

The University of Western Ontario
Department of Visual Arts
VAH 2230F: History of the Moving Image
Fall, 2014



Tuesdays 2:30 – 5:30 PM
North Campus Building: Room 117

Professor: Dr. Matthew Ryan Smith
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Office Hour: Tuesdays 1:30 – 2:30 PM

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Course Description

This course will explore a history of the moving image in Western visual culture from the 19th century to the present. While we will consider dominant modes of cinematic production (Soviet, Hollywood, home movies, etc.) and projection (conventional theatres), we will concentrate on the way in which visual artists and cultural producers have used film and video to analyze, oppose, critique, or satirize mainstream culture industries. This course will navigate both the changes in moving image technology in the 20th century (from film to video, from movie theatre to iPad, from television to Netflix), and the creative use of this technology by artists and experimental filmmakers. Please note that this is *not* a film history course, but a narrow examination of the moving image in relation to artistic production. *Students who may be uncomfortable viewing explicit content should contact the professor prior to enrolling in the course.*

Course Readings

All readings for VAH 2230F are available as PDF files on OWL (<https://owl.uwo.ca/>). If a student is unable to access the readings through OWL, it is his or her responsibility to contact the professor immediately. Although there is not a scheduled tutorial for this course, weekly course readings may be discussed during lecture. That being said, course readings are specifically meant to contextualize materials presented in class and develop your knowledge in the area of moving image history and its relation to visual art practice.

Course Assignments and Evaluation Schedule:

Assignment	Due Date	Grade Weight
Exhibition Review / Curated Exhibition	September 30 th , 2014	25%
Film Blog Assignment	November 18 th , 2014	25%
Research Essay	December 5 th , 2014	35%
Participation / Attendance	Cumulative	15%

Participation

Students are expected to bring their readings to class. Students are expected to arrive on time to all classes unless they are ill in which case suitable documentation should be given to the professor. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they sign the weekly attendance sheet at the beginning of class.

Attendance: 5%

If you attend 100% of the classes, you will receive 100% of the 5 percentage points of the course assigned to attendance. If you attend 50% of classes, you will receive 50% for this portion of the course grade.

Film / Video Screenings

Rare and difficult to access films and videos will be screened periodically. It is the student's responsibility to attend all screenings. If you cannot attend a class, the week's featured films and videos will be available to review on a to-be-scheduled day before the final exam.

Requirements

Students are expected to punctually attend all class sessions and be prepared to participate in all class activities. Absences will not be excused, and under no circumstances will late weekly participation statements/questions be accepted. Students are responsible for making themselves aware of all assignments, procedures, and due dates. With fair notice, course assignments, procedures, and due dates can be changed by the instructor in response to class needs. It is the student's responsibility to keep informed of any such changes.

Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date of the assignment. Failure to complete assignments without prior arrangements with the instructor will result in a failing grade. With prior discussion, students may hand in late work with a 10% per day deduction from the assignment. Extensions will be given upon official notification from the student's faculty advisor due to documented serious health and bereavement reasons.

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 Counseling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. The instructor or department cannot grant academic accommodation.

Accommodation for missed assignments totaling less than 10%, due to medical reasons, may be arranged with the instructor as long as the student contacts the instructor prior to the due date.

For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness please see:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western

http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Written Assignments

Written assignments will not be accepted via email or as an email attachment. All assignments must be typed, double spaced, using Times New Roman, 12 pt. font.

For all written assignments, the strictest of penalties will be applied in the case of plagiarism.

Please ensure that you properly credit all source material. If you are in doubt about how cite a work, please consult your instructor well in advance of the assigned due date. Proper bibliographic and footnote format is required with all written assignments.

All written work must adhere to The Chicago Manual of Style. It is the responsibility of the students to familiarize themselves with The Chicago Manual of Style, available online at the following URL: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/contents.html>

Communication

Students are required to check their UWO email and OWL account regularly. If you do not have Internet access where you live, please schedule a regular stop at a public terminal on campus. Important class announcements may be sent out via email.

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 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.

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, 7th ed., p. 1170). (Refer to www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg113.html# or the 2014/2015 Western Academic Calendar, p. 19, with regards to academic penalties for plagiarism.)

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 Policy:

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western 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 10:00 pm each night. There will be no after-hour access for undergraduate students. The Centre is open weekends 12:00 noon-5:00 pm. Students should be prepared to vacate the building promptly at 10:00 pm and 5:00 pm. You must also sign-in with the building monitors when working in the workshop areas outside of regular office hours.

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, Prof. C. Barteet (tel. 519-661-2111 ext. 86182; 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 (Mr. Ben Hakala or Ms. Amanda Green for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities).

The Student Development Centre (WSS room 4111; tel: 519-661-3031; www.sdc.uwo.ca) offers a wide range of useful services to students 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.

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; or check out their website at http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/student_finances/financial_counselling.html

Anticipated Learning Outcomes

1. Re: Depth and Breadth of Knowledge
 - Students will acquire the range of skills required to engage in the material practice being studied, and will have a thorough understanding of the genesis of those skills historically
 - Students will have a thorough knowledge of the key critical and theoretical frameworks that pertain to the period being studied and will be able to engage with/analyze works of art from that period according to those frameworks

2. Re: Knowledge of Methodologies
 - Students will gain an understanding of the critical potential of the medium, be able to identify various ways works in that medium operate critically, and will apply their understanding, in creative ways, to the realization of their projects
 - Students will acquire the discursive/theoretical vocabularies that are utilized in debates within the field, and will demonstrate their knowledge of the field through the deployment of the vocabulary in orally and in writing
3. Re: 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
4. Re: 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)
5. Re: 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
6. Re: 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 history 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.

Course-Related Learning Outcomes

- Students who attend all lectures and engage with the course material at an advanced level will be introduced to a wide variety of films and videos from the 20th and 21st centuries as well as the key theoretical and socio-political issues these moving images engage.
- Students will understand both the similarities and differences between key avant-garde movements, and will be able to identify and define strategies used by filmmakers to critique the mainstream culture industry (such as montage, parody, and détournement).
- Students will develop the skills necessary to write critically about moving images and moving image technologies.
- Students will have a thorough knowledge of the key critical and theoretical frameworks that pertain to the film and video practices featured in the course and will be able to engage with / analyze moving images according to said frameworks.
- Students will acquire the vocabularies utilized in debates within the field, and will demonstrate their knowledge of these debates in writing.

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READING LIST AND SCHEDULE

1. September 9th, 2014 – Course Introduction

- No readings assigned

2. September 16th, 2014 – Precinema: Spectatorship and the Cinema of Attractions

- 1) Bordwell, David. "Doing Film History," in *David Bordwell's Website on Cinema* (accessed 8 September, 2014), <http://www.davidbordwell.net/essays/doing.php>
- 2) Gunning, Tom. "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," in *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser, (London: BFI Publishing, 1990), 56-62.

3. September 23rd, 2014 – Mainstreaming Culture: The Institutionalization of Cinema

- 1) Kochberg, Searle. "Cinema as Institution," in *An Introduction to Film Studies*, 3rd ed. Jill Neldes, ed. (London, Routledge, 2003), 3-19.
- 2) Adorno, Theodor W. and Max Horkheimer. Excerpts from "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 1223-1240.

4. September 30th, 2014 – Strange Scenes: Dada, Surrealist Cinema and the Uncanny

- 1) Kuenzli, Rudolf E. "Introduction," in *Dada and Surrealist Film*, ed. Rudolf E. Kuenzli (New York: Willis Locker & Owens, 1987), 1-12.
- 2) Judovitz, Dalia. "Anemic Vision in Duchamp: Cinema as Readymade," in *Dada and Surrealist Film*, ed. Rudolf E. Kuenzli (New York: Willis Locker & Owens, 1987), 46-57.

- EXHIBITION REVIEW ASSIGNMENT DUE

5. October 7th, 2014 – Structuralist / Materialist Film and Paracinema

- 1) Sitney, P. Adams. "Structural Film," in *Film Culture Reader*, ed. P. Adams Sitney (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 327-345.

- 2) Walley, Jonathan. "The Material of Film and the Idea of Cinema: Contrasting Practices in Sixties and Seventies Avant-Garde Film." *October* 103 (2003): 15-30.
- 6. October 14th, 2014 – Deconstructing the Mainstream: Contemporary "Cinematic" Art**
- 1) Walley, Jonathan. "Modes of Film Practice in the Avant-Garde," in *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader*, ed. Tanya Leighton (London: Tate Publishing and Afterall, 2008), 182-199.
 - 2) Viénet, René "The Situationists and the New Forms of Action against Politics and Art," in *Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*, ed. Tom McDonough (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 181-185.
- 7. October 21st, 2014 – Film Screening**
- Readings: TBD
- 8. October 28th, 2014 – Fall in Line: Political Propaganda and the Art of Persuasion**
- 1) Gillespie, David. "Introduction: The Golden Age of Soviet Cinema," in *Early Soviet Cinema: Innovation, Ideology and Propaganda* (London: Wallflower, 2000), 1-21.
 - 2) Eisenstein, Sergei. "Beyond the Shot: The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram," in *Film Theory and Criticism, Introductory Readings*, 5th ed., Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 15-24.
- 9. November 4th, 2014 – Songs of the Self: Identity, Auto / Biography, and the Ethnicity**
- 1) Smith, Matthew Ryan. "Relational Manoeuvres in Autobiographical Video Art," in *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly* (Winter, 2015).
 - 2) Horton, Jessica L. "A Shore without a Horizon: Locating by Looking Anew," in *Shapeshifting: Transformations in Native American Art*, ed. Karen Kramer Russell, et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 116-166.
- 10. November 11th, 2014 – Feminist Critique: Appropriation, Parody and the Gaze**
- 1) Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Film Theory and Criticism, Introductory Readings*, 5th ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 833-844.
 - 2) Nelmes, Jill. "Gender and Film," in *Introduction to Film Studies*, 4th edition (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 221-248.
- 11. November 18th, 2014 – Media Burnout: Video and the Critique of Television**
- 1) Barry, Judith. "This is Not a Paradox," in *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*. Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer, eds. (New York: Aperture, 1990), 249-257.
 - 2) Antin, David. "Video: The Distinctive Features of the Medium," in *Video Culture: A Critical Investigation* (Layton, Utah: G.M. Smith, Peregrine Smith Books, in association with Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1986), 147-166.
- **FILM BLOG DUE**
- 12. November 25th, 2014 – Into the 21st Century: Pornography, Obscenity, and Ethics**
- 1) Steyerl, Hito. "In Defense of the Poor Image," in *e-flux journal* 10 (November 2009): 1-9.

2) Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York, NY: MacMillan, 2013).

13. December 2nd, 2014 – Me, Me, Me: Proprietary Media and the Digital Revolution

- 1) Bourriaud, Nicholas. *Postproduction*, 2nd edition (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002), introduction.
- 2) Smith, Matthew Ryan. “Hennessey Youngman and the New Art Criticism,” in *ESSE: Arts + Opinions*, 82 (Fall, 2014).

RESEARCH ESSAY DUE – December 5th by 5:00pm SHARP

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.