

**Visual Arts, Art History**  
**History of Photography**

AH 2650G – Winter 2023



Helen Levitt, *New York*, c1971

**Professor Sarah Bassnett**

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Office hours – Tuesdays 2 – 2:30 pm on Zoom

Class time: access new course material each week on **Mondays @ 10 am**

**Teaching assistants**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course takes a thematic approach to issues and debates in the history of photography. Throughout the course, we look at the work of key photographers, discuss ideas by important theorists and historians, and consider how photographs relate to the social, political, and artistic context in which they were produced. We examine the social and cultural role of photography, including how photography has been mobilized to advance political agendas and how it has influenced ideas about people from various classes and cultures. As we investigate the field of art photography, our focus is on stylistic movements from pictorialism, modernism, and postmodernism. This survey introduces students to the exciting field of photography studies and prepares them to critically engage with our image-saturated world. This is an asynchronous online course.

Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton (Neutral) peoples on lands connected to several Treaties including Treaty 6 London Township, Treaty 7 Sombra Township, Treaty 21 Longwoods and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- describe and analyze the formal properties of a range of photographs using appropriate terminology
- explain the significance of the work of important photographers from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, including how it relates to the social, political, and artistic context in which it was produced
- read and comprehend the main points of scholarly articles
- conduct research using library resources, such as books and journal articles in databases, and use the sources effectively to support your analysis of selected photographs
- express ideas effectively in writing
- participate respectfully and constructively in online discussions and activities

## PREREQUISITE / ANTI-REQUISITE

The prerequisite is 1.0 from AH 1640 or the former VAH 1040 or two of AH 1641A/B – 1648A/B or the former VAH 1041A/B – VAH 1045A/B, or 1.0 essay course from Arts and Humanities, FIMS, or Social Science, or a module in photography, or permission of the Department.

You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that you have not taken an anti-requisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as the basis for an appeal. If you are not eligible for a course, you may be removed from it without an adjustment to your fees. These decisions cannot be appealed.

The last day to drop this course without academic penalty is **March 7, 2023**.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Important Technical Requirements



Stable internet connection



Laptop or computer with  
microphone and speakers  
(camera optional)

For technical assistance, check the [OWL Help page](#) or contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#).

Phone: 519-661-3800.

[Google Chrome](#) or [Mozilla Firefox](#) are the preferred browsers to use for OWL.

All course material will be posted to OWL: <http://owl.uwo.ca>. Any changes will be announced on the OWL site.

## Required Readings

All required readings are posted as PDFs on OWL.

## ASSESSMENTS

### DUE DATES & GRADING

Assignment	Due date	Grading
Participation on VoiceThread	Weekly	15%
Quizzes on readings and lectures	Weeks 2 to 8	25%
Final written assignment	March 13 @ 10 am to March 19 @ 11 pm	30%
Visual analysis essay	April 6 @ 11 pm	30%

### PARTICIPATION 15%

The participation portion of your grade will be based your contributions to online discussions and activities in VoiceThread. Please note that even though the course is asynchronous, there is a weekly schedule. You are expected to complete course work on a weekly basis, and this includes contributions to online discussions.

### WEEKLY QUIZZES 25%

The weekly quizzes on the readings and lecture videos (weeks 2 to 8) are multiple choice format and are completed in OWL. Each quiz has five questions. Use these quizzes to help guide your reading and for feedback on how well you are understanding the lecture material. Any quiz that is not completed on time will receive a grade of 0. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped when final grades are calculated.

### WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT 30%

The written assignment is based on the weekly readings and lecture videos and assesses the weekly learning outcomes. The assignment is comprised of short answer and essay questions. You will have approximately one week to complete this, in addition to the lessons assigned for that week.

### VISUAL ANALYSIS ESSAY 30%

Using the guidelines for visual analysis provided, write a 6 page / 1800-word essay that compares two photographs with similar subject matter: two portraits, two landscapes, etc. A list of suggestions will be provided. If you would like to select images yourself, make sure we have not discussed them in class, and check with me to see if they are suitable. Consult a minimum of three published sources (books, exhibition catalogues, articles) for your research on the photographs. Your research will help you understand the social, political, and artistic context. You will combine this with formal analysis of the photographs in order to develop your own interpretation and comparison.

### POLICIES ON LATE OR MISSED ASSESSMENTS

#### Academic Consideration

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Dean's office (the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration/home Faculty) together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. These documents will be retained in the student's file, and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy. Once the

petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic accommodation shall be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty. Academic accommodation shall be granted only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. (Note – it will not be sufficient to provide documentation indicating simply that the student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill.”)

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

Documentation from Family Physicians/Nurse Practitioners and Walk-In Clinics: A Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is required where a student is seeking academic accommodation. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

At the time of illness, students should make an appointment with a physician/nurse practitioner at Student Health Services. During this appointment, request a Student Medical Certificate from the Physician/Nurse Practitioner. Students should request that an SMC be filled out. Students may bring this form with them, or request alternative Emergency Department documentation. Documentation should be secured at the time of the initial visit to the Emergency Department. Where it is not possible for a student to have an SMC completed by the attending physician, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that their ability to meet their academic responsibilities was seriously affected.

### **Late Assignments & Grace Days**

A student seeking academic accommodation for any work worth less than 10% must contact the instructor. To minimize requests for extensions, each of you will have two grace days to use on the written assignment or the visual analysis essay. In other words, no late penalties will be applied to these assignments until **after** you've used these two days. You can use them all at once (i.e. hand an assignment two days late and still get full marks), or you can use them for different assignments. You cannot use the grace days for VoiceThread participation or Quizzes.

Once you've used up your grace days, the grade penalty is 5% for each calendar day, **including weekends**, that it is late. All late assignments, whether covered by the grace days or not, will be subject to the following conditions:

1. Late papers may be graded and returned later than those submitted by the deadline
2. A grade will be given, but no (or minimal) comments will be provided

**The last opportunity to submit coursework is April 10, 2023 at 11:59 pm.**

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

All work for the course **MUST** be entirely your own. All sources that you use for your assignments must be accurately cited. If you have doubts about how and when to cite sources, it is better to err on the side of caution. Consult the academic integrity lesson on OWL and / or consult with me before assignment due dates. All course work must be completed specifically for this course. Submitting the same work for credit in more than one course is considered cheating. Plagiarism and cheating are very serious academic offences and they will be dealt with strictly. Plagiarism includes:

- Quoting verbatim or almost verbatim from any source, including all electronic sources, without acknowledgement
- Adopting someone else's line of thought, argument, or supporting evidence without acknowledgement
- Submitting someone else's work, in any form, without acknowledgement

- Knowingly representing another person's idea as one's own

For information concerning Western's Plagiarism and Academic Offences (Scholastic Offences) policies see: [www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2016/pg113.html#](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2016/pg113.html#)

All assignments are subject to review through plagiarism detection software. The University uses Turnitin.com for this purpose. Turnitin is an anti-plagiarism tool that screens assignments against a database of the Internet, e-journals, e-books, and a range of other scanned material, including other assignments for this course. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

### **Multiple choice quizzes**

Computer-marked multiple-choice quizzes may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

### **CITATION STYLE**

The Chicago Manual of Style, Humanities format, is the standard style for art history. Use this style to cite your sources for your research paper and other assignments. Please refer to the guide in OWL and the Library website for examples: <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/services/styleguides.html>.

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## **POLICIES & CONDUCT**

### **Student Conduct**

Students will conduct themselves in a manner 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. [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/code\\_of\\_conduct.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/code_of_conduct.pdf)

I am committed to fostering a class environment that is comfortable for all students, especially those from marginalized or underrepresented backgrounds. These core values include using preferred gender pronouns and human-centred language, which convey respect for people's diverse experiences. We do not always have to agree with one another; however, everyone is expected to show respect for the views of other people.

### **Academic Sanctions**

In instances of non-payment of prescribed tuition and other fees, the University shall seal the academic record. When an academic record is sealed, the student will not be able to: a) view grades; b) register in future courses; c) receive transcripts or a degree diploma; d) obtain admission or readmission.

### **Additional Course Material Request Policy**

For online courses the material may be presented in a variety of ways at the instructor's discretion. Requests for additional material can only be made in cases necessitating academic accommodation. If a student requires Academic Accommodation for the course material, they can contact Western's Academic Support & Engagement department. <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>

### **Normal Building Access (September 1st to April 30th) (Subject to change):**

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

### Academic Accommodation

For Western's complete Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities see [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic\\_policies/rights\\_responsibilities.html](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html). Please visit the Accessible Education for assistance with a academic accommodation. Students who want to request academic accommodation must register with the Centre, meet with a counselor, and provide appropriate documentation. See [http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html) for more information.

### Absences on Religious Holy Days

For purposes of this policy "the University has approved a list of dates which are recognized religious holidays which require members of those religions to be absent from the University; this list is updated annually and is available at departmental, Deans' and Faculty advising Offices." For Western's Policy on Religious Holidays see [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic\\_policies/rights\\_responsibilities.html](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html).

### Professionalism & Privacy

In addition to following the [Student Code of Conduct](#) Western students are expected to adhere to the following expectations of professional conduct:



- Students are expected to follow online etiquette expectations
- All course materials created by the instructor(s) are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared
- Recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission
- Permitted recordings are not to be distributed
- Students will be expected to uphold academic integrity standards
- All recorded sessions will remain within the course site or unlisted if streamed

### Copyright and Audio/Video Recording Statement

Course material is copyrighted and using this material for any purposes other than your own education contravenes Canadian Copyright Laws. You must always ask permission to record another individual and you should never share or distribute recordings. Do not post course material on any websites or platforms.

## RESOURCES

### Office Hours / Email

Office hours will be held on Zoom. Please see me during my office hours if you are having difficulty with any aspect of the course, including readings or assignments. If you cannot make it during office hours, please contact one of the TAs or contact me by email. I will make every effort to reply to email within one to two business days. As I have other professional and personal responsibilities, I typically respond to email Monday through Friday during normal business hours.

### Support Services

There are various support services around campus and these include, but are not limited to:

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.

## **Health and Wellness**

Western offers a variety of counselling services and several mental health resources for students. If you or a friend are feeling overwhelmed, confused or unsure of your mental health state, please don't ignore it. There are steps you can take to help yourself or help others. Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help engage in healthy living while pursuing your degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Further information regarding health and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>.

## **Undergraduate Visual Arts Grade Descriptors - Art History / Museum and Curatorial Studies**

### **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.