

Muse E-150: The Role of Museums in History (14776)

Wednesdays, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Sever Hall 110

Website: <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/18303>

Mary Malloy, Ph.D. mmalloy@fas.harvard.edu

Course Readings:

Several of our readings will be found in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, edited by Sharon Macdonald (Blackwell Publishing, 2006). This book is available electronically on the Harvard Library website at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/book/10.1002/9780470996836>; individual chapters are available as pdfs on the course website. All of the other readings are available on reserve at the Grossman Library (Sever Hall, third floor), or as pdfs on the course website.

Wednesday, 31 August 2016

Introduction: Collecting, Revering, Representing, Looting:
How Objects Acquired Meaning in the Ancient World

Background Reading:

Sharon Macdonald. Chapter 6: "Collecting Practices," in the *Companion*, 81-97.

Wednesday, 7 September

Part I: Relics, Souvenirs, and Booty in the Middle Ages

Part II: Aristocratic Collections and Cabinets of Curiosities in the Renaissance

Background Reading:

Christina Smiraglia. "The Gazophylacium: An Argument for European Medieval Religious Sites as the First Museums in the West," *Museum History Journal*, Volume 6, Issue 2, 2013, 237-252.

Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds. *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-century Europe*. Oxford University Press, 1985. (Browse the book, especially the "Introduction," and chapters 1, 15 and 18.)

Paula Findlen. "Inventing Nature: Commerce, Art, and Science in the Early Modern Cabinet of Curiosities," in *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe*, Pamela Smith and Paula Findlen, eds. New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 292-323.

Rosamond Purcell and Stephen Jay Gould. "Dutch Treat: Peter the Great and Frederik Ruysch," in *Finders, Keepers*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1992, pp. 13-32.

Wednesday, 14 September

Visit to the MFA: Part I: Antiquities, Relics, Cabinets; **Part II:** Masterpieces of the Renaissance
(In advance of our visit, read the directions for the first assignment, due in one week.)

Wednesday, 21 September

Part I: Colonial Expansion and the Development of Museums in Enlightenment Europe

Part II: Museums in the New American Republic

Background Reading:

Jeffrey Abt. Chapter 8: "The Origins of the Public Museum," in the *Companion*, 115-134.

Kim Sloan, ed. *Enlightenment: Discovering the World in the Eighteenth Century*. British Museum Press, 2003. (Part V: "Voyages of Discovery")

FIRST PAPER DUE (See description and additional readings below.)

Wednesday, 28 September

Part I: The French Revolution and the Ideal of a Public Museum

Part II: Expositions, Fairs, and Museums: Popular Enterprise and Public Spectacle in the 19th century

Background Reading:

McClellan, Andrew L. "The Musee du Louvre as Revolutionary Metaphor During the Terror," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (June, 1988), pp. 300-313.

Dorothy Mackay Quynn. "The Art Confiscations of the Napoleonic Wars," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (April, 1945), 437-460. [pdf]

Robert W. Rydell. Chapter 9: "World Fairs and Museums," in the *Companion*, 135-151.

Wednesday, 5 October

Part I: Museums and the Development of Anthropology: Defining Late-19th-Century Museums

Part II: Art, Commerce, and Society: The Conception and Direction of Art Museums

Background Reading:

Tony Bennett. Chapter 16: "Civic Seeing: Museums and the Organization of Vision," in the *Companion*, 263-281; and/or Tony Bennet. "Museums and 'The People,'" in *The Birth of the Museum*, 109-126.

Anthony Shelton. Chapter 5: "Museums and Anthropologies," in the *Companion*, 64-80.

Steven Conn. *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998. (pages 192-232: "From South Kensington to the Louvre: Art Museums and the Creation of Fine Art")

Cuno, James. "The Object of Art Museums," *Whose Muse? Art Museums and the Public Trust*. Princeton U. Press, 2004. (Introduction and "The Object of Art Museums," pages 11-26/49-76.)

Wednesday, 12 October

Part I: Art and Artifacts

Part II: Expectations for an Excellent Paper

Background Reading:

C. Geary, "On Collections..." and E. Barry Gaither, "...An African American Legacy," in S. P. Blier, *Art of the Senses*, 25-41; Susan Vogel, et al. in Arthur Danto, *ART/ Artifacts*, 10-17, 197-212; and browse William Rubin's "Primitivism" in 20th Century Art, on reserve in the Grossman Library.

Wednesday, 19 October

Part I: Reinterpreting History after World War II

Part II: Museum Architecture: Palaces to Sculptures to Social Spaces

Background Reading:

Rosmarie Beier-de Haan. Chapter 12: in the *Companion*, 186-197.

Michaela Giebelhausen. Chapter 14: "Museum Architecture," in the *Companion*, 223-244.

SECOND PAPER DUE

Wednesday, 26 October

Video: *The Rape of Europa* (2007)

Wednesday, 2 November

Part I: Discussion: “Rape of Europa” and the Repatriation of Nazi-Looted Art in WWII.

Part II: Controversial Topics in Museum Exhibitions

Part III: “Authentic Voices” and “Stakeholders” Challenge Museums in the 20th Century

Background Reading:

Allon Schoener. *Harlem on My Mind; Cultural Capital of Black America, 1900-1968*. New York: 1995. (“Preface” by Thomas Hoving; “Introduction” by Candice Van Ellison; and “Introduction to New Edition” by Allon Schoener) pdf.

Steven C. Dubin. Chapter 29: “Incivilities in Civil(-ized) Places: ‘Culture Wars’ in Comparative Perspective,” in the *Companion*, 477-493.

Steven Conn. Chapter 30: “Science Museums and the Culture Wars,” *Companion*, 494-508.

Wednesday, 9 November

Visit to the MFA II: The American Wing

RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSALS DUE

Wednesday, 16 November

Part I: Cultural Property: Who Defines It? And Who Protects It

Part II: Review of First Papers

Background Reading:

Neil McGregor. “The Value of Museums to Shape the Citizens of ‘That Great City, the World,’” in *Whose Culture? The Promise of Museums and the Debate over Antiquities*. Princeton Press, 2009, Chapter One.

Mark O’Neill. *Enlightenment Museums – Universal or Merely Global*.

<http://www.elginism.com/20071012/826/> 12 October 2007.

Tiffany Jenkins. “The Censoring of our Museums,” *New Statesman*, 11 July 2005.

<http://www.newstatesman.com/node/162442>

Wednesday, 23 November

Thanksgiving Vacation: NO CLASS

Wednesday, 30 November

“Museums in the Movies” Film-Clip Festival

Wednesday, 7 December

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH PROJECTS. In 5-8 minutes, describe your research to your classmates. You may use four powerpoint slides, which should be sent to Mary by midnight on Sunday, 4 December.

Wednesday, 14 December

CONCLUSIONS

Part I: Issues Facing Museums in Our Times: Collecting, Revering, Representing, Looting II

Part II: What is the Future of Museums and their Collections?

Background Reading:

Charles Saumarez Smith. Chapter 33: "The Future of the Museum," *Companion*, 543-554.

Christopher Kemp. "Museums: The Endangered Dead," *Nature*, Vol. 518 (19 Feb. 2015), 292-294.

American Alliance of Museums. "Museum Facts." <http://www.aam-us.org/about-museums/museum-facts>

Christopher Ingraham. "There are more museums in the U.S. than there are Starbucks and McDonalds – combined," *Washington Post*, June 13, 2014. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2014/06/13/there-are-more-museums-in-the-us-than-there-are-starbucks-and-mcdonalds-combined/>

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE

ASSIGNMENTS

FIRST PAPER (due on 21 September)

Observation and Interpretation: At the Museum of Fine Arts, choose an object or painting and look carefully at it for several minutes. At first, let your eyes move across and around it without a plan or agenda; when you have a sense of what you are looking at, begin to think about words that you might use to describe it and make a list to use in the essay that you will write. Seek out both the more obvious words that describe color, line, texture, etc. and less objective words: "delicate," "beautiful," "frightening," "meaningless," "political," "religious." Can you pinpoint and describe what aspects of the work provoke such ideas? When you have described how the thing LOOKS, begin to make notes on your response to it. Are you in awe of the artistry? Moved by it? What questions does it raise? Do you know what it is, how it was used, what subject is portrayed?

Read the label only after you have looked closely at the painting or object, made your notes, and considered questions. Does the label answer the questions you raised? Does it provide information that was unexpected or surprising? Does the information change the way you think or feel about the work of art? Does knowing more make it more impressive? Look again at the thing with this new information in mind. Is it a good label? Before you begin to write your essay, you should look at the MFA website and see if it provides additional information that was not in the label.

Your essay should consist of five paragraphs. Introduce the object in the first paragraph, describe in detail what it looks like in paragraph two, give it a contextual background (artist, use, cultural background) in the third, critique the MFA's interpretation in the fourth paragraph, and sum up and draw conclusions in the final paragraph. (Worth 20% of the course grade.)

Two short readings that give good examples of describing paintings are posted in the "Files" link under "Assignment One."

Jean Longnon and Raymond Cazelles. "107. Christ in Gethsemane," in *The Très Riches Heures (The Book of Hours) of Jean, Duke of Berry*. George Braziller, Inc., New York, 1989, pp. 107 & 211.

Sebastian Smee. "'Negro Soldier': A Haunting Portrait Worthy of Salute," *Boston Globe*, 27 June 2016. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/theater-art/2016/06/26/negro-soldier-offers-haunting-portrait/esDfeUcJWBopoNCuPySFWN/story.html>, Accessed on 9 August 2016.

SECOND PAPER: “The Case of the Cylinder Seal” (Due on 19 October)

More than three thousand years ago, a Middle Eastern merchant paid an artist to create a cylinder seal that he could use as a signature. Today that object is on exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Your assignment is to write a history of the cylinder seal describing the various hands through which it passed on its journey through time. Start from the present by writing a 2-page catalog entry for this object at the MFA. Then write three 1-page labels, each from a different point on the timeline, and describing the seal in three different institutions. The goal of this exercise is to show your understanding of how the meaning of objects has changed over time and in different contexts. The assignment is NOT to research the actual history of an existing seal, but to be creative in inventing both the artifact and its history. You will need to do preliminary research to knowledgeably choose a specific time period and place of origin for the piece. Describe what it looks like, what material it is made from and the image that is created when it is rolled out onto wet clay. Support your descriptions with scholarly citations. Feel free to be creative. (Worth 20% of course grade.)

GRADUATE RESEARCH PAPER

Several of our class readings and discussions explore changes in museums that were the result of political events, technological developments, or societal changes. Describe one of these periods of change; include the sequence of events or ideas that led to it, and the resulting impact on a museum or type of museum. Establish a chronological framework and be explicit in making links between the causes of change and the effects of it. Review your topic choice with Mary before you begin writing your proposal.

Part I: Proposal (Due on 9 November)

Your proposal should be two-to-three pages long (500-750 words) and should include a tentative title for your research paper. In each of five paragraphs you should:

1. frame your research question(s)
2. propose a hypothetical result
3. describe your source materials and evidence
4. place your research into the broader context of secondary source material; and
5. provide an annotated bibliography.

This proposal will not be graded, but will be considered as part of the grade on the final paper.

Part II: Presentation of work in progress, 7 December

In 5-8 minutes, describe your research to your classmates. You may use four powerpoint slides, which should be sent to Mary by midnight on Sunday, 4 December. (Worth 10% of your course grade.)

Part II: Final Paper (Due on 14 December)

Your final paper of 8-10 pages (2000-2500 words), should show a mastery of the secondary sources on your topic as well as original ideas and a logical development, well supported by evidence.

You may want to refer to the *Guide to the ALM Thesis in Museum Studies* for suggestions on the format of both your proposal and your paper. Your essay should conform to the standards of graduate level expository writing. You must start with a clearly stated hypothesis, followed by an outline sketch of the means by which you will present your research to the reader. The body of your paper should present your evidence and place it in a context of previous research. Your conclusion should recapitulate your hypothesis, describe modifications that you have made, and clearly state how your work differs from previous work on the topic. (This paper will be worth 50% of your course grade.)

Note: Please use a 12-point Times font, double-spaced, for all papers. Indent your paragraphs five spaces; do not leave an empty line between paragraphs. Use the MLA style for citations. All assignments will be submitted through our course website, and must be in doc or docx format.

GRADES: Your grade for this course will be based on two short papers in the first half of the course, each worth 20%; a presentation of your research work in progress, worth 10%; and a research project, consisting of a proposal and a final paper, worth 50% of your course grade. You regular attendance and active participation in class discussions can tip your grade up or down. Late work will not be accepted unless extraordinary circumstances are presented to Mary in advance, and the grade will be diminished by one increment for every late day.

INTERNET SOURCES: As you browse websites, assess their usefulness very critically. Who posted the information and why? Can you trust them to be correct? Authoritative? Unbiased? (It's okay to use a biased source as long as you incorporate it knowingly and transparently into your own work.) Keep track of good sources that might be useful for assignments in your other classes, and annotate any sites you cite. Your annotation should include the name of the author or organization originating any material that you reference. If you can't identify the source, don't use it!

ACADEMIC HONESTY

You are responsible for understanding Harvard Extension School policies on academic integrity (www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/student-conduct/academic-integrity) and how to use sources responsibly. Not knowing the rules, misunderstanding the rules, running out of time, submitting "the wrong draft", or being overwhelmed with multiple demands are not acceptable excuses. There are no excuses for failure to uphold academic integrity. To support your learning about academic citation rules, please visit the Harvard Extension School Tips to Avoid Plagiarism (www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources/tips-avoid-plagiarism), where you'll find links to the *Harvard Guide to Using Sources* and two, free, online 15-minute tutorials to test your knowledge of academic citation policy. The tutorials are anonymous open-learning tools.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course uses the tools and resources of multiple disciplines (history, art, art history, anthropology, science) to explore the relationship between humans and the physical world of culture. Members of our learning community construct essays utilizing primary documents, secondary scholarly literature, and the Internet—where assessing the value and veracity of web pages is an essential skill for the scholar. Oral communications skills will be demonstrated in a presentation of the research project.

DISABILITY SERVICES

The Extension School is committed to providing an accessible academic community. The Disability Services Office offers a variety of accommodations and services to students with documented disabilities. Please visit www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources/disability-services-accessibility for more information.