

VAH/VAS4485E
Museum and Curatorial Practicum
Tuesdays 2:30-5:30 – VAC 148

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Course Description and Objectives:

This participatory museum studies course introduces students to the technical aspects of museum work as well as the ethical ramifications of these methods as they are applied in art, history, and ethnographic museums. The class includes field trips, discussions with professionals in the field, the study of exhibit controversies, and debates about the politics of memory and visual display. The major component of the course is the creation and realization of a large-scale exhibition.

Students are required to write an essay, to complete a series of short assignments, and to participate in a group assignment. However, 20% of the final grade is based on participation in the exhibition. Each student will assume a specific role in this endeavour and will work closely with the professor, the TA, and other students. A good portion of the work in this class will be self-directed, and students should be prepared to assume responsibility for their aspect of the final exhibition, and to spend as much time working in remote locations as they do in class.

This course will familiarize students with the debates that shape museum scholarship as well as the various issues central to the preparation and staging of an exhibition. It will provide them with an opportunity to develop their research, writing, and presentation skills. Students will learn to evaluate written texts and exhibitions and think critically about the development and role of museums in Western culture.

Required Texts:

All course readings are available on Owl. It is the student's responsibility to let the professor or the TA know in advance if s/he has any trouble downloading the readings.

Please note that this syllabus is incomplete as we are waiting on two books scheduled for release in October and November, 2017. Updates will be posted on Owl.

Assignment Breakdown

Fall semester:

Short Assignments 10%: due November 14

Final Curatorial Paper abstract 2%: due November 28

Group Assignment 20%: due December 5

Participation (including article summaries): 10%

Winter semester:

Short Assignments 10%: due January 30

Final Curatorial Paper 18%: due April 10

Exhibition 20%: grades assigned after de-installation

Participation (including article summaries): 10%

EXHIBITION DATES: March 1-March 15, 2018

Assignment Description

Group Assignment: 20%

Due: December 5

Students will be placed in groups and given the task of “planning” a new wing of the Museum of Food and Drink. Examples and potential sources will be discussed in class. Groups will each be given 45 minutes on December 5 to present their vision of the museum to the class as if it were a competitive bid. A hard copy of the bid (with extra material) will be handed in, with a component written individually by each student. We will spend some time in class reviewing the marking criteria and the details of this assignment.

Students will receive a group mark and an individual mark, and the final grade will be an average of the two.

Final Curatorial Abstract: 2%

Due: November 28

Final Curatorial Paper: 18%

Due: April 10

The final assignment involves designing and planning a major exhibition, through a practice (initiated by Shelley Butler and Erica Lehrer) called “curatorial dreaming.” A curatorial dream is “an imagined exhibit or public intervention (tour, film, audio piece, object, etc.) addressing a cultural issue or historical event in a manner relevant to the present day.” This assignment has four components:

1. Students will hand in a proposal that describes their curatorial dream on November 28.
2. On November 28 students will meet individually with McIntosh Gallery Director James Patten to discuss their proposals.
3. On March 27, students will work in groups to exchange and peer-review exhibition ideas.

4. The final, major assignment will be handed in on April 10 and will consist of an extensive and well-researched proposal for an exhibition. Students may use any approved format for their final proposal (digital/written/visual etc.). Students will also informally present their work in a 5 min pecha kucha presentation on April 10.

Short Assignments: 2, each worth 10%

Due: November 14

Due: January 30

Each semester, students will select 3 assignments from a list of 10 (6 total, 3 Fall semester, 3 Winter semester). Students will answer the questions posed by the assignments. Each answer should be maximum 2 pages single-spaced (6 pages total in Fall; 6 pages total in Winter). Sources must be included, and proper citations used.

Attendance/Participation: 10%+10% = 20%

This mark will be determined by attendance, the extent and quality of engagement in class discussions, and the ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the readings. Additionally, students must submit a 200 word summary/response to class readings on “reading” classes. Summaries must be submitted to Owl prior to class.

Exhibition: 20% (Time will be spent in class discussing the specifics of this assignment) Students will also be asked to keep a journal of contributions to the exhibition and to give in class progress reports.

Learning Outcomes, Museum Studies

The Readings

- Students will develop a greater understanding of the issues and politics which are significant to the museum field.
- Students will have the opportunity to develop their own opinions about controversial subjects in the museum field, through class discussions about the readings.

The Exhibition

- Students will each learn about the process of designing and mounting a public exhibition.
- Through first-hand experience, students will develop a greater understanding of the variety of roles involved in curating an exhibition, including: budgeting, fundraising, copy-writing and editing, creating a catalogue, community outreach, event planning, website design, and mounting an exhibition.
- Students will have the opportunity to work both independently and as part of a team.
- Students will develop time-management and communication skills.

Short Assignments

- Students will have the opportunity to hone their critical thinking and writing skills.
- Students will have the opportunity to experience current exhibitions.
- Because there is choice in the assignments, students will be able to research and write on topics that suit their own areas of interest.

Field Trips and Classroom Visits

- Field trips and classroom visits introduce students to professionals in the field of art and art history.
- These events are professional development opportunities, which will give students the opportunity to learn more about the arts and culture sector.
- These events give students a forum to ask professionals career-related questions, offering the potential for ongoing mentorship.

Essays

- Students will hone their academic writing skills and will develop their knowledge of critical themes and topics relevant to museum studies.
- Students will become more familiarized with best practices for citing reference materials and utilizing the Chicago Manual of Style.

Group Project

- Students will experience working as part of a team.
- Students will work with challenging material and will participate in designing an exhibition space for an existing museum.

Overall

Students will undertake assignments that will expose them to the major facets of working in the museum world. Students will be required to write clearly and concisely, to work under pressure, to work with a team, to give and take constructive criticism, to think creatively about curatorial spaces, to work with a budget, and to plan and execute an exhibition. The overall purpose of the class is to verse students in the critical methodologies that top curators must understand in order to move through the field. In sum, this class will teach students that curation is about much more than hanging pictures.

POLICIES

Late Policy

Students are expected to complete all assignments on time. Assignments are considered late after the start of class the day they are due. Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counseling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. *Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the professor or the department.*

This class has a different late policy from my other classes. For VAS/VAH4485E I do not

grant extensions except in the most extreme circumstances. Students should not contact me or the TA asking for an extension, but should instead weigh whether the minor penalty is worth the extra time. The idea is that this is a 4th year class, and the onus is in the hands of the student. For the first 3 days, students will be docked 1%/day. For the next 4 days after that students will be docked 2%/day. After a week, the assignment will be docked 5%/day.

Attendance:

Attendance is required and is an exceptionally important part of this class. Students are expected to attend all class sessions and be prepared for and participate in lectures and discussions, as well as in exhibition brain storms and group work. Students are also expected to help install and de-install the exhibition, which falls outside of class hours. Students who miss less than two classes are not required to seek accommodations for their absences from classes. For subsequent absences students will need to seek accommodations according to the Medical Accommodation policy below.

- Under Western's regulations, if a student misses 15% of their classes, without written corroboration for health or bereavement, they can be debarred from participation in the final exam (or in this case the final essay).
- If a student is consistently absent from a portion of class, they will be considered as exceeding the 15% cut off.
- After three unexcused absences/semester, a student's final grade may be lowered by half a letter grade.

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.

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://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2017>.

Emails

- Assignments will not be accepted by email.
- Please clearly identify yourself and the course in any emails.
- The TA and I will do our best to respond to emails within 48 hours, exclusive of weekends. Neither I, nor the TA, should be expected to respond to emails from Friday at 4pm to Monday at 9am.
- Due to privacy regulations, grades cannot be discussed over email.

Dropping the class

November 30, 2016 is the last day to drop a full year course without academic penalty.

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 strongly discouraged, especially as this is distracting to others. Students should turn off all cell phones while in the classroom.

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 and Academic Honesty:

All work for the course MUST be entirely your own. All sources that you use for your assignments must be accurately cited. This will be discussed in class. If you have doubts about how and when to cite sources, consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* guide on OWL in the Resources section, or talk to me or your TA before the assignment due date. All course work must be completed specifically for this course. Plagiarism and cheating are very serious academic offences and they will be dealt with strictly. Submitting the same work for credit in more than one course is considered cheating.

Plagiarism includes:

1. Quoting verbatim or almost verbatim from any source, including all electronic sources, without acknowledgement;
2. Adopting someone else's line of thought, argument, or supporting evidence without acknowledgement;
3. Submitting someone else's work, in any form, without acknowledgement;
4. Knowingly representing as one's own an idea of another.
5. Handing in the same work for more than one class.
6. Plagiarism 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.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. For information concerning Western's Plagiarism and Academic

Offences (Scholastic Offences) policies see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the

commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. 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. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Medical Policy:

For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> (under the Medical Documentation heading).

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Updated from previous years: The instructor will NOT accept any missed assignments, whether totaling more than 10% or less than 10%, unless the student has arranged accommodation through the Dean's Office.

Mental Health:

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

Academic Accommodation: For Western's complete Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities see <http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2017>. The policy states, "In its efforts to accommodate disabilities appropriately, the approach adopted by the University is collaborative, involving the student requesting the accommodation, the instructor, department (or school or program where applicable), and/or Faculty which provides the accommodation, and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in the Student Development Centre which coordinates the request for and provision of accommodation."

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.

Preferred Pronouns

I will happily use your preferred pronoun. Please let me know during/after class or during office hours if I have made a mistake with your pronoun.

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>.

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. C. Barteet (tel. 519-661-3440; 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 (Ms. Amanda Green and Mr. Ben Hakala 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) 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.

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; or check out their website at www.registrar.uwo.ca/FinancialServices/index.cfm

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.