

**MSM 210- *Introduction to Museums and Collections***

**Visual Arts Program**

**Department of Visual & Performing Arts**

**Instructor information:**

**Course Credit: 3**

**Pre-requisites: ENG102**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course provides an overview of the inner workings of museums and their contributions to the public by collecting, preserving, and interpreting material culture. Art museums are the focus of the course, but other types such as history, ethnographic and science museums, as well related sites such as zoos and public gardens, will be discussed. Topics covered include: the history of museums as foundation for assessing current challenges in the field, organizational structures, development and marketing, museum education, the role of curators, management and care, exhibition planning and the use of new technologies. Content encompasses insight into related professional opportunities.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Timothy Ambrose and Crispin Paine, *Museum Basics* (ICOM, Routledge, London and New York, 1993).

G. Ellis Burcaw, *Introduction to Museum Work*, 3rd ed. (AltaMira, Walnut Creek, California, 1997).

There will be additional readings assigned from Library reserves, websites, and/or class handouts

**STUDENT LEARNER OUTCOMES:**

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. articulate the historical development of museums
2. understand key challenges faced by museums today
3. describe what mission statements are and be able to critique them
4. reflect upon the importance of cultural identity
5. evaluate how museums use the internet as marketing tools
6. articulate specific functions of several types of museums
7. explain the function of Museum Education
8. recommend ways to improve museum diversification of programs, audience, staff and board based on case studies
9. analyze the effectiveness of some uses of technology by museums
10. specify the roles, skills, and training requirements of museum professionals in various areas
11. understand several ways of developing collections for public access
12. understand basics of collection documentation, management and care
13. articulate several methods of organizing exhibitions
14. articulate basic knowledge of how museums finance collection care and programming

**LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:**

1. Textbook and other assigned reading materials
2. In-class exercises and discussions

3. Writing review and class presentation of an individual reading
4. Two class presentations based on web search assignments
5. Written report on a museum education program
6. A formal research paper on a case study of an institution
7. Two trips to two regional museums or related public sites (one may be an organized class field trip; or two self-propelled trips)
8. At least one guest speaker during a class period
9. Brief written homework to aid in prep for papers

**ASSESSMENT TOOLS/GRADING STANDARDS:**  
**GRADING SCALE**

	<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Grade</b>											
<b>Points</b>	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.0	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.3	1.0	0.0
<b>%</b>	100-93	92.9-90	89.9-88	87.9-82	81.9-80	79.9-78	77.9-72	71.9-70	69.9-67	66.9-60.1	60 and under

**Grade WEIGHTS & PERCENTAGES**

- 2 Reading/Writing Assignment - 25%
- 2 Presentations of web searches - 25%
- Mid-term Project - 25%
- Final Project - 25%

**READING/WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**

- 1) Read about the history of a type of museum assigned to you and also read a short article about challenges this type of museum faces today. Write a 2-page paper summarizing the readings and make a class oral report on the assigned set. Focus your report on past, changing and future issues within the museum type assigned to you.
- 2) The class will be divided into teams and each team assigned a set of readings related to controversial exhibition issues in museums. Summarize the controversy in an essay. With your classmates, present a discussion/debate on the issues.

**WEB SEARCHES/PRESENTATIONS:**

- 1) One web search is designed to increase student awareness of the presence and diversity of culture specific museums and to read and analyze their mission statements for these museums.
- 2) A second web search is to develop critical skills in analyzing effectiveness of the museums. website as a marketing tool, for educational purposes, as well as its graphics, user friendliness, and innovation.

**MID-TERM PROJECT:**

Self-propelled trip to a museum: observe a museum education program (tour, school program, adult lecture, family studio program) in a museum. Write a one page paper including a short summary of the program, how many and who attended, and analyze its educational effectiveness.

## **FINAL PROJECT:**

A 6-page typed critique of a visit to a museum located in the Philadelphia-Wilmington-Baltimore regions. For this critique, you will include a survey of the facility and program. For the survey include:

- the name of the organization, address, the type and the mission; the architecture, the experience of attending an exhibition, educational program; education materials/publications; any administrative information you can acquire from an annual report, membership program, transportation, arrival, appearance, buying a ticket, hours of operation or presentation, physical and intellectual orientation, the staff that you see, sequence and flow, pace, and visitor service amenities.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

See "Class Attendance" under "General Academic Regulations" in the *Lincoln University (PA) Bulletin 2003-2006*, pp. 60-61. Located on Lincoln's homepage as an Adobe© PDF file. <http://www.lincoln.edu>

## **LINCOLN UNIVERSITY INTEGRITY STATEMENT:**

**Will be attached or indicate location on website.**

## **SAMPLE 15 WEEK SCHEDULE:**

### **Week 1**

Introduction to Course; Overview of syllabus

- The definition for "museum"; what benefits does a Museum provide to public?

Reading: Burcaw, pp. 13-36.

Activities: Class sharing of museum experiences.

Videotape: Philadelphia Stories: A Collection of Pivotal Museum

Memories; Michael Spock, Editor, American Association of Museums, 2000

### **Week 2**

Past, Present and Future: The history of museums; challenges for museums today

\*Reading and Writing Assignment: The history and future of museums

Assigned reading from course reserve (Alexander)

### **Week 3**

The culture-specific museum. Museums and cultural identity.

Museum mission statements.

Assignment: Conduct a web search for two culture specific museums and present them in class.

Look for and analyze their mission statements.

### **Week 4**

Audiences: Development, Marketing and Public Image, Tourism, Visitor Services, Evaluating the Museum Experience

Reading: Reserve (Alexander, pp. 281-303); Ambrose/Paine, pp. 16-37, 56-64, 216-226.

\*\*Assignment #3: Museum website critique (20 points):

Research online and prepare a critique of 2 museum websites. Analyze websites each as marketing tool, for educational purposes, graphics, user friendliness, and innovation.

### **Week 5**

Diversifying audiences. Social inclusion.

Reading, website:

A New Audience for a New Century,. Minneapolis Institute of Art Audience Diversification Project ([http://www.artsmia.org/new\\_audience.pdf](http://www.artsmia.org/new_audience.pdf))

### **Week 6**

Museum Education, School Programs, Family Programs, Events and activities,

Interpretation.

Reading: Ambrose and Paine, pp. 37-49, 67-78; Burcaw, pp. 150-162.

\*\*Assignment: Observe a museum education program (tour, school program, adult lecture, family

studio program) in a museum. Write a one page paper including a short summary of the program, how many and who attended, and analyze its educational effectiveness.

GUEST SPEAKER: MUSEUM EDUCATOR

### **Week 7**

Use of new technologies and audio visual materials for audiences both within and outside of the museum. Uses of multimedia, online learning; virtual exhibitions, etc.

Reading: Ambrose and Paine, pp. 75-77;

### **Week 8**

The role of the Curator, Collections, Collectors (Albert C. Barnes, Lincoln University donors to the African collection, etc.), Collection Policies, Repatriation

Reading: Ambrose and Paine, pp.127-135; Burcaw, pp.73-92.

Dvd: Marjorie Schwarzer, .Riches, Rivals and Radicals, the Collectors Who Shapes the American

Museum,. American Association of Museums, 2006.

### **Week 9**

Collection Management and Care (Registration, Conservation, Climate Control, Security), the role of the Registrar

Reading: Ambrose and Paine, pp. 124-195; Burcaw, pp. 93- 117.

Presentation: EmbARK . collection management software system for cataloguing the African collection at Lincoln University

### **Week 10**

Exhibitions (Permanent and Temporary), the Role of Research, Exhibition

Design, Publications; Exhibition Controversies; Exhibiting Objects from Diverse Cultures  
Reading: Ambrose and Paine, pp. 79-110, 114-118; Burcaw, pp. 121-149

**\*\*Assignment --Exhibition Controversies**

The class will be divided into teams and each team assigned a set of readings related to controversial exhibition issues in museums. With your classmates, present a discussion/debate on the issues.

**Week 11**

Governance and Museum Management, Planning, Legal Issues, Risk Management, Facilities, Financial Planning -- The basics of reading financial statements

Reading: Ambrose and Paine, pp. 230-245, 248-252; Burcaw, pp. 203-214

Activities: Field Trip

**Week 12**

Diversification Planning

Reading:

Information Center Fact Sheet: Developing a Diversity Plan, American Association of Museums, (2004).

Lonnie Bunch, .Challenges of Diversity,. Joyce Foundation, December 2002

(<http://www.joycefdn.org/programs/culture/content/zspots/lonniebunch.html>)

Tania Said and John Suau, An Introduction to Diversity.s Importance for Museums,. from Nema/News (Summer 2002). (<http://www.nemanet.org/nemanews-SUM02.htm#Saind/Suau>)

**Week 13**

Earned Income, Membership Programs, Fundraising (National, State, Foundation Grants, and Corporate and Individual Support)

Readings: Ambrose and Paine, pp. 245-248.

Web Assignment:

Visit the website for the National Endowment for the Arts; Institute for Museum Services

Activities: Paul Lamarre and Melissa Wolf, producers and directors, The NEA Tapes (VHS): a documentary and archive, NY: Eidia House Productions, c. 2000.

Reviewing sample grants.

**Week 14**

Working in a Museum; the Museum Profession (Ethics, Accreditation)

Reading: Ambrose and Paine, 256-267; Burcaw, pp. 215-225

Websites:

ICOM: International Council of Museums: <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/icom/>

AAM: American Association of Museums: <http://www.aam-us.org/index.htm>

Activities:  
Reviewing sample organizational charts

### **Week 15**

Presentations of final projects  
Assignment: A Critique of a Museum Visit  
Presentation to class on your final **6-page typed, double spaced** paper DUE SCHEDULED DAY OF FINAL EXAM (below):  
Critique of one museum located in the Philadelphia-Wilmington-Baltimore region. (Museum visited by class on joint field trip not to be used for this assignment—see previous hand-out).

UNIVERSITY-WIDE FINALS SCHEDULE TBA; TERM PAPER DUE ON SCHEDULED FINAL DATE; **KEEP POSTED.**

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **READING/WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

1) Read about the history of a type (below) of museum assigned to you and also read a short article about challenges this type of museum faces today. Write a 2-page paper summarizing the readings and make a class oral report on the assigned set. Focus your report on past, changing and future issues within the museum type assigned to you.

#### **Art Museums:**

Alexander and Alexander (course reserve, below), pp 23-51.  
Weil, Stephen (course reserve article)

#### **Natural History and Anthropology Museums:**

Alexander, Alexander, pp 53-84.

#### **Science and Technology Museums:**

Alexander, Alexander, pp. 85-112  
Spiess, III, Phillip D. "The Impossible Museum: The Smithsonian Celebrates 150 Years." (reserve)

#### **History Museums:**

Alexander, Alexander, pp. 113-138.  
Barbara Franco, "The History Museum Curator of the 21st Century." (reserve list)

#### **Botanical Gardens and Zoos:**

Alexander, Alexander, pp.139-161.  
James P. Folsom, "Garden Legacies of the Golden Age." (reserve list)

#### **Children's Museums**

Alexander, Alexander, pp.167-183.  
Suzanne LeBlanc, "The Slender Golden Thread, 100 Years Strong." (reserve list)

2) The class will be divided into teams and each team assigned a set of readings related to controversial exhibition issues in museums. Summarize the controversy in an essay. With your classmates, present a discussion/debate on the issues.

### **TWO WEB SEARCHES/PRESENTATIONS:**

- 1) Search on the Internet for culture specific museums in US and world. Find two to present in class. Are the mission statements for these museums stated on their websites?
- 2) Website critique -- Research online and prepare a critique of 2 museum websites. Assign a score of 1 (lowest) to 10 for each site you visit and list reasons for your scores. Be prepared to present 2 websites to the class, one you have rated the most highly and the one that has received the lowest rating. Rate 20 according to: graphics, marketing tool (including ticketing), educational effectiveness, user friendliness, innovation.

### **MID-TERM PROJECT:**

Observe a museum education program (tour, school program, adult lecture, family studio program) in a museum. Write a one page paper including a short summary of the program, how many and who attended, and analyze its educational effectiveness.

### **FINAL PROJECT:**

A 6-page typed critique of a visit to a museum located in the Philadelphia-Wilmington-Baltimore region. Include:

the name of the organization, address, the type and the mission; the architecture, the experience of attending an exhibition, educational program; education materials/publications; any administrative information you can acquire from an annual report, membership program, transportation, arrival, appearance, buying a ticket, hours of operation or presentation, physical and intellectual orientation, the staff that you see, sequence and flow, pace, and visitor service amenities.

### **List of museums for Final Project:**

Websites for the museums should be up-to-date sources of information.

#### **Delaware**

Delaware Agricultural Museum (Dover)  
Delaware Art Museum (Wilmington)  
Delaware Center for Contemporary Art (Wilmington)  
Delaware Museum of Natural History (Greenville)  
Hagley Museum and Library (Greenville)  
Historical Society of Delaware (Wilmington)  
John Dickinson Plantation (Dover)  
Longwood Gardens (Kennett Square)  
Sewell Biggs Museum (Dover)  
University of Delaware Museums. (Newark)  
Winterthur Museum. Winterthur

#### **Maryland**

Baltimore Museum of Art

Maryland Academy of Sciences (Baltimore)  
Maryland Historical Society (Baltimore)  
Walters Art Gallery (Baltimore)  
The Visionary Art Museum (Baltimore)

### **Pennsylvania**

Academy of Natural Sciences (Philadelphia)  
African American Museum of Philadelphia (Philadelphia)  
Barnes Foundation (Merion)  
Brandywine River Museum (Chadds Ford)  
Chester County Historical Society (West Chester)  
Franklin Institute Science Museum (Philadelphia)  
Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia)  
Independence National Historic Park (Philadelphia)  
Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia)  
Lancaster County Historical Society (Lancaster)  
Morris Arboretum and Gardens, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia)  
Philadelphia Museum of Art  
Philadelphia Zoological Gardens  
Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (Philadelphia)  
Please Touch Museum (Philadelphia)  
University Museum, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia)  
US Constitution Center (Philadelphia)

### **[SAMPLE]**

#### **Preliminary Reserve/database readings:**

Alexander, Edward P. and Mary Alexander. *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Function of Museums*, 2nd edition, AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek, California, 2008.

Anderson, Maxwell L. "Museums of the Future: The Impact of Technology on Museum Practices," *Daedalus*, vol. 128, no.3 (Summer, 1999), pp. 129-162.

"Black History Museum Planned." PBS interview with Lonnie Bunch, March 24, 2006 ([http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/race\\_relations/jan-june06/museum\\_2-24.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/race_relations/jan-june06/museum_2-24.html))

Bronner, Ethan. "Museum Offers Gray Gaza a View of its Dazzling Past," *New York Times*, July 25, 2008. ([http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/25/world/middleeast/25gaza.html?\\_r=1&hp&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/25/world/middleeast/25gaza.html?_r=1&hp&oref=slogin))

Crouch, Ron. "Rules for a New Demographic Ballgame," *Museum News*, vol. 83, no. 3, (May/June 2004), pp. 43-45, 64.

Falk, John H. "Visitors: Who Does, Who Doesn't, and Why," *Museum News* vol. 77, no. 2 (March/April 1998), pp. 38-43.



Folsom, James P. "Garden Legacies of the Golden Age." *Public Garden* vol. 7, no. 2 (April 1992), pp 8-11, 32.

Franco, Barbara.. "The History Museum Curator of the 21st Century," *History News*, vol. 51, no. 3 (Summer 1996), pp. 6-10.

LeBlanc, Suzanne. "The Slender Golden Thread, 100 Years Strong." *Museum News*, vol. 78, no. 6 (November/December 1999), pp. 49-50.

Spiess, III, Phillip D. "The Impossible Museum: The Smithsonian Celebrates 150 Years," *Museum News*, vol. 75, no. 4 (July/August 1996), pp. 42-51.

Weil, Stephen E. "New Words, Familiar Music: The Museum as Social Enterprise," in *Weil, Making Museums Matter* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), pp. 55-74 (photocopy).

"Toward a Natural History Museum for the 21st Century," *Museum News*, vol. 76, no. 6 (November/December 1997), pp. 38-49.

Wilson, Fred, author and Lisa Graziose Corrin, ed. *Mining the Museum: An Installation* (New Press, February 1994).