

Western University – Department of Visual Arts

VAH 9582B/9682B

Contemporary Art and the Process of Witnessing

Professor: Dr. Joy James
Class Day/Time: Wednesday 11:30-2:30pm
Location: VAC 148
Office Hours: By appointment
Office: Room 120
Phone: (519) 661-2111 Ext. 86198
Email: jjames53@uwo.ca

Course Description

This graduate seminar will address creative arts production in relation to historical and contemporary ideas regarding 1) processes of witnessing, 2) notions of subjectivity, and 3) an ethics of difference. The continued importance of photography's aesthetic legacies and the model of the archive to questions of witnessing will be a topic of investigation throughout the course. The capacity of art to bear witness, as this pertains to rapidly changing conceptions of human subjectivity, has been an important discussion in emerging aesthetic models. Moving from art's engagements with radical crises of witnessing in the 20thC to recent re-conceptualizations of the relation between art, science, technology and the production of cultures, we will work with challenging and provocative texts, art objects and exhibitions in an effort to understand the shape and significance of current concepts of witnessing and to delve deeply into a practical ethics of scholarly and material practice.

Evaluation

Attendance at all classes is mandatory. Active participation and full engagement is required for successful completion of this graduate level course. The course requires a rigorous amount of reading, thinking and discussion. Students are expected to come to class having fully prepared to take up critical discussion of materials. A close reading of the assigned materials will open to the impact of ideas of witnessing on contemporary thought and art production, and the implications of these in moving forward projects in contemporary art.

Participation	20%	Ongoing
Book Review	25%	Due date: February 27, 2019
Student Presentation	15%	Due date: March 20/27, 2019
Research Paper	40%	Due date: April 03, 2019

Course Text

Syllabus

(Please note: Weekly syllabus will be distributed to seminar participants on the first day of class.)

Course Protocols

Office Hours/Email: Please email me for a mutually convenient appointment time when you have course-

Assignment Descriptions

Student presentations 15% Length: 30 minutes Due: March 20 & 27

Students will be assigned to present on one of the two days scheduled for presentations. Expectations for the presentations will be reviewed in seminar. This assignment is linked to both the book review and research papers. The presentation offers students an opportunity to connect ideas and theories addressed in seminar to art works and exhibitions of their choice, and expands the number of works we can actively consider during the course of the semester.

Research Paper 40% Length: 3000-3500 words/12-14 pages Due: April 03

Working out of course lectures, readings, discussions, and presentations, students will develop individual research projects in keeping with their particular scholarly and studio interests as they relate to the course focus. The graduate level research paper will present a clearly articulated argument or position that offers a critical discussion of the chosen topic. Further details of the assignment will be discussed at length after the first month of classes.

Book Review List of Possible Choices

(Presented to seminar participants on the first day of class.)

**Western University
Visual Arts Department**

POLICIES

Student Conduct:

All students will conduct themselves in a manner that will be consistent with the maturity and academic integrity expected of university students. Student conduct shall be consistent with the general laws of the state of Ohio (w)1.9 (i)

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.

Medical Policy:

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. See course outline for specific arrangements regarding less than 10% of assignments.

Mental Health:

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

www.lib.uwo.ca (esp. for MW 42 30 (1) 518 (52) 5.0 8.52) 5.38 (96529.76) (e) 518 0 1 rg 90 6) 8.26) 1.46 0.6 refEMC BT/P