

ARTH 594. The Museum. Spring 2012. Prof.: Carol Mattusch
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ARTH 594: THE MUSEUM is a study of the history of public and private museums. We will concentrate on classical influences in the formation of modern museums, on collections of classical art, and on issues of repatriation. We'll also consider university museums, study collections, and plaster cast collections. Visits to museums in the Washington, D.C., area will be required, along with reports, short papers, and discussions.

Assigned readings are to be completed before class of the week for which they are listed on the syllabus.

Books:

Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*.
Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture 1500-1900*.
Sharon Waxman, *Loot: The Battle over the Stolen Treasures of the Ancient World*.
Susan Woodford, *The Art of Greece and Rome*.
Lawrence Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder*.
Marjorie Caygill, *The Story of the British Museum*, 2002 ed. (not in GMU bookstore)

Articles and chapters assigned will be available via Jstor or as scans.

Required Coursework:

You are responsible for all material presented in class. Participation in class discussion is an important aspect of the work for this course. Museum visits are also an integral part of your coursework. Please do not talk privately or use a laptop during class.

Classes will consist of both lectures and discussion. Topics to be covered may include: museum architecture, national galleries, museums as treasuries of culture and of cultures, the idea of the canon in art, political correctness in exhibitions, collections and collecting, acquisitions and de-accessions, theft, design and installation, conservation and restoration, sculpture gardens, private houses as museums, donor memorials, museum operations, museum shops, and the role of traditional museums and classical collections in contemporary society. We will explore controversies relating to museum acquisitions and to the looting

of cultural property. I'll ask each of you to choose one of these topics as your personal favorite to report on and criticize and to keep track of throughout the course, bringing up your topic as appropriate.

Each of you will prepare and present an illustrated 5- to 10-minute **critique** (10 points), along with a **paper** (10 points) and a thorough annotated **bibliography** on the topic for which you have signed up (10 points). In these reports, choose a topic and take a critical stand (for instance, what is wrong with a show about Macedonia that is geared to modern political interests?); consider the bias of each source that you use (For instance, is Waxman's treatment of the Getty unfairly one-sided? Is she more interested in marketing her book than in presenting an objective report?). Be sure to cite specific evidence/material in support of your argument. Do a single case study, or compare and contrast 2 or 3 examples. Remember that your job is to be critical, not just of the topic but also of those who are writing about your topic! Dates for your short presentations will be decided once you have chosen your topics.

Topics:

- Museum architecture:
- National galleries:
- Museums as treasuries of culture and cultures:
- the idea of the canon:
- political correctness in exhibitions:
- collections and collecting:
- acquisitions and de-accessions:
- theft, dealers, the art market:
- design and installation:
- conservation and restoration:
- sculpture gardens:
- private houses as museums:
- donor memorials:
- museum shops:
- traditional museums in today's world:
- classical collections in today's world:
- Why not throw out all those old plaster casts?

Each of you will also lead the discussion for one class meeting. So, be sure to read the assignments carefully and think about questions that will get discussion going. **Remember that you are expected to read all the assignments and to participate in the discussion of every one of them.**

You will need to make individual field trips to museums in the Washington-Baltimore area and write short analytical papers (10 points each) about what you saw on your visits.

There will be a **midterm** exam (20 points), and a **final** exam (20 points), both of which will consist of essay questions. These tests will include critiques of readings, museum visits, and lectures. You will need to consider monuments, museums, and works of art discussed in class, as well as major periods, historical figures, artists, and works of art. You will be responsible for proper use of technical and stylistic terms and understanding of concepts. Class **participation** will count approximately 20 points.

Grading:

A+	rare	A	99-95	A-	94-90
B+	89-87	B	86-83	B-	82-80
C+	79-77	C	76-73	C-	72-70

TENTATIVE SYLLABUS: all changes and additions will be announced in class.

Mon. Jan. 23. Introduction: Unearthing the Classical World: literature, fieldwork, collecting, and power.

Jan. 30. The Classical World as we know it now.

Read: Woodford, *The Art of Greece and Rome*; Haskell and Penny ch. 13.

Feb. 6. Ancient and early modern collections of classical antiquities.

Read Haskell and Penny, chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10.

Feb. 13. Royal collections: Naples.

Read Haskell and Penny, ch. 10, "The New Importance of Naples."

Feb. 20. Museum architecture.

Read Haskell and Penny, ch. 8, 9; Duncan, chapter 1.

Visit a museum on the Mall, and **write for today** one or two pages, typed, double-spaced, on the following topic. Analyze and critique the architectural message delivered by one museum-building on the Mall in D.C. In the first paragraph, describe the outside of the building; in the second paragraph, discuss

the main entrance hall; in the third, analyze and critique the message intended to be delivered by this architecture.

Feb. 27. The Louvre.

Read Duncan chapter 2, pp. 21-33; Haskell and Penny ch. 14.

Midterm exam question to be distributed in class.

March 5. The British Museum.

Read Marjorie Caygill, *The Story of the British Museum*

Midterm exam due in class.

March 12. Spring Break.

March 19. Plaster cast collections, large and small. The Smithsonian's collection; The Metropolitan Museum's collection; GMU.

Read Haskell and Penny, chapters 3, 5, 11, 15. Another reading may be assigned.

Report by Smithsonian cast-collection interns.

March. 26. Changing collections: the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Read Duncan ch. 3.

April 2. The Smithsonian vs. the National Gallery of Art

Reading: find and read a selection of books (such as biographies of Smithson and Mellon), articles, and promotional pieces by each of these museums and be prepared to compare and contrast their histories, collections, sizes, goals, research, outreach, politics, scandals, and opinions of themselves.

April 9. Private museums and copies: from Naples to Madrid to California.

Read Duncan ch. 4, "Something Eternal: The Donor Memorial"; Umberto Eco, "Travels in Hyperreality"; Haskell and Penny ch. 12.

April 16. Cabinets of Wonder.

Read Lawrence Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder*.

Visit the "Chamber of Wonders" at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.

Written assignment for today: 2-page description and analysis of the WAM's "Chamber of Wonders."

April 23. Collecting antiquities today: Ethics.

Read Waxman, *Loot*.

April 30. Working in museums and university collections/putting together exhibitions. Examples: *Pompeii and the Roman Villa* x2; *Pompéi: Un art de vivre*.

See *Blogging Pompeii* and other articles/posts on these exhibitions.

Final exam questions to be distributed.

May 14: Save this time slot: we may need it for reports.

Final exam due today at 430, if not before.

Topics: please sign up for one. Dates to be decided later.

Museum architecture: _____

National galleries: _____

Museums as treasuries of culture and cultures: _____

The notion of the canon: _____

Political correctness in exhibitions: _____

Collections and collecting: _____

Acquisitions and de-accessions: _____

Theft, dealers, the art market: _____

Design and installation: _____

Conservation and restoration: _____

Sculpture gardens: _____

Private houses as museums: _____

Donor memorials: _____

Museum shops: _____

Traditional museums in today's world: _____

Classical collections in today's world: _____

Why not throw out all those old plaster casts? _____

