

Beth S. Gersh-Nešić, Ph.
Museum History and Fundamentals
Purchase College, Fall 2014
Mondays, September 29-December 8, 2014
6:30 to 9:30 pm

Course Code: MSC 1000 - Museum History and Fundamentals

Syllabus:

- Sept 29 Introductions. Information about the American Alliance of Museums and student membership. Discussion: What Does a Museum Look Like? (We will list different types of museums in class.) Ordering the books.
Assignment: Look for museum jobs online (NYFA/AAM sites)
- Oct 6 Museums: Spaces, Objects and People; Needs and Staffing. Discussion: Your museum ad lists and personal history.
Assignment: Read *Museum Studies* or *Museums in Motion*
- Oct 13 No Class – Columbus Day (read book on museums)**
- Oct. 20 History of Museums. Discussion: What did you discover?
Assignment: One book on the Met (see bibliography)
- Oct 27 The Louvre and the Met in depth – videos and slides.
Assignment: *The Proud Collectors* or any other book on collectors.
- Nov 3 Art Museums and Collectors: From the Met to HVCCA
Video presentation on the Barnes Collection
Assignment: Visit a historic venue; Chapters on the history museums in *Museum Studies* or *Museums in Motion*.
- Nov 10 History Museums – Slides lecture, discussion, Olana
Assignment: Visit any kind of museum other than an art or history museum and write a review. Read chapters in your textbook of choice.
- Nov 17 The Natural History Museum. Discussion: Your experiences
Assignment: Read *Museum Legs* or *Museum, Inc.*
- Nov 24 Discuss *Museum Legs* and *Museum, Inc.* Questions about project presentations and papers. Google Art Project.
Assignment: Work on your Presentation and Papers.
- Dec 1 Presentations and discussion; Smithsonian videos online.
Dec 8 Presentations and discussion; review of this course

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Required Reading:

Basic Texts:

Bettina Carbonell, ed. *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Context ...*(2010)
or

Edward P Alexander and Mary Alexander, *Museums in Motion* (2007)

On the MMA:

Calvin Tomkins, *Merchants and Masterpieces* (1989)

Thomas Hoving, *King of the Confessors* (1981)

Thomas Hoving, *Making the Mummies Dance* (1994)

Aline B. Saarinen, *The Proud Possessors* (1958)

or

Any book on collectors (e.g, the Havermeyers, Rockefellers, Gertrude Stein, The Cone Sisters, Albert Barnes, etc.

Amy Whitaker, *Museum Legs* (2009)

or

Paul Werner, *Museum, Inc* (2006)

Course Objective:

This course offers an opportunity to discuss the history and role of museums in the past and today. We will investigate many different kinds of museum (art, historic, ethnological, scientific, personal collections, university galleries, temporary exhibitions venues, etc.) and visit a few online. Your particular interests in museum occupations will direct our examination of these roles.

Outcomes:

You will learn about:

- The history of the museum.
- Museum occupations and contemporary expectations in the workplace/marketplace.
- Different kinds of museums and their goals
- Good habits for writing research papers.
- A better sense of where/how you might make your contribution as a museum professional.

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Requirements:

1. Read and prepare for class.
2. Participate in class discussions.
3. Present your powerpoint or video on your project.
4. Write your own paper, including handing in the draft and polishing the paper.

Absences:

More than two absences will result in an F.

Class Format:

- Powerpoint lectures in class
- Discussion
- Videos on various museums (e.g., Louvre, Met, Barnes, Olana)

Semester Project (Research, Presentation and Paper): Adopt a Museum

1. Select any kind of museum that interests you.
2. Visit and research the museum – learn about its history, mission, programming, community outreach, membership, in-person experience, online experience.
3. Describe the above and the museum's building, exhibitions, installations, labels, text panels, curatorial decisions, etc.
4. Share your personal impressions of the museum's amenities: food, bathrooms, coatroom, admissions procedure, disabled visitors accommodations, friendliness to its visitors, etc.
5. Recommendations for the museum.
6. Include bibliography and footnotes/endnote.

Assessment:

1. Participation in discussions: 20%
2. Papers: 80% (Presentation, Draft and Polished Version for one grade).

Class Trip:

TBA

Visit with a Museum Professional:

TBA

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Academic Integrity Policy:

<http://www.purchase.edu/Policies/academicintegrity.aspx>

ADA compliance: Documented Disabilities

Students with documented physical, learning, psychological and other disabilities are entitled to receive reasonable accommodations. If a student needs accommodations, he or she must first register with the Office of Special Student Services; please call 914-251-6390; or email accommodations@purchase.edu

You can find a description of special student services provided by the Counseling Center at: <http://www.purchase.edu/Departments/SpecialStudentServices/>

Moodle is ADA compliant; you can find the accessibility specification for Moodle at: http://docs.moodle.org/en/Moodle_Accessibility_Specification