

Fall 2009

Museum Studies

Time and Place: Wednesday 7:20 -10:00 PM, East Building 134

Office Hours: Wednesday 4:30-5:00 and 6:45-7:15 PM

Course Objectives: This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the theory and practice of museums in America, history museums in particular, but other types as well. We will examine the origins of museums and specific institutions as well as their leaders who helped shape the field. History and memory, surviving controversy, the changing role of museums, museum learning, the creation of exhibitions, the future of museums, and museums and innovation are among the issues which will be covered. In the process the class will gain an understanding of the many challenges facing museums as well as the process of proposing, researching, and executing an exhibition.

Course Requirements: As a member of this class you are expected to attend class regularly, read assigned materials, actively participate in class discussions, prepare assignments on time, write a two page exhibition review, write a two to three page exhibition proposal, prepare a 10 -15 page research paper based on the proposal, and prepare and present a power point exhibition with images and artifacts from that research as the final project.

Evaluation: Class attendance, preparation as a discussion leader, the exhibition review, and contribution to class discussions (25%); research paper (35%); exhibition proposal and final power point presentation (40%). **LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED UNLESS DISCUSSED AND APPROVED IN ADVANCE.**

All plagiarism cases will be automatically submitted to GMU's honor committee. According to GMU's honor code, plagiarism includes the following:
1. Presenting as one's own words, the work, or the opinions of someone else

without proper acknowledgement. 2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgement.

Texts:

Edward P. Alexander, *Museum Masters Their Museums and Their Influence*

John Falk and Lynn Dierking, *The Museum Experience*

Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, *History Wars The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*

Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*

Robert Rydell, *World of Fairs The Century -of- Progress Expositions*

Beverly Serrell, *Exhibit Labels An Interpretative Approach*

2 Sept. **Introduction**

9 Sept. **Museums and National Identity in the 18th and 19th centuries**

Museum Masters, Chapters 1,2,3,4,6,7,10,13

16 Sept. **Role and responsibilities of museums**

“Essentialism, Adaptation and Justice: Towards a New Epistemology of Museums” by Mark O’Neill, *Museum Management and Curatorship* , 21 (2006) 95-116; “Contentiousness and shifting knowledge paradigms: The roles of history and science museums in contemporary societies,” Fiona Cameron, *Museum Management and Curatorship* , 20 (2005) 213-233; “Excursions into the Remembered Past: What People Want from Visits to Historical Sites” by Catherine M. Cameron and John B. Gatewood, *The Public Historian*, Vol. 22, No. 3, (Summer 200) 107-127; “Te Papa: Reinventing the Museum,” William J. Tramosch, *Museum Management and Curatorship* , 17 (1998) 339-350; “The Museum, a Temple or the Forum,” Duncan F. Cameron in *Reinventing the Museum* edited by Gail Anderson, pp 61-73.

23 Sept. **History and Memory**

“Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire” by Pierre Nora, *Representation* 26, (Spring 1989), 7-24; “Memory and American History,” David Thelen, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 75, No 4 (March 1989) 1117-1129, “Public History and the Study of Memory,” David Glassberg, *The Public Historian*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Spring 1996) 7-23; “Roundtable Responses to David Glassberg’s ‘Public History and the Study of Memory’,” *The Public Historian*, Vol. 19, (Spring 1997), pp. 31-72.

30 Sept. **Individual Views of Memory and History**

Presence of the Past; “Contested Terrain: History, Museums, and the Public,” James B. Gardner, *The Public Historian*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Fall 2004) 11-21.

Selection of project topics (2 page proposal due)

7 Oct. **Exhibitions and Controversy**

History Wars

14 Oct. **Visit Enola Gay exhibition** at The Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center near Washington Dulles International Airport. Write an exhibition review of no more than three pages. The review is due on this date.

21 Oct. **Museums and the State**

World of Fairs; “Civic Seeing: Museums and the Organization of Vision” by Tony Bennett in *A Companion to Museum Studies* edited by Sharon Macdonald

28 Oct. **Museums and Learning**

The Museum Experience

4 Nov. **Turn in research paper and individual discussions concerning exhibition projects**

11 Nov. **Writing museum labels**

Exhibition Labels

18 Nov. **Museums for the 21st Century**

“The End of History Museums: What's Plan B?, Cary Carson, *The Public Historian* (Nov 2008), Vol. 30, No. 4: 9–27; “An Agenda for American Museums in the Twenty-First Century,” Harold Skramstad, in *Daedalus*, (Summer,1999), Vol. 128, No. 3: 109-128; “Museums of the Future: The Impact of Technology on Museum Practices,” Maxwell L. Anderson in *Daedalus*, (Summer, 199), Vol. 128, No. 3: 129-162; “From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum,” Stephen E. Weil in *Daedalus*, (summer, 1999), vol. 128, No. 3: 229-258.

2 Dec. **Project Presentations**

9 Dec **Project Presentations**