

## **The Museum**

**ARTH 394 / ARTH 594**

**Online, synchronous: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3–4.15 pm**

**Dr. Heidi Gearhart**

[hgearhar@gmu.edu](mailto:hgearhar@gmu.edu)

This course will examine the history of the art museum and the issues surrounding art museums today. We will consider the origins of art collections and public viewing of them, and consider the museum as a political and social entity. What are the political stakes in collecting, displaying, and viewing art? What purposes and ideologies do museums serve, and for whom are they intended? How has the history of the art museum affected and shaped the institution we know today? How are museums changing and what will they be like in the future? We will also consider some of the practicalities of work in a museum, from the conservator to the registrar, from the curator to the educator, and we will look at some of the issues museums face today, such as race, repatriation, forgeries, and funding. Assessments will be based on short writing assignments, a final paper, participation in class discussion and presentation of a research topic.

ARTH 394: Fulfills Mason Core: Synthesis

Recommended Prerequisite: 6 credits in art history at the 300-level and completion or concurrent enrollment in ENGH 302.

### **Learning Objectives:**

This goal of this course is for students to gain a broad understanding of the history, theory, and practice of the museum. Through class participation and work done during and beyond class hours, students should strive to:

- Understand the history of collecting and museums
- Demonstrate knowledge of museum organization and operations
- Critically assess texts, objects, and museum spaces
- Through written and oral communication, synthesize and analyze current museum practices
- Review and evaluate critical issues facing museums today

### **Learning Objectives for the Mason Core:**

The purpose of the synthesis course is to provide students with the opportunity to synthesize the knowledge, skills and values gained from the Mason Core curriculum. Synthesis courses strive to expand students' ability to master new content, think critically, and develop life-long learning skills across the disciplines.

Upon completing a synthesis course, students will be able to:

1. Communicate effectively in both oral and written forms, applying appropriate rhetorical standards (e.g., audience adaptation, language, argument, organization, evidence, etc.)
2. Using perspectives from two or more disciplines, connect issues in a given field to wider intellectual, community or societal concerns
3. Apply critical thinking skills to:
  1. Evaluate the quality, credibility and limitations of an argument or a solution using appropriate evidence or resources, OR,

2. Judge the quality or value of an idea, work, or principle based on appropriate analytics and standards

**Evaluation:**

Attendance and Participation in online discussion	10%
Reading Notes Journal (Eight weeks' worth of entries)	25%
Museum review	15%
Paper proposal and bibliography	10%
Presentation of Final Project	15%
Final Paper	25%

In order to pass this course you will have to keep up with lectures and assigned readings. Participation in online discussion is critical. You will also be asked to keep a Journal with notes from your readings for each week, which you will use in your small groups. You will be expected to raise questions and discuss aspects of these readings in class; these notes should help prepare you.

**Readings:**

Readings for this class will be available through the library e-reserves on Blackboard. Readings will form the basis for discussion each class. The reading for this course is substantial and it is part of your grade. Please plan accordingly.

**Attendance:**

Attendance at online meetings is **required**. More than two unexcused absences will cause your participation grade to drop. (After two absences every additional class missed will lower your participation grade by half a letter.)

**Class Structure:**

To prepare for class each week, you will have readings to complete, and lecture videos to watch providing background on the weekly topics. You'll have Tuesdays to watch video lectures asynchronously. We'll meet on zoom on Thursdays to discuss your reading questions together as a class. The work on the readings that you do on the readings will be part of your Reading Journal, which is a substantial part of your grade. **N.B. We will meet synchronously on April 20, 22 and April 27, 29 for presentations.**

**Deadlines:**

Deadlines are important. If you need an extension you must contact me 24 hours before the deadline to request more time. If you do not submit an assignment your grade will be a zero.

If you wish an exemption for religious holidays you must contact me within the first two weeks of the semester with the appropriate dates.

**Evaluation:**

Your work will be evaluated as follows:

A+ (98-100)	A (93-97)	A- (90-92)	Outstanding and exceptional level of work
B+ (87-89)	B (83-86)	B- (80-82)	Good to very good level of work
C+ (77-79)	C (73-76)	C- (70-72)	Satisfactory to average level of work
D (60-69)			Below average work -- marginally acceptable
F (below 60)			Unacceptable work – very poor quality or quantity

**Proper Etiquette for Our Online Course:**

Our class is a virtual one, but rules of respect and etiquette still apply, and in fact, are even more important in an online course. Each student is expected to treat their fellow students and Instructor with utmost respect, and treat all persons fairly and kindly. For further guidelines see

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Our virtual classroom is a safe, open space for the exchange and debate of ideas. Please respect your fellow students and listen to everyone's comments. We want our class to be a supportive, amicable and also challenging place for learning. We are all in this together!

Just a note – when you send an email, please remind me of your full name and which class you are in. Also, please let me know how best to address you. I use she/her for myself and you may address me as Dr. Gearhart in email and verbally.

**Technological Requirements:**

This class will be taught synchronously. Please make sure that you have appropriate bandwidth to join class discussions each week, and can log in to the course on Blackboard regularly.

*A GMU email address is required for this course.* All communication will be through Blackboard and email.

**Hardware:**

You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. For the amount of Hard Disk Space required taking a distance education course, consider and allow for:

1. the storage amount needed to install any additional software and
2. space to store work that you will do for the course.

If you consider the purchase of a new computer, please go to [Patriot Tech](#) to see recommendations.

**Software:**

This course uses Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the [myMason Portal](#). See [supported browsers and operating systems](#). Log in to [myMason](#) to access your registered courses. Some courses may use other learning management systems. Check the syllabus or contact the instructor for details. Online courses typically use [Acrobat Reader](#), [Flash](#), [Java](#), and [Windows](#)

[Media Player](#), [QuickTime](#) and/or [Real Media Player](#). Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software for free [here](#). Students owning Macs or Linux should be aware that some courses may use software that only runs on Windows. You can set up a Mac computer with Boot Camp or virtualization software so Windows will also run on it. Watch [this video](#) about using Windows on a Mac. Computers running Linux can also be configured with virtualization software or configured to dual boot with Windows.

*Nota Bene:* If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

### **Academic Integrity:**

At George Mason University, Academic Integrity is demonstrated in our work, community, the classroom and research. We maintain this commitment to high academic standards through Mason's Honor Code. It is an agreement made by all members of our community to not "cheat, steal, plagiarize, or lie in matters related to your academic work." Students sign an agreement to adhere to the Honor Code on their application for admission to Mason and are responsible for being aware of the most current version of the code.

The Honor Code Pledge reads as follows:

***To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University Community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set for this Honor Code: Student Members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.***

The Honor Committee is selected to promote academic integrity as a core value for our university community. Members of the committee serve on hearing panels established to investigate and resolve alleged violations of the Honor Code. Undergraduate and graduate students at Mason are subject to the university Honor Code. Mason's law school, the Scalia School of Law, has an Honor Committee that is independent from the rest of the University's Honor Committee. Questions about cases brought by the Scalia School of Law should be referred to that committee.

In addition, Mason has an office that deals with issues around research misconduct. Those incidents are investigated through the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance. As it states in policy 4007, "Allegations of academic misconduct against graduate students are governed solely by the university's honor code, except for 1) research activities as defined above regardless of sponsorship; and 2) master's theses and doctoral dissertations, both of which are governed by this policy. Allegations of academic misconduct against undergraduate students are governed solely by the university honor code, except for sponsored research activities which are governed by this policy." For more information, visit the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance website at <https://rdia.gmu.edu/topics-of-interest/research-misconduct/>.

This link provides the full read of the 2020–2021 Honor Code. Select it to download:  
[George Mason University Honor Code 2020-2021 final](#)

**Diversity:**

George Mason University values the diversity of its students. So do I. The University's Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Multicultural Education (ODIME) seeks to create and sustain inclusive learning environments where all are welcomed, valued, and supported. Harmful or hateful behavior will not be tolerated.

**Religious Holidays:**

Please consult the George Mason religious holiday calendar here:

<https://ulife.gmu.edu/religious-holiday-calendar/>

If religious observances will require an adjustment to your course schedule, please let me know within the first two weeks of class.

**GMU Calendar:**

For important dates regarding registration, add/drop, withdrawals, and mid-term evaluations, please consult the University calendar:

<https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/spring-2021/#dates>

**Student Privacy:**

Student privacy is governed by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to a non-Mason email address. For Mason's policy on student privacy, please see <https://registrar.gmu.edu/ferpa/>

**Class Recordings**

I will not record our synchronous meetings for this class **unless a student specifically requests it**. In that case, recordings will be stored on our Blackboard course site and will only be accessible to students taking this course during this semester.

**Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence**

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students and employees who believe that they have been sexually harassed, sexually assaulted or subjected to sexual or interpersonal misconduct to seek assistance and support. [University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct](#) speaks to the specifics of Mason's process, the resources, and the options available to students and employees.

**Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual or interpersonal misconduct:** As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Non-Confidential Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, complicity, and retaliation to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with

someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

**Disability Guidelines**

If you have been diagnosed with a disability and require accommodation, I am happy to work with you to help you succeed in this course. However, you will first need to be in touch with the Office of Disability Services. Please see the office website at <https://ds.gmu.edu> for further information.

**Other Student Services:**

Mason provides many services to help you learn. Take advantage of them! Here are a few:

- Keep Learning, Learning Services: [learningservices.gmu.edu/keeplearning/](http://learningservices.gmu.edu/keeplearning/)
- Online Education Services, University Libraries: [library.gmu.edu/for/online](http://library.gmu.edu/for/online)
- University Libraries: [library.gmu.edu](http://library.gmu.edu)
- The Writing Center: [writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu)
- Counseling and Psychological Services: [caps.gmu.edu](http://caps.gmu.edu)

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS (14 Weeks)

### WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

Jan. 26: Introduction to the Course

**READ:** Syllabus and Course Policies, Netiquette Guide:  
<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Jan. 28: Introductions and About this Course

**READ:** Findlen, Paula. "The Museum: Its Classical Etymology and Renaissance Genealogy." *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*. Bettina Messias Carbonell, ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. 23-50.

### WEEK 2: EARLY COLLECTIONS

Feb. 2, 4: Part I: Treasuries

**READ:** Shalem, Avinoam. "The Second Life of Objects: Ivory Horns in Medieval Church Treasuries." *Spätantike und byzantinische Elfenbeinbildwerke im Diskurs*. Gudrun Bühl, ed. Spätantike und byzantinische Elfenbeinbildwerke im Diskurs. Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2008. 225--236.

#### **Part II: The *Kunstkammer* (Cabinet of Curiosities)**

**READ:** Kaufmann, Thomas DaCosta. "Remarks on the Collections of Rudolf II: The *Kunstkammer* as a Form of *Representatio*." *Art Journal* 38 / 1 (Autumn 1978): 22-28.

Maxwell, Susan. "The Pursuit of Art and Pleasure in the Secret Grotto of Wilhelm V of Bavaria." *Renaissance Quarterly* 61 / 2 (2008): 414-62.

**DISCUSSION:** What kinds of questions do we ask when we read?

**Start your Reading Notes Journal**

### WEEK 3: EARLY COLLECTORS

Feb. 9, 11: Part I: Antiquarians and Aristocrats

**READ:** Thomas, Sophie. "A 'strange and Mixed Assemblage': Sir John Soane, Archivist of the Self." *Studies in Romanticism* 57 / 1 (2018): 121-142.

## **Part II: Exploration and Export**

**READ:** Hart, William. "African Ivories and Eighteenth-Century English Antiquarians." *Antiquaries Journal* 99 (September 2019): 347–362.

**Enter your notes about the Reading into your Reading Notes Journal**

## **WEEK 4: SCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE**

**Feb. 16, 18:** **Part I: Natural History and Science Museums**

**READ:** Burke, Peter. "Classifying Knowledge: Curricula, Libraries, and Encyclopedias." *A Social History of Knowledge from Gutenberg to Diderot*. Malden, MA: Polity, 2000. 81- 115.

## **Part II: Ethnographic and National Museums**

**READ:** Walklate, Jen. "Heterotopia or Carnival Site? Rethinking the Ethnographic Museum." *Museum Worlds* 6 / 1 (January 1, 2018): 32–47.

**Enter your notes about the Reading into your Reading Notes Journal**

## **WEEK 5: ART AND CRAFT**

**Feb. 23, 25:** **Part I: The Art Museum**

**READ:** Duncan, Carol. "From the Princely Gallery to the Public Art Museum. The Louvre Museum and the National Gallery, London." *Civilizing Rituals. Inside Public Art Museums*. London: Routledge, 1995. 21-47.

McClellan, Andrew. "The Musée du Louvre as Revolutionary Metaphor During the Terror." *The Art Bulletin* 70 / 2 (June 1, 1988): 300–313.

## **Part II: Museums of Craft**

**READ:** Robertson, Bruce. "The Victoria and Albert Museum: Rethinking the Context." *Victorian Review* 43 / 1 (2017): 41–45.

**MUSEUM REVIEW DUE**

## **WEEK 6: THE NEW MUSEUMS**

**March 2, 4:**

**Part I: Learning by Proxy? Plaster Cast Collections in the United States**

**READ:** Curran, Kathleen. "From Craft to *Kulturgeschichte* in Boston: the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston." *The Invention of the American Art Museum: from Craft to Kulturgeschichte, 1870-1930*. Los Angeles, California: Getty Research Institute, 2017. 52–79.

Wallach, Alan. "The American Cast Museum: An Episode in the History of the Institutional Definition of Art." *Exhibiting Contradiction: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998. 38–56.

**Part II: Displays and Architecture**

**READ:** Bilsel, Can. "Architecture in the Museum: Monuments for a Mass Spectacle." *Antiquity on Display: Regimes of the Authentic in Berlin's Pergamon Museum*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. 189–214.

**Enter your notes about the Reading into your Reading Notes Journal**

**WEEK 7: THE MODERN MUSEUM**

**March 9, 11:**

**Part I: The Modern Art Museum**

**READ:** Wolff, Janet. "Women at the Whitney, 1910-30: Feminism/Sociology/Aesthetics." *Modernism/modernity* 6 / 3 (1999): 117-138.

**Part II: Where Next? Globalism and the Twenty-First Century**

**READ:** Zarobell, John. "Museum Exhibitions in the Era of Globalization." *Art and the Global Economy*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017. 64-89.

**Enter your notes about the Reading into your Reading Notes Journal**

**WEEK 8: PRACTICALITIES I**

**March 16, 18:**

**Practicalities: Who's Who?**

**READ:** Boylan, Patrick J. "The Museum Profession." *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Sharon Macdonald, ed. Malden, MA : Blackwell, 2006. 415–430.

Besterman, Tristram. "Museum Ethics." *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Sharon Macdonald, ed. Malden, MA : Blackwell, 2006. 431–441.

### **Practicalities: Markets and Money**

**READ:** Wallis, Brian. "The Art of Big Business." *Art in America*. June 1986. 28–33.

Cuno, James. "'Sensation' and the Ethics of Funding Exhibitions." *Unsettling Sensation: Arts–Policy Lessons from the Brooklyn Museum of Art Controversy*. Lawrence Rothfield, ed. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001. 162–70.

**Enter your notes about the Reading into your Reading Notes Journal**

### **WEEK 9: PRACTICALITIES II**

**March 23, 25:**

#### **Part I: Practicalities: Conservation and the Gallery Space**

**READ:** Baxandall, Michael. "Exhibiting Intention: Some Preconditions of the Visual Display of Culturally Purposeful Objects." *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, eds. Washington, DC: Smithsonian, 1991. 33-41.

Alpers, Svetlana. "The Museum as a Way of Seeing." *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, eds. Washington, DC: Smithsonian, 1991. 25-32.

#### **Part II: Provenance, Forgery, and Restitution**

**READ:** Wood, Paul. "Display, Restitution and World Art History: The Case of the 'Benin Bronzes.'" *Visual Culture in Britain* 13 / 1 (2012): 115–37.

**Enter your notes about the Reading into your Reading Notes Journal**

### **WEEK 10: PREPARING YOUR FINAL PROJECT**

**March 30, April 1:**

**Prep session on Final Project**

**Discussion of Proposals**

**Prepare ideas for your final project to discuss in Thursday meeting**

### **WEEK 11: CRITICAL ISSUES I**

**April 6, 8:**

**Part I: Cultural Heritage**

**READ:** Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Whose Culture Is It, Anyway?" *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. London: W. W. Norton, 2006. 115–35.

## **Part II: Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice**

**READ:** Jennings, G., and J. Jones-Rizzi. "Museums, white privilege, and diversity: A systemic perspective. *Dimensions*, 18 / 5, Special Edition 66-67. Washington, DC: ASTC, 2017. [https://nemanet.org/files/9615/0228/7672/Dimensions-Diversity-Special-Edition\\_JenningsJonesRizzi.pdf](https://nemanet.org/files/9615/0228/7672/Dimensions-Diversity-Special-Edition_JenningsJonesRizzi.pdf).

Bryant-Greenwell, Kayleigh. "Taking a Stand Against Neutrality: The Role of Social Justice in Museums." *Museum-ID.com*. N.d. <https://museum-id.com/taking-a-stand-against-neutrality-the-role-of-social-justice-in-the-21st-century-museum/>

## **PROJECT PROPOSALS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**

### **WEEK 12: CRITICAL ISSUES II**

**April 13, 15: Public Spaces**

**WATCH:** Videos for *Murals that Matter: Activism through Public Art, August 28, 2020–Dec. 31, 2020*. National Building Museum. <https://www.nbm.org/exhibition/murals-that-matter/>

**Get outside and look for public art in your neighborhood. Make some notes in your Reading Journal about what you found, what surprised you, and what you would like to see.**

### **Museums in Digital Space**

**READ:** Billock, Jennifer. "How Will Covid-19 Change the Way Museums Are Built?" *SmithsonianMag.com*. Sept. 16, 2020.

Coyle, Laura. "Right from the Start: The Digitization Program at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture." *The Public Historian* 40 / 3 (August 1, 2018): 292–318.

**Enter your notes about the Reading into your Reading Notes Journal**

### **WEEK 13: PRESENTATIONS**

**April 20: PRESENTATIONS**

**April 22: PRESENTATIONS**

**WEEK 14: WRAPPING UP**

**April 27: PRESENTATIONS**

**April 29: Wrapping up**

**FINAL PROJECT DUE DATE TBD**