

HIST 691: Museum Studies

Spring 2012

Professor Spencer R. Crew

East Building Room 207B

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Time and Place: Wednesday 7:20 -10:00 PM, East Building 122

Office Hours: Wednesday 4:30-5:00 and 6:45-7:15 PM and by appointment

Course Objectives: This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the theory and practice of museums with an emphasis on history institutions. We will examine the origins of museums and the leaders who helped shape the field. History and memory, surviving controversy, the changing role of museums, museum learning, creating exhibitions, the future of museums, and museums and innovation are among the issues which will be covered. In the process the class will gain an understanding of the numerous challenges facing museums as well as the process of proposing, researching, and executing an exhibition.

Course Requirements: As a member of this class you are expected to attend class regularly, read assigned materials, actively participate in class discussions, prepare assignments on time, write a two to three page exhibition proposal, prepare a 10 page research paper based on the proposal, prepare a poster presentation of your exhibition idea, and write a NEH planning grant proposal to seek funding to create your exhibition.

Evaluation: Class attendance, preparation as a discussion facilitator, and contribution to class discussions (15%); proposal and research paper (35%); poster presentation (10%), exhibition grant proposal (40%). **LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED UNLESS DISCUSSED AND APPROVED IN ADVANCE.**

All plagiarism cases will be automatically submitted to GMU's honor committee. According to GMU's honor code, plagiarism includes the following:
1. Presenting as one's own words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgement. **2.** Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgement.

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Drop/Add deadlines:

Last Day to Add: Tuesday, January 31
Last Day to Drop: Friday, February 24
Selective Withdrawal Period: Monday, February 27 – Friday, March 30

Texts:

Edward P. Alexander, *Museum Masters Their Museums and Their Influence*

Herman Din and Phyllis Hecht, *The Digital Museum: A Think Guide*

John Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*

Mathew Pinsker, *Lincoln's Sanctuary Abraham Lincoln and the Soldiers' Home*

Beverly Serrell, *Exhibit Labels An Interpretative Approach*

National Endowment for the Humanities, <http://www.neh.gov/>

The articles for reading can be found on jstor or on the course's blackboard page.

25 Jan. **Introduction**

Museum Masters, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13

1 Feb. **History and Memory**

“Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire” by Pierre Nora, *Representation* 26, (Spring 1989), 7-24; “Memory and American History,” David Thelen, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 75, No 4 (March 1989) 1117-1129, “Public History and the Study of Memory,” David Glassberg, *The Public Historian*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Spring 1996) 7-23; “Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum,” *History and Theory*, Vol. 36, No. 4, Theme Issue 36: Producing the Past: Making Histories Inside and Outside the Academy (Dec., 1997), pp. 44-63. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2505574>

8 Feb. **Roles and responsibilities of museums**

“The Museum, a Temple or the Forum,” Duncan F. Cameron in *Reinventing the Museum* edited by Gail Anderson, pp 61-73(on blackboard); “Essentialism, Adaptation and Justice: Towards a New Epistemology of Museums” by Mark O’Neill, *Museum Management and Curatorship* , 21 (2006) 95-116; “Contentiousness and shifting knowledge paradigms: The roles of history and science museums in contemporary societies,” Fiona Cameron, *Museum Management and Curatorship* , 20 (2005) 213-233; “Excursions into the Remembered Past: What People Want from Visits to Historical Sites” by Catherine M. Cameron and John B. Gatewood, *The Public Historian*, Vol. 22, No. 3, (Summer 2000) 107-127;“ Kitchen Conversations: Democracy in Action at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum by Ruth J. Abram, *The Public Historian*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter, 2007), pp. 59-76 URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4491539>.

15 Feb. **Exhibitions and Controversy**

“Museums and Controversy: Some Introductory Reflections” by Neil Harris, *The Journal of American History* Vol. 82, No. 3 (Dec., 1995), pp. 1102-1110 ,URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2945115>; “Museums as Centers of

Controversy” by Willard L. Boyd, *Daedalus*, Vol. 128, No. 3, America's Museums (Summer, 1999), pp. 185-228; “September 11 and the Mourning after: Reflections on Collecting and Interpreting the History of Tragedy “ by James B. Gardner and Sarah M. Henry , *The Public Historian*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Summer, 2002), pp. 37-52 URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3379085>; “ The Personalization of Collective Memory: The Smithsonian’s September 11 Exhibit” by Amy Fried in *Political Communication*, 23:387–405, 2006, online DOI: 10.1080/10584600600976971 387

22 Feb. **Museums and Learning**

The Museum Experience

Selection of project topics (2-3 page proposal due)

29 Feb. **Museums for the 21st Century** (*Meet with the Deputy Director and the Head of Curatorial Affairs for the National Museum of African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian Institution in their offices in Washington, D. C.*)

“The End of History Museums: What's Plan B?, Cary Carson, *The Public Historian* (Nov 2008), Vol. 30, No. 4: 9–27; “From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum,” Stephen E. Weil in *Daedalus*, (summer, 1999), vol. 128, No. 3: 229-258; Diane Ragsdale address to Australia Council arts marketing summit, 09 July 2008, http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/news/speeches/speech_items/diane_ragsdale_address_to_australia_council_arts_marketing_summit; “Heritage, Commerce, and Museal Display: Toward a New Typology of Historical Exhibition in the United States,” Tammy S. Gordon in

The Public Historian , Vol. 30, No. 3 (Aug., 2008), pp. 27-50 , Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20185211>

9 March **Exhibition Design, memory, and memorials**

“What is an Exhibit?” from *Exhibits: Planning and Design* by Larry Klein, pp. 14 – 25 (on blackboard); National Park Service site on the Presidents House, <http://www.nps.gov/inde/historyculture/the-presidents-house.htm>; *Making of the President's House*, February 23, 2009 , Kellie Patrick Gates, (<file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/srcrew/My%20Documents/presidents%20house/gatesmaking%20of%20prezhouse.htm>); *The President's House Revisited*, By Edward Lawler, Jr. , (<file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/srcrew/My%20Documents/presidents%20house/lawlwearticlerevisited.htm>); *Press Release* , PRESIDENT’S HOUSE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETS TO RESOLVE DESIGN CONTROVERSY (blackboard) ; *Press Release*: PRESIDENT’S HOUSE OPENS ON INDEPENDENCE MALL IN PHILADELPHIA
Much-Anticipated Site Honors Lives of Enslaved Africans in Presidential Household (blackboard).

16 March **Springbreak**

23 March **Visit Lincoln Cottage** in Washington, D.C and meet with the Director of the site.

Lincoln’s Sanctuary

30 March **Writing museum labels**

Exhibition Labels

- 6 April **Digital Museum**
The Digital Museum: A Think Guide
- 13 April Turn in research paper and individual discussions with the professor concerning exhibition grant proposals.
- 20 April Mission, Market, Money and Morale
“An Agenda for American Museums in the Twenty-First Century,” Harold Skramstad, in *Daedalus*, (Summer, 1999), Vol. 128, No. 3: 109-128;”Some Observations on Financial Stability,” Elizabeth Merritt, in *Museum News* September/October 2006.; “New Ways of Experiencing Culture: the Role of Museums and Marketing Implications,” Neil Kotler, in *Museum Management and Curatorship*, (2001)19:4, 417-425.
- 27 April **Research Week**
- 4 May **Project Poster Presentations**
- 7 May **NEH Grant Proposal due**