

**ART NOW**  
**ART 3161/3262 OL/YOL/ZOL**  
**University of Lethbridge**

**Instructor:** Dr. Andrea Korda  
**E-mail:** [andrea.korda@uleth.ca](mailto:andrea.korda@uleth.ca)

*\*\*Please include your group number in your emails, especially if your questions relates to the discussion forum\*\**

**Course Description:** Art NOW is an innovative course built upon an extensive [Visiting Speakers in the Arts Program](#), one of the largest and longest running such programs in the country. Art NOW centres on presentations by guest speakers including artists, art historians, critics, cultural theorists, curators and filmmakers. Up to three different speakers per week, representing a wide range of contemporary practices, discuss their art, ideas, working methods, and issues in the visual arts. Through the diverse spectrum of lectures, students gain a broad exposure to a range of work including painting, sculpture, photography, performance, drawing, installation, video, sound art, public art, social practice, and collaborative practices.

**Course Aims:** The aim of Art NOW is to familiarize students with contemporary art, building a base of knowledge and confidence that will allow them to critically engage with contemporary art and the issues that it raises. The role of the instructor is that of a facilitator; students are expected to both lead and respond to on-line discussions.

**Technological Specifications:** Students must have regular access to a computer with high-speed internet in order to view the recorded lectures and participate in the discussion forums. The course website can be accessed through the Moodle link on the [University of Lethbridge website](#) (under Resources). The University of Lethbridge offers [student tutorials on Moodle on their website](#). If you need additional help, click on the link “Need More Answers?” Please email me ASAP to inform me of difficulties that can’t be immediately resolved through these help pages.

**Course Structure:** The lectures that take place at the University of Lethbridge are recorded and will be posted online. The schedule of lectures can be found [here](#), though it is not yet complete and is subject to change (note that we will be looking *only* at the Art NOW lectures, *not* the Architecture & Design Now lectures). Lectures take place on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Expect to view 3 lectures a week – some weeks there may be fewer. The nature of the course demands flexibility. The schedule of lectures is likely to change as we move through the semester; sometimes lectures are added if a particular artist happens to be visiting the area, and sometimes lectures are canceled when complications arise for the speaker. Our course will adapt to any changes in the lecture schedule. Keep in mind that though I am the instructor for the course, I am not responsible for arranging the lectures. I will keep you informed of any changes as soon as possible through emailed course announcements for which you are automatically subscribed.

Using links to videos and discussion forums on our course website (accessed through [Moodle](#)), students will watch the recordings and will then engage in discussion with classmates in the virtual classroom (we will run one week behind the on-site lectures, so lectures posted in week 2 will be up for discussion week 3, etc.). Each week will appear as a new “topic” on our course website. Under that topic, you will find links to the lectures and to the discussion forum. Sometimes additional resources (such as articles or websites) will be posted. Students will be divided into groups for the purpose of discussion. One student will be responsible for leading the discussions each week. S/he will post discussion questions that will help the group engage with the lectures, and will monitor the discussion throughout the week.

To post questions in the forum, the discussion leader clicks on the forum name under the appropriate week, and then clicks on “Add a new topic.” Add a new topic for each question. Discussion questions must be posted by Monday at noon for the lectures on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of the preceding week. The discussion will be open until Sunday at midnight. At that point the forum will become inaccessible. Once the week’s discussion is graded, the forum will become accessible again for those who may want to go back and review the discussion.

You will be graded on the quality of your participation in the discussion. In addition, you will write two essays: one short essay (300-500 words) at the start of the term, and one longer essay at the end of the term (see details below).

### ***The First Week (Jan. 9-13)***

1. **Read this syllabus carefully!!** Your success in the course depends on your comprehension of the requirements. Please read this document carefully and contact me if you have any questions.
2. **Log-in to our Moodle site and modify your profile settings**
  - On the left-hand side of your homepage in Moodle, click on “My profile settings” under the heading “Settings.” Then click on “Edit profile.”
  - Modify settings according to your preferences
  - Please include your City/town, a short description of your interests and your course of study (in the “description” field) and a picture so that everyone has an image to associate with your name. If you are not comfortable including a picture of yourself, please choose some other image (a favourite pet, painting or some other design).
3. **Join the first discussion forum, named “Introductions” and introduce yourself to your group by the end of the day on Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>**
  - If you are the first one to introduce yourself, you will need to “Add a new topic” under the discussion forum. If someone else has already introduced themselves, you can read their post and then “Reply” (you will find the link to reply under their post, on the right-hand side).
  - Please share the information that you included in your description, and also briefly describe your previous experiences and interests in art (if any): courses you have taken, favourite artists or exhibitions. Additional

information is also welcome. This part is completely up to you! Try to get to know your group members, as your grade for the course is dependent on your interaction with them. (Note that groups will remain the same through the whole term.)

4. **Assignment #1 due Fri. Jan. 13<sup>th</sup> via discussion forum: *What is Art NOW?***
  - Respond to the question “What is Art Now?” in a 300-500 word paragraph. To get started, think about the following questions: what is the role of art, and in particular contemporary art, in today’s world? What is the role of the artist? The art critic? The art institution? This is an open-ended question to get us started in our discussions.
    - No outside research is required; consider this a type of brainstorming. That being said, your response should be written in an organized manner with a thesis statement. Remember that others will be reading it. Please no stream-of-consciousness writing! Write an outline, a rough draft, and take the time to edit before posting.
  - The final essay will also deal with this same question, but at the end of the term, you will narrow the focus of your topic and draw on the lectures, discussions and additional research to support your argument. Keep this in mind as we move through the course so that you can choose a specific topic and gather notes and sources for your essay.
  - You will post your essay in the discussion forum. If you are the first in your group to post, you will need to “Add a new topic” to the forum. If a post already appears in the forum, then you should post your essay as a “Reply.”
  - Responses are due Friday. Unless otherwise specified, all deadlines refer to midnight of the due date.
  - Between Saturday and Monday, log back in and read through your groupmates’ responses. Comment and exchange ideas. Remember, a good dynamic within the group will help foster good discussion (& will lead to better grades all around!).
5. **The First Lectures take place Jan. 11<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>.** Discussion of the lectures will take place the week following the lectures (i.e. lectures taking place the week of Monday, Jan. 9 – Friday, Jan. 13 will be up for discussion from Monday, Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> to midnight on Sunday, Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>).

### ***The Second Week (Jan. 16-20)***

1. **The First Discussion Forum (Jan. 16-22)**
  - Each week will appear as a topic on the website. Under the topic header, you will find links to the lectures and the discussion forum and, in some cases, additional resources. Most artists that speak in Art Now have their own websites. I will not post links to their websites, since these are easy to access through a simple google search. Students are encouraged to look for these additional resources on their own. (*Note that viewing the artist’s website, or any other website, is not a substitute for watching the lecture*)

- For each week of lectures, you will be either a discussion leader or a discussion participant. Check the schedule posted on the website (under the link to the syllabus) to find out which lectures you are responsible for as the leader. Find out more about these roles below, and read the guidelines for discussion. ***For this first week, I will act as the discussion leader. The schedule of discussion leaders starts the following week.***
- You have one week to participate in the discussion. Aim to log-in to the forum at least 2 times a week so that you have an opportunity to respond to other students' posts and engage in discussion. You will receive a grade for each week, which will be recorded in the gradebook online. I will not be posting comments through the gradebook. Please do email me with any questions regarding grades. I am happy to provide comments via email for those who contact me.

***\*\*For those registered in ART 3261 YOL & ZOL:*** After the course add/drop date, the three sections of ArtNOW are rolled into a single section. You will notice that the course name will change to ART 3261 OL. This will cause a glitch on the Moodle site, as you are de-registered from one section and registered in another. When you enter into the course website, it will appear as though all of the posts have been erased, and you won't have access to the forums. Do email me as soon as you experience this, and I will resolve the problem as quickly as possible. Last term, a handful of students encountered the problem right away, and I was able to get it fixed within 24 hours. I have been working with the administration to find a solution to this problem, but it does not look like it will be resolved this term.

#### ***Subsequent Weeks***

1. January 23<sup>rd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> is the first week that one member of the group will act as the discussion leader. Check the schedule & make sure to note when it is your turn!
2. Be sure to keep up-to-date with the lectures and discussions.
3. Consider all lectures, readings and discussions as research for your final paper, in which you will re-visit the question "What is Art Now?" For this 1500-word paper, due on **Monday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>** at midnight, you must include citations, so you will want to keep notes throughout the term.

\*\*\*

***Role of the Discussion Leader:*** The discussion leader will post 1-3 questions that prompt discussion of the lectures by **noon on Monday**, and will also moderate the discussion. Post each question as a separate topic under the discussion forum. The amount of questions you post will depend on you and your group. You want to make sure to put enough out there to generate discussion, and to allow your group to touch on each lecture. As discussion leader, you should actively check posts. Follow-up questions may be appropriate, depending on the discussion, and you need to make sure that the group remains on-topic. You are responsible for creating a lively and productive conversation around the lecture. Some hints/considerations:

- Do some background reading (e.g. the artist's website might be useful). Additional research that you bring to the group may enhance the conversation. You may want to post short readings, images, or links to websites that you think would benefit the discussion. (See section below on additional resources.)
- Think about the wider issues raised by the speaker's work. However, make sure that you relate the discussion back to works of art. For example, if an artist deals with environmental issues, you will want to consider how the artist engages with these issues and how effective the work appears to be. You don't want the discussion to veer off into a vague exchange on how everyone feels about the environment. Always try to bring the discussion back to a focus on art and images. Remember that this is a course about contemporary art, and our goal is to engage with works of art.
- You will be responsible for a full week's lectures. You can ask questions that relate to just one lecture, or questions that ask your groupmates to consider the relationship between lectures. Do make sure to give your group the opportunity to bring each of the lectures into the discussion (i.e. do not post one question about just one of the lectures!). ***If you do not address all of the lectures in a given week, you cannot earn a grade higher than C for the week (see grade scale below).***
- As the facilitator for the course, I might add questions or help to re-focus the discussion. If a questions posed in one group has been particularly successful, I may share it with other groups.
- Please be punctual out of respect for your fellow students.

***Role of the Discussion Participants:*** Be an active participant! Read your groupmates' posts, and respond accordingly. Do interact with your groupmates. As a participant, you are also free to pose follow-up questions. Though initial discussion questions will be posted by Monday at noon, the conversation should continue over the course of the week. I expect each student to contribute at least twice per week, though there is no limit on posting. Your first post should appear before 5pm on Friday. Do keep in mind that you will be graded on the quality of your responses.

***Guidelines for discussion:***

- Discussions should be relevant to the lectures. Your posts should demonstrate that you have watched and thought about the lectures. I want to see evidence of your engagement with the ideas and the visuals presented in the lectures. If your post does not suggest that you have watched the lectures, you will receive a zero.
- You are expected to view and comment on three lectures per week. Some weeks there will be fewer lectures, depending on scheduling. Keep in mind that viewing all of the lectures is an essential requirement of the course, and much of your grade depends on completing this requirement. The only way for me to know whether you have completed this requirement is through your participation in the discussion.
- You may post as often as you like, but note that your grade will reflect the quality of your work (thoughtfulness, relevance, specificity), not the quantity of posts. The best posts will contribute to the conversation and forward the discussion.

- To sum up one key implication of the previous three points: **Your grade on each forum will reflect the amount of time and effort that you appear to have put into watching the lectures and participating in the discussion.** If you have questions about your grade, email me and I will be happy to provide comments.
- In order to generate good discussions, be specific in your statements. Vague statements such as “I like looking at art” are not helpful. Try to always push yourself further. For example, starting from the statement “I like looking at art,” think about what it is that you like about it – which types of works of art do you enjoy? Why? What does it do for you that produces this positive response?
- Value judgments will be expected, but once again, a value judgment on its own is not helpful. You may find that you dislike some works of art or approaches to artistic production; you are welcome to say so, but you must always consider WHY. What about the piece disagrees with you? Again – push yourself further in order to generate a more valuable discussion.
- Disagreement is essential to a productive discussion. Expect to have different opinions from your groupmates, and to raise those disagreements. Do keep in mind that this should be done in a respectful manner. We are discussing opinions, issues and ideas. Be sure to always focus your comments on the issues, and avoid any behaviour that might be interpreted as a personal attack. The idea is to learn from each other, even if we do not always agree.
- Clarity is essential to a good discussion, but you will not be graded on grammar or spelling. The goal is a lively and productive discussion, not a polished piece of writing.
- There have been some glitches in moodle. I have heard from students who have posted responses, and found that the response doesn’t appear. In order to avoid losing your work, type out your responses in another program, where you can save your work, and copy & paste into moodle. Also, please check that your post has actually appeared in the forum before leaving the site.
- **FAQ: What do I do if no questions have been posted this week?** There are a number of things you can do. First, you can email me to check whether I have heard from the student. Second, you can email your discussion leader directly with a reminder. Third, if you have not heard from your discussion leader or from me that questions are coming, you can be proactive and post your own questions, or just share your thoughts to try to get some discussion going.

### *The Final Paper*

The final paper is a **2000-word research paper** on one issue in **contemporary art**. A precise topic will allow you to develop a specific argument, which is essential to a successful paper. Your paper must include a thesis statement in the introduction, a body and conclusion, footnotes and bibliography, and figures (i.e. illustrations) where appropriate.

Some suggestions for choosing a topic:

- You can choose to write about the work of one artist who caught your attention this term, though you will want to highlight a specific theme in the artist’s work.

- Though keep in mind that you will have difficulty finding sources on a younger, emerging artist. You may want to check on this before deciding on your topic.
- If you choose an issue as your focus, you will want to draw on specific artists and works of art within the body of your paper. In constructing your thesis statement, do include the names of artists.
  - You do not need to limit yourself to artists who have presented in Art NOW
  - If you are having difficulty coming up with a topic, consider this question: what theme would I choose if I were to curate my own exhibition? You can treat this project as an exhibition, exploring a particular theme and choosing artworks that develop the theme.
  - Remember that your topic must deal with **contemporary art**! Artists who are currently active are a good choice. (Also note that this course is *not* about modern art. Do not confuse “modern art,” which is a designation given to some art produced during the first ½ of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and contemporary art, which is a label used to describe the art of the present day.)

On **Friday, April 6<sup>th</sup>**, you will submit your draft thesis statement via a new discussion forum, so that the group can see the range of topics, and so that I can provide feedback. Again, if you are the first to post, you will need to “Add a new topic.”

The **thesis statement** is an essential component of every research paper. The thesis statement is one sentence that lets your reader know what you will be arguing in the paper. Sometimes the thesis statement is divided into 2 sentences, but do keep in concise (i.e. not a full introductory paragraph). ***You must introduce your paper with a thesis statement, and follow through with an argument supported by the lectures from the course and additional reading.*** You may find the following website useful: [Developing a Thesis Statement](#). The [University of Lethbridge Library](#) provides links to a number of webpages that can guide you through the process of writing a research paper. You are welcome to send me draft thesis statements via email. I am also available to discuss your ideas for the final paper and make sure that you are on the right track. Do contact me by [email](#) with any questions or concerns.

You are required to include **at least 5 sources** in your bibliography (aside from the Art NOW lectures themselves, which should also be cited), which will also be cited in footnotes. You should look for peer-reviewed scholarly sources, and use them wherever possible. However, the pickings of scholarly sources are often slim when it comes to the work of contemporary artists, particularly if you are writing about an artist who is younger or less well known. In these cases, websites and newspapers are fine. Art criticism is often published in newspapers and magazines that are not usually considered scholarly, and such articles are acceptable here. Also, the artist's website, which may feature the artist's statement, will likely be useful. (Keep in mind that, as with other university courses, you should think about the credibility of the source. Please, no wikipedia!)

You may use any style of citation, as long as you use it correctly and consistently. You may find [this webpage](#) helpful, as it provides links to citation manuals. Within these

online manuals, you will be able to find guidelines for citing websites and recorded lectures. A paper without proper citations cannot receive a grade higher than a B+.

Keep in mind that your writing and the content of your essay are inextricable from one another. If you do not write clearly, I will not be able to fully understand your research and your ideas, and your grade will suffer. Write in a clear and organized manner, avoiding typos and errors in spelling and grammar. It helps to have someone read over your paper to ensure clarity. You may even consider exchanging papers with the other members of your group. A paper that has not been edited cannot receive a grade higher than a B+.

The final deadline for the paper is **Monday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>**. Submit your paper via the website [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) as a Word or pdf file (more details on the submission process to come). Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will be treated as such. For more information on the University of Lethbridge's Student Conduct Policy and how to avoid plagiarism, see [this link](#).

**Additional Resources:** Many contemporary artists have their own websites, which will provide information about the artist as well as a bibliography of articles on their work. The University of Lethbridge Library and your own institution's library provide access to [databases](#) such as [Art Full Text](#) and [JSTOR](#). You can also search the website of [Canadian Art](#) for relevant articles.

#### **Evaluation Criteria & Important Dates:**

- 5% Introduce yourself & post a picture by Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>
- 10% First Assignment, due Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>
- 50% Participation as Discussion Leader & Participant  
(Each student leads 2 discussions)
- 5% Draft Thesis Statement, due April 6<sup>th</sup>
- 30% Final Paper, due April 23<sup>rd</sup>

\*\*deadlines refer to midnight of the date indicated

\*\*for each discussion, you will receive a mark out of 10. Your participation grade will be an average of these marks.

\*\*In order to complete the requirement for participation, *you must earn a grade of at least 60% in the weekly forums*. You will not fail the course for missing just one discussion forum, but repeated absences may result in a failing grade.

\*\**You MUST complete EVERY component of the course in order to PASS – from the introduction to the Final Paper.*

**Your final grade will be a PASS or a FAIL.**

**Note that in order to PASS, you need a minimum of 60% in the course, and a minimum of 60% for your participation grade.**

**Course Grade Scale for Assignments:**

General Description	Letter Equivalent	Numeric Equivalents
Excellent	A+	96+
	A	87-95
	A-	83-86
Good	B+	79-82
	B	74-78
	B-	70-73
Satisfactory	C+	67-69
	C	64-66
	C-	60-63
Poor	D+	55-59
	D	50-54
Failing	F	<50