

**VAS 9541b/9544b Graduate Studio Seminar**

**Winter 2023**  
**Professor Kelly Wood**

Office: VAC 119  
e-mail: kwood@uwo.ca  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:30pm – 4:30pm (or, by appointment)

Room: VAC247 and MFA Studios and/or TBA  
Time: 9:30-12:30pm

Classes Start	Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
January 9	February 18-26	April 10	NA	N/A

**1. COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will provide a weekly forum for the critical engagement of the ongoing material production and research of MFA students. The course will be structured around presentations of student thesis-related research and the close analysis of contemporary artworks. Over the term, these presentations will be complemented by both formal critiques and less formal studio discussions. Critique sessions will be directed to sustain discussion and debate concerning students' developing material, conceptual and theoretical engagements. Critiques will be scheduled by the instructor throughout the course, and, at the end of the term.

Students are required to schedule individual or class meetings with their instructors to discuss the development of their studio work. All students will also be expected to arrange studio visits with Visiting Artists, Faculty and other individuals.

**Learning Outcomes**

**A. 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

**B. 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)

C. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge

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

**Note:**

An aim of this course is to expose the student to a very broad range of contemporary art. Some of the most canonical or universally esteemed works depict what is nowadays 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).

**2. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Studio Work (weighted 50%)

Peer Critiques/ Research Discussions (weighted 20%)

Students presenting work for the peer critiques will be assessed on the ambition and level of development demonstrated in the work. A portion of the mark for this critique will be based on the student's ability to orally articulate their ideas and readily engage in critical discussion.

The course instructor will evaluate the student work at mid-term and combine this with in class peer critique activity at the end of term [ie. not including final critique].

Final Critique Grade Breakdown (weighted 30%)

Department graduate faculty members attending the formal studio critique in April will submit to the course instructor recommended grades for the student. The critique grade will be determined by averaging the recommended grade of the Faculty, the Advisor and the Instructor. This averaged grade will count for 30% of the total grade for the course (1/3 the Instructor, 1/3 the Advisor, and 1/3 an average of other faculty in attendance comprise the grade for the final critique)

Diatribes/Encomium Research Presentations (weighted 20%)

All students will be graded on their preparedness to discuss the significance of the work in question and to develop a terrain for a lively group discussion centered around their topic. Students will be graded on their ability to highlight and elucidate key issues relating to their diatribe/encomium, as well as their ability to productively facilitate discussion around this research and its relation to their studio work.

Performance and Participation (weighted 15%)

In addition to the evaluation of studio work in context of the critiques, assessment of individual course performance and participation will be based on an assessment of ongoing productivity throughout the semester and ongoing engagement in discussion in critiques, seminars and related materials and readings.

Dossier (weighted 15%)

The dossier will be evaluated on the basis of the rigor and clarity of the written synopses and reflections on the student's own critique and studio visit discussions.

The dossier consists of synopses of the following: minimum 2 guest visits of independent guests, department faculty or PhD, 2 mentor/advisor visits, 1 in-class peer critique.

**3. COURSE MATERIALS:**

Any course materials will be posted, or exchanged, through the OWL portal.

#### **4. EVALUATION:**

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

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Studio work	In-class Peer and mid-term roundabout; and, final critique	50% (20% + 30%)	Scheduled dates and final at end of term Final crit April 11-14?
Diatribе/Encomium	Presentation	20	scheduled
Dossier	Online submission	15	April 10
Participation	ongoing	15	ongoing

After an assessment is returned, students should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their evaluator; to ensure a timely response, reach out within 7 days

Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. The table below outlines the University-wide grade descriptors.

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

#### **5. DIATRIBE/ENCOMIUM GUIDELINES:**

##### **Diatribе (first year students)**

All first-year students will produce and deliver, to the class, a 30-40 minute presentation in the form of a diatribe, on a current or historical artistic movement and/or artist. The student is encouraged to form the presentation around visual cues to the argument and emphasize their various points using visual, and or textual, evidence. In other words, the student can use plain language and mostly deliver the diatribe via speech and normal live discourse—a formal written diatribe/essay/critique need not be produced. A supporting theoretical text should be sought out to strengthen the argument where possible (this should be possible in most cases). A minimum of 20 slides would be expected. More about this requirement will be discussed in the first class. What is a diatribe? See below:

[Latin *diatriba*, *learned discourse*, from Greek *diatrib*, *pastime*, *lecture*, from *diatrbein*, *to consume*, *wear away*: *dia-*, *intensive pref.*; see **dia-**+ *trbein*, *to rub*; see *ter-*<sup>1</sup>in Indo-European roots.]

**Word History:** Listening to a lengthy diatribe may seem like a waste of time, an attitude for which there is some etymological justification. The Greek word *diatrib*, the ultimate source of our word, is derived from the verb *diatrbein*, made up of the prefix *dia-*, "completely," and *trbein*, "to rub," "to wear away, spend, or waste time," "to be busy." The verb *diatrbein* meant "to rub hard," "to spend or waste time," and the noun *diatrib* meant "wearing away of time, amusement, serious occupation, study," as well as "discourse, short ethical treatise or lecture, debate, argument." It is the serious occupation of time in

discourse, lecture, and debate that gave us the first use of *diatribe* recorded in English (1581), in the now archaic sense "discourse, critical dissertation." The critical element of this kind of diatribe must often have been uppermost, explaining the origin of the current sense of *diatribe*, "a bitter criticism."

**diatribe**/'daɪə,traɪb/

n

a bitter or violent criticism or attack; denunciation

Etymology: 16<sup>th</sup>Century: from Latin *diatribal* earned debate, from Greek *diatribe* discourse, pastime, from *diatribein* to while away, from dia- + *tribein*to rub

### **Encomium (second year students)**

All second-year students will produce and deliver, to the class, a 30-40 minute presentation in the form of an *encomium*, on a current or historical artistic movement and/or artist. The student is encouraged to form the presentation around visual cues to the argument and emphasize their various points using visual, and or textual, evidence. In other words, the student can use plain language and mostly deliver the encomium via speech and normal live discourse—a formal written encomium/essay/critique need not be produced. A supporting theoretical text should be sought out to strengthen the argument where possible (this should be possible in most cases). A minimum of 20 slides would be expected. More about this requirement will be discussed in the first class. What is an encomium?

**encomium**

**NOUN**

*formal*

A speech or piece of writing that praises someone or something highly.

Origin

Mid 16th century: Latin, from Greek *enkōmion* 'eulogy', from *en-* 'within' + *komos* 'revel'.

### **6. STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC OFFENCES:**

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

### **7. ENROLLMENT RESTRICTIONS:**

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Department of Visual Arts, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

### **8. HEALTH/WELLNESS SERVICES:**

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

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

### **9. ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION WESTERN (AEW):**

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.