

MCS 3610G – Winter 2023

Museum Controversies and Contestations

Thursdays 2:30 – 5:30

Room VAC-247



Benin Bronzes at the British Museum

Professor: Dr. Helen Gregory

Office: McIntosh Gallery, Room 5B (downstairs)

Office Hours: Thursday 12:45 – 1:45 pm, by appointment

Email: hgregory@uwo.ca

Course Description and Objectives:

Despite often being described as storehouses for dead objects akin to mausoleums, museums have more recently been the focus of numerous controversies and contestations. In light of current socio-cultural shifts and re-evaluations, this course will examine how museums are now both the site and subject of protest, activism, and social change. What challenges are faced by museums in researching and displaying “difficult” material such as artefacts related to histories of violence, social and economic disparity, colonization, or environmental degradation? Students in this course will learn how museums have both benefitted from and responded to historical and ongoing exploitation and inequality.

Required Texts:

All course readings, weblinks, podcasts etc. 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. Some news articles may be paywall protected, but I have pdfs of most of them just in case we need them. Additional material will be added as required, but in the event of any changes you will receive a notification.

Assignment Breakdown:

Participation: 15%

Reading responses (3), 15% (5% each)

Case Study: 70%

- Initial Expression of Interest: 5%
- Proposal and Annotated Bibliography: 15%
- Final Essay: 40%
- Pecha Kucha Presentation: 10%

Participation: 15%

10% of the participation will be determined by attendance, the extent and quality of engagement in class discussions, and the ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the readings. **5%** of the participation grade will be determined by students submitting news stories for discussions in class. Students can submit 0-5 stories, but each one is worth 1%. Stories should pertain to exhibitions and current events in the art and museum world that pertain to course material, and students should be prepared to talk about the story in class. Resist the urge to go home and send five emails immediately your first class. It will be the least interesting way to approach this.

Assignment Descriptions:

More detailed descriptions of assignments are available on OWL. All assignments will be discussed in class.

Assignment Submissions:

All short assignments (Reading Responses, Expression of Interest, First Draft, Presentation PowerPoint) should be submitted through Dropbox/OWL. The Final Essay must be submitted using the Assignments tab, where I have enabled Turnitin.

Reading Responses: 15%

1st mandatory response due on January 26th, other two as chosen.

Over the course of the semester, students will respond to assigned readings. The first reading response is mandatory and will be due on **January 26th**, but the other two can be chosen from any other classes. You must respond to all readings or other material assigned on those weeks, but you can choose which two weeks. Responses must be uploaded to Dropbox/OWL prior to the class in which the readings have been assigned. Your responses can be provocative, critical,

questioning, or praiseworthy but they must demonstrate a clear understanding of the authors' arguments. 500-750 words/response.

Case Study: 70%

Initial Expression of Interest: 5%, Due February 2nd

Students will submit an initial expression of interest of 250 words describing a proposed case study associated with one of the topics covered in class.

First Draft and Annotated Bibliography: 15%, Due February 16th

Students will submit a more substantially developed proposal for their essay, taking into consideration any feedback received from the professor. This should be approximately 1000 words in length and must also include an annotated bibliography of five research resources, at least three of which must be scholarly sources. The other two may be news articles, films, podcasts, or other media. Each source should be annotated with a one-paragraph description that summarizes how it will be useful to your proposed essay. Students will also have the opportunity to engage in a peer feedback session during class, to further expand and develop their ideas.

Final Essay: 40% Due on or before April 6th

Students will submit a well thought out scholarly essay. This assignment must be submitted under the assignments tab.

Pecha Kucha: 10%, Presented in class on April 6th

Students will give a short Pecha Kucha style presentation of their case studies, using up to 5 images. Pecha Kucha presentations are timed, and students will have exactly five minutes to present – one minute per slide.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will develop a greater understanding of issues significant to the museum field.
- Students will develop knowledge of and be able to discuss different controversial events in museum history
- Students will be able to critically reflect on how past controversies have influenced current museum policies and programming
- 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 perform independent research on a chosen subject.
- Students will have the opportunity to hone their critical thinking and writing skills.
- Students will hone their academic writing skills and will develop their knowledge of critical themes and topics relevant to museum studies.
- Students will become familiar with best practices for citing reference materials and utilizing the Chicago Manual of Style.

Class Policies – A Brief Overview

Late Assignments: Students are expected to complete all assignments on time. I will deduct one mark per day of lateness. Extensions will be given *only* upon official notification from the student's faculty advisor documenting bereavement or serious health issues.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. For information concerning UWO's Plagiarism and Academic Offenses (Scholastic Offences) consult the Western Academic Calendar.

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus throughout the term. Should a change be required, you will be given prior notice. Any changes to material on OWL will be accompanied by an announcement.

All students will conduct themselves online in a manner consistent with the Code of Student Conduct and treat all members of the University community with respect.

VISUAL ARTS DEPARTMENT POLICIES

Assignment Submissions:

All assignments should be submitted to the professor 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 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. Assignments will be docked 1 point per day of lateness. (If your assignment is worth 10%, your grade will be reduced 1 mark out of 10 for each day that it is late.)

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.

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

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&ArchivedID=#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. 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 accommodation 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, to the appropriate Dean's office (the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration/home Faculty) together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation 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 accommodation shall be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Academic accommodation 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 accommodation 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 accommodation 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 accommodation. 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.

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.

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](#).

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:

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 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.

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS: MUSEUM AND CURATORIAL STUDIES

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 of 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.

Land Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. With this, 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.