

MCS 4605E: Museum and Curatorial Practicum

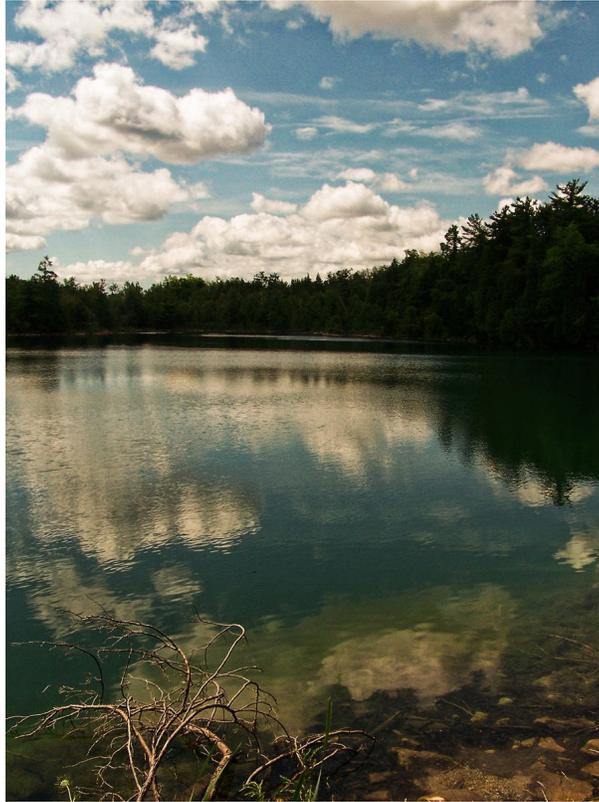


Image credit: DailyB, Crawford Lake Conservation Area, 2016 [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/)

Course Description and Objectives:

This participatory museum studies course is organized around three major components: a single-authored individual exhibition design portfolio that is broken down into smaller sections across both semesters; a group project (with individual grades) focused on the speculative design of a new wing at the ROM (Royal Ontario Museum); and a class-curated, professional exhibition that will open in March at the Artlab Gallery (JLVAC). This year's class exhibition focuses on Crawford Lake, the Anthropocene, and the land/water/air around us. It will include the work of professional artists and has a significant budget to work with. Each student will assume a specific role in the class exhibition and will work closely with the professor, museum personnel, and other students. Additionally, students will complete the course with a professional-level portfolio that can be used in seeking positions in the field and/or applying to graduate school.

The individual exhibition design assignment can be tailored to the career aspirations of each individual student. It can be adapted for interests across the sector, including art curation, historical interpretation/public history, and museum education, etc.

The goal of this class is to foreground creativity in exhibition design and practice. Students will develop cross-sectoral and transferable skills and will also learn about exhibition design, collections management, and museum and gallery administration. This class focuses on hands-on, practical experience.

The syllabus is part of course content. As we decide the direction of the exhibition, we work together to co-learn and co-create the course and exhibition content.

Assignments:

Individual Exhibition Assignment: 50% (various components due in Fall and Winter semesters; see syllabus and OWL)

Group Assignment (Royal Ontario Museum): 20%, November 28

Artlab Exhibition: 20% (install Feb 26-28; exhibition Feb 29-March 14; deinstall March 15)

Attendance and Engagement: 10%

CHECK THE ASSIGNMENTS FOLDER ON OWL FOR MORE DETAIL ON EACH ASSIGNMENT

Individual Exhibition Assignment: worth 50% of course grade

Over the course of Fall and Winter semesters, students will develop an in-depth exhibition proposal for a real university, community museum, gallery space, artist run centre, preferably in Ontario.* This is a major assignment, requiring extensive research and preparation. The assignment is broken into multiple components, and students will receive extensive feedback from peers, professionals, and the professor about their project. *The exhibition must be feasible, realistic, appropriate for its venue, and appropriate for the career stage of the curator.*

1. Initial exhibition idea/expression of interest (1 paragraph): October 3, 2%
2. In-depth exhibition idea/expression of interest (1 page minimum, single-spaced): October 24, 8%
3. List of proposed exhibition content (i.e. artworks and locations; artefacts; objects): October 24, 5%
4. Sketch Up or accurate 3D maquette of galleries and design overview: January 30, 15%
5. Accessibility and Inclusivity Plan; Budget; Sustainability Plan; Programming Plan: February 13, 15%
6. Catalogue Essay draft (including layout): March 12, 15%
7. Label text and design for entry panel and a minimum of three 100-word labels, March 12, 7.5%,
8. Promotions plan with examples: March 19, 10%
9. Pecha Kucha/informal presentation: March 26, 2.5%
10. Submission of entire Exhibition assignment: April 2, 20%

*it is advised but not required that students develop proposals for real calls such as the Middlebrook Curatorial Prize. Following the submission of #1 and #2, the assignment can be adapted to different kinds of projects. For adapted assignments, the student and professor will agree to the components by November 30, and the number of components, grade weights, and due dates will match for all students and all projects.

Group Assignment (Museum of Natural History): 20%

Due: November 28

Students will be placed in groups and given the task of “planning” a new wing of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. Examples and potential sources will be discussed in class. Groups will each be given 45 minutes on November 28 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 weighted 30% group, 70% individual.

Artlab 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.

Attendance/Participation/Engagement: 10%

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 readings and other materials.

Required Texts:

All course readings are available on Owl. It is the student’s responsibility to let the professor know in advance if they have any trouble downloading the readings.

Learning Outcomes, Museum Studies

The Readings

- Students will develop a greater understanding of the Anthropocene and to the topic of the artLAB exhibition.

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.
- Students will gain experience working with artists, registrars, insurers, and others.
- Students will gain transferable skills adaptable to many employment contexts.

Assignments

- Students will have the opportunity to hone their critical thinking and writing skills.
- Students will develop an in-depth and professional exhibition portfolio.

- Students will experience extensive one-on-one feedback on their work, and will be able to adapt assignments, readings, and other materials to their own career aspirations.

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 museums/heritage sector. 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.

Land Acknowledgment

Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ahpay-wuk) and Chonnonton (Chun-ongk-ton) Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum.

With this, we/I respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research and community service.

Western University Visual Arts Department

POLICIES

Submission:

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

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 should read the Academic Considerations section below.

All components of the Individual Exhibition Assignment, with the exception of the final submission, can be submitted up to 48 hours late with no questions asked. Following that, assignments will be docked 2%/day for the first 5 days, and 5%/day thereafter, inclusive of weekends.

The final submission of the Individual Exhibition Assignment (April 2) can be handed in up to 5 days late with no academic penalty, BUT students should be aware that grades are submitted 7 days after the end of class. At that point, late assignments cannot be accepted without accommodation arranged through the student's home faculty/Academic Counselling.

FOR ALL OTHER ASSIGNMENTS, this class has a distinct late policy due to the fact that one of the major components of the class is an exhibition, which must open on time. Students must consult with the professor as well as their Academic Counsellor if illness or other accommodations will affect the Artlab exhibition or the group assignment.

Artificial Intelligence

In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes except with the permission of the instructor. AI tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration, however students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism. **Assignments should reflect the students own thoughts and independent written work.** By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and ethical learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and allows them to produce original written contributions.

There are certain components of the Group Assignment and Final Exhibition Assignment that may benefit from the use of AI, however, prior to using AI, students MUST check with the instructor.

Prerequisite Checking:

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). 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.

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>).

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.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/code_of_conduct.pdf

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

Additional Course Material Request Policy

For online courses the material may be presented in a variety of ways at the instructor's discretion. Requests for additional material can only be made in cases necessitating academic accommodation. If a student requires Academic Accommodation for the course material, they can contact Western's Academic Support & Engagement department. <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>

Academic Consideration:

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. Academic Consideration provides students with consistent, fair, and pedagogically appropriate consideration, without compromising the academic integrity of the course or program, when they have been unable to complete some component of a course due to short-term extenuating circumstances. Students who have long-term or chronic medical conditions (physical or mental) that may impede their ability to complete academic responsibilities are directed to seek Academic Accommodation through Accessible Education ([Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)).

The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and

consistency for all students, academic consideration for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the end of the period of absence covered, to the Academic Counselling unit or Dean's Office of the student's Home Faculty together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the academic consideration being requested. These documents will be retained in the student's file, and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's [Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy](#). Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic consideration shall be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Academic consideration may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty.

Academic consideration shall be granted only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. (Note – it will not be sufficient to provide documentation indicating simply that the student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill.”)

Whenever possible, students who require academic consideration should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

Documentation from Family Physicians/Nurse Practitioners and Walk-In Clinics

A Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is required where a student is seeking academic consideration. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Documentation from Student Health Services

At the time of illness, students should make an appointment with a physician/nurse practitioner at Student Health Services. During this appointment, request a Student Medical Certificate from the Physician/Nurse Practitioner.

Documentation from Hospital Urgent Care Centres or Emergency Departments

Students should request that an SMC be filled out. Students may bring this form with them, or request alternative Emergency Department documentation. Documentation should be secured at the time of the initial visit to the Emergency Department. Where it is not possible for a student to have an SMC completed by the attending physician, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that their ability to meet their academic responsibilities was seriously affected.

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)

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

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.

STATEMENT ON GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Western [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Electronic Devices:

During Exams: Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any electronic devices during any tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other in-class evaluations.

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.**

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.

Removal:

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

Support Services:

There are various support services around campus and these include, but are not limited to:

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.

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.

Gender Neutral Bathrooms:

There are two gender neutral bathrooms in the John Labatt Visual Arts Centre (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 a list of inclusive washrooms at Western: http://www.uwo.ca/equity/doc/inclusive_washrooms.pdf.

Please contact the Administrative Officer, Meghan Edmiston (meghan.edmiston@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.

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.