

9521B/9621B Studio Elective – Art Practices and the Environment.:

Term: Winter 2018

Time: Thursday 2:30-5:30;

Location; VAC 249 or room 206

Professor: Kim Moodie

Office: VAC rm. 118

Office Hours: Friday, 1-2 p.m. or by appointment

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This course accommodates both studio practitioners and art theorists and historians. Students will investigate the scholarly, influential, and social state of art that addresses the environment and its creative and critical relevance in historical, modern, and contemporary artists' work. As well the course may examine both historical and current depictions of natural and industrial scenes in which the use of material resources is clearly visible. It further investigates how art production can interact with the environment, both positively and negatively, while also addressing economic and social correlations. In doing so it will primarily focus on examinations of the practices of artists whose work addresses ecological concerns. Course assignments will focus on detailed examinations of the work of influential, developed artists. Students should expect some classes to be held outside the Department, or perhaps at other sites on campus.

Students should be informally prepared, in the first class of term, to do either a short studio presentation on their work or a discussion of artists or critics whose stance on environmental art intrigues them.

Environmental artistic practices include both historical renditions of nature and/or urban development and more recent ecological and politically motivated types of works. Current environmental art primarily distances itself from formal traditional aesthetics, instead focusing on systems, processes and phenomena with a connection to social concerns. Over the last two decades environmental art has become more significant internationally as the cultural impact of climate change is definitively

more visible.

Consequently environmental artists often focus on ecological issues. Particularly important is a connection between an artist's use of natural materials and their connection to images, symbols or a specific site. This is often most visible in earth/land art. Environmental artists will use information from all disciplines, i.e. science, philosophy, history and the humanities. Environmental art encompasses traditional media and new media. Relevant artists' work can embrace a range of landscape/environmental conditions from the rural, to the suburban and urban as well as urban/rural industrial.

Following are categories of environmental art as defined by the Internet:

- Representational Artworks - presenting information and conditions primarily through images and object-making with the intention of encouraging dialogue.
- Remediation Projects that reclaim or restore polluted and disrupted environments – these artists often work with environmental scientists, landscape architects and urban planners
- Activist Projects that help change and activate patterns of behaviour and public policy.
- Social Sculptures – socially engaged, time-based artwork that involves communities in monitoring their landscapes and taking a participatory role in sustainable practices and lifestyles.
- EcoPoetic art works that initiate a re-envisioning and re-enchantment with the natural world, inspiring healing and co-existence with other species.
- Direct Encounters – artworks that bring into play natural phenomena such as water, weather, sunlight, plants, etc.
- Didactic or Pedagogical Works that share information about environmental injustice and ecological problems such as water and soil pollution and health hazards.
- Lived-and-relational Aesthetics involving sustainable, off-the-grid, permaculture existences.

Eco Art: A current definition of Ecological Art, drafted collectively by the EcoArtNetwork is that "Ecological Art has an ethic of social justice in both its content and form/materials. EcoArt is created to inspire caring and respect, stimulate dialogue, and encourage the long-term flourishing of the social and natural environments in which we live. It commonly manifests as socially engaged, activist, community-based restorative or interventionist art. Artists considered to be working within this field subscribe generally to one or more of the following principles:

- Focus on the web of interrelationships in our environment—on the physical, biological, cultural, political, and historical aspects of ecological systems.
- Create works that employ natural materials or engage with environmental forces such as wind, water, or sunlight.
- Reclaim, restore, and remediate damaged environments.
- Inform the public about ecological dynamics and the environmental problems we face.
- Revise ecological relationships, creatively proposing new possibilities for coexistence, sustainability, and healing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Students will develop and hone specific reading, writing skills in relation to discussions of art and the environment.

2. Students will gain familiarity with a broad range of current debates about environmental art as discussed in historical/theoretical arguments

3. Students will have a demonstrable grasp of issues significant to the relationship between art making and artists' research methods in relation to the topic.

4. Students will develop analytical skills in respect to their own research methods as artists and historians, and use these skills to further hone their own practice.

And the ability to articulate contemporary concerns between art reception, art theory and art making.

Course Requirements and Materials:

- Active e-mail address (communications outside of class will be done via class e-mail address and OWL)

- * A collegial disposition (especially during critiques) in the form of attentiveness, respectfulness, and generosity.

Attendance:

- Attendance, punctuality and preparedness for class are critical.
- University regulations stipulate that if a student misses 15% of their classes (see end of syllabus for official policy), without written corroboration for health or bereavement, they can be debarred from participation in final evaluations and/or critiques.

Assignments/Late Assignments:

Students are expected to complete all assignments on time. Failure to complete assignments without prior arrangements with the instructor will result in a failing grade. With prior discussion, students may hand in late work with a 10% per week deduction from the assignment. Extensions will be given upon official notification from the student's faculty advisor due to documented serious health and bereavement reasons.

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 Counseling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. The instructor or department cannot grant academic accommodation. See below for specific arrangements regarding less than 10% of assignments.

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.

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]

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.

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.

Prerequisites:

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 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.)

Please remember:

One of the most important resources for course counseling, special permissions, course changes, grade appeals, etc., is the Undergraduate Chair of Visual Arts, Prof. C. Barteet (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 or Ms. Amanda Green 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.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1] A thirty minute presentation on an artist whose work demonstrate environmental concerns and who fits one or more of the categories or definitions of ecological art mentioned at the beginning of the course outline. Choose one of artists from the aforementioned list, or one of your own and in thirty minutes interpret how their work fits into a definition of ecological art. Describe in particular how their use of materials can be recognized as environmentally positive, negative or in between. But also see if you can offer a critique of the work as well. How much of an impact does their work have on the space around them, or how much does it inform the audience about ecological issues? A 10-minute discussion period will follow each presentation. 20%

2] A seminar that corresponds to course objectives and relative readings. Students will prepare a 30-40 minute presentation on two artwork placed in dialogue with each other, and with a relative reading for each artist. One reading can be chosen from assigned readings and one or both chosen by the student. The seminar may address the following: remediation, activism, time-based art works [how long does it last and what is the residue], pollution, social responsibility, industrialization, the poetic, hybrids, restoration, interaction with nature and or an audience. techniques. The presentation will be followed by a 10-to15 minute discussion lead by the student. A record of the seminar must be submitted in hard copy to the instructor. 25%

Students will complete one major studio final project that reflects environmental concerns. (Including either and/or studio work and /or a written component/essay); -35%

At the end of the semester, each student will host a critique wherein they present an artwork[s] that is influenced by conceptual or material investigations undertaken during the semester. The work should be devised in connection to the themes of the course. [35%]

A Mid-Term Progress Report (10% from 35%) [February 16]

At midterm, students will host a critique or present a report on the progress of their studio/paper research.

Students can work off of the artwork they are producing towards getting their degree. Or they can produce entirely different work[s]]. But obviously the artwork must have an environmental theme. Methodology, and techniques are very important in the construction of the work, as they are clearly part of the content. . The work should be substantial enough to equate with 35% of the course grade. By the second class of term students should submit a proposal [2 pages] defining their project. For MA students who do not wish to do this assignment they may choose to do an essay based on a well known artist or art movement [2500 word] paper in which they interpret the premises of artworks through the application of three of the aforementioned terms and the lens of 21st century contemporary art works.

Participation activity and written responses to readings. 20%

Students are expected to submit 4 2-3 page reports on readings discussed in class based on their content, the student's interpretation of this content and responses discussed in class. Or students can write reports based on class visits to galleries and sites. Participation means active involved discussion relative to readings, seminars and project critiques. This requires continual full participation.

Grading Guidelines

The following grading standards are quoted from the department webpage:
http://www.uwo.ca/visarts/grad/downloads/Graduate_Grading_Standards.pdf

90-100% Work of excellent quality

Approaching if not already at professional standards. Thoroughly and creatively engaged at a high level of artistic and/or written production; very high standards and sophistication evidenced in all areas of production

86-89% Work of very good quality

Demonstrably evolved beyond expected standards of critical, theoretical and creative engagement in artistic and/or written production

80-85% Work of good quality

Shows competence in artistic and/or written production but could be improved in one or more ways

78-79% Work of acceptable quality

Needs substantial improvement in one or more areas

70-77% Work of passable quality (a warning regarding removal of funding)

Shows sufficient ability and effort to allow the student to pass the course, but is seriously deficient with respect to critical, theoretical or practical engagement in artistic and/or written production

<69% Work of unacceptable quality

Removal from program