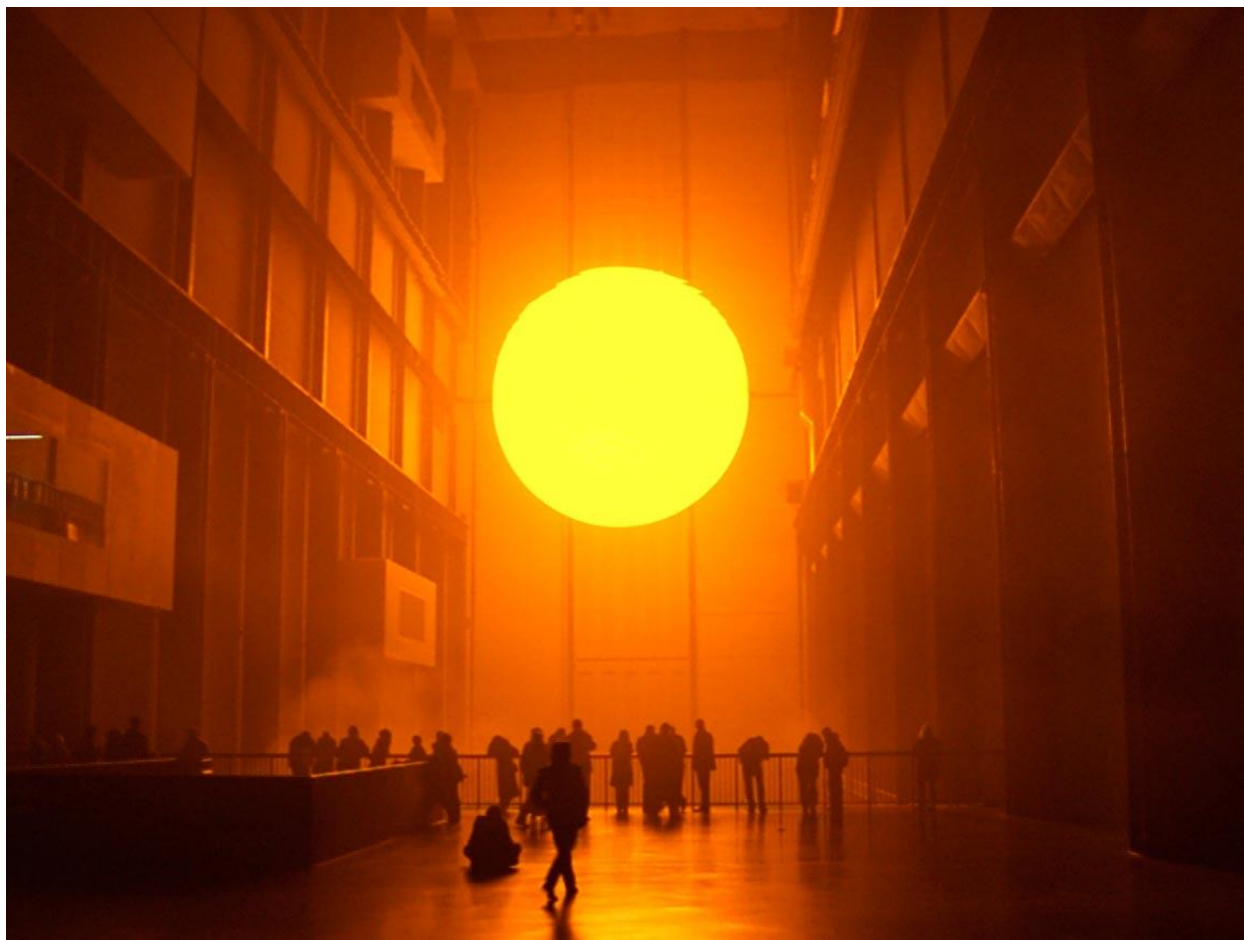


**Special Topics Modern Art – *Modern Art and the Sublime***  
**VAH 3395G Winter 2016**  
**Monday - 5:30-8:30pm, VAC 249**



**Instructor:** Margherita Papadatos

**Office Hours:** Monday 4-5pm or by appointment, VAC RM. 240

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

What do we mean when we use the term 'sublime'? This word is often used casually in everyday speech as a description of something that is awe-inspiring or overwhelming, and yet it has very specific connotations in the history of Western thought that extend beyond such colloquial usage. This course develops a concept of the sublime and explores what it means for modern art, specifically regarding abstract expressionist painting. In working towards an understanding of the sublime in modern art we will move through its various iterations in the history of thought using specific thinkers, namely, Longinus, Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant, Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard, and Slavoj Žižek, exploring how their theoretical interpretations can and have been applied to modern and contemporary artworks and artistic practices. Using Longinus and Burke the course will

first trace the development of the modern sublime with Kant, distinguishing its concerns from those of the sublime in Baroque art in the seventeenth century and the sublime in Romantic art in the pre-modern period. In working towards the modern sublime the course will consider Cubist works, Vassily Kandinsky, and Kasimir Malevich alongside Kant as building towards an idea of abstraction continued by the abstract expressionists, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Jackson Pollock. The second half of the course will then take up the themes explored in relation to the modern sublime from the first half, such as nature and terror, examining how they reappear in postmodern and contemporary art including performance, installation, and earthworks, all while working alongside the thought of Derrida, Lyotard, and Žižek. This course then seeks to determine the ways in which the modern sublime has paved the way for the postmodern sublime, ultimately questioning the use of the sublime in the present context.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES/COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

Upon successful completion of the course students will be able to:

- Identify the history of the term “sublime”
- Identify key issues and themes in modern art with relation to the sublime
- Identify and articulate primary theoretical approaches to the sublime in relation to modern and contemporary art
- Explain the significance of the sublime to the work of modern as well as postmodern artists from the twentieth century, as it relates to the social, political, and/or artistic context in which it is produced
- Read, comprehend, and summarize the main argument of an academic or philosophical text
- Conduct a close-reading of an academic, philosophical or theoretical text
- Conduct research using the library catalogue and databases, and use the sources effectively in a research essay
- Articulate an argument in writing, support the argument using appropriate evidence, and address counter-arguments

### **Course Text Requirements:**

Required readings will be posted on the OWL site.

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### **GRADING:**

Participation and Reading Summaries	25% Weekly/Ongoing
Short Writing Assignment/Close Reading (1000 words)	20% February 1 <sup>st</sup> due date
Case Study Presentation	20% Beginning March 7 <sup>th</sup>
Research Essay (1750-2000 words)	35% April 4 <sup>th</sup> due date

## **POLICIES & CONDUCT**

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### **Office Hours / Email:**

Please see the instructor during office hours if you are having difficulty with any aspect of the course, including readings or assignments. If you would like to speak with the instructor and cannot make it to office hours, please ask for an alternate appointment time via email. Expect a **turnaround time of 24 hours in answering emails** sent from Monday morning to Friday afternoon. Mail sent on Friday afternoon and over the weekend will be answered on Monday.

### **Late Policies:**

Extensions, granted for valid reasons, must be negotiated BEFORE assignments are due. Late assignments will be penalized by 5% each day, unless appropriate documentation is provided. Accommodation for missed assignments, or attendance, totaling less than 10%, due to medical reasons, should be discussed directly with the instructor. If the assignment is over 10% students must contact the Academic Counseling office of their home faculty and be able to provide appropriate documentation. All course work must be submitted by the last day of classes, which is April 6, 2016

### **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. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. See course outline for specific arrangements regarding less than 10% of assignments.

### **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 is a serious academic offence and will not be tolerated. 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/2015/pg113.html#](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2015/pg113.html#) or the 2015/2016 Western Academic Calendar, p. 19, with regards to academic penalties for plagiarism). All assignments may be subject to review through plagiarism detection software. All assignments should be cited in Chicago Manual Style (preferable) or MLA. There are a number of excellent resources on how to use these styles available through Weldon Library.

### **Mental Health Policy:**

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 10:00 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 10:00 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. David 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. Faculty of Arts and Humanities is located in IGA Building, Room 1N20 (Ms. Amanda Green and Mr. Ben Hakala are the counselors for Arts and Humanities).

**The Student Development Centre** (WSSB 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 [http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/student\\_finances/financial\\_counselling.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/student_finances/financial_counselling.html)

## RESOURCES

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### **OWL SAKAI**

We will be using OWL/SAKAI for our online course site to supplement the in-class portion of the course. You will be able to access all course related information and materials there as well as a discussion link, course PowerPoint presentations, and various other resources of interest. Go to <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal/site/owldocs>. 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.

### **WRITING CENTRE WSSB 4130**

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 restricted to students who have difficulty with writing. All students are encouraged to take advantage of this service. Most effective are the one-on-one tutoring sessions, where students can work with a tutor on course assignments from early in the process of responding to the assignment through to its completion. See <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/> for details.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

All course assignment guidelines and requirements are posted on OWL and will also be discussed in class ahead of their due dates.

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