “Slanguage”

Hidden Brain “The Scientific Process”

Freakonomics “Two (Totally Opposite) Ways to Save the Planet”

Freakonomics “Does Early Education Come Way Too Late?”

Freakonomics “In Praise of Incrementalism”

How Stuff Works “How Empathy Works”

Essays

James Baldwin, “If Black English Isn’t a Language, Then Tell Me What Is”

“How it Feels to be Colored Me” Hurston

Colby Buzzell “Killing Time in Iraq”

“From Realism to Virtual Reality: Images of America’s Wars”

“Rewriting American History” Frances FitzGerald

“Decolonizing the Mind” Ngugi wa Thiong’o

“Warfare: An Invention – Not a Biological Necessity” Margaret Mead

Andrew Sullivan “What Is a Homosexual?”

Judith Butler, from Undoing Gender

“Is Everything Determined?” Stephen Hawking

“Intelligent Evolution” Edward O. Wilson

“Darwin’s Middle Road” Stephen Jay Gould

“The Climate Emergency” Al Gore

“Diversity and Stability: The Paradox of Religious Pluralism” Randall Balmer

\*Benazir Bhutto, “Islam and Democracy”

“The Motive for Metaphor” Northrop Frye

“A Century of Cinema” Susan Sontag

“Language and the Destiny of Man” Chinua Achebe

“Africans Are Not Poor” Lucy Lameck

Robert B. Reich, “Why the Rich Are Getting Richer and the Poor, Poorer”

Nicholas Carr “Is Google Making Us Stupid?”

“Watching TV Makes You Smarter” Steven Johnson

“Reality Television: Oxymoron” George F. Will

“The Endangered Middle Class” Robert Reich

“Stop Googling. Let’s Talk” by Sherry Turkle