

**The University of Western Ontario: Department of Visual Arts
VAH 4477G (Winter Term 2015-16)**

Capturing Urban Everyday Life: The Fleeting and the Fragmentary in 1920s
Berlin, Paris and New York

Professor:

Bridget Elliott, International & Graduate Affairs Building 0N20L/M

Course Meetings:

Wednesdays, 11:30-2:30, VAC 249

Office Hours and Contact Details:

Thursdays 1:30-2:30 or by appointment

661-2111 ext. 86839 (office) or 661-3440 (department office)

belliot@uwo.ca

Course Description:

This course examines the interrelationship between art and film during the 1920s in the metropolitan centres of Berlin, Paris, Moscow and New York. Starting with a selected corpus of early experimental films, we consider analogous developments in painting, collage, photography, graphic design, fashion and architecture. In particular, we examine the proliferation of fragmentary and fleeting art forms and consider their theoretical, and social significance in shaping the cultural parameters of everyday life in the early twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Learning Outcomes:

Students who are committed to the course will develop critical reading, writing, and visual skills and gain a good knowledge of canonical avant-garde work in early twentieth century art and film. These critical skills will also be used to analyze contemporary urban culture.

Required Readings:

Readings and other course materials are available on OWL course website.

Course Evaluation:

20 % **Participation** – note that attendance will be recorded each week (10%) and you are expected to discuss weekly readings and pose questions at the end of each seminar presentation (10%)

20% **Assignment 1 /early 20th Century topic** (to be scheduled in term – see below)*

25% **Assignment 2/ contemporary urban project**

(individual presentations to be scheduled in last 3 weeks of course)

35% **Submission of Final Paper** due April 6, 2016 (see below)

****Re: problems with Presenting Material on Assigned Dates***

*Since the topics for Assignment 1 are tied to individual films, all oral presentations must be done on the assigned date when the film is screened. If you cannot do your presentation on the assigned date and have documentation from the Dean's office, the weight of your oral presentation (1/3 of the total assignment grade) will be transferred to the final paper and, if you do not have documentation, the grade for the presentation portion will be zero. In either case, the written portions of Assignments 1 and 2 (i.e. the abstracts and bibliographies) should be submitted online and the usual policy of late penalties for written material (see below) will be applied. **No rescheduling of the oral portions of Assignment 1 will be possible. If you would like to reschedule your presentation of Assignment 2, you will need to find another person in the class willing to trade dates with you.***

Notes for all assignments:

- All assignments will be submitted online through the OWL course website. Acceptable file formats are MS PowerPoint, MS Word and PDF. File names should include your last name, the assignment and a brief description of contents – e.g. Smith Presentation1 text; Smith Presentation1 images, etc.
- Correct use of either Chicago or MLA style is required for footnotes and bibliography.
- Your writing style is crucially important so please leave adequate time for editing to ensure there are as few grammar and syntax errors as possible.
- Please stick to the specified word count for each assignment as closely as possible and print the number of words on your title page along with your name and the date of submission.
- Assignments deadlines are spelled out in each case below. Official medical or emergency documentation will be required if assignments are to be submitted after the deadline without penalty. Late penalties are 5% per day (except in the case of seminar material which will be docked 10% for late submission) and assignments will **NOT** be accepted more than five calendar days after the deadline.

Presentation 1 (early 20th-century art and film): scheduled in weeks 3-10

Each student will be assigned to one of the subjects for presentation that are indicated in the course schedule under the heading “presentation topics” in weeks 3 through 10. The point of the presentation is to consider how the particular film viewed that week relates to the visual artworks that you have selected. Think about the way similar problems are tackled in different media – moving versus still, celluloid versus textile etc. Presentations should be well organized, accessible and informative. The aim is to engage the class in a lively discussion of the material by referring to material already studied in the course. The presentation will consist of an informal (i.e. not read) but carefully structured discussion of the selected topic illustrated with an MS PowerPoint presentation. Students are also expected to field questions at the end of the presentation. The presentation should be about 20 minutes in length (not including the Q and A session) and should include a 350 word (one page) informative abstract with a short bibliography of the five most useful scholarly sources for your topic.

Both the Powerpoint file and the text file with your abstract/bibliography must be uploaded to the class website well in advance of your presentation so the seminar group can view your material ahead of time. The deadline for uploading this material is 8:00 pm on the Monday evening prior to your presentation. **Failure to meet this deadline will automatically result in 10% being deducted from the assignment grade.** All three components of the presentation – the visual materials in MS PowerPoint (which should be neatly formatted and labeled), the abstract with accompanying bibliography and the oral delivery – will be weighted equally in a written assessment of your performance.

Presentation 2 (contemporary urban project) : scheduled in weeks 11-13

The point of this presentation is to trace the legacy of early twentieth-century urban cultural forms in our own everyday life by making a 1-2 minute video clip or a sequence of still images (10-15 at most) that documents some aspect of urban life in/near London ON. The images you capture should address some of the concerns outlined in this course such as sensations of alienation, anxiety, shifting subjectivities or fleeting and fragmentary perceptions. An informative abstract of 350 words (one page) should explain your choice of imagery and analyze how it functions. Your abstract should start with an imaginative title for the project and end with a bibliography of five further sources (i.e. those that were most useful in framing your project). The presentation should be 20-25 minutes in length.

To start thinking about this project, I would suggest you read the excerpts from Kathleen Stewart's *Ordinary Affects* (Durham: Duke UP, 2007) posted on the class website and look at digital artist Perry Bard's participatory project to globally "remake" of Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* <http://www.perrybard.net/> and a review of the project in the online journal *Jump Cut* <<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc52.2010/FeldmanVertov/>>.

Both the Powerpoint file and the text file with your abstract/bibliography must be uploaded to the class website well in advance of your presentation so the seminar group can view your material ahead of time. The deadline for uploading this material is 8:00 pm on the Monday evening prior to your presentation. **Failure to meet this deadline will automatically result in 10% being deducted from the assignment grade.** All three components of the presentation – the visual materials in MS PowerPoint (which should be neatly formatted and labeled), the abstract with accompanying bibliography and the oral delivery – will be weighted equally in a written assessment of your performance.

Final Paper due April 6, 2016 (8:00 pm)

For the final term paper, you will select one of your two presentation topics and turn it into a more extended critical analysis of the subject. By the time you write the paper, you will be able to respond to the criticisms of your presentation. In other words, the term paper will be a **thoroughly revised and expanded** version of the seminar presentation. (Your arguments should become more sophisticated as the term progresses!) The target length is 2000 words, not including the footnotes, bibliography and image captions. Any

images discussed in the paper should be clearly reproduced, numbered, captioned and referenced in the body of the body of the paper (e.g. fig. 1, fig. 2). Captions can be placed directly below the image or contained in a separate list of figures and the images themselves can either be embedded in the text or placed in sequence at the end. All papers must be uploaded as MS Word or PDF files to the course website by 8:00 pm on April 6, 2016. Unless there is documentation from the Dean's office, the usual late penalties (5% per day) will apply if the paper is submitted after the deadline. Papers later than 5 calendar days will not be accepted.

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

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. David Merritt (tel. 519-661-3440; 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. Faculty of Arts and Humanities is located in IGA Building, Room 1N20 (Ms. Amanda Green and Mr. Ben Hakala are the counselors for A&H).

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

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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.