

Western University  
Department of Visual Arts  
Winter 2016

# VAH1041B

## Art, Visual Culture, and Power

**Professor:** C. Sprengler

**Office:** VAC 218

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 10:00-11:00am or by appointment

**Email:** csprengl@uwo.ca

**Lectures:** Thursdays 2:30-4:20 in MC110

**Tutorials:** Thursdays 4:30-5:20 (check timetable for room #)

### Teaching Assistants/Office Hours

Taylor Davison	tdaviso2@uwo.ca	Wednesdays 1:00-2:00pm, Rm 242
Ellen Groh	egroh@uwo.ca	Tuesdays 12:30-1:30, Rm 242
Keely McCavitt	kmccavit@uwo.ca	Wednesdays 2:00-3:00, Rm 242
Katie Oates	koates2@uwo.ca	Wednesdays 12:30-1:30, Rm 242
Carling Spinney	cspinney@uwo.ca	Tuesdays 1:00-2:00pm, Rm 242

### Course Description

This course introduces students to the complex relationships between art and power and the ways in which both have been defined, engaged and mobilized from ancient times to the present. We will take a chronological approach that emphasizes the social contexts of the artistic practices surveyed and considers how certain intellectual contexts gave rise to specific conceptions of power. As such, we will also pay close attention to the philosophical, religious, political and scientific forces that led to significant cultural shifts and shaped the character of artistic periods.

## Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to help students develop the following:

- knowledge about artistic and visual cultural production within a series of diverse historical contexts
- understanding of the issues and debates pertaining to the study of art and visual culture
- familiarity with the terminology, stylistic classifications and methodologies employed in the study of art and visual culture
- the ability to communicate orally and in written form the knowledge acquired about art and visual culture in relation to questions of power

## Required Texts

Richard Lewis and Susan I. Lewis, *The Power of Art*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.  
Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2014.

## Evaluation

### **In-class Test: 25%**

Date: Thursday February 11, 2016

### **Tutorial Project: 25%**

Due: Thursday March 10, 2016

### **Tutorial Attendance and Participation: 10%**

Breakdown: 5% for attendance; 5% for participation

### **Final Exam: 40%**

Date: Scheduled during the April examination period.

## Tutorials

This course consists of two lecture hours and one hour of tutorial per week. Attendance at tutorials is mandatory and attendance and participation will be graded. Teaching Assistants (TAs) have some flexibility in the structure of their tutorials and are responsible for issuing and grading all assignments and administering any review quizzes, group exercises or other learning initiatives that they see fit. Please keep in mind that 35% of your final course grade is designated for the tutorials. TAs will provide you with a tutorial syllabus.

## General Course Policies

1. Tests and examinations start at the beginning of class. Time lost due to late arrival will not be made up.
2. Late Assignments: Students are expected to complete all assignments on time. Assignments are considered late after the start of class the day they are due. Extensions will be given *only* upon official notification from the student's faculty advisor documenting bereavement or serious health issues. All other late essays are subject to a 10% penalty per day.
3. Syllabi and other relevant course information will be posted on Owl.
4. Attendance is required. Tutorial attendance will be monitored and marked.
5. Plagiarism will not be tolerated! For information concerning UWO's Plagiarism and Academic Offenses (Scholastic Offences) consult the Western Academic Calendar.
6. Emails:
  - a. Assignments will not be accepted through email.
  - b. Grades will not be discussed through email.
  - 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 two business days.
7. Electronic Devices: You may use a computer in class to take notes. All other activities (e.g. checking email or social media sites, etc.) are prohibited. Students must turn off all cell phones, PDAs, or similar electronic devices while in the classroom. Under no circumstances are cell phones or any electronic devices to be used or seen during times of examination. Should you need to receive a phone call during class time, I ask that you first notify me at the beginning of class and that you keep your phone on vibrate and step out of the classroom to receive the call.
8. I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus throughout the term. Should a change be required, you will be given prior notice.
9. All students will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Code of Student Conduct and treat all members of the University community with respect.
10. A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations: 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year. 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

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

**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.

**Attendance:**

**EXAMINATIONS/ATTENDANCE (University Policy)**

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations: 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year. 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

**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.

**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). (Refer to <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2013/pg113.html> or the 2013/2014 Western Academic Calendar, p. 19-21, with regards to academic penalties for plagiarism.)

**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 Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. See course outline for specific arrangements regarding less than 10% of assignments.

**Mental Health:**

"Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western [http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental\\_health/](http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help."

**Building Access:**

The John Labatt Visual Arts Centre will be closed at 10:30 pm each night. There will be no after-hour access for undergraduate students. The Centre is open weekends 12:00 noon-5:00 pm. Students should be prepared to vacate the building promptly at 10:30 pm and 5:00 pm. You must also sign-in with the building monitors when working in the workshop areas outside of regular office hours.

**Please remember:**

One of the most important resources for course counselling, special permissions, course changes, grade appeals, etc., is the Undergraduate Chair of Visual Arts, Prof. D. Merritt (tel. 519-661-3440; [vaugc@uwo.ca](mailto: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 (Ben Hakala and Amanda Green are the counselors for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities).

The Student Development Centre (WSS room 4111; tel: 519-661-3031; [www.sdc.uwo.ca](http://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](http://www.lib.uwo.ca).

Financial Aid Services is your main source of information for OSAP, bursaries, loans, scholarships, and the work-study program which offer part-time positions on campus for Western students. Tel: 519-661-2100; e-mail, [finaid@uwo.ca](mailto:finaid@uwo.ca); or check out their website at [www.registrar.uwo.ca/FinancialServices/index.cfm](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/FinancialServices/index.cfm)

### **Undergraduate Grading Guidelines - Art History**

These guidelines are benchmarks that are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. For example, grades in first-year courses are generally lower than in fourth year.

#### 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.