

VAH3396F FALL 2018
Tues 11:30 - 2:30 VAC 100
Greatest Shows on Earth: Exhibitions That Changed Art History



Detail from Fred Wilson's *Mining the Museum*, Maryland Historical Society, 1992

Professor: Dr. Kirsty Robertson
 Office: VAC 221
 Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30-3:30
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 TAs: Stephanie Anderson, Lisa Daniels
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 Office Hours: by appointment, VAC 242

Course Description and Objectives:

This class examines radical shifts in curating, exhibition design, art making, and visitor experience that have been precipitated by important exhibitions. We will examine key exhibitions from around the world and will discuss how and why these particular exhibitions triggered profound change in the museum world and art history. Though most examples are drawn from the contemporary art world, science, history, and other exhibitions make appearances. Case studies will also consider the role played by controversy, push-back, and intervention in deeply altering the status quo. Together in this class we will create a timeline of important exhibitions, a short catalogue to accompany the timeline, and a wiki Bibliography that can be used and added to by others. Over the course of the class, each student will develop in-depth knowledge of a single exhibition that they will explore through a presentation, a catalogue entry, and a final essay.

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 they have any trouble downloading the readings.

Assignment Breakdown:

Paper abstract (September 25): 2%

Time line Presentation + catalogue entry + bibliography (Oct 30, Nov 6, Nov 13): 8% + 10%

Please note the powerpoint slides must be submitted the day prior to the presentation

Field trip assignment (October 23): 10%

Rough version of final paper (November 13): 20%

Final paper (due December 4): 35%

Participation and Engagement: 15%

Paper abstract

1-2 paragraphs describing the chosen exhibition and the approach that the student will take to writing about it. An example of an abstract can be found on Owl.

Time Line Presentation, Catalogue Entry, Bibliography

On their assigned date, students will give a short presentation about their chosen exhibition, will hand in a short catalogue entry, and will contribute a minimum of two academic sources to our Wiki Bibliography. Powerpoint slides must be submitted a minimum of 24 hours before the presentation. Together, student contributions will allow us to create a timeline and catalogue of important exhibitions. A more in-depth description of this assignment can be found on Owl.

Field Trip Assignment

Students will answer the "scavenger hunt" questions handed out in advance of the fieldtrip, and will write a descriptive review of one of the exhibitions that we visit. A more in-depth description of this assignment can be found on Owl.

Rough version of paper

Students will hand in approximately 10 pages of their final exhibition. TAs will give extensive feedback on these papers, helping students to develop their final assignment. We will talk about this assignment in class.

Final Paper

The final paper is due on the last day of class. It should be approximately 15 pages long (Times New Roman, double spaced), and should be a well-researched, in-depth exploration of a single exhibition. We will talk about this assignment in class.

Participation and Engagement

Attendance is important, but engagement is even more important. For an excellent participation grade, show us (the prof, TAs, and other students) that you have done the reading, and that you are engaged with the discussions.

CLASS BREAKDOWN

September 11

Intro

September 18

Exhibitions that Changed the Display and Production of Art – an Overview

Bruce Altshuler. "Introduction." *Salon to Biennial: Exhibitions that Made Art History, 1863-1959*. New York and London: Phaidon Press, 2008, pp. 11-19.

Bruce Altshuler. "Introduction." *Biennials and Beyond: Exhibitions that Made Art History, 1962-2002*. New York and London: Phaidon Press, 2013, pp. 11-24.

Please note: There are three readings next week. You might want to balance your reading schedule between the two weeks.

September 25

The Importance of Controversy and Conflict

Robyn Gillam. "The Spirit Sings: A Sour Note in the Museum's Halls." *Hall of Mirrors: Museums and the Canadian Public*. Banff: The Banff Centre Press, 2001, pp. 101-34.

David Dean. "Museums as Conflict Zones: The Canadian War Museum and Bomber Command." *Museum and Society* 7.1 (March 2009), pp. 1-15.

Aruna d'Souza. "Open Casket: Whitney Biennial, 2017." *Whitewalling*. New York: Badlands Press, 2017, pp. 15-64.

October 2

Paper abstract due

Field Trip – October 5

October 9

Reading Break

October 16

The Art World Unsettled

Field Trip assignment due

Case Study, Mining the Museum: <http://beautifultrouble.org/case/mining-the-museum/>

Maurice Berger and Fred Wilson. "Collaboration, Museums, and the Politics of Display: A Conversation with Fred Wilson." *Fred Wilson: A Critical Reader*. Doro Globus, ed. Ridinghouse: 2017, pp. 154-68.

Ruth Phillips. "Modes of Inclusion: Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Canada and the Art Gallery of Ontario." *Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenization of Canadian Museums*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013, pp. 252-76.

October 23

Timeline presentations followed by discussion

October 30

Timeline presentations followed by discussion

November 6

Timeline presentations followed by discussion

November 13

Biennales and the Global Art World

Last day to hand in rough version of paper (they can definitely be handed in earlier)

Oliver Marchart. "The Globalization of Art and the 'Biennials of Resistance': A History of Biennials from the Periphery." *World Art* 4.2 (2014), pp. 263-76.

Sarah Thornton. "The Biennale." *Seven Days in the Art World*. New York: W.W. Norton Press, 2008, pp. 219-54.

November 20

Guest lecture

Readings tba

November 27

Behind the Scenes/Making Exhibitions

Francesca Lanz. "Staging Migration (in) Museums: A Reflection of Exhibition Design Practices for the Representation of Migration in European Museums." *Museum and Society* 14.1 (2016), pp. 178-92.

Charity M. Counts. "Spectacular Design in Museum Exhibitions." *Curator* 52/3 (2009), pp. 273-88.

December 4

Final paper due

Discussion: what makes an exhibition influential?

Naomi Rea. "Is This the Most Important Exhibition of 2018?" *artnet news*, April 18, 2018:
<https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/louvre-delacroix-retrospective-look-1267508>.

Richard Hill. "The Catalogue is Not the Exhibition." *Canadian Art* (May 16, 2017):
<https://canadianart.ca/essays/the-catalogue-is-not-the-exhibition/>

Vidal Wu. "Why Everyone is Talking About Every.Now.Then." *Canadian Art* (August 24, 2017):
<https://canadianart.ca/reviews/everybody-talking-every-now/>.

Rachel Cooke. "Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty Review." *The Guardian* (March 15, 2015): <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2015/mar/15/alexander-mcqueen-savage-beauty-v-and-a-review-observer-awe-and-unease>.

Learning Outcomes, Museum Studies

The Readings

- Students will develop a greater understanding of the issues and politics that 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.
- Students will develop a portfolio of knowledge about important exhibitions from around the globe.

Short Assignments and Field Trip

- Students will have the opportunity to contribute to the class assignment of creating a timeline of important exhibitions.
- Students will learn from their peers and will gain knowledge of a significant number of important exhibitions.
- Students will critically engage with exhibition design and reception and will work together to understand what makes an exhibition impactful.
- Students will see at least one important exhibition in person and will use skills gained in the class to understand the role that it plays both within the institution and outside of it.

Essay

- 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.
- Most importantly, students will receive feedback at multiple stages on the same assignment, and will thus be able to work with the TAs and professor to develop their writing and analytic skills.
- Students will emerge with an extensive knowledge of one important exhibition. They will, in fact, be an expert on it.

Western University Visual Arts Department

POLICIES

Submission:

All assignments should be submitted through Dropbox on OWL unless otherwise noted directly on the assignment.

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.

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_19

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, the TAs, or the department.*

Assignments will be docked 2%/day for the first 5 days, and 5%/day thereafter, inclusive of weekends.

Attendance:

Students who miss two or fewer classes are not required to seek accommodations for their absences from classes.

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. This includes handing in final papers. 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.

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, 7th ed., p. 1170). (Refer to http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_189 with regards to academic penalties for plagiarism.) 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.

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.

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:

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.

Emails

- Assignments will not be accepted by email.
- Please clearly identify yourself and the course in any emails.
- The TAs and I will do our best to respond to emails within 48 hours, exclusive of weekends. Neither I, nor the TAs, 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.

Mental Health:

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

Accommodation

Academic Accommodation: For Western's complete Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities see

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_disabilities.pdf. 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."

Building Access (September 1st to April 30th):

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.**

Removal:

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

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, Professor 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 academic counselors in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities located in University College Room 2230.

The Student Development Centre (WSS room 4111; tel: 519-661-3031; www.sdc.uwo.ca) offers a wide range of useful services 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 http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/student_finances/financial_counselling.html

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 http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?PolicyCategoryID=1&Command=showCategory&Keywords=academic%20sanctions&SubHeadingID=169&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_169

Dropping the class

November 12, 2018 is the last day to drop a Fall semester 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.

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.

Names and Pronouns

I will happily use your preferred name and pronoun. This includes names that are different from those on your academic file. Please let me know during/after class or during office hours or by email if I have made a mistake.

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.”

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.