

The University of Western Ontario – Department of Visual Arts

VAH 3396G – Special Topics in Art History – **The Artist and the Archive**Susan Hiller, *Nine Songs from Europe 1991-1995*.

http://www.susanhiller.org/installations/nine_songs_more.html

Professor: Dr. Joy James
Class Day/Time: Thursdays, 11:30-2:30pm
Location: NCB117
Office Hours: Wed. 1:30-2:30pm (and by appointment)
Office: Room 200C
Phone: (519) 661-2111 Ext. 86181
Email: jjames53@uwo.ca

TA: Ruth Skinner
Office: Graduate offices, John Labatt Visual Arts Centre
Office Hours: TBA
Email: rskinne6@uwo.ca

Course Description

Recent study has theorized the role of the archive in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century as having prominent conceptual significance and identifying a move away from narrative explanation to a less linear and more inclusive method of understanding individual and collective life. In the context of a series of readings, presentations and projects the course looks at how we might understand what has been referred to as the “archival turn” and what this has to do with the proliferation of uses and contestations of the archival model in modern and contemporary art. We will begin with an overview of the significant impact of photography in histories of the archive, and move on to focus on works based on the model of the archive in contemporary art across all media. The continued importance of photography’s aesthetic legacies to ways of seeing, sensing and making meaning of and in the world will be a topic of investigation throughout the course.

Evaluation

(Attendance at all classes is mandatory. Active participation and full engagement is required for successful completion of this third-year course.)

Attendance & Active Participation	20%	Ongoing
Book Review	20%	Due date: January 28
Small Group Archive Project & Presentation	20%	Due date: February 25
Research Paper	40%	Due date: March 31

Textbooks

The texts for this course are available at the University Bookstore and on 2-hour reserve in Weldon Library under the course title and number.

Ernst Van Alpen, *Staging the Archive: Art and Photography in the Age of New Media*, Reaktion Books, 2014.

Charles Merewether, *The Archive*, Documents of Contemporary Art, MIT Press, 2006.

Course Protocols

Office Hours/Email: Please come and see me, or Ruth Skinner, during office hours when you have course-related questions or concerns. I respond to emails within a 24-hour period excepting emails sent after 4:00pm on Fridays, and on Saturdays and Sundays—I will answer mail sent during this period on the following Monday morning.

Late Assignment Policies: All assignments must be submitted when due unless there are mitigating and documented circumstances. Arrangements for late assignments (with full documentation) must be made before the assignment due date. All other late assignments will be docked 5% per day.

Assignment Submissions: All materials submitted must be work done entirely by the student, expressly for this course. Please consult the Writing Centre if you have any confusion regarding definitions of academic honesty within University practices. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of policies governing academic honesty and what constitutes plagiarism and/or cheating. Writing Centre, UCC Room 217; <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing>

Accommodations: All students who require accommodation are required by the University to register with the Student Development Centre, meet with a counselor, and provide documentation of a disability. All accommodations are conducted in a fully confidential manner. Please let me know in the first two weeks of classes if you will be requesting accommodation. Student Development Centre, WSS Room 4111; Tel: 519-661-3031; www.sdc.uwo.ca

Mental Health:

"Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help."

Assignment Descriptions

Attendance and Participation 20%

Students are required to come to class fully prepared to discuss the assigned readings, and as the course proceeds, to develop connections across the larger discursive field in which the readings circulate. To this end, students are asked to prepare a brief summary of each reading that situates it in the wider context of course required reading. Please place your name and date on the top of the summary sheets, and submit before class. Mark will be based on both in-class participation and the written summaries.

Group Archive Project and Presentation 20%

Group will decide to work with an existing or to construct an archive following their research interests. The assignment will provide an opportunity for working with the theoretical and material aspects of the archive covered by course lectures, assigned readings and guest lecturer presentations. Details of the assignment will be discussed in class.

Book Review 20%

Students review one of the secondary course texts. This assignment will provide an opportunity for a close reading, and explication of how the text is positioned in the wider discursive field of the archive as a significant concept and area study for 21st-century art practice and criticism. Details of the assignment will be discussed at in class.

Research Paper 40%

Working out of course lectures, readings, discussions, and presentations students will develop individual research projects in keeping with their particular scholarly and studio interests as they relate to the course focus. The research paper will present a clearly articulated argument or position that offers a critical discussion of the chosen topic. Further details of the assignment will be discussed at length and distributed in written form after the first month of classes.

POLICIES**Student Conduct:**

All students will conduct themselves in a manner that will be consistent with the maturity and academic integrity expected of university students. Student conduct shall be consistent with the general laws of the community and with University regulations. Students shall show regard and respect for the rights, safety, and property of all members of the University community and are expected to act in a responsible manner within the University and the community at large.

Attendance:

A student who misses more than 15% of the course hours, without written corroboration for health or bereavement, can be debarred from writing final exams, or participation in final studio evaluations. Note that if a student consistently is absent from a 3-hour class for 1 hour, they will exceed the 15% cutoff and can be debarred.

Prerequisites:

You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that you have not taken an antirequisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as basis of appeal. If you are not eligible for a course, you may be removed from it at any time, and you will receive no adjustment to your fees. These decisions cannot be appealed.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism, which may be defined as "The act or an instance of copying or stealing another's words or ideas and attributing them as one's own," will not be tolerated. (Citation excerpted from Black's Law Dictionary, 1999, 7th ed., p. 1170). (Refer to <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2015/pg113.html> or the 2015/2016 Western Academic Calendar, with regards to academic penalties for plagiarism.)

Medical Policy:

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. See course outline for specific arrangements regarding less than 10% of assignments.

Building Access:

The John Labatt Visual Arts Centre will be closed at 10:30 pm each night. There will be no after-hour access for undergraduate students. The Centre is open weekends 12:00 noon-5:00 pm. Students should be prepared to vacate the building promptly at 10:30 pm and 5:00 pm. You must also sign-in with the building monitors when working in the workshop areas outside of regular office hours.

Please remember:

One of the most important resources for course counselling, special permissions, course changes, grade appeals, etc., is the Undergraduate Chair of Visual Arts, Prof. David Merritt (tel. 519-661-3440; vaugc@uwo.ca). Please note, however, that should you encounter any serious difficulties due to illness, family emergency, etc., you should consult the Academic Counselor for your Faculty, IGA Building, Room 1N20 (Ms. Amanda Green and Mr. Ben Hakala are the counselors for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities).

The Student Development Centre (WSS room 4111; tel: 519-661-3031; www.sdc.uwo.ca) offers a wide range of useful services to students including workshops on learning skills, career and employment services, and an effective writing program, amongst many more.

The D.B. Weldon Library offers orientation tours from the first week of classes until Thanksgiving, where you will get acquainted with the numerous research resources available. As well, the University libraries have an extremely useful website where you can search the library system, the databases, view your circulation record, renew materials, access your UWO e-mail account, and much more. Check it out at: www.lib.uwo.ca.

Financial Aid Services is your main source of information for OSAP, bursaries, loans, scholarships, and the work-study program which offer part-time positions on campus for Western students.

Tel: 519-661-2100; e-mail, finaid@uwo.ca; or check out their website at http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/student_finances/financial_counselling.html

VISUAL ARTS Undergraduate Grading Guidelines - Art History

These guidelines are benchmarks that are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. For example, grades in first-year courses are generally lower than in fourth year.

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The writing shows significant originality and exhibits a high degree of critical engagement. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the background research is exemplary. Regarding research, all major secondary sources pertaining to the topic have been consulted and proper citation has been used.

80-89 (Excellent, A)

The writing shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical engagement. Writing is probing through the use of comments and/or questions, and is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing immediately engages the reader. Mastery of complex materials and ideas is demonstrated. The writing is of appropriate length, and demonstrates mastery of techniques so that results are meaningful and not simplistic. Regarding research, a majority of the secondary sources pertaining to the topic have been consulted and proper citation has been used.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The writing shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Written claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The work is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. Written analysis is organized around focal points and the development of the argument is easily followed. The writer demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material. Regarding research, a representative selection of secondary sources pertaining to the topic has been consulted and proper citation has been used.

70-74 (Good, B)

The writing shows a satisfactory attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Written claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The work is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. Written analysis is organized around focal points. The text is generally well written and well argued. Regarding research, a somewhat limited selection of secondary sources pertaining to the topic has been consulted and proper citation has been used.

60-69 (Competent, C)

The writing demonstrates adequate engagement with the topic. The writing is on topic and is a reasonable response to material covered in the course, but goes no further. Written facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the text. Regarding research, an insufficient number secondary sources pertaining to the topic has been consulted but proper citation has been used.

50-59 (Marginal, D)

The writing shows less than adequate engagement with the topic and with the material covered by the course. The writing is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Written facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the text. Regarding research, few secondary sources pertaining to the topic have been consulted; proper citation may or may not have been used.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The writing demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. Written material is disorganized and unintelligible. The work clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment. Regarding research, secondary sources pertaining to the topic have not been consulted and proper citation has not been used.