

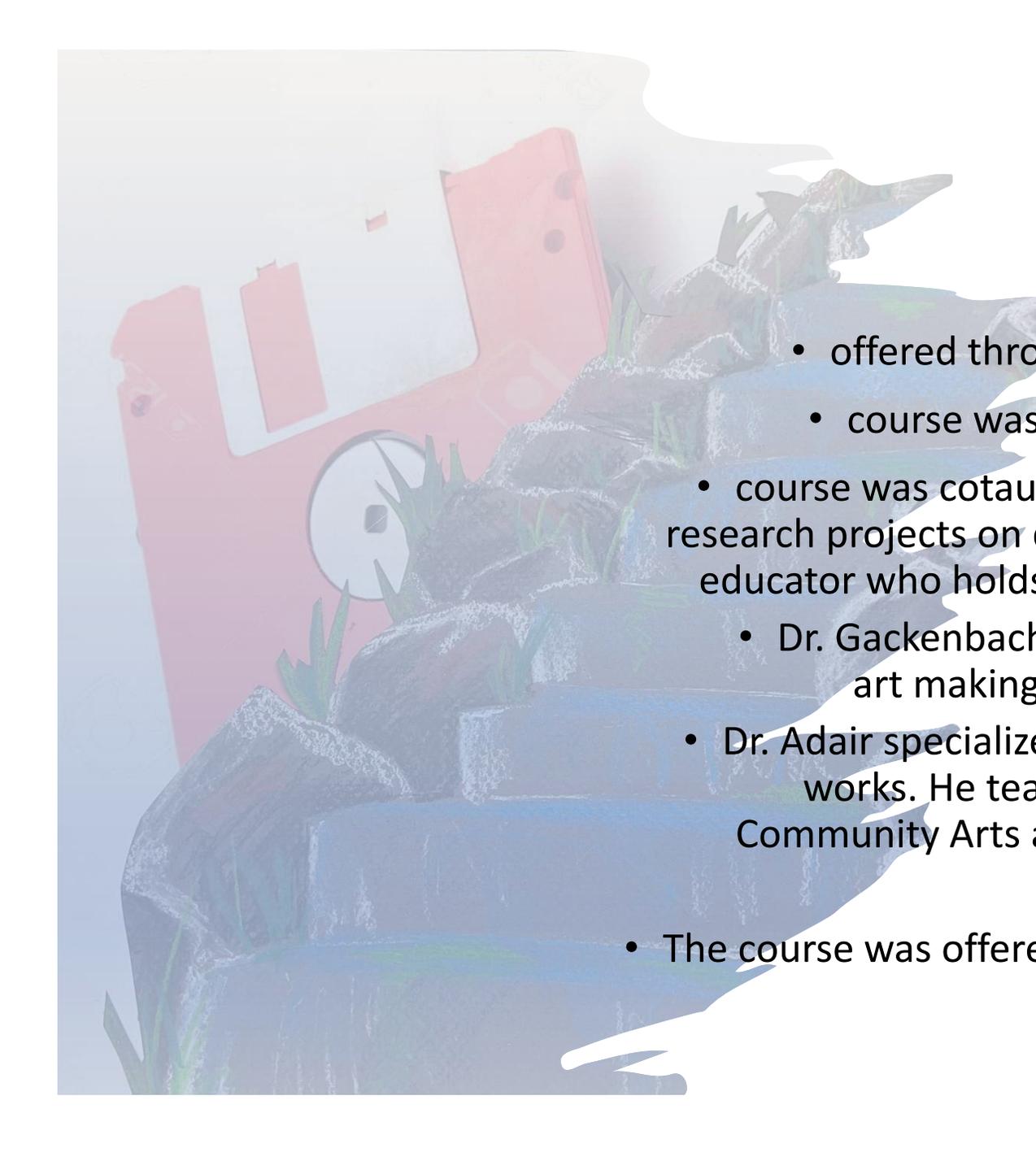


A Continuing Education Course

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and

Robin Adair, PhD, University of Saskatchewan

The artwork in this presentation is a combination of the professors and the students. Some of it has been distorted to preserve the artists anonymity.



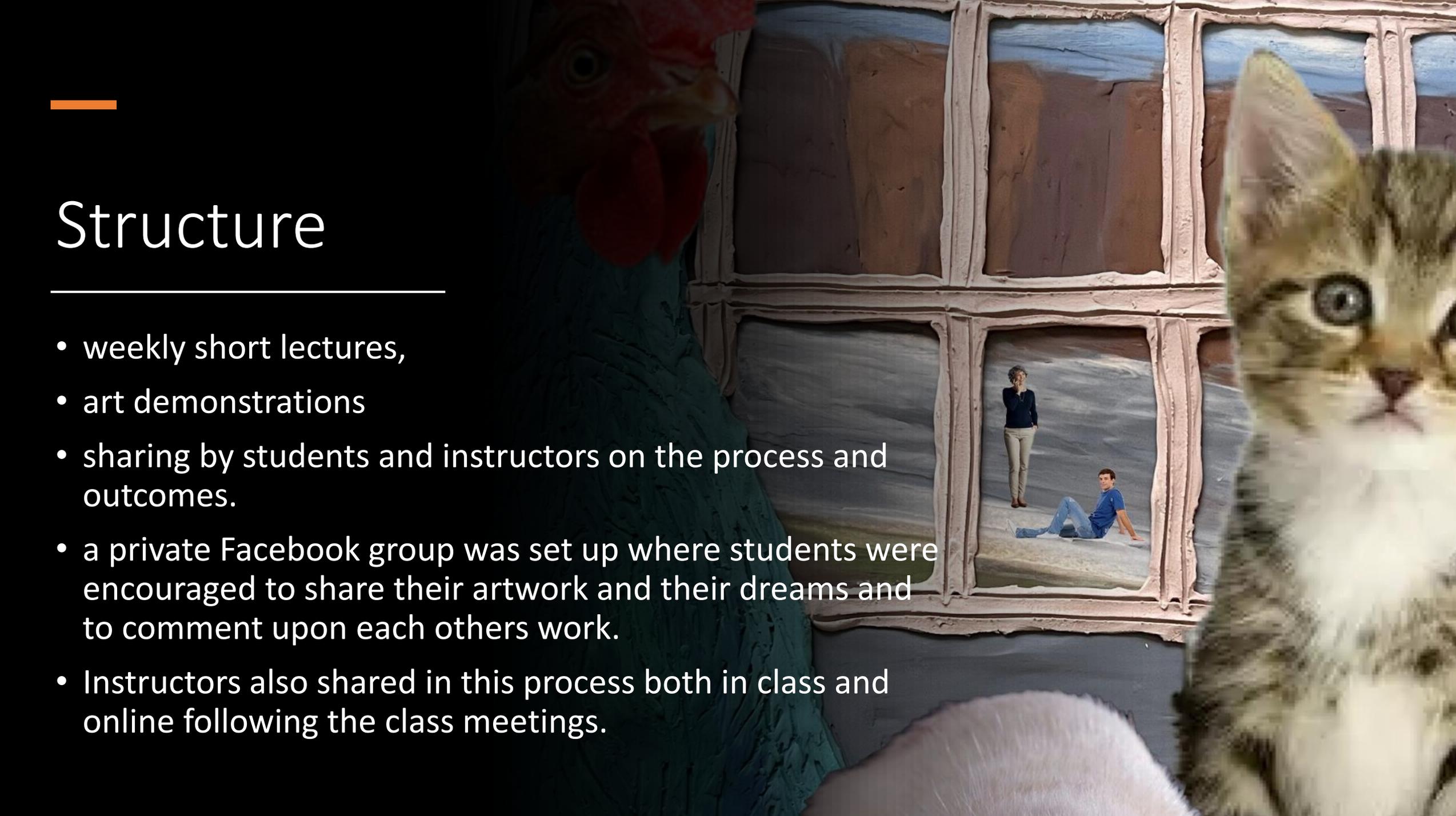
Course overview

- a 10-week Continuing Education course
- offered through the University of Saskatchewan in the Fall of 2022.
- course was listed as an art course but added a dream component.
- course was cotaught by a psychologist with multiple books, courses, and research projects on dreams over a 40-year career and a visual artist and art educator who holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a PhD in English literature.
 - Dr. Gackenbach is also a lifelong crafter who has combined her love of art making with her primary self awareness tool, dream meaning.
 - Dr. Adair specializes in pen and ink drawings, acrylic paintings, and digital works. He teaches painting, drawing, and art journalling through the Community Arts and Artisanhip Certificate Program at the University of Saskatchewan.
- The course was offered online through zoom, thus both students and faculty from two provinces could be accommodated



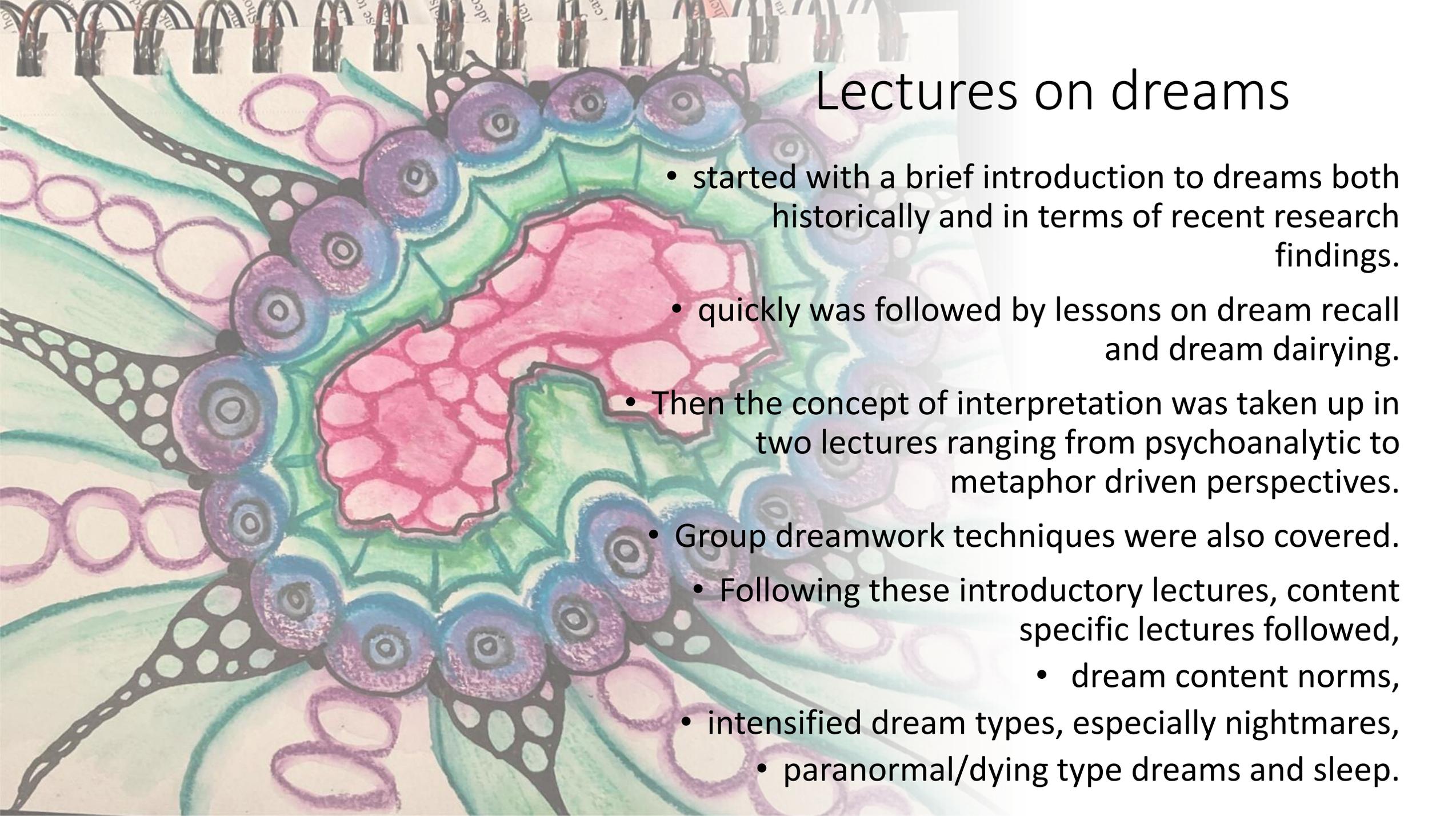
Conceptual Framework for Course

- Boudrias (2021) argues that the creation of images based on dreams can result in the updating of emotional memory through reconsolidation done in art making
- Sleep and dreams play a role in memory reconsolidation
- She notes, “since images increase both emotional arousal and memory processing art therapy and dream images can be used to facilitate emotional memory reconsolidation . . . The creative process allows one to conduct play-like experiments with the dream images, which can either result in reexperiencing an emotional memory and/or experiencing a prediction error. Surprisingly, the prediction error sometimes occurs *before* the emotional memory reaches awareness (e.g., the surprise reaction informs us that she was expecting something else).”



Structure

- weekly short lectures,
- art demonstrations
- sharing by students and instructors on the process and outcomes.
- a private Facebook group was set up where students were encouraged to share their artwork and their dreams and to comment upon each others work.
- Instructors also shared in this process both in class and online following the class meetings.



Lectures on dreams

- started with a brief introduction to dreams both historically and in terms of recent research findings.
- quickly was followed by lessons on dream recall and dream dairying.
- Then the concept of interpretation was taken up in two lectures ranging from psychoanalytic to metaphor driven perspectives.
- Group dreamwork techniques were also covered.
 - Following these introductory lectures, content specific lectures followed,
 - dream content norms,
 - intensified dream types, especially nightmares,
 - paranormal/dying type dreams and sleep.

Art Techniques



Mixed media collage: Magazine clippings, craft paper, recycled maps, and repurposed drawings.

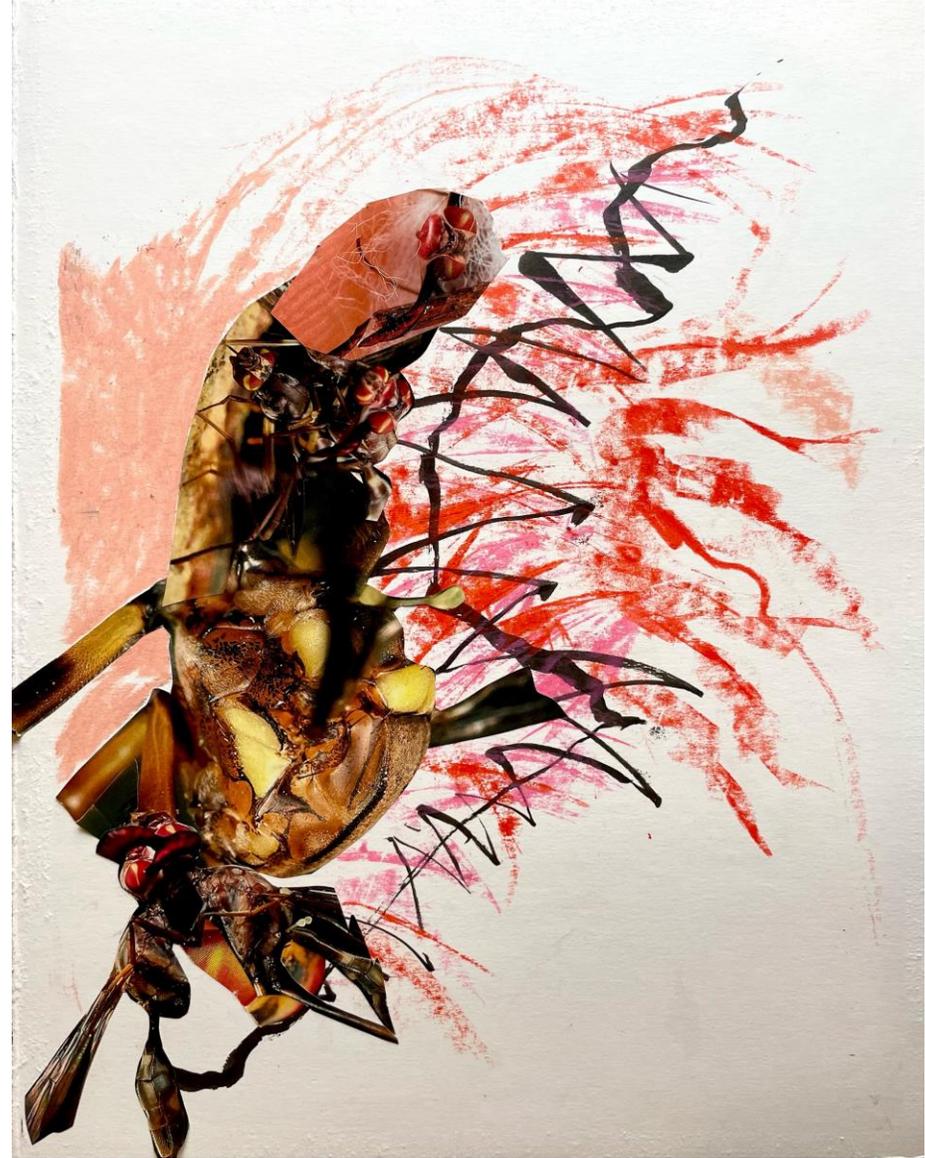
- Students and instructors in the course created art based on the premise that art making facilitates a meditative state of mind, a **heightened focus**, enabling artists/dreamers to gain valuable insights **during the process** of creating.

- During the 2 hour art making sessions, Robin shared his thought process as he made his creations.
- He used a dream image as a starting place, but often new insights about the dream would arise in the process of creating the art.



Collage: magazine clippings, internet images.

- Robin relied on **affect** to determine the decisions in his art making.
- When he sensed an emotion arise, it was a cue for him to pause and reflect upon the relationship between the feeling and the current iteration of the image.



Collage and Mixed media: ink, pastel, magazine clippings.

- Students were encouraged to trust impulses — i.e what colours do I want to use in this moment? — rather than attempting to follow through with an intellectual plan from start to finish.





Mixed media relief: modelling clay, beans, shells, jewelry.

- This process requires a different way of thinking about image making. It has less to do with pursuing a finished product, or an aesthetically pleasing image, and more to do with noticing and capitalizing upon moments in the process of making wherein the artist feels a strong psychic/emotional connection to the image.

- A process-based approach to making art offers more possibilities for experimentation. The end result can often be surprising, and suggest alternate meanings for the dream.



Mixed media sculpture: recycled cloth, recycled cardboard, tinfoil, shells, beads.

Digital medium process in art making to a dream

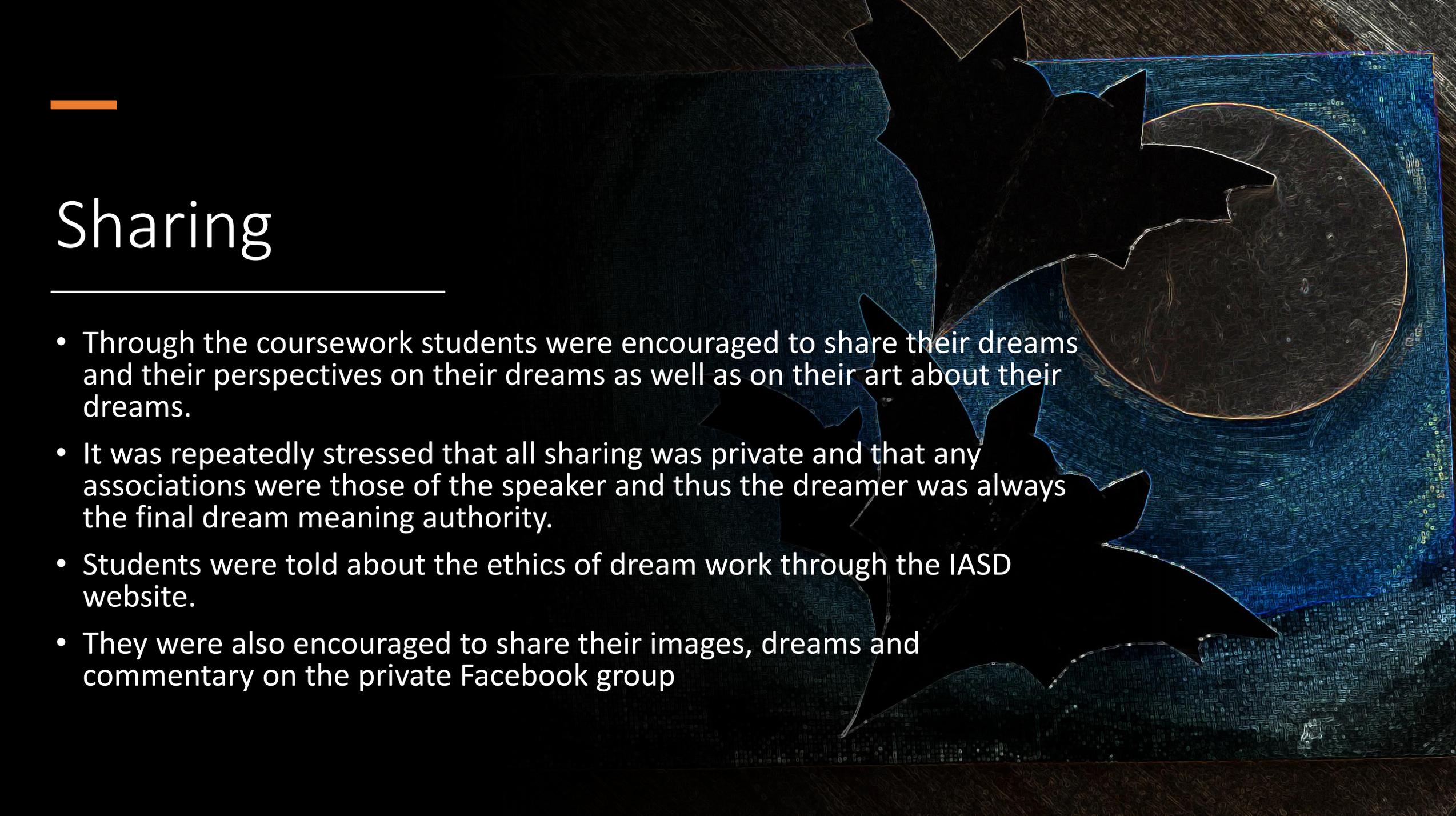


- When using the digital medium, the artist's ability to edit and revise is unrestricted, which means the image can move through unlimited stages of transformation.
- Documenting individual layers and stages of the process is another exciting feature.



Summation

- Affect is an essential component of making dream art.
- The image maker has leverage to change and restructure the image as it unfolds.
- There is, perhaps, something lost and something gained in the translation process.
 - visual art utilizes its own language for understanding the dream, but cannot represent the whole picture.

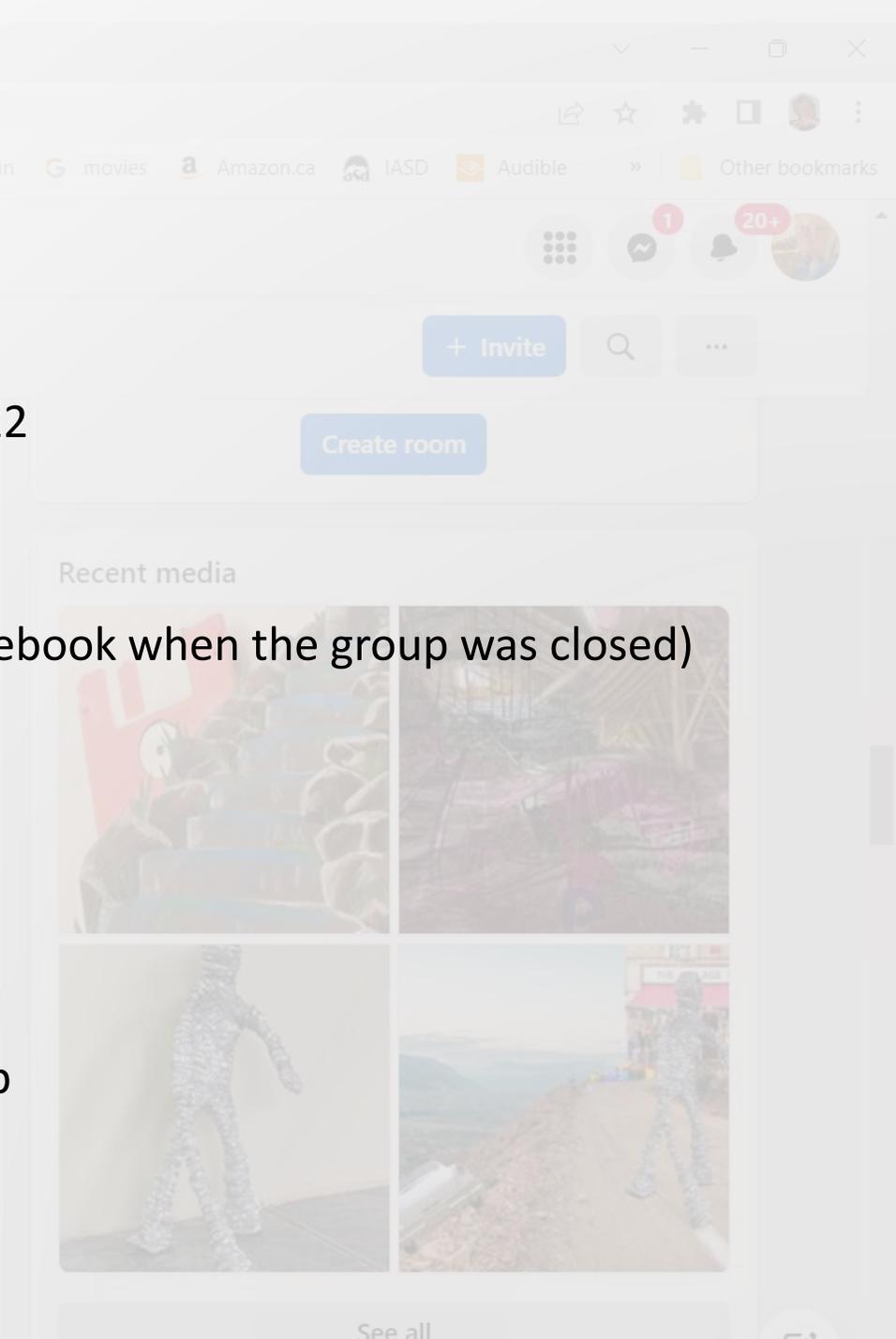


Sharing

- Through the coursework students were encouraged to share their dreams and their perspectives on their dreams as well as on their art about their dreams.
- It was repeatedly stressed that all sharing was private and that any associations were those of the speaker and thus the dreamer was always the final dream meaning authority.
- Students were told about the ethics of dream work through the IASD website.
- They were also encouraged to share their images, dreams and commentary on the private Facebook group

Facebook Summary Stats

- Summary statistics generated by Facebook
- Private group over 61 days from end of Sept to end of Nov, 2022
- 7 members including two instructors
- 58 posts
 - Top 27 posts had 2386 words (these were provided by Facebook when the group was closed)
 - 156 views of these top posts
 - 48 comments to these top posts
 - 42 likes to them as well
- 162 comments
- 172 reactions (likes)
- Given the small number of members it was a fairly active group



LIWC-22: Content of Facebook posts compared to Facebook post norms

- Linguistic Inventory and Word Count (LIWC-22) system (Boyd, Ashokkumar, Seraj & Pennebaker, 2022)
 - Widely used data analysis system
 - Tabulates frequency of word usage
 - Easy to use system via computers
- Two previous studies looking at dreams using the LIWC
 - Bulkeley & Graves (2018) compared dream types and used these LIWC categories
 - Social Categories: Family, female, male
 - Other Psychological Categories: cognitive processes, seeing, hearing, sexual, religious, death
 - Affect Categories: positive emotion, anxiety, anger, sadness
 - Zheng & Schweickert (2021) used these categories on the LIWC based on similarity to Hall and VandeCastle categories
 - Family, home, friends, sexual, see, hear, motion, death, achievement, sadness, anger, social processes, analytical thinking, positive emotion, cognitive processes, body, anxiety, money, ingestion, female references, male reference

LIWC-22 Results: Art Class > Norms

| Term | Art Class | Mean Norms | SD |
|------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Authentic | 92.91 | 62.38 | 22.58 |
| function | 59.73 | 48.18 | 6.94 |
| i | 8.26 | 5.44 | 2.26 |
| ipron | 6.08 | 4.10 | 1.27 |
| det | 15.77 | 11.75 | 2.18 |
| article | 7.76 | 5.15 | 1.40 |
| prep | 14.01 | 11.13 | 2.21 |
| conj | 7.47 | 4.88 | 1.39 |
| memory | 0.34 | 0.11 | 0.14 |
| emo_anx | 0.42 | 0.11 | 0.14 |
| home | 1.09 | 0.47 | 0.39 |
| Perception | 12.84 | 8.71 | 1.97 |
| space | 8.85 | 5.26 | 1.43 |
| focuspast | 7.09 | 2.78 | 1.13 |

- 116 variables compared
- Most showed no difference from norms
- 15 showed art class Facebook posts HIGHER than Facebook norms
 - Using one standard deviation
- Interesting ones are highlighted

LIWC-22 Results: Art Class < Norms

- 116 variables compared
- 9 showed art class Facebook posts LOWER than Facebook norms
 - Using one standard deviation
- Interesting ones are highlighted

| Segment | Art Class | Mean Norms | SD |
|--------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Tone | 27.45 | 67.91 | 24.73 |
| you | 0.38 | 2.37 | 1.40 |
| Affect | 3.98 | 8.82 | 2.47 |
| tone_pos | 2.18 | 5.93 | 2.24 |
| emo_pos | 1.09 | 2.94 | 1.73 |
| focuspresent | 3.65 | 5.64 | 1.55 |
| focusfuture | 0.84 | 2.13 | 0.88 |
| Conversation | 0.34 | 3.69 | 2.72 |
| netspeak | 0.21 | 3.15 | 2.61 |

Summary

- When people talk about dreams online it's a different topic than normal Facebook chatter
 - Thus the art class Facebook group had MORE self references, memory, anxiety and focus on the past than Facebook norms
 - The art class Facebook group had LESS present and future references, positive emotions, conversation and netspeak
 - Consistent with previous research by Bulkeley & Graves (2018)
- Dreams and the art produced about the dreams offer a topic for deeper, more personal online discussion
- We conclude that the course was successful in helping these women get in touch with some personal material through dreams and art