

**Western University - Faculty of Arts and Humanities - Visual Arts Department**

**VAS 4430 Practicum – Fall/Winter 2017-2018**

Classes: **Wednesdays and Fridays 8:30-12:30**

**Room: JLVAC 300 and 148**

**Professors:**

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or by appointment

**1. Course Description**

Practicum is a studio/thesis course designed to prepare students to develop a studio practice in the context of contemporary art issues and various media processes. It will, at all times, emphasize critical analysis and energetic discussion in combination with an intensive commitment to probing specific ideas and interests through creative exploration.

As a two-course load, practicum provides time for studio development and production with a related research component. The course will encourage students to experiment with materials and methods as they develop a critical studio practice informed by theoretical investigations. The university setting and the local communities offer access to information, ideas, and facilities that students are expected to use to enrich their creative practices. Attendance at speaker events and gallery openings is recommended and should be considered an important adjunct to the weekly studio classes.

**2. Learning Outcomes**

A. Autonomy and Professional Capacity

- Students will understand the range of opportunities for artists within and beyond the academic setting, and will have an awareness of the routes that must be taken to make advancements toward further study and/or professional practice. They will understand the appropriate means by which artists communicate with their peers, advance their careers etc.
- Students will understand the range of opportunities for art researchers within and beyond the academic setting, and will have an awareness of the routes that must be taken to make advancements toward further study and/or professional practice.

B. Application of Knowledge

- Students will use their capacities with the medium as a critical, discursive and expressive tool to develop creative works; understand the potential viability of their works, and will utilize their reflections on their works to explore and develop further projects in order to create a body of work
- Students will utilize their knowledge of appropriate methods, the vocabularies pertinent to the field, and their ability to make appropriate judgements, in order to develop a sound argument regarding a particular historical development, and will be able to defend their argument according to a knowledge of scholarly works

C. Communication Skills

- Students will be able to communicate in writing and orally regarding their projects and regarding relevant art and culture, and will recognize the range of language suited to differing communication opportunities (i.e. a grant application vs. a grad school application)
- Students will be able to communicate orally and in writing with regard to their art history research, and will be able to utilize different genres of writing for different purposes (i.e., to write an academic paper, or a magazine article)

D. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge

- Students will have an awareness of the art world, and of differing arenas and audiences for art, and they will understand the function and appropriateness of their own creative strategies in relation to the immediate context as well as a broader context

- Students will be aware of the field of research/inquiry in relation to which their studies are situated, and will understand the limits/opportunities inherent to their research capacities within the framework of their studies

### 3. Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- Present a honed and cohesive independent body of work and research.
- Demonstrate perceptual, visual and conceptual skills through art making and as a critical viewer.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional artist career trajectories and how these may relate to their own practice.
- Demonstrate an understanding of publishing.
- Create a professional artist dossier and present their work in a professional manner.
- Prepare written and visual work for publication through the creation of a catalogue.
- Install and present their work professionally in a professional gallery setting.
- Demonstrate a grasp of historical and contemporary issues relevant to the making and evaluation of contemporary practices in the visual arts.
- Demonstrate the ability to translate and present information through various presentation strategies and media and understand shifts in meaning generated through this process.

### 4. Course Requirements

Practicum meets twice a week for a total of 8 hours. *Students are also expected to spend a minimum of 8 hours a week outside course time on studio work and research.* Each student is responsible for knowing the assignments, procedures, and due dates. Students are expected to complete all assignments by the due date; failure to do so may result in a failing grade (F). Requests for deadline extensions cannot be considered unless approved by the instructor at least 24 hours before the assignment is due and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Attendance is mandatory and missing 15% or more of class time can result in a failing grade. All students are expected to be present and available for discussions at the **beginning** of each class meeting, even in the case that there is no scheduled activity and students are engaging in their work in another area of the building. Students are also responsible for the preparation, installation, and de-installation of class exhibitions. Failure to deliver or remove your work by a required deadline could result in loss of sign-out privileges and will affect your participation grade. Additionally, failure to use studio space safely and professionally will also impact your participation grade and could result in the loss of studio privileges.

### 5. Evaluation

Evaluation will be based upon the demonstrated ambition and resolution brought to meeting the creative, conceptual, and formal demands of assignments and studio work, as well as in the level of participation demonstrated in all other aspects of the course. Students will be evaluated on their understanding of relevant theoretical issues introduced in class and their ability to integrate these ideas in their studio practice. Qualitative evaluation will take the form of a numerical breakdown of each assignment grade in reference to the above criteria as well as through oral feedback from the course instructors.

### 6. Course Evaluation

#### First Term (45% of final grade):

First Term Assignments Quantified	Grading Weight
Self-Designed Project	10
Independent Studio Project: Midterm	20
Independent Studio Project: End of term	30

Bibliography, Reading Discussion and Reflections	10
Artist Statement	5
Participation (Professional Conduct, Committee Work & Reports, Participation in Exhibition Planning & Development, Participation in Critiques, Working in Class)	15
Total	90 (/2=45%)

### **Second Term (55% of final grade):**

<b>Second Term Assignments Quantified</b>	<b>Grading Weight</b>
Independent Studio Project: Midterm	30
Independent Studio Project: Final	40
Presentation	10
Dossier, includes: Letter of Intent/exhibition proposal, updated statement, biography, images/video, list of works, artist CV.	10
Catalogue Entry	5
Overall Participation (Professional Conduct, Committee Work & Reports, Participation in Exhibition Planning & Development, Participation in Critiques, Working in Class)	15
Total	110 (/2=55%)

## **7. Readings and Presentations**

### First Term

Students will participate in a number of seminar-like discussions on a variety of texts. Thorough knowledge of these texts will be required for active participation and students will be required to submit short (500 words) written reflections on each text. These will be evaluated for critical thinking, clarity of expression and relevance to each text. In addition, students will be asked to submit a bibliography (7-8 texts) of their own research interests (primarily books, but films, sound works and other cultural material/sources may be included) and to submit similar reflections on two of them, at different times in the term.

### Second Term

Students will give presentations on a term or concept integral to their own practices. Topics will be chosen with the Professors before the end of the first term. Presenting students are expected to generate a critical discussion based upon their own research into the theme. Presentations should include audio-visual material and will be delivered to the class in a standard lecture format. This presentation must incorporate the work of at least two artists (or collectives) whose work responds to and extends the theme as well as suggesting connections to the student's own work, and who has not been researched in any previous presentation or essay.

### Note:

An aim of this course is to engage the student with a very broad range of artistic practices. Some of the most canonical or universally esteemed works contain what is now called 'mature subject matter.' Be forewarned that a small percentage of the visual material students will be expected to view is of an explicit nature, containing for example, scenes or depictions of sexual and/or violent acts. Students must accept that by taking this course they have consented to viewing such material. If this poses a problem for a student, for

whatever reason, it must be BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE INSTRUCTOR IMMEDIATELY (DURING THE FIRST CLASS).

### **8. Practicum Mentors**

Course instructors *recommend* finding a mentor for each student from the Visual Arts Faculty or Graduate students. After agreeing, students will be responsible for scheduling individual consultations with your mentors as well as inviting them to final critiques (if available). Studio visits scheduled with mentors should be considered formal occasions and you must prepare your work and presentation accordingly. Notes from these visits can be included in your proposals (see below).

### **9. Artist Statement**

Students will have the opportunity to write two artist statements over the two terms (one page, single spaced). Students will submit an initial statement to the class to be discussed in a writing workshop. After gathering feedback from their peers and instructors, students will revise the statement and hand it in at the end of the first term for evaluation. A final version will be handed in during the second term as part of the dossier/catalogue entry.

### **10. Proposal**

At certain stages in each term, students will be asked to write a one-page single-spaced, proposal for the development of their studio work. Students will outline their formal, conceptual, and thematic ideas and outline the reasons for this planned material manifestation as clearly as possible. Students will cover the projects material concerns, methodology, and describe their timetable for developing and finishing this work. Students will also note comments from their visits with their mentors in a brief summary, if arranged. The studio art proposals will be amended, by the faculty, in time, and will be graded.

### **11. Dossier**

The dossier will include an updated cv, cd of work or website, list of images/titles, a biography and an artist statement. It will be due early in the second semester. This will help students prepare to meet some of the requirements of applications to graduate programs, grants, and exhibitions.

### **12. Studio Work & Critiques**

Each term, students will have many opportunities to formally present their most recent studio work for discussion with instructors and peers. In-studio visits will be decided by schedule and/or request and will be posted at the beginning of each class. Students should prepare for, schedule and/or expect these visits regularly. Formal critiques will be organized twice per term. The schedule for these critiques will be established before the critique. Studio work presented for discussion in the critiques should usually represent recently completed projects. In some cases, very major or multi-faceted projects may be presented still in development. All finished and work-in-progress presented must demonstrate a vigorous commitment to process as well as demonstrate an evolved conceptual and material practice. For all formal critiques students should provide instructors with a list of (working) titles, materials details and installation notes. For some critiques students will assume responsibility for effectively introducing and facilitating discussion around their work and the work of their peers, however students may also be asked to take the role of an observer, making notes of the direction and topics of discussion in relation to their work. These notes will be reviewed with the course instructors during studio meetings/visits to assess what expectations of the work were met, and if expectations of the work were not met what future directions could be investigated. All class members are expected to actively participate in these critiques and will be evaluated on both the presentation of their work as well as their generous engagement with the work of others.

### **13. Committee Work**

Committee work is an important part of the Practicum Course and a large part of your participation grade. Each student will volunteer or be assigned a role in one of four committees: **Fundraising; Catalogue; Class-Trip;** and **Exhibition**. Specific roles will be discussed in class. Each student will submit a short report on their activities on dates the requested. Committee positions will often rely on each other to do a good job, so good planning and communication is essential.

**14. 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.

**15. Attendance**

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. Note that if a student consistently is absent from a 3-hour class for 1 hour, they will exceed the 15% cut-off and can be debarred.

**16. Course 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.

A student who cannot complete assignments totalling less than 10% for the whole course, due to medical reasons, may speak with the instructor and arrange an extension of no more than two weeks to complete the assignments without presenting medical documentation.

**17. Mental Health:**

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

## Visual Arts Studio 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.

**The University of Western Ontario  
Visual Arts Department**

**POLICIES**

**Student Conduct:**

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**Attendance:**

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. 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, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., p.1170). (Refer to <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2017/pg113.html> 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.

**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 Wellbeing:**

"Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Wellbeing [http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental\\_health/](http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help."

**Building Access:**

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](mailto: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 IGA Building, Room 1N20.

The Student Development Centre (WSS room 4111; tel: 519-661-3031; [www.sdc.uwo.ca](http://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](http://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](mailto:finaid@uwo.ca); or check out their website at [http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/student\\_finances/financial\\_counselling.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/student_finances/financial_counselling.html)

June 2, 2017