

**Department of Visual Arts
BROCK UNIVERSITY**

VISA 2P50 CANADIAN IDENTITIES: FROM NOUVELLE FRANCE TO THE MID-20TH CENTURY

Course Instructor: Dr. Keri Cronin
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course focuses on cultural production in Canada from early First Nations art practices until the middle of the twentieth century. Through thematic explorations we will consider some of the histories of Canadian art during this time period. This course is intended to give students a foundation in applying social and contextual analysis to the study of early Canadian Art.

Through a combination of lectures, readings and film presentations, students in this course will gain a historical overview of early Canadian art. In addition, emphasis will be placed on the continued development of research, writing, and critical thinking skills necessary for success in this and other Faculty of Humanities courses at Brock University.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- ▶ to present students with an opportunity to learn about the key artistic movements of the period under consideration in this course
- ▶ to encourage critical engagement with ideas surrounding socio-political aspects of image culture and consumption
- ▶ to foster dialogue surrounding the relationship between visual arts and ideas of national identity
- ▶ to provide students with the opportunity to view Canadian Art in galleries and museums
- ▶ to give students opportunity to engage in contextual and visual analysis of images beyond the introductory level
- ▶ to provide students an opportunity to build upon existing academic research and writing skills through assignments and workshops

REQUIRED TEXTS & RESOURCES:

- ▶ Courseware package (available at the campus bookstore and on reserve in the James A. Gibson library)
- ▶ CyberMuse (available at http://cybermuse.gallery.ca/cybermuse/home_e.jsp)
- ▶ WebCT (available at <http://www.brocku.ca/webct/>)

SCHEDULE:

*The following schedule is provided as a guideline for this course and is subject to change.

*Attendance at all lectures, seminars and film screenings is expected in this course. The lectures, seminars, readings and film screenings are intended to complement one another, but do not replace the other components of the course. You are responsible for material presented in lecture, seminar discussions, films, and course readings.

*Please ensure you have completed the assigned reading prior to class for which it is assigned.

Week #1: **Course Introduction**

Week #2 **French and British Traditions in Early Canadian Art**

- ▶ René Villeneuve, “Perspectives on Sculpture.” In *Baroque to Neo-Classical: Sculpture in Quebec*, pp.32-49. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1997)
- ▶ Dennis Reid, “Painting in British North America.” In *A Concise History of Canadian Painting* (2nd ed), pp. 18-37. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988)

Week #3 **Representations of “The Other” in Early Canadian Art**

- ▶ Charmaine Nelson, “Slavery, Portraiture and the Colonial Limits of Canadian Art History” *Canadian Woman Studies* 24 no. 2 (Winter 2004): 22-29.
- ▶ Gillian Poulter, “Representation as Colonial Rhetoric; The Image of ‘the Native’ and ‘the *habitant*’ in the Formation of Colonial Identities in Early Nineteenth-Century Lower Canada.” *Journal of Canadian Art History* XVI no. 1 (1994): 11-24.
- **Film: “Visions from the Wilderness – The Art of Paul Kane” (CineFocus Canada, 2001)

Week #4 **Cultural Production By Canada’s First Peoples**

- ▶ Ruth Holmes Whitehead, “I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: Atlantic Coast Artistic Traditions.” In *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada’s First Peoples*, pp. 19-49. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987)
- ▶ Ruth B. Phillips, "Nuns, Ladies, and the 'Queen of the Huron,': Appropriating the Savage in Nineteenth-Century Huron Tourist Art." In *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, ed. Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher Steiner, 33-50. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999

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Week #5: **Canadian Visual Culture at the End of the Nineteenth Century**

- **Film: “Notman’s Canada” (TVO, 2004)

Week #6: **MIDTERM PROGRESS EXAM**

Week #7: **Field Trip: DETAILS TBA**

- Week #8: **Landscape and the Art of Building of a Nation**
 ► Ellen L. Ramsay, "Picturing the Picturesque: Lucius O'Brien's *Sunrise on the Saguenay*." *RACAR* XVII (1990): 150-157.
 ► E.J. Hart, "The Railway Art School." In *Trains, Peaks, and Tourists: The Golden Age of Canadian Travel*, pp.36-49. (Banff: EJM Literary Enterprises, 2000)
- Week #9: **Emily Carr and the Group of Seven**
 ► Lynda Jessup, "The Group of Seven and the Tourist Landscape in Western Canada, or The More Things Change..." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 37 no. 1 (Spring 2002): 144-179.
 ► Gerta Moray, "Wilderness, Modernity and Aboriginality in the Paintings of Emily Carr." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 33 no.2 (Summer 1998): 43-65.
 **Exhibition Review Due
- Week #10: **The Canadian Group of Painters & The Beaver Hall Group**
 ► Joyce Millar, "The Beaver Hall Group: Painting in Montreal, 1920-1940." *Woman's Art Journal* 13, no. 1 (1992): 3-9.
 ► Lynn Pearce, "The Viewer as Producer: British and Canadian Feminists Reading Prudence Heward's *Women*." *RACAR* 24, no. 1-2 (1998): 94-102.
 **Film: "By a Woman's Hand" (NFB, 1994)
- Week #11: **Canadian War Art**
 ► Kristina Huneault, "Heroes of a Different Sort: Gender and Patriotism in the War Workers of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle." *Journal of Canadian Art History* XV (1993): 26-46
 ► Kirsty Robertson, "We Stand on Guard for Thee: Protecting Myths of Nation in *Canvas of War*." *Journal of American and Comparative Cultures* (Fall & Winter 2002): 99-108.
- Week #12: **Canadian Painting After 1945**
 ► Glen Williams, "Translating Music Into Visual Form: The Influence of Music in the Work of Bertram Brooker." *RACAR* 27 no. 1&2 (2000): 111-122
 **CyberMuse Assignment Due

ASSIGNMENTS & COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Participation and Attendance: 20%
- Midterm Progress Exam: 20%
- Final Exam: 30%
- CyberMuse Assignment: 20%
- Exhibition Review: 10%

Participation and Attendance

This course has a seminar component. Unless otherwise noted, during the second half of each class meeting we will be discussing the assigned readings as a group. Seminars are designed to provide an active learning component to this course, and students are expected to participate on a regular basis. In order to fully participate in seminars it is imperative that you come to class prepared. Common courtesy is expected in this class; students who demonstrate disruptive or disrespectful

behaviour will lose participation marks. While attendance is required in class (unexcused absences will result in a loss of participation and attendance marks), attendance alone is not enough to earn a high mark on this component of the course.

Exams

There is both a midterm progress exam and a final exam in this course. Exams in this course are non cumulative, that is the midterm progress exam will cover material presented in class and in the assigned readings from the start of the semester to Week #5 and the final exam will cover material from Week #7 until the end of the term.

The midterm progress exam will be written during the regularly scheduled class meeting time. The final exam will be held during the formally scheduled exam period in December. The schedule for the exam period is co-ordinated by the Registrar's Office. December exam schedules are usually posted at the end of October

Exam questions will draw from material presented in readings, lectures, film screenings, and seminar discussions. The format for the final exam for this class will be a combination of fill-in-the blank, multiple choice and short answer questions.

Exhibition Review

For this assignment you will need to critically reflect upon the exhibition relating to course themes. (More details about the specific exhibition and our field trip to see the exhibition will be made available at the start of the term).

Your review should be between 750-1250 words (roughly 3-5 pages), double-spaced, typed in 12pt. font and include citations, image captions and a bibliography where appropriate (MLA style).

Questions to consider:

- what type of narrative of Canadian identity is expressed through this exhibition?
- how do the various pieces work together?
- how does this exhibition relate to course themes?

CyberMuse Assignment

CyberMuse is a "virtual museum" which aims to offer "a new dimension in interpreting, understanding and enjoying Canada's visual arts heritage." CyberMuse is part of the National Gallery of Canada and, as such, positions itself as part of Canadian cultural identity. CyberMuse will be an important part of our exploration of Canadian Art History, and this assignment requires you to spend some time becoming familiar with the layout, functions, and purpose of the CyberMuse website. CyberMuse can be found at the following URL:

http://cybermuseum.gallery.ca/cybermuseum/home_e.jsp

This assignment will give students an opportunity to familiarize themselves with CyberMuse and to think about how an institution such as the National Gallery frames Canadian cultural identity.

Assignment Instructions:

1. Spend some time exploring the CyberMuse site. (note: you may wish to register for a free account through CyberMuse. Registration is optional, but it is very useful to set up an account as you will then be able save images to your own personalized gallery which you can then access from any computer with an internet connection. This will be very useful for study purposes as many of the images we will be looking at in this class are found on CyberMuse.)

2. While you are exploring the site, jot down some thoughts: What are your first impressions of CyberMuse? What kind of material is available through this “virtual museum”? Do you find the site easy to use? (*note: these first impressions might be useful when you are writing up your analysis)

3. Read Lianne McTavish’s essay “Visiting the Virtual Museum: Art and Experience Online” in *New Museum Theory and Practice – An Introduction*, pp.226-246. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

4. After you have had a chance to explore the site and read the McTavish essay, you are required to offer a written critical analysis of the site. Your assignment should consider the following questions:

-How does CyberMuse present Canada’s cultural heritage?

-What type of narrative of national identity is expressed through CyberMuse?

-How does CyberMuse express the relationship between Canadian art and art produced in other countries?

-How does the arguments put forth in Lianne McTavish’s article relate to your experience of viewing CyberMuse?

-What are the advantages and disadvantages of a “virtual museum” like CyberMuse?

-If you have been to the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, how does visiting the CyberMuse site compare with walking through the physical space of the gallery building?

-If you have not been to the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, does visiting the CyberMuse site make you want to plan a trip to the Gallery?

-other issues you think are relevant in a discussion of a “virtual museum” which operates as part of the National Gallery of Canada

Papers should be between 1500-2000 words (roughly 6-8 pages), double-spaced, typed in 12pt. font and include citations, image captions and a bibliography where appropriate (MLA style).

REQUIREMENTS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

1. All written assignments must adhere to MLA style, in text citation. The James A. Gibson Library has also prepared a handout outlining the basics of the MLA style and students are encouraged to use this as a guideline. <http://www.brocku.ca/library/reference/style.htm>

2. All written assignments will be marked with attention to style, grammar, and spelling. Students who received 60% or less on a written assignment are encouraged to attend a writing workshop. For more information on these and other academic skills workshops, please visit the Student Development Centre (Schmon Tower - ST400; 905-688-5550 x3240 or x4225) <http://www.brocku.ca/sdc/learning/>

LATE PENALTY:

Late assignments will be deducted 5% a day. Extensions will be given only in extreme circumstances and must be accompanied by supporting medical documentation.

DISCLAIMER ABOUT SENSITIVE MATERIAL

Due to the nature of the themes of this course, there will occasionally be inclusion of sensitive material presented in lectures, films, readings, and discussion (i.e.: themes surrounding issues of sexuality, politics, religion, etc.). By remaining in the course, a student is understood to have given their informed consent to exposure to such materials.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Academic honesty is expected in this course, and students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with what constitutes appropriate behaviour in this respect. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. You must cite all work and ideas which are not your own. The expectation of academic honesty also exists for exam situations -- only students who are registered for the course may write exams; students may not use "study guides" during the exam; and collaboration or cooperation on exams is strictly forbidden. See Student Calendar for policies and further guidelines.

GRADING

*Brock University uses a 0, 2, 5, 8 marking scheme. What this means is that your final grade must end in one of these four numbers (i.e.: 70%, 72%, 75% or 78%). Marks are rounded up or down at the instructor's discretion (i.e.: not necessarily rounded to the closest number ending in 0, 2, 5 or 8). See the University Calendar (Academic Regulations and University Policies, Section VI) for more information.

*Below is an excerpt from the Brock University Undergraduate Calendar which outlines how grades are assigned in undergraduate courses.

"The following grades are awarded for undergraduate courses:

A - 90, 92, 95, 98, 100

Reserved for students where work is of outstanding quality that provides clear evidence of a rare talent for the subject and of an original and/or incisive mind.

A - 80, 82, 85, 88

Awarded for excellent, accurate work in which evidence of a certain flair for and comprehension of the subject is clearly perceptible.

B - 70, 72, 75, 78

Indicates competent work that shows a sound grasp of the course goals without being distinguished.

C - 60, 62, 65, 68

Represents work of adequate quality which suffers from incompleteness or inaccuracy.

D - 50, 52, 55, 58

Given where the minimum requirements of a course are barely satisfied.

F - 45 or lower

Means that minimum requirements have not been met and no credit has been given for the course.”

See the University Calendar (Academic Regulations and University Policies, Section VI) for more information on Grading and Student Evaluation at Brock University.