

Western University, Department of Visual Arts
PhD Seminar: Theory & Methods
VA 9600A – FALL 2019



Hito Steyerl, still from *How Not To Be Seen. A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File*, 2013

Class time: 11:30 am – 2:30 pm
Location: VAC 148

Professor: Sarah Bassnett

Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30 – 3:30 pm and by appointment in VAC 219

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This seminar is the foundation course for the PhD program in Art and Visual Culture. The theoretical component of the course aims to develop proficiency in critical theory. It prepares students for the comprehensive exams and helps them establish the theoretical framework for their thesis prospectus. The research methods module of the course examines a variety of methodologies for studying art and visual culture. Students learn to situate their research within their field of study and begin work on a literature review for their thesis prospectus. The course also addresses professional practices, such as grant writing and pedagogy.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

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

- analyze and contextualize a range of theoretical texts
- effectively communicate complex ideas orally and in writing
- establish learning goals for an undergraduate course and begin to develop the teaching materials needed to achieve them
- situate their research / artistic practice in relation to the relevant fields of art and literature
- manage expectations and workload
- set reasonable goals for their scholarly and professional development

ASSIGNMENTS

PARTICIPATION 10%

The participation portion of your grade will be based on your commitment and contributions to the course. Arriving late to class, leaving early, not being prepared, and not participating in discussions and activities will significantly reduce your participation mark. The level and quality of your contributions to class discussions will form the basis of one portion of your mark and reading responses make up the other.

READING RESPONSE JOURNAL 10%

Reading responses should be approximately 250-words long and should first briefly summarize the reading and then comment on the ideas raised in the text. Your response journal should address 10 of the assigned readings from the theory and research methods readings (week 3 to 8 with the exception of Paul Oliver, "The Literature Review"). Your responses will form the basis of our class discussion about the reading, which means this assignment should be completed weekly, even though you will hand it in as one document.

GRANT WRITING 10% (OR RESEARCH STATEMENT 10%)

Using the grant guidelines and the class on grant writing, write a SSHRC doctoral fellowship grant application. Drafts will be submitted first for feedback and a second time for grading. If you have received a SSHRC grant, the alternate assignment is to write a research statement. Briefly describe the objectives, theoretical framework, and methodology of your research program (500 words).

THEORY PAPER & PRESENTATION 25%

This assignment is a 1000-word paper and thirty-minute seminar presentation on one of the assigned readings from the **Minor Comprehensive reading list** (for First Years), or your developing **Bibliography for the Major Comprehensive** (for Second Years). Presentation dates and readings will be arranged at the beginning of the course. Readings (second years) must be posted to OWL at least one week before your presentation so that class members have time to read it.

For the paper and presentation, you are expected to come to terms with the main ideas in the reading and be able to situate its arguments historically and theoretically as well as in relation to the author's other writings and an appropriate theoretical field. As well, you should attempt to explain the relationship between the author's theoretical approach and your own research question. Be sure to include a bibliography with your paper.

LESSON PLAN 10%

Develop a lesson plan for one class session of a course you would be interested in teaching. Using the guidelines for lesson planning discussed in class, come to class prepared to "teach" a 15-minute portion of the plan you have developed. Your grade on this assignment will be based on both the presentation and the written submission using the BOPPPS lesson planner.

LITERATURE REVIEW 35%

A literature review is an analysis of the scholarship on a particular topic. Its purpose is to map the key concepts and issues in a field and to synthesize existing scholarship. By reviewing the literature, you can identify important debates in a field, and this can help you to formulate new questions and position your own research within that field. This assignment gives you the opportunity to get up to date on the literature in the main field you expect to engage with for your PhD research. Your literature review should be approximately 2000 words (eight pages) and should include a bibliography of all sources discussed. Working in pairs, you will peer review a preliminary draft of a class mate's literature review on Oct. 31. Drafts must be submitted by Oct 30 @ 8 pm. Guidelines will be provided.

Assignment	Due date	Grading
Attendance & participation	Weekly	10%
Grant writing	Sept 27 @ 8pm	10%
Theory paper & presentation	Oct 3 or 10 @ 8pm	25%
Peer review of lit review	Nov 7 @ 8pm	Graded with lit review
Reading response journal	Nov 14 @ 8pm	10%
Lesson plan	Nov 28 @ 8pm	10%
Literature review	Oct 30 & Dec 12 @ 8 pm	35%

Late Policies

Extensions will be granted in exceptional circumstances and typically only in cases of illness, bereavement or for other compassionate reasons. They should be negotiated before assignments are due. Late assignments not accompanied by official documentation will receive a penalty of 5% per day. If you suspect that you will be unable to meet a deadline, please talk to me before the deadline to discuss an extension.

Academic Honesty:

All work for the course MUST be entirely your own. All sources used for your assignments must be accurately cited using the Chicago Manual of Style, humanities format. If you have doubts about how and when to cite sources, visit the Writing Centre, or talk to me before the 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 the most serious of 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 as one's own an idea of another.

For information concerning Western's Plagiarism and Academic Offences (Scholastic Offences) policies see: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2017/pg113.html> .

All assignments may be subject to review through plagiarism detection software. The University of Western Ontario currently 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.

CITATION STYLE

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

POLICIES & CONDUCT

Attendance

You are expected to attend and participate in every class. In particular, it is essential that you come prepared to discuss the readings. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed from a class mate.

Academic accommodation

Please talk to me during the first few weeks of the course if you require accommodation in course requirements or scheduling due to a disability. Students who want to request academic accommodation on these grounds must provide appropriate documentation.

Electronic devices:

Computers should only be used to for work related to the course. You will be asked to put your computer away if it becomes a source of distraction for you and others. Please ensure cell phones are off, and please do not check email, social networking sites, or engage in other distractions during the seminar.

Code of conduct:

Students will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Code of Student Conduct and treat all members of the Western community with respect. See <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2017/pg111.html>. I will make every effort to foster a class environment that is comfortable for all students. We do not always have to agree with one another, however, it is important that we respect each other's viewpoints. Behaviour that is disruptive or discriminatory will not be tolerated.

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 <http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2017/pg111.html>.

RESOURCES

Office Hours/ Email

Please feel free to drop in during my office hours to discuss any aspect of the course or other academic matters. If you would like to talk to me and cannot make it to my office hours, please ask for an appointment or contact me by email. During term, I will generally answer emails within 48 hours or less.

OWL

We will use OWL to supplement the in-class portion of the course. I will post the syllabus, readings, and a range of other resources on OWL. Go to <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal> to access OWL. Use your Western user name and password to sign on. Please be sure to check your browser and make sure everything is working at the beginning of the course. See the ITS technical assistance info on the above mentioned web site, and contact ITS for additional technical assistance. The ITS Support number is (519) 661-3800.

Readings

Readings for the course are available online. Most readings are posted as PDFs on OWL, although you'll access *Effective Grading* as an e-book in Weldon Library. Theory readings selected by first-years

are from the Minor Comprehensive reading lists on the password protected part of the Department of Visual Arts website: <https://www.uwo.ca/visarts/restricted/gradinfo.htm>.

Writing Support Centre 4100 WSSB

The Writing Centre is part of the Effective Writing Program at Western and is open to all registered students. It offers instruction on all aspects of writing and is not merely for undergraduate students or those who have difficulty with writing. Most effective are tutoring sessions, where you can work with a tutor individually. See <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/> for details.

Health and Wellness

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/>, and McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>. Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html

To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/module.html. This module is 30 minutes in length and provides participants with a basic understanding of mental health issues and of available campus and community resources. Topics include stress, anxiety, depression, suicide and eating disorders. After successful completion of the module, participants receive a certificate confirming their participation.

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.

List of Readings

- Bolker, Joan. "Beginning," "Choosing an Advisor and a Committee," "Getting Started Writing," "From Zero to First Draft," 3-62. *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day*. New York: H. Holt, 1998.
- Britzman, Deborah. "Uneven Development." *The Very Thought of Education: psychoanalysis and the impossible professions*, 27-44. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009.
- Johnson, John M. "In-Depth Interviewing." *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*, ed. Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Hostein, 103-119. London: Sage, 2002.
- King, Michelle. "Working With/In the Archives." *Research Methods for History*, ed. Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire, 13-29. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.
- Leitch, Vincent. "Introduction to Theory and Criticism." *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch, 1 – 28. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001.
- Newbury, Darren. "Research Training in the Creative Arts and Design." *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, ed. Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson, 368-387. London: Routledge, 2011.
- Oliver, Paul. "The Literature Review," 124-140. *Writing Your Thesis*, third ed. Los Angeles: Sage, 2014.
- Rose, Gillian. "Visual Methodologies." *Research Methods for English Studies*, ed. Gabriele Griffin, 67-89. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.
- Walvoord and Anderson, "Clarifying Goals, Constructing Assignments," "Fostering Healthy Student Motivation," and "Establishing Criteria and Standards for Grading," 7-60. *Effective Grading: A Tool for Learning and Assessment in College*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010

University of Western Ontario
Department of Visual Arts
GRADUATE GRADING STANDARDS

90 – 100 Work of **excellent** quality

(PhD / MA) Approaching if not already at professional standards.

Thoroughly and creatively engaged at high level of research, possibly with primary sources; very high standards in writing and evidence of sophistication in all aspects of the work

(PhD studio / MFA) 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

(PhD / MA) Demonstrably better than expected with respect to research effort, mastery of critical and analytical tools, and involves polished presentation style

(PhD studio / MFA) Demonstrably evolved beyond expected standards of critical, theoretical and creative engagement in artistic and/or written production

80 – 85 Work of **good** quality

(PhD / MA) Shows competence in research and writing but could be improved in one or more ways

(PhD studio / MFA) Shows competence in artistic and/or written production but could be improved in one or more ways

78 – 79 Work of **acceptable** quality

(PhD / MA) Needs substantial improvement in one or more areas

(PhD studio / MFA) Needs substantial improvement in one or more areas

70 – 77 Work of **passable** quality (a warning regarding removal of funding)

(PhD / MA) Shows sufficient ability and effort to allow the student to pass the course, but is seriously deficient with respect to research approach, or critical or analytical skills, or writing ability

(PhD studio / MFA) 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

(PhD/MA/MFA) Removal from program