

AH 2600F: THEORIES AND PRACTICES OF ART HISTORY AND VISUAL CULTURE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to modern and contemporary theories, methods, and practices in art history and visual culture. Through the examination of a wide range of visual media, artists, philosophers, and political theorists, students will develop their knowledge of and capacity for critical thinking about the intersections between visual culture, art, philosophy, and politics.

PREREQUISITE(S):

Registration in years 2–4 of a Department of Visual Arts Module, or permission of the department.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course develops students:

- knowledge of key historical and contemporary theories and practices of art history and visual studies
- knowledge of key concepts in Art History and Visual Culture
- critical thinking and analytical skills
- competency in communicating analysis in writing

COURSE ORGANIZATION

This is a blended course that consists of both online and in-person instruction. Students are expected to follow the weekly schedule of readings and other media, and to complete all assignments on or before the due dates.

REQUIRED AND SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

Course readings and other materials will be posted on the OWL course site (<https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>) under the Resources tab. You can access this site by using the same ID and password as your UWO email account.

EVALUATION

Kant Summary	500 words	10%
Formal Analysis	500 words	15%
Take-Home Assignment	600-750 words	15%
Response Paper	400-600 words	10%
Final Essay	1,000-1,200 words	30%
Class participation in Forums: Weeks 5, 6, 7, 8		20%

COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

1. Email: You are free to email me with questions or concerns at any time, and I will reply within 24 hours during the week, and within 48 hours on weekends. *Email is best for short questions, clarifications and sharing material. For more involved questions, please see me during office hours.*

2. Office hours: Office hours are held on campus (see above). I am also available after class. Zoom meetings are only scheduled in exceptional circumstances.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSIONS

Assignments must be submitted through OWL as a Microsoft Word document (.doc, .docx), and they will not be accepted through email. Assignments should be written (keyboarded) in full sentences and double spaced with proper citation and formatting. All materials will be submitted through OWL and must be completed exclusively by the student *expressly for this course*. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of policies governing academic honesty and to be clear on what constitutes plagiarism and/or cheating. If you have any confusion about definitions of academic honesty within University practices, you can direct questions to your instructors and the Writing Support Centre, <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing>.

POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS

If you cannot hand in an assignment by the specified due date, discuss the matter with me as soon as possible. Late assignments are subject to a penalty of 2%/day, and it is your responsibility to make arrangements with me to hand in late assignments. *Do not send assignments through email.*

If you are unable to meet assignment deadlines for medical, religious, or extra-ordinary circumstances inform me as soon as possible and refer to the 'Academic Consideration' section below.

CITATION STYLE GUIDELINES

The Department of Visual Arts adheres to Chicago Manual of Style guidelines. See the see the Research Guides tab on OWL, or the Writing Support Centre (<http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing>) and these links:

1. <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>
2. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/amos_formatting_and_style_guide/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html

WESTERN UNIVERSITY VISUAL ARTS DEPARTMENT POLICIES

Prerequisite Checking:

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 is a major academic offence. 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). This includes presenting the written, visual or aural work of another creator as your own. Plagiarism includes failing to attribute ideas, statements, paragraphs, and frameworks of essays, articles, and other texts. Visual or Aural Plagiarism may involve both hand-based media such as drawing, painting, printmaking and sculpture, as well as digital media such as photography, video and sound. It includes work subsequently manipulated or transferred between different media, as well as self-plagiarism – work submitted for assignments previously produced and graded for another course. Similar to textual plagiarism, all student work involving the visual or aural work of others must be appropriately cited/identified whether in print or orally. Failure to do so will lead to similar academic penalties as those identified in Western’s Academic Calendar.

Works Cited, Turnitin and ChatGPT.

University Senate states that: “Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words.” When students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt by acknowledging paraphrasing, using quotation marks for direct quotation, and including footnotes or citations. Similarly, paraphrasing must be referenced, and a Works Cited page should be attached to assignments that draw on outside sources. The Department of Visual Arts adheres to Chicago Manual of Style Guidelines (see the Research Guides tab on OWL or the links above).

Assignments are subject to submission for textual similarity review using Turnitin.com, the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University. 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. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>). Additionally, assignments are subject to submission for authorship review to ChatGPT detection software.

In this course, AI tools are permitted exclusively for preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance research and learning by providing access to diverse information sources, but they must be used responsibly. It is therefore essential that students critically evaluate the information, exercise independent thinking, and develop and synthesize their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. In short, AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration; however, students are expected to uphold academic integrity by developing original material, attributing all sources according to the conventions outlined by the Chicago Manual of Style, and adhering to the plagiarism guidelines outlined by Western.

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.

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/code_of_conduct.pdf

Statement on Gender-based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, here. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, **please contact support@uwo.ca**.

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.

The above prohibitions shall be in force until such time as indebtedness to the University, including payment of fee for removal of the seal, has been cleared to the satisfaction of the University.

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?PolicyCategoryID=1&Command=showCategory&Keywords=academic%20sanctions&SubHeadingID=169&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_169

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/>

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, 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 they 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.

Documentation from Student Health Services

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.

Documentation from Hospital Urgent Care Centres or Emergency Departments

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.

Accommodation by Instructor for work worth less than 10% of the overall grade in a course

A student seeking academic accommodation for any work worth less than 10% must contact the instructor and follow the appropriate Department or course specific instructions provided on the course outline. In this course, Forum Contributions (see below) start on the day of the lecture and span the week. Failure to make at least two of the three contributions during the week that they are due will receive 0% unless students receive academic consideration.

Medical (or other) documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office, and it will be the Dean's office that will make the determination whether accommodation is warranted. Given the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy, instructors may not collect medical documentation.

In all cases where accommodation is being sought for work totalling 10% or more of the final grade in a course, students will be directed to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office. Students who have been denied accommodation by an instructor may appeal this decision to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office but will be required to present appropriate documentation.

Attendance:

Under university regulations, students who miss more than 15% of their classes (15% is equivalent to missing 8 hours of Lecture and/or Studio Lab, due to absence or lateness, or a combination of both, per semester) without written corroboration for health or bereavement, can be debarred from participation in final evaluations and/or assignments.

Note that if a student is consistently absent from a 3-hour class for 1 hour, they will exceed the 15% cutoff and be debarred; assignments may stop being accepted and such assignments will receive a mark of 0 (zero).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Electronic Devices:

During Exams: Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any electronic devices during any tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other in-class evaluations.

During Lectures and Tutorials: Although you are welcome to use a computer during lecture and tutorial periods, you are expected to use the computer for scholastic purposes only, and refrain from engaging in any activities that may distract other students from learning. From time to time, your professor may ask the class to turn off all computers, to facilitate learning or discussion of the material presented in class. **Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of lectures – nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.**

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.

Permission re: Promotion:

You grant permission for Western University to reproduce your name, information describing your artwork, representations of your work and any other information you have provided for the purpose of display, promotion and publicity either now or in the future.

By installing your artwork in the John Labatt Visual Arts Centre, you grant Western University an irrevocable, perpetual, royalty-free world-wide licence to photograph your artwork and use such photograph(s) for the promotion of your artwork and/or Western University, including, without limitation, advertising, display, editorial, packaging, promotion, television, social media, the Department of Visual Arts website, flickr, Twitter, Instagram etc.). Students wishing to not have their work photographed should not exhibit it in the Visual Arts Centre, Artlab Gallery or Cohen Commons. As the area is open to the public, students, faculty, staff and other visitors will not be prohibited from photographing your artwork while on exhibit at the John Labatt Visual Arts Centre.

You otherwise retain all ownership in your artwork.

Artwork Installation Liability Release:

You understand that the area where your artwork will be hanging or displayed is unsupervised and is in a part of the building that may be open to the public, day and evening, whether or not the building is open. Western University accepts no responsibility for damage to, or loss of, artwork at any time while on display or while being transported to or from the John Labatt Visual Arts Centre. By displaying your artwork in the John Labatt Visual Arts Centre, you accept all risk of loss or damage to your artwork. Western University does not provide insurance for the artwork on exhibition. If you wish to insure artwork, it is your responsibility to do so.

Removal:

Western University reserves the right to dispose of artwork not picked up by April 15th of each year.

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

Gender Neutral Bathrooms:

The John Labatt's Visual Arts Centre has two gender-neutral bathrooms. One is located in the Artlab and is open only during Artlab hours. A second single stall gender neutral bathroom can be found on the third floor of the JLVAC. Here is the full list of inclusive washrooms at UWO: http://www.uwo.ca/equity/doc/inclusive_washrooms.pdf.

Please contact the Administrative Officer, Meghan Edmiston (meghan.edmiston@uwo.ca), for card access to the elevator and stairs if you are in need of the 3rd floor gender neutral/accessible washroom for the academic year.

Land Acknowledgement

<https://communications.uwo.ca/comms/land-acknowledgement/>

VISUAL ARTS**Art History / Museum and Curatorial Studies Grade Descriptors**

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 of 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.

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments must be submitted in Word (not PDF/read-only formats) to OWL. Do not send documents through email.

Kant Summary: September 20th

500 words 10%

The summary explains Kant's thesis that aesthetic judgement is both **subjective** and **universal**, and his argument that "**the agreeable**" and "**the good**" are "**interested**," in opposition to "**the beautiful**" as "**disinterested**." Bolded terms should be defined using accessible language. If descriptive language cannot completely concretize your points, use examples.

Formal Analysis: September 27th

500 words 15%

This essay compares and contrasts two paintings using Wölfflin's five principles. The latter provide tools for analyzing the structure, meaning, and psychological power of two-dimensional works: consider the relation of formal elements to narrative, mood, emotional impact, etc. To develop a thesis statement, consider the following questions: how do the formal elements convey meaning, and what thoughts, sensations, and feelings do they evoke: foreboding, mystery, tranquility, conflict, harmony, irony, discomfort, anxiety, amusement, empathy, etc.? Finally, how do these responses affect perceptions of the subject matter?

Take-Home Assignment: November 15th

600-750 words 15%

The assignment consists of short essay questions about the material covered in Weeks 1-9.

Forum Contributions (class discussion): Weeks 5, 6, 7, 8

4 X 5% = 20%

The weekly asynchronous hours will be devoted to Forum posts in Weeks 4, 6, 8, 11. The posts are spread out over a seven-day period, but they are not completely self-paced. You must post at least three separate submissions, one original that responds to the discussion topic, and two others that respond to two other students' original posts. The original post must be completed within the first three days – so that others can respond – and the others should be spread out over the week. Note: posts cannot be submitted retroactively (or through email) because there will be no audience to respond (i.e., Forums are part of class discussion).

Postings on the Discussion Board must:

- Contribute something meaningful to the discussion;
- Support your opinion with sufficient reasons or evidence;
- Be clear and well structured.

Postings should not:

- Contain disrespectful, insulting, or offensive language;
- Be excessively long or excessively short;
- Be unrelated to the week's topic;
- Make empty statements, e.g., "I agree with you" or "nice comment";
- Be too general, e.g., "your argument is strong, and your example is clear."

Response paper: November 29nd

400-600 words 10%

The paper explores issues raised by the material in Weeks 10 and 11.

Final Essay: December 07th

1000-1200 words 30%

This essay explores a key issue, or set of issues, related to the theory covered in one week (e.g., aesthetic experience, abjection, visual culture and perception, critical race theory, etc.). Your analysis of theoretical issues can examine one or more artists, or it can focus solely on the arguments of theoreticians and art historians.

