

**050:355:06 MUSEUMS, MONUMENTS AND AMERICAN CULTURE
(3.0 Credits)**

WINTER SESSION 2011

SCOTT HALL 220

Class Meets Daily from Monday December 23, 2010, to Friday January 14, 2011

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is intended to be an undergraduate-level introduction to museum studies (also sometimes called museology), the study of how to organize and manage museums and museum collections. Some of the theories of societal roles of museums, monuments, and historical sites will be explored. Topics such as history versus heritage, preservation laws, restoration, and governmental censorship will be discussed. The course presents an overview of museum typologies, history, philosophy and ethics. Practical day-to-day skills needed to operate a museum such as planning, organization; management and administration will be addressed. This course will also look at the educational and interpretative aspects of museums, exhibition, and will introduce student to the adaptation of museums to the digital age. This course includes field trips.

Some students may wish to take the course to enhance their appreciation of the museum visit as worthwhile leisure activity throughout their adult lives. Other students may see this course as a stepping stone to graduate work in museum studies. A variety of professional careers exist within the discipline of museum studies including museum director, curator, educator, docent, graphic designer, exhibit designer, and conservation specialist.

WINTER SESSION

Winter Session 2011 allows students more flexibility and new scheduling options. You have the opportunity to earn major/minor credit or explore a new interest. During this time, you can take advantage of intensive study at one of the foremost research and teaching universities in the United States as well as have a chance to enjoy major museums during a bustling and exciting time of year.

Often times the fall and spring semesters can be overly hectic for students – a full-time course load, student club responsibilities, work, internship commitments, and social obligations. This busy time forces students to focus mainly on their academic progress which doesn't always allow freedom to explore a new interest or take advantage of the many nearby cultural resources. You get the same three credits that you would get in an ordinary semester-long course. At the same time, the compressed schedule requires a great deal of motivation, focus, concentration, and hard work. The faculty is committed to giving you a course that is *fully equivalent* to one offered in a regular semester. The material is presented differently because long class periods require varied, activity-centered instructional strategies, but the amount of work is identical to a regular semester's work load.

LEARNING GOALS:

Department Learning Goals Met by this Course:

- Students will be able to synthesize an interdisciplinary dialogue among the different disciplinary methodologies that compose American Studies investigation of American culture across time and space in the history, politics, literature, and arts of the peoples of the United States, as well as the Americas.
- Students will be able to write well; speak articulately; and think critically, analytically, and creatively.

Additional Learning Goals Met by this Course:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and organization of museums
- Understand the historical, but changing roles of objects for museums.
- Debate museum ethical issues
- Discuss critically, in written and verbal form, current issues in the philosophy of museums, museum missions, representation of the past, interpretation of cultural objects, and the role of museums in society
- Evaluate critically a museum exhibition
- Locate the core museum studies literature, principal museum organizations, and museum reference sources including on-line resources

METHODOLOGY

This course will use a variety of media to convey course materials. Slide lectures, film, print media, web based resources and field trips may be expected.

We are taking advantage of New Brunswick's distinct cultural environment and its close proximity to New York City, Philadelphia and other major urban centers. Students will visit four different museums/monuments. Two of those museums will be visited during our regular evening class time. Two museum visits will be of the students choosing, to be visited at the student's convenience, and must be of different museum types as outlined in the lectures. Students must arrange and pay for their own transportation to museums and sites. Convenient transportation is available by rail through New Jersey Transit or by bus through Suburban Transit to all of the major regional metropolitan centers. For classes meeting in museums **only pencil** may be used due to conservation concerns.

POLICIES & EXPECTATIONS

Regular class attendance is required by Rutgers and is essential to this class. This course will rely heavily on classroom discussion and lectures presenting images intended to compliment and illustrate required readings. In most cases, missed lectures cannot be recreated. Those who miss lectures due to a viable excuse should contact the instructor as soon as possible.

It is expected that students will contribute their ideas, thoughts, and reflections to

class discussions, and will listen respectfully to the contributions of other in the class. The class focuses on critical, self-reflective thinking, integrates knowledge from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, examines social and cultural complexity, and probes the impact of knowledge on ethical decision-making in museums. The value of the course will be determined by the extent that you intentionally and thoughtfully enter into debates, discussions, and critical reflections.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

READINGS

The readings for this course are primary source articles, essays and news clippings from websites, e-books, period newspapers, journals, and monographs. Readings will either be available on Sakai or online. All required reading assignments will be posted on Sakai.

(2) MUSEUM/EXHIBIT CRITIQUES - 40% of your grade

Students are required to submit 2-4 paper essays critiquing exhibit and experience of two distinct types of museums/monuments. Essays are due on Mondays via sakai.rutgers.edu

QUIZZES – 20% of your grade

Two quizzes will be administered during the term. Quizzes will include material from readings and lectures.

FINAL EXAM – 40% of your grade

A final exam will be administered on the last evening of class

All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Work must be handed in on time or an extension agreed to by the instructor. Missed assignments cannot be handed in during the last week of class. **Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade.** All papers must be double-spaced, typeset with Times or Times New Roman 12pt font, and have page numbers and one-inch margins. Format of papers should adhere to the following American Studies Department standard format for written assignments and acceptable acknowledgement of sources.

http://amerstudies.rutgers.edu/documents/AcknowledgingSources_000.pdf
<http://amerstudies.rutgers.edu/documents/GuidetoWritingEssaysandTermPapersinAmericanStudies.pdf>

Plagiarism of any sort will not be tolerated.

All assignments that a student submits must be his/her own independent effort. Students must cite properly all outside sources consulted in preparing written assignments. Students should review the university's policy on academic integrity.

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>.

This site clarifies many issues regarding the university's policy on academic integrity. Failure to comply with this policy can result in failure of the course. Ignorance of university policy is not an excuse.

Extra Credit: Visit the Butterfly Conservatory

For an extra two points toward the final exam, extend your visit at the Museum of Natural History past the usual dismissal time to visit the Butterfly Conservatory. Then write a thoughtful 350-word report on your visit, using the same format as on the optional term paper, to be turned in at the beginning class on Monday, January 11th. Butterflies and moths make up a large group of insects known as the Order Lepidoptera (lep-i-DOP-ter-ah). The name—from the Greek *lepido*, "scale", and *ptera*, "wings"—refers to a prominent feature of adult butterflies and moths, the tiny scales that cover the wings and the rest of the body. Adult butterflies are wonderfully diverse in shape, size, and color. Active during the day, they live almost everywhere around the world, from Arctic tundra to tropical rain forests. There are more than 250,000 known species of Lepidoptera, of which about 18,000 are butterflies. No one has to do this assignment, and there is no penalty for not doing it.

Extra Credit: Optional Term Paper

This optional extra-credit term paper will be due in class during the last week as indicated in our calendar of assignments. Since the assignment is entirely optional, there will be no need for extensions. If you do not have the paper, you will not be penalized in any way. Writing this paper can only help your final grade and cannot harm you at all.

Papers will be evaluated on their merit--extra credit is not given merely because papers were completed. Papers must be generated on the computer or typewritten. Use Times New Roman in 12point type with one-inch margins all around. No cover sheet please. Simply type your name, the course name, the instructor's name, and the date, each item on its own line, single-spaced, in the upper right hand corner of page 1. Double space down to the paper's title. Double space thereafter. Follow either the MLA (Modern Language Association) or Chicago Manual of Style guidelines for the manuscript, citations, and works cited (bibliography). Grading will be based on content, organization, development, style, and correctness. Carefully proofread for spelling, typography, punctuation, and grammar.

Successful papers will earn bonus points to be applied to the score on the final exam, after the regular grades are computed. "A" papers get 6 points; "B" papers get 4 points; and "C" papers get 2 points. When bonus points are applied to the final exam, it can make a difference of an entire letter grade. Remember, it is up to you. No one has to do the assignment. However, those who carry it out should find the experience rewarding. We are looking for a 750 word paper (about 3 typewritten

pages) that meets the criteria below. Papers are due at the start of the due-date class. Late papers will not be accepted. We will try to grade and returned your paper to you at the final exam. You have considerable choice of topic for your optional term paper.

First Option: Describe your own collecting experience. What do you collect? Why do you do it? In what way and under what circumstances do you show your collection to others? What is your motivation for exhibiting? Do not be superficial. If you give this question serious thought and attempt to answer it fully and without reserve, you will gain in understanding how museums are created and managed. People are much the same. Museum trustees, directors, curators, and technicians are like you. To understand them, try to understand yourself.

Second Option: This one will require a good relationship with several other people or sneakiness on your part. Look into and make inventories of the contents of three refrigerators in as many different homes. Safely back at your desk compare these lists to arrive at similarities and differences. Make up a composite list of average items that would be found in a typical refrigerator in your neighborhood at this time. Leave out unusual items, and do not add anything which you think should have been present, though it was not. This list of items would be of great value to a curator of history a hundred years from now. Add any instructions he would need on how to place the objects within the refrigerator.

Third Option: Look at the pictures on the walls of your own home and describe them. Are there prints? What kinds? Are these reproductions or originals? Are they popular art? Fine art? Folk art? Primitive art? How is each enjoyed? (Analyze your own enjoyment or non-enjoyment.) The purpose of this assignment is for you to describe a collection of art with which you are familiar according to the manufacture, style, function, and so forth. You may limit yourself to one room, if you wish.

Format. Papers should be word-processed, double spaced, in Times New Roman, 12-point font, and have one-inch margins. Your name and the name of the book you are analyzing should be placed in the upper right-hand corner of your first page. Be sure to place page numbers on each page. Please staple all pages together. Please do not use folders or binders, since they are too bulky.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as the semester progresses. It is your responsibility to stay abreast of changes to the course schedule by attending class, checking email regularly, and contacting instructors for updated information.

DEC 23	Course Overview
DEC 24	NO CLASS
DEC 27	UNIVERSITY CLOSED
DEC 28	Definitions and Museum Typologies
DEC 29	History of the American Museum; Principles of Museum Planning
DEC 30	QUIZ; Principles of Museum Design, Exhibit and Design
DEC 31	NO CLASS
JAN 03	ESSAY 1 DUE; Art Museums
JAN 04	Living History, Military Museums, History Museums, Historic Houses/Sites
JAN 05	FIELD TRIP – Zimmerle Museum - Meet at the museum at 5:30 pm
JAN 06	NO CLASS
JAN 07	Natural History Museums, Science Museums
JAN 10	QUIZ; Botanical Museums
JAN 11	ESSAY 2 DUE; Special Interest Museums, University Museums
JAN 12	FIELD TRIP – Rutgers Geology Museum – Meet at the Museum at 5:30
JAN 13	Zoos, Children’s Museums
JAN 14	FINAL EXAM

