

**Western University**  
**Department of Visual Arts**

**9521B/9621B Studio Elective**

**In-between Cultures: Cultural Translation in Contemporary Art**

Term: Winter 2021

Time: Thursday 2:30-5:30 pm

Location: Synchronous online

Professor: Soheila K. Esfahani

Office: VAC 215

Online Office Hours: Tuesday 11:00 – 12:00 & Thursday 1:00-2:00 or by appointment

E-mail: [skolahd@uwo.ca](mailto:skolahd@uwo.ca)

**Course Description**

This course investigates the notion of living between cultures brought about by the act of migration and displacement. In multicultural societies such as Canada, many people occupy a liminal space between cultures, which results in the act of cultural translation. This course applies theories of cultural translation to the realm of visual arts practice, with a focus on the translational activities that occur in the art practices of culturally diverse contemporary artists within the context of Western society. We will explore Homi Bhabha's concept of the third space as a negotiated space of "in-betweenness" and navigate the processes involved in cultural transfer and transformation. This course also investigates displacement, dissemination, and reinsertion of culture in the works of contemporary artists such as Ai Weiwei, Shirin Neshat, and Brian Jungen.

This is a graduate level class (open to both history and studio students) intended for students that would like to concentrate on the development of a particular work of art or theme of study within the context of cultural translation. The student will propose and present this work of art, or theme, in class. The student will be expected to research, relate and contextualize their work within the context of the course.

**Course learning outcomes**

A high degree of discussion and participation in class critiques will be encouraged. This course is intended to assist students in the development of analytical skills with which to enrich their understanding of interpretation and expand their methodologies while pursuing their respective creative processes.

**Methods**

Students will participate in presentations, group critiques, issue-related seminars and discussions. They will be expected to carry out self-generated work and research. Students will work in the direction and medium of their choice and will be expected to work in a self-directed manner in the production of such work. The student will prepare written and verbal statements and presentations concerning their subject.

## Course Requirements

Students must attend all class sessions and come fully prepared to discuss readings and participate in all related class activities. Course readings are assigned from textbook (*Communicating in the Third Space*, edited by Karin Ikas and Gerhard Wagner. New York: Routledge, 2009) and other sources. Some of the readings are available on OWL.

All work for the course must be entirely of the student's own and all sources used in presentations or papers must be properly cited. All course work must be completed specifically for the class alone and completed punctually by the end of the course.

## Evaluation

Attendance and Participation	10%
Written Reading Responses	25%
Short Presentation	10%
Seminar presentation	20%
Course Project	35%

## Attendance Policy

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.

## 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](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/code_of_conduct.pdf)

## Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

## 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.

## **Academic Consideration**

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by extenuating circumstances, including short-term illness or injury. Reasonable academic consideration is a cooperative process between the University, the student, and academic staff. All participants in the process must act in good faith, and fulfil their respective obligations, if it is to succeed.

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant as to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements, may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes: Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form, provided that the conditions for submission are met; For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner, in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration, in order to be eligible for academic consideration.

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see [Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

## **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](#).

## **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, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., p. 1170). This includes presenting the visual or aural work of another creator as your own. 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.

## Support Services

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

1. Student Development Centre -- <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>
2. Student Health -- <http://www.shs.uwo.ca/student/studenthealthservices.html>
3. Registrar's Office -- <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>
4. Ombuds Office -- <http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/>
5. Mental Health -- [https://uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/](https://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/)

## 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.