

Course: **Advanced Visual Art Foundations**
Visual Arts Studio 1025 – Section 001

Term: Fall 2015/Winter 2016

Time: Monday and Wednesdays 2:30 – 5:30

Location: JLVAC rm. 302

Professor: **David Merritt**

Office: VAC rm. 233

e-mail: dmerritt@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Mon. 1:30-2:30 or by appt.

Teaching Assistant: Jason Stovall

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Course Anti-requisite: VAS 1020

Course Description

VAS 1025 is an advanced level introduction to core studio practices in the visual arts. The course embraces an immersive, exploratory approach to art making, one informed by the creative tactics, critical concerns and historical precedents underpinning recent artists' practices. Organized around formal, material and thematic frameworks, class, lectures, field trips and workshops are offered in support of hands-on studio exercises and assignments. Working with 2D, 3D and time-based media and including drawing, painting, sculpture, photography and multi-media practices, VAS 1025 facilitates the technical, creative and critical understandings of these approaches and provides students a formative groundwork for continued practice and study.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

1. *Depth and Breadth of Knowledge:* Students will acquire a range of fundamental skills required to engage both technically and conceptually with the material art practices being studied. Students will also be familiar with relevant historical precedents relating to these practices as well as contemporary reconsiderations and adaptations.
2. *Knowledge of Methodologies:* Students will gain an understanding of conceptual/material methodologies through application of both traditional and non-traditional processes, developing and presenting ideas via drawing and other modes as well as through resources such as lectures and demonstrations and consultations with the instructor.
3. *Communication Skills:* Students will be able to communicate in writing and orally regarding their projects and with respect to an informed foundational understanding of contemporary art and its precedents, and will be skilled with a variety of formats of critique at the university level.

Important Course Resources:

Owl. To facilitate aspects of VAS 1025, students can access the VAS 1025 Owl site through <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal/site/owldocs>. Course outline, readings, slide lectures and class assignments will be posted to Owl in a timely manner.

Facebook. This site offers the opportunity to grow a social connection among the students, while also providing a playful discussion space that can continue to exist beyond the timeline of the course.

Student blogs. Primarily used personally, but are also another venue for fostering discussions, interest and community among students.

Course Requirements

Studio Assignments and Critique Discussions

Critiques and shorter artwork discussion sessions are regularly scheduled in VAS 1025 and represent important assessment situations for the course. Student preparation and active participation in these sessions are a requirement of the course. In addition to affecting participation grades, students late or otherwise not prepared for scheduled critiques or discussions will forfeit the opportunity for class feedback on their work.

Failure to complete assignments without prior consultation with instructor may result in a failing grade. With prior discussion, students may hand in late work with 2% per day late penalty deducted from the assignment (Monday to Friday, weekend considered one day).

Assignments submitted for evaluation in portfolios must be submitted in a protective enclosure with each requirement clearly labeled and dated. Failure to hand in assignments in a professional, organized manner may result in the instructor declining to grade a portfolio. Accommodation for missed assignments, or attendance, totaling less than 10% of the course grade, due to medical reasons, may be arranged with the instructor (rather than the academic counseling office of their home faculty) as long as the student contacts the instructor no later than the day after the assignment or attendance is required.

It is expected that students take notes on all lectures, presentations, and class discussions. A sketchbook or journal should be brought along to each class.

With fair notice, the course syllabus may be subject to change in response to class needs. It is the student's responsibility to stay apprised of all such discussed changes.

Participation and Attendance

Due to the intensive nature of VAS 1025 students will be required to work on some assignments independent of in-class studio work. This may occasionally involve undertaking more than one way of working at a time. In response, students should be prepared to spend at least one hour working outside of class for every hour of class time to meet the course requirements. Studio space is available outside of class time as room scheduling permits.

Attendance is mandatory and regularly taken. Students are expected to show up to every class, on time, and with the appropriate materials and must clean up after themselves at the end of each class. Students who miss class for medical reasons must present documented medical or bereavement excuses vetted through their academic advisor (see Department Medical Policy below). Missing classes, or part of a class without documented excuse or prior consultation with the instructor, will adversely affect students' grades. Missing more than 15% of classes, including late arrivals or early departures, may also result in student's being debarred from final assessments.

Workshops designed to orient students to specific facilities or media areas will be scheduled during class time. Attendance to these workshops is particularly important; workshops cannot normally be rescheduled for students who have missed class and may affect studio privileges in that area.

Students are expected to make themselves aware of all assignments, procedures and due dates, and are required to complete all assignments by the announced date of submission or critique. With fair notice to students, the course syllabus may change to adapt to class needs. It is the students' responsibility to remain apprised of such changes.

Note:

*An aim of this course is to expose the student to a very broad range of contemporary art practices. Some of the most canonical or universally esteemed works depict what might today be called 'mature subject matter'. Please be forewarned that a small percentage of the visual material students will be expected to view may be of an explicit nature, containing for example, scenes or depictions of sexual and/or violent acts. Students must accept that by taking this course they have consented to viewing such material. Also some class activities will involve working from nude models. If either of these class activities poses a problem for a student, for any reason, it must be brought to the attention of the instructor **immediately** (during the first class*

Assigned Readings, Written and Oral Presentations

Readings in support of class exercises and projects are assigned throughout both semesters of the course. As specified, students' will prepare and submit electronically a brief a written response or a reflective question for each of these readings before each class discussion. Writing assignments relating to organized field trips will also be a requirement in both semesters. In the second semester students will also be required to work with a partner to prepare a research presentation on the work of a contemporary artist.

Evaluation

Students' work and performance will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and numerical grades will be posted on the course OWL site at mid and end points of each semester. All student work will be awarded grades according to the following criteria (for more detail on terms of reference for studio grading see [Department Grading Criteria](#) below)

A+ 90 - 100%	Outstanding work, well exceeding the basic requirements of the project and demonstrating profound insight.
A 80 - 89%	Excellent work, well exceeding the basic requirements of the project and demonstrating creative insight.
B 70 - 79%	Very good work, showing thorough understanding of the course material and exceeding the basic requirements.
C 60 - 69%	Satisfactory work, meeting the basic project requirements and showing good understanding of the material.
D 50 - 59%	Satisfactory work that meets basic requirements and demonstrated some understanding of the course material, but not a thorough understanding.
F below 50%	Unsatisfactory work which shows insufficient effort or comprehension.

Grading Breakdown

Studio Assignments	80 %
Research (gallery reports, readings, blog, presentation)	10%
Attendance, participation, and professionalism	10%

Studio Assignments (80% of each semester)

All grades studio grades will reflect the student's ability to clearly *demonstrate*

- understanding and engagement of project concepts and parameters
- effort and ambition
- technical resourcefulness, proficiency, follow through
- inventiveness and initiative
- presentation, organization, communication of intent

Work will be handed in for regular grading and will be given a number grade based on the following grading scorecard: **Idea/Concept, Preparation, Material Execution, Presentation**. Students' artwork will be provided verbal comments during critiques. Formal evaluation of students' progress will take place after the presentation and at the end of the semester.

Attendance, Participation and Professionalism (total 10% of each semester)

Attendance and participation in all class activities is mandatory. Grades for attendance are tallied as follows: 5% percent per semester. Perfect attendance= 5%, 1 absence= 4%, 2= 3%, 3=2%, 4 = 1%, please note any more than 4 absences in a semester could lead to being debarred from participation in final critiques. 2 Lates = 1 Absence. A student is considered absent if they miss more than half a class on a given day. See *course requirements for more detail regarding attendance policy*. Class Participation will be weighed 5% per semester on the basis of demonstrated engagement in class activities, oral participation in critiques, class discussions. Marks are deducted for lack of preparation (for example, attending class without having materials to work with).

Materials

Materials Storage

Shared lockers will be assigned to students. It is your responsibility to maintain the use of this locker in a cooperative spirit and to ensure that it is locked and that the supplies of others are respected.

1025 Basic Supplies

All students are required to pay a materials fee of \$30.00 to cover a student Safety Kit (10\$) and a class purchasing budget (20\$ for provided materials). This fee can be paid by cash or cheque (payable to Western University - Dept. Visual Arts). Payment must be made within the first two weeks of the course.

Specific materials pertaining to individual assignments and media will always be discussed in class early enough so you will be able to purchase what you need in advance for your projects. There will be times when you can share materials- this will also be discussed in class. However, it is a very good idea to have a basic assortment of supplies that will be brought to class regularly. The Drawing Supplies list will provide a basic toolkit for the class and should be available from the start of the course.

Drawing and Collage Supplies

- 2 large (24x 36) newsprint pads
- corresponding sized drawing board/ clips
- 4 sheets mayfair cover paper
- 3 sheets manila or cream coloured dwg paper
- 20 sheets cartridge or bond paper 20 x 30"
- sketchbook/journal (your choice)
- 8 yds 36" brown craft paper (cut from roll)
- wide range of graphite pencils, 2H to 6B
- pencil sharpener w/ shaving container
- 6B graphite stick
- 2 sticks of brown conté
- 1 stick black conté
- 1 stick white conté
- 2 sticks of soft compressed charcoal
- willow charcoal
- blending stump
way)

- white vinyl eraser
- kneadable eraser
- black and one other colour ink
- reed brush
- 1/2" or larger flat brush
- containers for water
- cloth rag
- ballpoint pen or sharpie marker
- metal ruler, 12" or longer
- x-acto knife and scissors
- acid free glue stick
- masking and/or painters (removable) tapes
- cardboard or portfolio for storage of completed drawings (tape or string binding fine)
- fixative, workable variety (*use ONLY in department spray boot*)

Painting Supplies (Second Semester)

- Gesso 250ml
- acrylic gel
- containers for water
- painters tape or masking tape
- canvas stretchers (to be discussed)-
- canvas
- staples to fit JT-20 or JT-21
- stapler (optional)
- metal palette knife (for mixing/scaping paint)
- mixing palette (any flat impermeable/scrapable surface tempered glass sheet ideal)

Brushes:

- #4 filbert or round.
- #8 and #10 Filbert
- #6 and #8 Round
- 2 " soft housepainting brush

Acrylic Paints:

- Titanium white (1 large tube).
- Ivory Black
- Cadmium yellow middle
- Cadmium Red middle
- Alizarin Crimson
- Cerulean Blue
- Ultramarine Blue
- Burnt Umber

Art Supply Stores (Please call ahead to confirm store hours):

Bijan's Art Studio on Mill Street, north side, just off of Richmond Street, 2 blocks south of Oxford – right across from Barney's – free parking on Mill Street 519-439-1340 – on Richmond 6, Wellington 13 or University bus routes

Curry's corner of Wharnccliffe and Southdale (accessible by Wharnccliffe bus, but quite out of the

VISUAL ARTS DEPARTMENT POLICIES

Safety and Maintenance Responsibilities in Drawing and Foundations

Faculty Responsibilities:

- Inform students about safe use of toxic materials and ensure that students are following safe procedures. In case of an emergency, call 911.
- Instruct students in the proper use of the spray booth in room 230 if they wish to use aerosol fixatives. (The door of the booth must be closed when in use.)
- At the end of each class, return props and drapes to the model closet.
- At the end of each class, return space heaters and skeleton to room 206A, and opaque projectors, slide projectors, etc. to room 244. In the case of evening classes, equipment may be stored in your office and returned the next day.
- Notify Marlene Jones of any burnt-out bulbs, broken or missing furniture, broken window blinds, etc.
- Inform students about general cleanup (including removal of paint, etc., from table surfaces), about storage of work in progress, and removal of completed marked work.
- Supervise students' adherence to the maintenance requirements listed below, under the heading "Student Responsibilities".

Student Responsibilities:

- When using paint, remember that some pigments are more hazardous than others. Take special care with cadmium colours, cobalt colours, manganese colours, zinc white, flake white, cerulean blue, vermilion red, burnt and raw umber.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while painting since these activities may lead to accidental ingestion of paint.
- Use aerosol fixative only in the spray booth in Room 230 or outdoors. Fine mists from these sprays can penetrate deep into the lungs.
- At the end of each class, remove work-in-progress from easels, A-frames and walls, and store these works in your locker or storage racks.
- At the end of each class, clean all table surfaces. Throw used jars and other containers, and dirty rags and paper towels, into the garbage containers.
- Take home all completed graded work.
- Replace drawing boards in the model closet.
- Wash your hands thoroughly when you are finished working with dry or wet pigments or inks. Use a good hand cream after washing with soap, in order to prevent damage to your skin's natural defensive barrier.

Please note: According to University regulations guiding "Laboratory Use," students who fail to respect the responsibilities listed above will not have their final course grades sent to the Registrar.

University and Department Student Resources

Please remember:

Students in Distress:

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

Medical Illness:

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.

For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

[downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading]

Academic Counsellor: 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. 519-661-2111 ext. 86182; 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 (Mr. Ben Hakala, Academic Counselor 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

University 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 www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg113.html# or the 2014/2015 Western Academic Calendar, p. 19, 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. Accommodation for missed assignments, or attendance, totaling less than 10%, due to medical reasons, may be arranged with the instructor as long as the student contacts the instructor no later than the day after the assignment or attendance is due.

Mental Health Policy:

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.

Building Access:

The John Labatt Visual Arts Centre will be closed at 10:00 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 10:00 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.

Visual Arts Department Grading Criteria

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The **studio work** shows significant originality and exhibits a high degree of critical engagement. Sophisticated analysis and synthesis involving complex theoretical and conceptual thinking are demonstrated. Mastery of complex ideas is immediately evident. The studio work has originality, clarity and ambition. The project is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A)

The **studio work** shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical engagement. The work is clearly focused and intelligently presented. Mastery of complex ideas is demonstrated. The studio work has clarity and ambition. The quality of the studio production immediately engages the viewer. The studio work has been sufficiently developed and demonstrates mastery of techniques so that results are compelling. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is impressive.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The **studio work** shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. It demonstrates a clear awareness of the parameters of the assignment and a very good attempt to respond creatively to them. The work demonstrates reasonable depth and/or breadth and engages in a production that is appropriate to the level of the course. The quality of studio work engages the viewer and demonstrates above-average mastery of techniques. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is very good.

70-74 (Good, B)

The **studio work** shows a satisfactory attempt at analysis and critical thinking. It shows a good attempt to respond to assignment parameters. The work demonstrates some depth and/or breadth, making references to appropriate course material/art context. The studio production engages the viewer and demonstrates a sufficient mastery of techniques. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is satisfactory.

60-69 (Competent, C)

The **studio work** demonstrates adequate engagement with the project. It shows an attempt to respond to assignment parameters but does so at a very basic level that lacks creativity. Engagement with studio production demonstrates basic mastery of techniques. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is competent.

50-59 (Marginal, D)

The **studio work** shows less than adequate engagement with the topic and with the material covered by the course. The studio work waivers in its attempt to respond to assignment parameters and tends to be simplistic. Engagement with studio production demonstrates less than a basic mastery of techniques. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is less than satisfactory.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The **studio work** demonstrates a failure to comprehend/engage the topic. The studio work is incomplete and lacks redeeming creative merit. The work clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is unacceptable.