

ARTH 394: THE MUSEUM
Spring 2022
Classroom: Music and Theatre Building 1007
Thursdays, 4:30-7:10 pm.
Dr. Jacquelyn Williamson
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This course will be an introduction to the history and practices of art museums, taking advantage of the superb museums in Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD. 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. During the course, class members will be required to get themselves to local museums, galleries or exhibits two times for undergrad students and three times for graduate students.

This class fulfills a requirement for the Art History major and fulfils 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.

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.
- Sally Yerkovich *A Practical Guide to Museum Ethics*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers 2016

We will also use:

- Tiffany Jenkins, *Keeping Their Marbles: How the Treasures of the Past Ended Up in Museums, and Why They Should Stay There*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Class papers: exhibit reviews and final analysis paper
(see Blackboard for the directions and additional bibliography)

Review 1: due Feb 10th (submit to Blackboard by 11:59 pm)

Review 2: due March 10th (submit to Blackboard by 11:59 pm)

Final paper: due April 28th (submit to Blackboard by 11:59 pm)

Class presentations of final papers: April 28th and May 5th

Course Health Requirements:

If you or a family member falls ill, I am very willing to work with you to figure out how we can best meet your needs. You can also contact the Sterns Center for help!

- *All students taking courses with a face-to-face component are required to follow the university's public health and safety precautions and procedures outlined on the university Safe Return to Campus webpage (<https://www2.qmu.edu/safe-return-campus>). Similarly, all students in face-to-face and hybrid courses must also complete the Mason COVID Health Check prior to coming to campus. The COVID Health Check system uses a color code system **and students will receive either a Green, Yellow, Red, or Blue email response**. Only students who receive a "green" notification are permitted to attend courses with a face-to-face component. **If you suspect that you are sick or have been directed to self-isolate, please quarantine or get testing. Faculty are allowed to ask you to show them that you have received a Green email and are thereby permitted to be in class.***
- *Students are required to follow Mason's current policy about facemask-wearing. As of August 11, 2021, all community members are required to wear a facemask in all indoor settings, including classrooms. An [appropriate facemask](#) must cover your nose and mouth at all times in our classroom. If this policy changes, you will be informed; however, students who prefer to wear masks will always be welcome in the classroom.*

Add-drop deadlines

Please note the following add-drop deadlines:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| January 31 | Last day to add a class |
| February 7 | Last day to drop a class with no tuition penalty |
| February 14 | Last day to drop a class (with tuition penalty) |
| February 15-March 1 | Student self-withdrawal period (with tuition penalty) |

It is your responsibility to observe the add-drop deadlines to ensure that you are properly registered for specific courses.

COURSEWORK/GRADE REQUIREMENTS:

Undergrads:

- **15%** Class attendance, assigned readings, and active participation in class discussion.
- **25%** Self-guided visits to D.C. or other regional museums, each followed by a write-up/exhibition review
 - 2 museum/exhibit visits with reviews
- **50%** Final synthesis/research paper
- **10%** Class presentation. You will present your final project to the class.

TENTATIVE CLASS READING and TOPIC SCHEDULE

Prepare the readings before the date listed for class discussion. The readings are listed weekly. You must bring to every class your questions or observations about the content of the readings and be prepared to share them with the class.

Readings: if the assignment is drawn from the textbooks mentioned above, they are referred to below by the author's last name. Other readings will be uploaded to Blackboard or handed out in class.

WEEK 1, January 27: INTRODUCTION**WEEK 2: February 3: EXPERIENCE**

Assignments:

1. **Visit the "Chamber of Wonders" room in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. This is an excellent example of how museums started.**
2. Visit other exhibits/museums.
3. Consult the "how to write an exhibition review" document, and write your first exhibition review, to be handed in next week.

WEEK 3, February 10: HISTORY OF THE ART MUSEUM

Reading:

1. Duncan, "Introduction," "The Art Museum as Ritual," and "From the Princely Gallery to the Public Art Museum." pg. 1-47.

Hand in your first exhibition review

WEEK 4, February 17: BRITISH AND AMERICAN PUBLIC ART MUSEUMS

Reading:

1. McClellan, "Introduction," and "Ideals and Mission," pg. 1-52
2. Duncan, "Public Spaces, Private Interests: Municipal Art Museums in NY & Chicago," pg. 48-71

WEEK 5, February 24: real-world curation/guest speaker Adriana Ospina (Mason alumni):

No Ocean Between us: the process of curating a travelling show.
In this lecture Adriana Ospina, Director of the Art Museum of the Americas of the Organization of American States will talk about the six year process of curating a travelling exhibition.

WEEK 6, March 3: TECHNOLOGY: 3-D Printing and scanning

Online materials:

Reading/viewing:

[What is 3d Printing?](#) (article/web site)

[The future of our past: Tatjana Dzambazova at TEDxSonomaCounty \(Video\)](#)

[3D printing for archeology and museology \(Video\)](#)

[3D Scanning, Hacking, and Printing in Art Museums, for the Masses \(article\) MET](#)

[3D Printing Allows Visually Impaired to Experience Museums in a New Way\(article\)](#)

[Teaching with a 3D Simulacrum \(article\)](#)

[Beyond Preservation: 3D Printing Being Incorporated in Museums\(article\)](#)

Museums using 3d technology:

Metropolitan Museum of Art

[British Museum](#)

[Smithsonian X](#)

[Brooklyn Museum](#)

[Smithsonian Museum of Natural History](#)

[African Fossils](#)

3d Printing Resources

[Autodesk](#)

[TinkerCad](#)

[123D Catch](#)

[Cults](#)

[Proto-Pasta](#)

[Stratys](#)

<http://www.gigamacro.com/>

WEEK 7, March 10: DONOR MUSEUMS, HISTORIC HOUSES, ETHICS

Reading:

- Duncan: “Something Eternal: The Donor Memorial” and “The Modern Art Museum” 72 – 135
- Yerkovich: Chps 4-5 , pg. 31-64

WEEK 8, March 17: no class, spring break

WEEK 9, March 24: MUSEUM ARCHITECTURE.

Second Round of Exhibition Reviews due today

Start to think about your final paper, check out the additional bibliography provided for your research on Blackboard.

Reading:

- McClellan: “Introduction,” and “Architecture” 1-12 and 53-106

WEEK 10, March 31: HOW MUSEUMS WORK (and Ethics of Leadership)

Reading:

- McClellan: 1. “Ideals and Mission.” pg. 13-52
- McClellan: 3, “Collecting, Classification and Display” pg. 107-154
- Yerkovich: chapters 1-3, pg. 1-30

WEEK 11, April 7: CURRENT ISSUES: RESTITUTION AND REPATRIATION

Reading:

- McClellan: 6, “Restitution and Repatriation,” pg. 233-268
- Jenkins, *Keeping their Marbles*: chapters 5-6, pg. 163-250

WEEK 12, April 14: CURRENT ISSUES: SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Murawski, Mike. “A Moment for Accountability, Transformation & Real Questions.” Museumsarenotneutral.com. June 3, 2020.
<https://www.museumsarenotneutral.com/learn-more/real-questions-for-transformation>
- 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/>
- Jenkins, *Keeping their Marbles*: chapters 3 and 4, pgs. 66-162

WEEK 13, April 21: CONTROVERSIES IN AMERICAN MUSEUMS

Reading:

- McClellan: 4, "The Public," pg. 155-192
- Jenkins, *Keeping their Marbles*: chapters 7 and 8, pg. 251-289

WEEK 14, April 28: presentations

Final paper due

Class presentations

Week 15, May 3rd: presentations

Class presentations

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance and Class participation are necessary to pass this course.

Late work will be graded down five points per weekday and ten points over a weekend. Plan ahead--last-minute hard-disk and printer failures do not constitute legitimate excuses. Make-up tests and elaborate medical excuses will require verification with a physician's or associate dean's excuse. There will be no make-up final exams.

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. The final result must be written in good standard English. Please work with **The Writing Center** in Robinson I, Room A116. <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/resources/> and <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/> Call them at (703) 993-1200, or see their web page for English language help, at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>. You may also want to work with GMU's **English Language Institute (ELI)**. Call them at (703) 993-3664, or visit their website at <http://eli.gmu.edu>

Learning disabilities. If you are a student with disabilities, and you need academic accommodations, please be sure to contact me *and* contact the Office of Disabilities Resources (ODS) or 703-993-2474. Website: <http://ds.gmu.edu/> All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Religious holidays. This syllabus is arranged 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).

Honor Code / Academic honesty is expected in all tests and writing, according to the

GMU Honor Code. “Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.” Please respect the Honor Code, our classroom standards, your fellow students, and yourself. Please report violations to the Honor Committee, using the procedures explained in the website.

DO NOT PLAGIARIZE

What is it?

To **plagiarize** is (according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary Definition) “to steal and pass off the ideas or words of another as one's own; use another's work without crediting the source.” In other words: copying someone else's text/speech and trying to pass it off as your own without explicitly saying (citing) where you read it. **This includes cutting and pasting from the internet.**

How to avoid it?

It is **very very easy to avoid** plagiarism: simply put the words in quotes and CITE the original writer/source. I take this very seriously. If you plagiarize anything, even something as simple as a museum label, I will fail your work and report your violation of the honor code to GMU.

POLICIES

ACCOMMODATIONS: be sure to approach me soon!

ILLNESS and OTHER HEALTH ISSUES Be sure to communicate with me as early as possible, so that we can work together and create the protections you need.

Final grades may be raised or lowered from strict average in the following circumstances (under the professor's control, not subject to negotiation):

Class participation improves/deteriorates

Reliability is stellar (always on time, always prepared, etc.) or poor (bad attendance, never prepared)

Significant improvement over the semester (Student begins semester poorly but then does better)

Please note that I do not engage in grade negotiation.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

A = 100% to 93%, or 4.00

A- = 92% to 90%, or 3.67

B+ = 89% to 87%, or 3.33

B = 86% to 83 %, or 3.00

B- = 82% to 80 %, or 2.67

C+ = 79% to 77 %, or 2.33

C = 76% to 73 %, or 2.00

C- = 72% to 70 %, or 1.67

D = 60% to 66%, or 1.0

F = below 60% receives no credit

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

WRITTEN WORK may be graded by points, or by the following criteria, as appropriate:

A = Startlingly good, exceeding expectations, and well written. Must be imaginative; NOT given for simply following directions.

B = Good effort with a good result.

C = Perfunctory; or, tried but missed the point; or did something well but it wasn't the assignment; or good idea but careless or sloppy.

D = Warning: accepted under protest.

F = Unacceptable as college-level work.

Grades will be lowered for lateness, lack of proofreading, bad English, lack of necessary documentation/supporting evidence/footnoting, faulty logic, or failure to follow directions for the assignment. Please study the directions for writing assignments, elsewhere in this syllabus.

Late written work: Papers are on the day specified. After that, late papers will be lowered five points a day (including the day it was due), or half a grade, during the work week (Mon-Fri) and lowered ten points over a weekend. Note that this makes even “A” work into “F” work after ten days. **If you need an extension, you must ask for it *before* the due date** if you want to avoid a penalty.

Class participation grade:

“A” Level: Great class participation—student demonstrates understanding of subject and the ability to think critically about it, makes connections with other students and encourages friendly and positive discussion, no “one-upping.”

“B” level: Normal class participation—student shows up on time, keeps up with classwork, participates in group activities, does not cause problems

“C” level: Student shows poor class attendance, does not pay attention, is not up to date with reading, is disruptive, etc.

“D-F” level: Student will get a D-F in class participation automatically if they use their personal technology devices in any way that is not connected to the classroom. IE no Facebook, Instagram, online shopping, TikTok etc. etc. etc. You are allowed to monitor emergency campus alerts of course.

To pass this course **you must demonstrate mastery of the material from all parts of the course.**

Outside of this class:

If you or anyone you know has been subjected to any form of harassment (due to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc.), please consider a visit to GMU’s Department of

Education's Office for Civil Rights. They will be supportive and discreet. GMU is proud of its diverse student body and committed to protecting the rights and the dignity of all students.

GMU Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights Website:
<http://integrity.gmu.edu/compliance/titleIX.cfm>