

MFA Graduate Studio Seminar VAS 9541b/9544b

Term/Session: Winter 2020

Professor: David Merritt: dmerritt@uwo.ca

Office Hours: by appointment

Mode	Dates	Time	Frequency
Virtual synchronous	Fridays	10:00 am-1pm	weekly

Technical Requirements:



Stable internet connection



Laptop or computer



Working microphone



Working webcam



UWO Zoom Account



Camera (or Camera Phone)

- This course will use the UWO Zoom for course delivery access through your Western email address
- Attendance at scheduled synchronous sessions is required
- Participation and Engagement in synchronous sessions is required
- Preparatory work must be completed prior to their scheduled synchronous sessions
- Missed in class work due to illness should be completed within 48 hours
- Cameras must be on during class and break out room activities

All course material will be posted to OWL: <http://owl.uwo.ca>. Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site and discussed with the class.

For OWL technical assistance call support on the [OWL Help page](#) or [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#) at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

[Google Chrome](#) or [Mozilla Firefox](#) are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL; update your your browsers frequently. Students interested in evaluating their internet speed, please click [here](#).

Classes Start	Reading Week	Classes End	Final Critique Period
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January 15	February 13-21	April 9	April 19-23 (exact dates TBA)
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Course Description

This course has been designed this semester in consideration of Western emergency’s remote teaching response to COVID-19 and has been scheduled to convene weekly as an **online synchronous** course.

Weekly virtual meetings will provide a critical forum devoted to developing the ongoing material practice and parallel research of MFA students. Informal studio discussions and related research presentations will comprise the core of the course. Formal critique sessions scheduled at midterm and at the end of the year.

Students will be asked to participate in studio discussions relating to their developing practice and to prepare research presentations in support of their larger thesis project. At individual students’ discretion, informal group studio discussions may also address related technical or conceptual concerns, develop appropriate language for evaluation and critique, or involve discussion on relevant issues. Suggested frameworks for the research presentations will be provided by the instructor. Outside of group forums, students may also schedule individual meetings with the instructor to discuss the development of their studio work.

Evaluation

This course presupposes each student’s vigorous and regular engagement with a studio practice and with the activities of the MFA community as a whole. All scheduled due dates must be respected. The following represents the principal requirements of the class:

Course Studio Work (presented in peer studio discussions and midterm critique).....	20%
Final Critique.....	35%
Research Presentations.....	15%
Participation (including class critiques and discussions).....	15%
Dossier	15%

Course Studio Work: studio discussions and critiques held during the semester leading up to the final crits will be graded by the course instructor in consultation with the student’s advisor.

Final Critique: Department graduate faculty members attending the formal studio critique at the end of the term will submit to the course instructor their recommended grades for the student. The final critique grade will be determined by averaging the recommended grades of the Committee (1/3), the Advisor (1/3) and the Instructor (1/3. This grade will count for 35% of the total grade for the course.

Research Presentations: a 45 minute presentation of thesis related research prepared by students in parallel to their studio practice. The format is adaptable in consultation with the instructor (see suggested guidelines under Assignments tab the course OWL site).

Class Participation: based on active and considered participation (9%); and attendance (.5% per class)

Dossier: this document will contain reflective notes on all studio visitor discussions relating to students’ ongoing material production, including:

- two guest studio visitors engaged by the department
- a minimum two independently arranged departmental visitors (faculty and/or Ph.D.)
- a minimum two meetings with the student’s faculty advisor
- a critical reflection on your midterm critique.

Each entry should around 250 words in length and submitted as a PDF at the end of the course

Information about late or missed evaluations:

Late assessments without illness self-reports will be subject to a late penalty 1% per day

Late assessments with illness self-reports should be submitted within 24 hours of the last illness self-report

Course Requirements

Attendance:

As the teaching methods used will include synchronous class discussions, critiques, lectures and workshops, attendance, punctuality and preparedness for the class are critical. Be sure to familiarize yourself with current academic consideration policy (below, under Visual Arts Department Policy) concerning procedures for requesting accommodations for reasons of health or bereavement. 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.

In cases of serious health and bereavement reasons, extensions for major assignments will be granted upon receipt of official notification from the student's faculty advisor.

- Late assessments with illness self-reports should be submitted within 24 hours of submission of the last illness self-report
- An assessment cannot be submitted after it has been returned to the class; [an alternate assessment will be assigned] OR [the weight will be transferred to the final grade]
- If a make-up assessment is missed, the student will receive an INC and complete the task the next time the course is offered.

Course Communications

- Students should check the OWL site every 24 – 48 hours
- Weekly updates will be provided on the OWL announcements as required
- Emails will be monitored regularly; students will usually receive a response within 24 – 48 hours,
- This course will use Zoom for course delivery
- This course will use the OWL forum and Voice Thread for class discussion and critiques
- Students should post all course-related content on the discussion forum so that everyone can access answers to questions
- The discussion forums will be monitored regularly by instructor

Professionalism and Privacy

Western students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations and professional conduct apply to this course:

- Students are expected to follow online etiquette expectations (below)
- All course materials created by the instructor(s) are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared
- Recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission

Permitted recordings are not to be distributed

All recorded sessions will remain within the course site or unlisted if streamed

Online Participation and Engagement

Students are expected to participate and engage with course content as much as possible.

In addition to participation in oral discussions, students may post comments on chat threads.

Students can also participate by interacting in the forums with their peers and instructors.

Online Etiquette

To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honour the following rules of etiquette:

- please “arrive” to class on time
- please use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet)
- ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of discussions in the event that a class discussion deals with sensitive or personal material
- to minimize background noise, it may be necessary to mute your microphone for the until you are invited to speak
- please be prepared to turn your video camera off at the instructor’s request if the internet connection becomes unstable
- unless invited by your instructor, do **not** share your screen in the meeting

The course instructor will act as moderator for the class and in most cases mediate any questions from participants. To participate please consider the following:

- if you wish to speak please raise your hand (physically or virtually) and wait for the instructor to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question
- remember to unmute your microphone before speaking
- remember to mute your mic after speaking (unless directed otherwise)

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- remember to unmute your microphone before speaking
- remember to mute your mic after speaking (unless directed otherwise)

General considerations of “netiquette”:

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.
- Be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing.
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. A temperate exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment.
- Be professional and scholarly in all online postings. Cite the ideas of others where appropriate.

Note that disruptive behavior of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of Zoom-bombing a class or of other serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

STUDIO ART GRADING RUBRIC

90-100 (Outstanding, A+) - The studio work shows significant originality and exhibits a high degree of critical engagement. Sophisticated analysis and synthesis involving complex theoretical and conceptual thinking are demonstrated. Mastery of complex ideas is immediately evident. The studio work has originality, clarity and ambition. The project is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A) - The studio work shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical engagement. The work is clearly focused and intelligently presented. Mastery of complex ideas is demonstrated. The studio work has clarity and ambition. The quality of the studio production immediately engages the viewer. The studio work has been sufficiently developed and demonstrates mastery of techniques so that results are compelling. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is impressive.

75-79 (Very Good, B+) - The studio work shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. It demonstrates a clear awareness of the parameters of the assignment and a very good attempt to respond creatively to them. The work demonstrates reasonable depth and/or breadth and engages in a production that is appropriate to the level of the course. The quality of studio work engages the viewer and demonstrates above-average mastery of techniques. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is very good.

70-74 (Good, B) - The studio work shows a satisfactory attempt at analysis and critical thinking. It shows a good attempt to respond to assignment parameters. The work demonstrates some depth and/or breadth, making references to appropriate course material/art context. The studio production engages the viewer and demonstrates a sufficient mastery of techniques. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is satisfactory.

60-69 (Competent, C) - The studio work demonstrates adequate engagement with the project. It shows an attempt to respond to assignment parameters but does so at a very basic level that lacks creativity. Engagement with studio production demonstrates basic mastery of techniques. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is competent.

50-59 (Marginal, D) - The studio work shows less than adequate engagement with the topic and with the material covered by the course. The studio work waivers in its attempt to respond to assignment parameters and tends to be simplistic. Engagement with studio production demonstrates less than a basic mastery of techniques. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is less than satisfactory.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F) - The studio work demonstrates a failure to comprehend/engage the topic. The studio work is incomplete and lacks redeeming creative merit. The work clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is unacceptable.

Visual Arts Department Policies and Regulations

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.

Electronic Devices

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.

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).

Academic Consideration

The University recognizes that a student’s ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by extenuating circumstances, including short-term illness or injury. Reasonable academic consideration is a cooperative process between the University, the student, and academic staff. All participants in the process must act in good faith, and fulfil their respective obligations, if it is to succeed.

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant as to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements, may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

- i. *Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form, provided that the conditions for submission are met;*
- ii. *For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner, in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or*
- iii. *For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration, in order to be eligible for academic consideration.*

Students seeking academic consideration:

- *Are advised to consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;*

- *Are encouraged to make appropriate decisions, based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (e.g., upset stomach) or upsets (e.g., argument with a friend) are not normally an appropriate basis for a self-reported absence;*
- ***Must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence;***
- ***Are advised that all necessary documentation, forms, etc. are to be submitted to academic counselling within two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities***

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe as to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours or less. The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:

- Students will be allowed a maximum of two self-reported absences between September and April, and one self-reported absence between May and August;*
- The duration of the excused absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30am the following morning if the form is submitted after 4:30pm;*
- The duration of the excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48 hour period, should the student undertake significant academic responsibilities (e.g., write a test, submit a paper) during that time;*
- The duration of an excused absence will terminate at 8:30am on the day following the last day of classes each semester, regardless of how many days of absence have elapsed;*
- Self-reported absences will not be allowed for scheduled final examinations; for midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period; or for final lab examinations*
- Self-reporting may not be used for assessments (e.g., midterm exams, tests, reports, presentations, or essays) worth more than 30% of any given course;*
- Students must be in touch with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form, to clarify how they will be expected to fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed*

Western Academic Policies and Statements

Absence from Course Commitments

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences](#)

In the interest of the health and safety of students and health care providers, you are no longer required to seek a medical note for absences this term. If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness you should use the [Illness Reporting Tool](#). This tool takes the place of the need to submit a medical note and the Self-Reported Absence System formally used by undergraduate students.

You are required to self-report every day that you are ill and unable to complete course commitments. Details about when you should submit missed work, the format of the missed work can be found in the Section 7. Evaluation above. Students should communicate promptly with their instructor and use this tool with integrity.

Accommodation for Religious Holidays

The policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be viewed [here](#).

Special Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or

medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

Academic Offenses

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed [here](#) to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence.

Accessibility Statement

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education (AE) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation or review [The policy on Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Correspondence Statement

The centrally administered **e-mail account** provided to students will be considered the individual’s official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at his/her official university address is attended to in a timely manner. You can read about the privacy and security of the UWO email accounts [here](#).

Turnitin and other similarity review software

All assignments will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. Students will be able to view their results before the final submission. 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 Western University and [Turnitin.com](#).

Arts and Humanities Academic Policies and Statements

Copyright and Audio/Video Recording Statement

Course material produced by faculty is copyrighted and to reproduce this material for any purposes other than your own educational use contravenes Canadian Copyright Laws. You must always ask permission to record another individual and you should never share or distribute recordings.

Rounding of Marks Statement

Across the Basic Medical Sciences Undergraduate Education programs, we strive to maintain high standards that reflect the effort that both students and faculty put into the teaching and learning experience during this course. All students will be treated equally and evaluated based only on their actual achievement. **Final grades** on this course, irrespective of the number of decimal places used in marking individual assignments and tests, will be calculated to one decimal place and rounded to the nearest integer, e.g., 74.4 becomes 74, and 74.5 becomes 75. Marks WILL NOT be bumped to the next grade or GPA, e.g. a 79 will NOT be bumped up to an 80, an 84 WILL NOT be bumped up to an 85, etc. The mark attained is the mark you achieved, and the mark assigned; requests for mark “bumping” will be denied.

Support Services

The following links provide information about support services at Western University.

[Academic Counselling \(Science and Basic Medical Sciences\)](#)
[Appeal Procedures](#)

[Registrarial Services](#)
[Student Development Services](#)
[Student Health Services](#)

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. https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/code_of_conduct.pdf

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.

For the 2020-2021 academic year the John Labatt Visual Arts Centre will be available by card access only for students who have in-person classes in the building.

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.

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

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/uwoom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender Neutral Bathrooms

Middlesex College does not have specifically 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. Here is the full list of inclusive washrooms at UWO: http://www.uwo.ca/equity/doc/inclusive_washrooms.pdf. Please contact the Media Lab Technician, Jennifer Slauenwhite (jslaue@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.