

**VISARTS 9500A: Master's Research Methods and Practices**

Tuesdays 10:00-1:00 p.m.

Rm. VAC 249

I acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ah- pay-wuk) and 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. This place continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples who are recognized as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors to society.

Professor:

**Patrick Mahon**

Email: pmahon@uwo.ca

Office: VAC Room 121

Phone: 519-318-3011



Office Hours:

- Mondays after 11:30 and Wednesdays before 1:00
  - An appointment is required
- You can request an appointment by emailing me at pmahon@uwo.ca

**Course Description:**

The Master's seminar in research methods is the foundational course for the MFA in studio and the MA in art history. The course is an integrated context for reading, analysis of art works, and engagement with relevant practices by studio and art history students, in a shared context. It combines a theoretical component involving a survey of some key movements in contemporary critical theory with a methods component focusing respectively on the development of tools for art making, related writing, and the use of professional skills by artists; and on art historical research methods and the development of critical writing skills, and the use of professional tools by art historians.

**Learning Outcomes:**

This course is designed to assist you in:

- gaining knowledge about artistic and visual cultural production within a series of diverse historical contexts.
- Understanding the issues and debates pertaining to the study of art and visual culture
- gaining familiarity with terminology, stylistic classifications, methods, and theories employed in the study of art and visual culture.
- developing the ability to communicate orally and in writing the knowledge you have acquired about art and visual culture.

**Course Delivery:**

In person.

This course will be in person, which means that we will meet as a group weekly. We will generally meet for 2.5 hours, but please always be available for the full 3. I will do my best to apprise you of class length prior to the start of each one.



Although this academic year might be different, Western University is committed to a **thriving campus**. We encourage you to check out the [Digital Student Experience](#) website to manage your academics and well-being. Additionally, the following link provides available resources to support students on and off campus: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

**Important Western Dates:**

Classes Start	Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
September 8	Oct. 31 - Nov. 6	December 8	December 9	December 10 - 22

### **Owl/Sakai:**

The use of OWL/Sakai is necessary for successful completion of this course. This includes accessing readings as stipulated in the course outline, downloading instructions and guidelines for assignments, and submitting assignments OWL. All course information, including assignments, will be posted on the course website.

### **Textbook:**

None; all content accessible through OWL

### **Technical Requirements:\***



Stable internet connection



Laptop or computer (some tablets may have the computing capacity to suffice)

\*If we have to transition to a digital learning practice, you will be need:



Working microphone



Working webcam

- 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.

### **Professionalism & Privacy:**



Western students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally the following expectations and professional conduct apply to this course:

- Students are expected to follow online etiquette expectations provided on OWL
- 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 take an academic integrity pledge before some assessments
- All recorded sessions, if any, will remain within the course site or unlisted if streamed

### **\*\*Working from Home:**

If we must shift to an online learning environment (whether on a rare occasion or more consistently), please remember that the pandemic has changed the way we conceive of workspaces and home spaces. If we are required to work from home, I understand that you (and that I) may be interrupted by pets, parents, partners, and/or children, etc. As a group, we will be tolerant and understanding of such interruptions. Should you need to step away from the virtual class to deal with something going on at home, please feel free to do so, leaving a comment in the chat if you are able.

### **\*Cameras and Microphones:**

Please feel free to have your camera on or off as you choose or as is necessary to accommodate your internet speed/bandwidth. If you are able, please do have your camera on for your presentation, and whenever possible. If you chose to use a static picture of yourself or an image, please choose one that appropriate for an academic/professional setting. To minimize background noise, please keep your microphone off unless you are speaking.

### **\*Online Participation and Engagement:**

- Students are expected to participate and engage with content as much as possible
- Students can post on forums (if they are required) upon completing the weekly content
- Students can also participate by interacting in the forums with their peers and instructors

**Grade Distribution:**

C.V. or Artists Resumé, & Cover Letters	10%
Reading Presentation	10%
Abstracts or Proposal for Final Paper or Projects	10%
Individual Research Lists or Studio Research List	10%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Peer-Review	10%
Final Papers or Projects	30%
Participation	10%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Rounding of Marks Statement:**

All students will be treated equally and evaluated based only on their actual achievement. *Final grades* on this course, irrespective of the number of decimal places used in marking individual assignments and tests, will be calculated to one decimal place and rounded to the nearest integer, e.g., 74.4 becomes 74, and 74.5 becomes 75. Marks WILL NOT be bumped to the next grade or GPA, e.g. a 79 will NOT be bumped up to an 80, an 84 WILL NOT be bumped up to an 85, etc. The mark attained is the mark you achieved, and the mark assigned; requests for mark “bumping” will be denied.

**Support Service:**

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.

**Accessibility Statement:**

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education (AE) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation or review [The policy on Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

**Additional General Course & Western Policies:**

1. Syllabi and other relevant course information will be posted on OWL (<https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>).
  - a. To access owl, use your student username and password.
  - b. Students requiring additional OWL support, please speak to myself or visit: <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal/site/owldocs>
2. You **do not have my permission** to use electronic devices to record (sound or video) lectures, nor to live stream, blog, or to sell or repost my lectures. Aside from intellectual property concerns, such activities can be distracting and disruptive to our participatory learning environment.
3. Late Assignments: Students are expected to complete all assignments on time. Assignments are considered late after the closing date set on OWL. Late assignments are subject to a 10% penalty per day. For information regarding self-reported absences and extensions given due to official notification due the student's faculty advisor see Western's medical policies and course evaluation sections that are provided over the following pages.
4. In-person and/or Online participation is mandatory and will be assessed (see page 3 of this syllabus).
5. Emails:
  - a. Assignments will not be accepted through email.
  - b. Emails will be sent through the Message function on OWL.
  - c. Be sure to keep emails brief and to the point and use standard formatting. Do not use short form or abbreviated expressions.
  - d. Be sure to identify your name and contact information in the email.
  - e. I will make every effort to reply to your email within one to two business days.
    - i. As I have other professional and personal responsibilities, I typically respond to email Monday through Friday during normal "business hours."
    - ii. By all means, if you have not heard from me within two business days, do email me again.
  - f. Only your assigned Western email will be used for communication in this class.
    - i. If your Western email is not your primary email address, please have your Western email forwarded to your primary address, whether it is Gmail, Outlook, etc.
    - ii. For general instructions on how to set up email forwarding, see [http://www.uwo.ca/its/email/account/email\\_forwarding.html](http://www.uwo.ca/its/email/account/email_forwarding.html)
6. **Plagiarism:** Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)
7. **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, should contact their departmental administrators and myself to seek academic consideration.
8. The policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be viewed [here](#).
9. Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Department of Visual Arts, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.
10. **Accessible Education Western (AEW):** Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.
11. Enrollment in the course constitutes an agreement to participate in class (both in the classroom and online) and to take complete all assignments.
12. Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Department of Visual Arts.

### **Citation Style:**

The Chicago Manual of Style, Humanities format, is the standard style for art history and studio art. 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>.

### **Notes on Marks and Assignments:**

Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. See specific grading policies of the Department of Visual Arts

- All assignments are due at 11:55 pm EST unless otherwise specified
- Written assignments will be submitted to Turnitin
- Rubrics will be used to evaluate assessments and will be posted with the instructions
- After an assessment is returned, students should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their evaluator; to ensure a timely response, reach out within 7 days

### **Information about late or missed evaluations:**

- Extensions will be granted in exceptional circumstances and typically only in cases of illness, bereavement or for other compassionate reasons.
- 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 contact the instructor as soon as possible.

### **Writing Centre:**

The Writing Centre is part of the Effective Writing program at Western and is open to both undergraduate and graduate students. It offers instruction on all aspects of writing and is not merely for students who have difficulty with writing. The one-on-one tutoring sessions can be very helpful in improving writing and editorial skills. For information visit: <http://writing.uwo.ca>

### **Assignments:**

Details for each assignment can be found on OWL under the assignment links.

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## **The University of Western Ontario Visual Arts Department**

### **EVALUATION**

#### **Grading Guidelines:**

The following grading standards are quoted from the department webpage:

[http://www.uwo.ca/visarts/grad/downloads/Graduate\\_Grading\\_Standards.pdf](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

## **POLICIES**

### **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)

### **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.

### **Artwork Removal:**

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

### **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.

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_sanctions.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_sanctions.pdf)

### **Attendance:**

Under university regulations, if someone misses 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, students 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).

**Electronic Devices:**

**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.**

**Gender Neutral Bathrooms:**

Middlesex College does not have specifically gender-neutral bathrooms. There are two gender neutral bathrooms in the JLVAC. 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](http://www.uwo.ca/equity/doc/inclusive_washrooms.pdf).

Please contact the Media Lab Technician, Jennifer Slauenwhite ([jslauen@uwo.ca](mailto:jslauen@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.