

ARTH 394/594: THE MUSEUM

Lawrence Butler, Spring 2016

This course will be an introduction to the history and practices of art museums, taking advantage of the superb museums in Washington, DC. Through our readings, discussions and visits, we will learn about museum history, operations, careers, ethical issues and current controversies. Readings will also introduce issues of cultural representation as expressed through museum exhibitions. The course will end with a consideration of international law regarding collecting, UNESCO's World Heritage program, and cultural property management worldwide. During the course, class members will be required to get themselves to a selected group of local museums, galleries or exhibits four times.

This class fulfills a requirement for the Art History major, the Ancient Mediterranean Art & Archaeology minor, and fulfills the University General Education requirement for a synthesis course. Please note that it will *not* fulfill the Mason Core requirement for **fine arts**.

OBJECTIVES. This course is designed to:

- Acquaint students with the broad range of Washington DC's museums.
- Introduce the behind-the-scenes of mechanics of art museum practices.
- Examine the roles, types and architecture of museums in the United States.
- Question the ways we present the art of our own and other cultures.
- Examine collecting: practices, ethics, economics, legalities, and illegalities.
- Explore the management of cultural heritage and cultural property worldwide.
- Prepare interested students for internships or careers in museums and galleries.

TEXTBOOKS, all available in the Johnson Center.

Required:

- Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum, from Boullée to Bilbao*. Univ. of California, 2008.
- Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*. NY: Routledge, 1995.
- Daan van Dartel, *Tropenmuseum For A Change: Present Between Past and Future: A symposium report*. Amsterdam, KIT, 2010.

Recommended, not required:

- Lawrence Weschler. *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonders: Pronged Ants, Horned Humans and Other Marvels of Jurassic Technology*. Los Angeles: Vintage Press, 1996.
- Jane R. Glaser and Artemis A. Zenetou. *Museums: A Place to Work: Planning Museum Careers*. New York: Routledge Press, 1996.

COURSEWORK:

- Class attendance, assigned readings, and active participation in class discussion.
- Four self-guided visits to D.C. museums, each followed by a 3 pp. write-up.
- Two tests and a final exam on terms and readings.
- Grad students will write an 8-12 pp. research paper instead of the final exam, with a 20-minute class powerpoint presentation of the research.

HOW TO REACH ME: email: lbutler@gmu.edu is always the best way to reach me.

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 1:30 to 3:00 PM, or by appointment.

My office is in the History and Art History Department, in **Robinson B 340**.

Phone: you can leave a message at the HIST/ARTH Dept. office at (703) 993-1250.

TENTATIVE CLASS AND READING SCHEDULE

Class will normally be held on Thursday evenings, 4:30 to 7:10, in Music/Theatre Building 1002. **Please prepare the readings beforehand** for class discussion. The readings are listed weekly.

WEEK I, January 21: HISTORY OF THE ART MUSEUM

The *Kunstkammer*. Film: "Inhaling the Spore"
National museums in Europe

Reading, as soon as possible,

- **Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*:**
 1. "The Art Museum as Ritual"
- Elizabeth Scheicher, "The Collection of Archduke Ferdinand II at Schloss Ambras: Its Purpose, Composition and Evolution" from *The Origins of Museums: the Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Europe*, ed. Impey and MacGregor. Oxford: Clarendon, 1985, pp. 29-38.

Recommended: Lawrence Weschler. *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonders: Pronged Ants, Horned Humans and Other Marvels of Jurassic Technology*. LA: Vintage Press, 1996.

First museum itinerary assigned: The National Gallery/Natural History Museum/Walters

WEEK 2, January 28: BRITISH AND AMERICAN PUBLIC ART MUSEUMS

British national museums: a special case
History of American public art museums

Reading

- **in Duncan:**
 2. "From the Princely Gallery to Public Art Museum: The Louvre Museum and the National Gallery, London."
 3. "Public Spaces, Private Interests: Municipal Art Museums in NY & Chicago"
- Charles Coleman Sellers, "Peale's Museum and 'The New Museum Idea'," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 124, no. 1. (Feb. 29, 1980), pp. 25-34. (on JSTOR)

WEEK 3, February 4: DONOR MUSEUMS AND HISTORIC HOUSES

Donor museums and bequests
Converting historic houses into workable museums

Reading:

- **Duncan:** 4: "Something Eternal: The Donor Memorial"
- Review of the new Barnes Foundation museum
- Current articles on The Broad Museum in Los Angeles etc.

Second museum itinerary assigned: Donor museums in old mansions.

WEEK 4, February 11: MUSEUM ARCHITECTURE.

Test 1 on the history of museums, in the first part of the evening. Then:

History of “good” museum design

Style and meaning: art museum as work of art

Reading:

- **McClellan**, Introduction, and 2. “Architecture”
- Brown, Fleissig & Morrish, *Building for the Arts*: 10: Design standards, Visual Arts”
- Architecture reviews of recent museums.

WEEK 5, February 18: HOW MUSEUMS WORK

Organization of American art museums. Film: “Curators’ Choices”

Provenance, collecting and classifying.

Reading:

- **McClellan**, 1. “Ideals and Mission.”
- **McClellan**, 3, “Collecting, Classification and Display”
- Glazer & Zenetou, *Museums: A Place to Work*: excerpts on museum governance and museum staff positions.
- Recent news articles on museum directors

WEEK 6, February 25: MUSEUM EXHIBITION

Guest lecturer: Professor Michele Greet

Reading:

- Belcher, *Exhibitions in Museums*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991. Chapter 7: “Museum exhibition policy and planning,” 69-82.
- Other reading to be announced.

Third museum itinerary assigned: Exhibition review

WEEK 7, March 3: PROVENANCE, THEFT AND FORGERIES

Fakes, theft, and security.

Film: “Nova: The Fine Art of Faking It”

Reading:

- *The Getty Kouros Colloquium*. A. Kokkou ed. (Athens: Nicholas Goulandris Foundation, 1992) 5-7, 11-19, 37-38, 43-47, 57-59, 65-66.
- Michel Brent, “Faking African Art.” *Archaeology*, Jan/Feb 2001, pp. 27-32.
- News articles on the Gardner Museum theft.

No class on March 10: Spring Break

WEEK 8, March 17: CONTROVERSIES IN AMERICAN MUSEUMS

Modern art and museums

Classic museum controversies

Reading:

- **McClellan, 4:** “The Public”
- Allan Wallach, “The Battle over ‘*The West as America*,’” from his *Exhibiting Contradiction: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States*. U. Massachusetts Press, 1998, pp. 105-117.
- Steven Dubin, “Battle Royal: The Last Mission of the Enola Gay,” from his *Displays of Power: Memory and Amnesia in American Museums*. NYU: 1999, pp. 186-226.
- On the Mapplethorpe photography controversy, TBA.

Fourth museum visit assigned: Museums of non-western art

WEEK 9, March 24 : Review and test, on museum operations.

WEEK 10, March 31: COLLECTING AND INTERPRETING NON-WESTERN ART

Interpretation of non-western art.

Film: “African Art, Through African Eyes”

Collecting and interpreting Asian and Islamic art

Reading:

- Susan Vogel, “Always True to the Object, In Our Fashion,” from *Exhibiting Cultures*, ed. Karp & Lavine (Washington: Smithsonian, 1991), pp. 191-203.
- Gülru Necipoğlu, “The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Discourses and New Approaches,” in *Islamic Art and the Museum* (Saqi, 2012), 57-75.
- Daan van Dartel, *Tropenmuseum For A Change: Present Between Past and Future: A symposium report*. Amsterdam, KIT, 2010.

WEEK 11, April 7: CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

World Heritage, preservation, and international cultural property law

Provenance and plunder: Film: “The Stolen Treasure of Cambodia”

Reading:

- Lawrence Kaye and Carla Main, “Law, Ethics and the Antiquities Market,” from *Asian Art and Culture: Preservation* (Winter 1996), pp. 22-39.
- Kate Fitz Gibbon, “Appendix I: Japan’s Protection of its Cultural Heritage, A Model,” from her *Who Owns The Past? Cultural Policy, Cultural Property and The Law*. Rutgers Univ. Press, 2005, pp. 331-339.
- Lawrence Butler, “Silk Road Buddhist Art in American Collections: Recovering the Context” from *East-West Connections* 5 (2005), 61-74.

WEEK 12, April 14: CURRENT ISSUES: RESTITUTION AND REPATRIATION

Restitution of Holocaust-era art;
NAGPRA and American archeology
The Parthenon sculptures/Elgin Marbles

Reading:

- **McClellan**, 6: “Restitution and Repatriation”
- The debate over the Parthenon sculptures in London: excerpts, from James Cuno’s *Who Owns Antiquity? Museums and the Battle over Our Ancient Heritage*: press reviews.
- The Venice Charter

WEEK 13, April 21: FUTURE OF MUSEUMS IN A CONSUMER SOCIETY

Guest?
Art museum trends
Digitization and public history

Reading:

McClellan, 5: “Commercialism”

- Peter Marzio, “Minorities and Fine-Arts Museums in the United States,” from Karp and Lavine, *Exhibiting Cultures*.
- On museum digital projects: TBA

WEEK 14, April 28: STUDENT REPORTS/GUEST?

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, May 5, 4:30 to 7:10 PM.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES

Last day to add; last day to drop without tuition penalty Tuesday, January 26

First test on museum history: Thursday, February 11

Second test, on museum operations: Thursday, March 24

Final exam, in the usual room: Thursday, May 5, 4:30 to 7:15

Museum field reports will be due in class two weeks after they are assigned.

WRITING FOR THIS COURSE. A key part of this course is the four museum reports, for which specific directions will be handed out each week. This is a 300/500-level college class, and I will expect all writing to reflect that. I assume you have all had English 101, two Art History 300-level classes, ENGL 302 and some experience with college writing. So:

- I expect all writing in my classes to be formal academic writing in good standard English, proofread carefully for correct grammar and spelling, and **properly cited**.
- **Mechanics:** All papers must be typed and double-spaced, using a standard font in 11- or 12-point size. Pictures are nice, but not required or expected. Observe page limits.
- **Citing your sources** is a crucially important part of academic writing. You *must* cite any sources you use, and *cite them correctly*, or I will grade down the work. Cite museum labels and pamphlets too. **Please use MLA or Chicago style in any Art History course.** Check <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/resources/> if you need a refresher.
- **Failure to do these things will result in a lowered grade or worse.**

CLASS POLICIES:

Attendance is necessary; much of the material will only be covered in our slide lectures. You are responsible for getting notes, and for all consequences of missed classes. Class participation will affect your grade, if it is conspicuously good, conspicuously lacking, or continually disruptive. One unexcused absence is allowed. More than one, and the “class participation” grade goes down.

Classroom atmosphere. Courtesy and common sense, please. Talking to friends during lectures, wandering in and out, cell phones, and eating food are all badly distracting to everyone else. Chronic chatters and latecomers are disruptive, and will be asked to leave the classroom (University policy!).

Electronic gizmos. Use of a laptop or i-pad is fine during class for taking notes. Surfing the web or doing email are not OK. No use of computers or gizmos during class films—too distracting to all around you. No use of computers, phones or gizmos will be allowed during tests, out of fairness to everyone.

Written work is a major part of the course, and will count heavily towards your final grade. Papers must be written in good formal English, with full documentation in standard Chicago or MLA format. Please submit papers typed, double-spaced, and proofread. Spelling and grammar count, of course. Badly written work will be downgraded, returned for a rewrite, or flunked, as I see most appropriate. All students are expected to use word-processors with spell-checkers. For help with writing, please contact **The Writing Center** in Robinson I, Room A116. Call them at (703) 993-1200, or see their phenomenally good web page, at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>.

Late written work: Papers are due in class on the day specified. Late papers will be lowered five points a day (not per class day; *every* day) during the week (Mon-Fri) and lowered ten points over a weekend. Note that this makes even the best work “F” work after about ten days. **If you need an extension, you must ask for it before the due date, not on or after**, if you want to avoid a penalty. **By the final exam, all missing work becomes F work.** Make-up finals and elaborate medical excuses will require verification with a physician's or assistant dean's excuse. Sorry, but this is life.

No email submissions of papers, except in special cases with my prior permission. Papers received by email without prior permission will be marked down ten points. **Written work is due in hard copy in class on the due date.** Papers will not be considered “on time” unless I receive them in hard copy.

Learning disabilities will be accommodated as required according to University policies. Learning disabilities must be documented by the Disabilities Support Services. **It is the student's responsibility to get tested, present the documentation to me, and request accommodations in a timely way** (i.e. not on the day of the test; not after-the-fact). For more information, call the **GMU Disability Resource Center** at (703) 993-2470, or visit their website at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/advising/dss.html>.

Religious holidays. I have planned this course according to the George Mason University calendar. If you observe a religious holiday that the University does not, please let me know and I will make necessary accommodations for you (but not for the whole class).

English as a Second Language: If English is not your first language, I will be happy to help you do your best in the writing assignments--by previewing papers, offering extra help, that sort of thing. But the final result must be good standard written English. You may want to work with The Writing Center in Robinson I, Room A116. Call them at (703) 993-1200, or see their web page for English language help, at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/esl/index.html>. You may also want to work with the **English Language Institute (ELI)**. Call them at (703) 993-3664, or visit their website at <http://mason.gmu.edu/~eli>.

Academic honesty is expected in all tests and writing. Please respect the Honor Code, our classroom standards, your fellow students, and yourself. The Honor Pledge will be required on all tests. Please report violations to the Honor Committee. See the explanation of plagiarism in the guidelines for writing.

GRADING POLICIES

TESTS must be taken on the scheduled date. If there has been an emergency, it must be documented by a note from the dean's office or your doctor. In those cases, there will be one make-up test given, probably during the subsequent class. Tests will be graded by percentage. **Grades will be calculated as follows:**

A	= 100% to 93%, or 4.00	B-	= 82% to 80 %, or 2.67	D	= 60% to 66%, or
A-	= 92% to 90%, or 3.67	C+	= 79% to 77 %, or 2.33		1.0
B+	= 89% to 87%, or 3.33	C	= 76% to 73 %, or 2.00	F	= below 60% and
B	= 86% to 83 %, or 3.00	C-	= 72% to 70 %, or 1.67		receives no credit

I may award a final A+ in rare instances: 4.0 average *plus* unusually good writing *and* class participation.

WRITTEN WORK will not be given precise points, but will be judged as follows:

A = Startlingly good, exceeding our expectations, and well-written. Must be imaginative; NOT given for simply following directions. Not awarded unless the writing itself is excellent.

B = Good effort with a good result. Competent, conscientious, followed the directions, got the point.

C = Perfunctory; or, tried but missed the point; or, did something well but it wasn't the assignment; or good so far, but only part of the assignment; or, good idea but careless or sloppy; or, fine but messed-up documentation or no documentation of sources.

D = Warning: accepted under protest. Something awful happened.

F = Unacceptable as college-level work..

Paper grades will be lowered for lateness, sloppiness, lack of proofreading, bad English, faulty or missing documentation of sources, faulty logic, or failure to follow directions for the assignment.

Late written work: Papers are due on the day specified. Late papers will be lowered five points a day (not per class day; *every* day) during the week (Mon-Fri) and lowered ten points over a weekend. Note that this makes even the best work "F" work after about ten days. **If you need an extension, you must ask for it before the due date, not on or after**, if you want to avoid a penalty. **By the final exam, all missing work becomes F work.**

FINAL GRADES will be based on the average of your class, writing and test grades, as follows:

Test 1: 10%

Test 2: 20% (10% for grad students)

Four museum reports: 10% each

Grad students only: Research paper 20%, and presentation 10%

Final exam, for ARTH 394 undergrads only: 20%

Class participation for all students, including attendance: 10%

Class participation grades will be determined as follows: Everyone will start out with an assumption of B, or 85%. This will be raised for conspicuous participation in discussion, or lowered for conspicuous lack of participation. Habitual absence (three times or more) will be construed as a conspicuous lack of participation indeed. Disruptive or inappropriate classroom behavior will result in a lowering of this grade.

Borderline grades may vary from strict numerical average if there is a pattern to grades over time (up or down) or if the final exam is flunked, or if major pieces of work are missing. You may fail the course if you flunk the final exam plus one other major piece of work; or if two or more major pieces of work (worth 10% each) are missing, regardless of average. **Put simply: You will not pass the course if you do not hand in any written work. You will not pass the course if you do not pass any tests.**