

ARTH 394: THE MUSEUM
Summer Session C, July 2012

Lawrence Butler
MTWTh 12:00 to 2:15

COURSE SYLLABUS—PRELIMINARY SHORT FORM

A more complete class and reading schedule will be handed out the first day of class

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, and fulfils the University General Education requirement for a synthesis course. Please note that as a synthesis course, it will no longer fulfill the University General Education 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.
- Improve analytical, research, writing, and presentation skills, as in all humanities courses.

TEXTBOOKS, all available in the Johnson Center.

- Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum, from Boullée to Bilbao*. Univ. of California, 2008.
- Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*. NY: Routledge, 1995.
- Additional readings and review materials will be posted on the class Blackboard site.

COURSEWORK:

- Class attendance, assigned readings, and active participation in class discussion.
- Four self-guided visits to D.C. museums, each followed by a 2-3 pp. write-up.
- One short (4-5 pp.) library research paper on current events and hot issues.
- Two tests and a final exam.

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

Office hours: After class, 2:30 to 3 PM, or by appointment. My office is in the History Department, in **Robinson B340**. **Phone:** the **HIST/ARTH Dept. office at (703) 993-1250**.

TENTATIVE CLASS AND READING SCHEDULE

Class will normally be held in Research 201, from 12:00 to 2:15, with a break. Please prepare the readings beforehand for class discussion. The readings are listed weekly.

WEEK I: NATIONAL MUSEUMS AND THEIR HISTORY

Monday, July 2: Introduction; film: “Inhaling the Spore”

Tuesday: Origins: The princely collection and the *Kunstammer*.

Wednesday, July 4: holiday, no class.

Thursday: National museums in Europe

Reading, as soon as possible:

Duncan: 1. “The Art Museum as Ritual”

2. “From the Princely Gallery to Public Art Museum: The Louvre Museum and the National Gallery, London.”

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

McClellan, “Introduction”

Additional short readings on Blackboard

WEEK II: ART MUSEUMS IN THE UNITED STATES.

Monday: History of American art museums

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

Wednesday: Museum architecture and planning

Thursday, July 12: Review and first test, on museum history and organization

Reading for the week:

Duncan, 3. “Public Spaces, Private Interests: Municipal Art Museums in NY & Chicago”

McClellan, 1. “Ideals and Mission, and 2. “Architecture”

Additional short readings on Blackboard

Second museum itinerary assigned: Smaller museums

WEEK III: MAKING MUSEUMS WORK

Monday: Donor museums and historic houses

Tuesday: Collecting and classifying. Guest.

Wednesday: Museum exhibition and controversy.

Thursday: Fakes, theft, and security. Film: *The Fine Art of Faking It*.

Reading for the week:

Duncan: 4: Something Eternal: The Donor Memorial

McClellan, 3, “Collecting, Classification and Display”

Additional short readings on Blackboard:

Third museum visit assigned: Museums of non-western art

WEEK IV: CULTURAL HERITAGE WORLDWIDE

Monday: Interpretation of non-western art. Film: "African Art, Through African Eyes"

Tuesday: World Heritage, preservation, and international cultural property law

Wednesday: Provenance, plunder and war: Film: "The Stolen Treasure of Cambodia"

Thursday, July 26: Review, catch-up, and second test

Reading for the week:

McClellan, 6: "Restitution and Repatriation"

Additional short readings on Blackboard

Fourth museum itinerary assigned: special research interests.

WEEK V: CURRENT ISSUES

Monday: The case of the Parthenon sculptures, a.k.a. the "Elgin Marbles"

Tuesday: Museums and the contemporary public

Wednesday, August 1: Reading day, no class.

Thursday, August 2: Final Exam, 1:30 to 4:15

Reading for the week:

McClellan, 4: The Public, and 5: Commercialism

On Blackboard: Articles on the Parthenon sculptures and the New Acropolis Museum

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES for SUMMER C TERM, 2012

Wednesday, **July 4: Holiday, no class.**

Monday, July 9: **Last day to add; last day to drop** without tuition penalty

Thursday, July 12: **First test**

Monday, July 16: **Last day to drop class, period.**

Thursday, July 26: **Second test**

Wednesday, August 1: **Reading day**, no class.

Thursday, August 2: **Final exam**, 1:30 to 4:15, in the usual room.

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. **Because of the compressed summer schedule, and the importance of class discussion, I will allow ONE unexcused absence only. Each subsequent unexcused absence will result in your final grade being lowered.**

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 chatterers 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 a standard format such as Chicago or MLA. 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. Please feel free to ask me for help with your writing. For better help with writing, from simple questions to systematic help, 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. Sorry—I've tried—it causes too many problems. **Written work is due in hard copy in class on the due date.** Papers will not be considered “on time” unless and until 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, the Honor Pledge, our classroom standards, your fellow students, and yourself. 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 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:

Two tests, 10% each

First three museum reports: 10% each

Research paper and fourth field report: 20%

Final exam: 20%

Class participation, 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 otherwise inappropriate classroom behavior will also 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%) are missing, regardless of average.**