

# INTRODUCTION TO MUSEUM STUDIES

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## COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze and apply interpretive methods to professional museum work.
- Students will develop an understanding of the methodology, theory and scholarship, ethics, and best practices of museum studies.
- Students will be capable of communicating historical knowledge and interpretations to various and differing publics.
- Students will synthesize relevant scholarship and position their work within that scholarship.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide students with a broad introduction to the field of museum work, with particular attention to history museums. Although the course focuses on history museums, the basic principles presented in this course apply to other types of museums as well, including those dedicated to science, art, or nature. Topics included will be: philosophy of museums; social, economic, and political trends that affect museums; staffing, management and financing; multiples functions of museums, including care of objects, exhibition design, interpretation, education, research, and public relations.

## REQUIRED READING

Alexander, Alexander, & Decker, *Museums in Motion*, 3rd edition.

**\*\*Important\*\*** This semester, we will only be reading on the online platform Perusall.

Students must buy their text **directly through Perusall or buy a voucher for the ebook through the YCP bookstore.**

These are the only two options for purchase for this book.

# COURSE POLICIES

Students will, above all, be respectful to each other and to the instructor. This course syllabus is subject to revision by the instructor. **\*\*Because of the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, mask-wearing will be required in all in-person meetings.\*\***

## Technology Policies for the Hyflex Classroom

While York College recognizes students' need for educational and emergency-related technological devices such as laptops, mobile devices, cellular phones, etc., using them unethically or recreationally during class time is never appropriate. The College recognizes and supports faculty members' authority to regulate in their classrooms student use of all electronic devices.

Because of our new, hyflex-learning environment, students are **strongly encouraged to bring a laptop or tablet for in-class work, every day**. However, the use of laptops or tablets for inappropriate purposes (i.e., email, messaging, other coursework, internet browsing unrelated to the course) is not acceptable. During class, **all cell phone use is prohibited** (unless otherwise permitted explicitly by the instructor for classroom use or unless student has extenuating circumstances and is given express permission by the instructor to use phone). These devices should be put away, silenced, and out of sight. Violation of this technology policy by use of laptops/tablets for non-classroom activity or any use of phone will adversely affect students' participation and, if egregious, attendance grades.

When students are on Zoom, **it is preferred that their video is not muted**.

### OFFICE HOURS

If you have questions or concerns about the course, your work, the material, etc., I am available on **Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11-12pm** and on **Mondays and Wednesdays from 1-3pm**.

Additionally, I am available by appointment scheduled via SSN. My office hours are always **on Zoom**. The link is available on Canvas.



## Communication

York College recognizes the importance of effective communication in all disciplines and careers. Therefore, students are expected to competently analyze, synthesize, organize, and articulate course material in papers, examinations and presentations. In addition, students should know and use communication skills current to their field of study, recognize the need for revision as part of their writing process, and employ standard conventions of English usage in both writing and speaking. Students may be asked to further revise assignments that do not demonstrate effective use of these communication skills.

Students are responsible for checking their **YCP email accounts, the Canvas site, and Perusall regularly**. This will be especially important as we all navigate the new normal of the world with the Coronavirus pandemic. The instructor will communicate with students via email and announcements on the course website. Please **do not use your personal email account** to email the instructor; instead, **use your YCP email account** when corresponding with the instructor. It is also advisable to email the instructor via the email client you use (Gmail in browser, Outlook, etc.) rather than sending a message through Canvas—these emails do not directly forward to the instructor's email account.

## Academic Integrity Policy

York College's mission statement stipulates that strict adherence to principles of academic honesty is expected of all students. Therefore, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated at York College. Academic dishonesty refers to actions such as, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabricating research, falsifying academic documents, etc., and includes all situations where students make use of the work of others and claim such work as their own. When a faculty member believes a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, the faculty member must inform the student in writing and then has ten business days from that written notification to the student to report the incident to the Dean of Academic Affairs and the Department Chair. Documentation related to instances of academic dishonesty will be kept on file in the student's permanent record. If the academic dishonesty is the student's first offense, the faculty member will have the discretion to decide on a suitable sanction up to a grade of 0 for the course. Students are not permitted to withdraw from a course in which they have been accused of academic dishonesty. Students who believe they have been unjustly charged or sanctioned (in cases involving a first offense) must discuss the situation with the faculty member and have 10 business days thereafter to submit an appeal to the Student Welfare Committee through the Dean of Academic Affairs. If an appeal is filed, the Student Welfare Committee will then conduct a hearing to review the charge and/or sanction. In cases of a first offense, the faculty member may request that the Student Welfare Committee conduct a

hearing and decide on the sanction, which can involve academic suspension or dismissal from the College, if the faculty member believes the offense to be of an extremely egregious nature. If the Dean of Academic Affairs determines that the academic dishonesty is the student's second offense, the Dean will provide written notification to the student, the faculty member, and the Department Chair. The Student Welfare Committee will automatically conduct a hearing to review the charge and decide on an appropriate sanction, which will involve academic suspension or dismissal from the College. Students who believe the Student Welfare Committee has unjustly sanctioned them may submit a written appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 72 hours of receiving notification of the Student Welfare Committee's sanction. Students are encouraged to communicate with the instructor if they have questions about this policy or whether their work violates this policy (in advance of the due date).

## Late Work Policy

Any assignment submitted after the timestamped deadline as listed on Canvas is considered late. Students may submit Perusall comments late, but this late work must be turned in **within 48 hours of the due date and can only earn up to half credit when late.** Lab and Final Project Portfolios must be submitted in advance of the final grading deadline (date TBD) for credit. **All other late work receives a deduction penalty of 5 points per day.** One minute to 24 hours is the first day, and so on, after that. \*N.B.: Extensions can be arranged for specific purposes, but must be done ahead of time. If there are extenuating circumstances (personal, health, etc.), students should discuss these with the instructor.



## Instructor Feedback

Students should generally expect feedback on all assignments about one week after handing in these assignments. On holidays and school breaks, this time frame may be extended. Students should also allow additional time when late work is submitted, though the instructor will make every attempt to provide feedback within the week. All feedback will be made available online (comments and grades).

# Learning Accommodations

If you are a student with a disability in need of classroom accommodations and have not already registered with **Linda Miller**, Director of Student Accessibility Services, please contact her at **717-815-1785** or **lmille18@ycp.edu** to discuss policies and procedures related to disability services and to establish the accommodations for which you are eligible. Please **contact your instructor ASAP** to speak about how these accommodations can be applied to your work this semester.



## COURSE WORK

### Attendance and Participation (75 pts, 18%)

Students' attendance in class is mandatory, and is essential to success in this course. Attendance includes not just your physical presence in class (in-person or on Zoom, depending on the schedule), but also your mental presence as well; being focused on the class discussion, listening to your peers and to the instructor, and being actively engaged in each class session is necessary for a strong attendance grade. **Students are permitted two absences** (no questions asked) without penalty to their grade; after that, students will begin to incur a grade penalty.

**In-class discussion** is even more essential to success in this course. The class will be conducted almost entirely as a discussion seminar. Students will earn their discussion grade by thinking critically about the reading, coming to class with ideas and questions for discussion, and participate actively in the conversation and in group work.

### Reading (100 pts, 24%)

This semester, all of our reading activity will be conducted on an online platform called **Perusall**, which is linked directly on the Canvas page's left-navigation menu. Students should **click that link ASAP** to activate their Perusall page and familiarize themselves with the functionality of the site. All assigned readings will be available there for students.

Perusall enables conversations on the readings themselves. Therefore, **your reading and engagement with the reading from Perusall will be graded**. Perusall grades include the time

spent engaged with the reading, your comments and questions on the content, your conversations with each other, your reactions, and any other links you may see between the history, our current world, or other classes you are taking. **Each assigned reading has a value of up to 3 points**, and is measured by your engagement with the readings and with each other. Reading and comments are **due by 8pm the night before they appear on the syllabus schedule unless otherwise noted** (deadlines are time stamped on Canvas). Students must **have access to the readings** (advised to have via computers/tablets with copies of readings/notes) **in class** on the day in which these readings are assigned. A reminder: students will **not be able to use their phones to access the reading materials** during class time.

## **Lab Reports and Portfolio Presentation (110 pts total, 27%)**

Over the course of the semester, students will complete a total of ten lab reports—activities or short, written responses—in small groups based on topics and methodologies we will discuss in class. Students **will be given class time** to complete this work, though time **out of class will likely be necessary** to complete these small assignments. Assignments will be posted and available on Canvas. Collectively, all ten assignments will be assembled in a portfolio, which will be **due at the end of the semester and presented to the class**.



## **Museum Evaluation (25 pts, 6%)**

Each student will compose a 2-3 page museum evaluation in which they assess one component of a museum (based on the topics we'll cover this semester). Ideally, students will visit a museum in-person to evaluate this work; if this is not possible (due to Covid-19 restrictions, for example), students must obtain the instructor's approval for a virtual museum substitute to ensure its adequacy for this project. Students should use the daily class session topics as guides for topics for evaluation in their chosen museum (design, historic houses, ethics, for example). Students **must engage either with in-class readings or secondary sources they've identified on their own** to establish the professional standard with which to evaluate their museum component, and cite these in their evaluations. Museum evaluations are due on **April 30 at midnight**.



## Final Project and Portfolio Presentation (100 pts total, 24%)

Students will create **three components** of museum projects in coordination with the York County Agricultural and Industrial Museum's (YCAIM) "Breaking Barriers" project. Students will, through original research and advisement with the YCAIM staff, create an **exhibit label**, a **printed guide/brochure** to complement the exhibit, and a **digital component** (of the students' choice). Students will work in small groups for this assignment. Each component is due at the end of the semester and will be presented to the class. Details for each component, including guidelines, resources, and rubrics, will be posted and available on Canvas.

### GRADE SCALE

4: 90% and higher; 369 to 410 pts

3.5: 85-89.9%; 348 to 368 pts

3: 80-84.9%; 328 to 347 pts

2.5: 75-79.9%; 307 to 327 pts

2: 70-74.9%; 287 to 306 pts

1: 65%-69.9%; 266 to 286 pts

0: Below 65%; 265 pts and below

## COURSE SCHEDULE

\*\*Schedule and meeting logistics subject to change pending Coronavirus pandemic situation\*\*

### Unit 1: Introduction

#### **Tuesday, February 2: Introduction to the Course (Group A on Zoom)**

To do: Register on Perusall by clicking on the left navigation menu link on Canvas.

Reading: Syllabus; McDaniel, "How to Read for History"

#### **Thursday, February 4: What is a museum? (Group B on Zoom)**

Reading: *Museums in Motion*, Ch 1, all; Dillenburg, "What, if Anything, Is a Museum?"

#### **Tuesday, February 9: What is the purpose of a museum? (Group C on Zoom)**

Reading: *Museums in Motion*, Ch 12, all; North, "The US is getting an official women's history museum"; Miranda, "What Sen. Mike Lee got wrong about a Latino museum"

In Class: Lab 1

#### **Thursday, February 11: The History of Museums (Group A on Zoom)**

Reading: Saxon, "P.T. Barnum and the American Museum"; Brandt, "Re-creating Mount Vernon"; Hart and Ward, "The Waning of an Enlightenment Ideal"

## **Unit 2: Museums and History**

### **Tuesday, February 16: History Museums (Group B on Zoom)**

- Reading: *Museums in Motion*, Ch 5, p. 111-124; Kurin, “The Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Museological Perspective”
- Explore: *Gettysburg Cyclorama: A Digital Annotation* (link available on Canvas)

### **Thursday, February 18: Historic House Museums (Group C on Zoom)**

- Reading: *Museums in Motion*, Ch 5, p. 124-127; Christensen, “Ideas Versus things”; Ryan and Vagnone, “Reorienting historic house museums”
- In Class: Lab 2

### **Tuesday, February 23: Interpretation Sites and Living History (Group A on Zoom)**

- Reading: *Museums in Motion*, Ch 5, p. 127-128; Wallace, Mickey Mouse History, Section II
- In Class: Lab 3

### **Thursday, February 25: Sites of Conscience and Memorial Museums (Group B on Zoom)**

- Reading: *Museums in Motion*, Ch 5, p. 128-131; Marita Sturken, “The 9/11 Memorial Museum and the Remaking of Ground Zero”; Kohn, “History and the Culture Wars”
- Guest Speaker: Susan Wigodner

## **Unit 3: Museum Processes**

### **Tuesday, March 2: Collections and Collections Management (Group C on Zoom)**

- Reading: *Museums in Motion*, Ch 8, all; Hamilton, “Object Lessons”; Conn, *Do Museums Still Need Objects?*, Ch 1; AAM Collections Management Policy
- Guest Speakers: Dr. Lindsey Bestebreurtje and Dr. Gretchen Beasley

### **Thursday, March 4: Conservation and Preservation (Group A on Zoom)**

- Reading: *Museums in Motion*, Ch 9, all; Keeley, “From ‘Monkey Jesus’ to ‘Tintin St. George’”
- Watch: “‘Monkey Christ’ fresco boosts tourism”
- In Class: Lab 4

### **Tuesday, March 9: Group Work Day (Group B on Zoom)**

### **Thursday, March 11: Interpretation (Group C on Zoom)**

- Reading: *Museums in Motion*, Ch 11, all; Kanno-Youngs, “Robo Tour Guides are Ready to Roll at Museums”
- In Class: Lab 5

### **Tuesday, March 16: Exhibitions (Group A on Zoom)**

- Reading: *Museums in Motion*, Ch 10, all
- Guest Speakers: Elena Popchok and Theresa Altieri Taplin

### **Thursday, March 18: Museum Design (Group B on Zoom)**

- Tzortzi, “Movement in Museums”; MacLeod, “New Museum Design Cultures”
- In Class: Lab 6

### **Tuesday, March 23: Visitor Engagement & Marketing (Group C on Zoom)**

- Reading: Silverman, “Visitor Meaning-Making in Museums for a New Age”; Bailey-Ross, et al, “Engaging the Museum Space”
- In Class: Lab 7

### **Thursday, March 25: Ethics and the Museum Profession (Group A on Zoom)**

- Reading: *Museums in Motion*, Ch 13; American Alliance of Museums (AAM) Code of Ethics; AAM Core Standards for Museums
- In Class: Lab 8

### **Tuesday, March 30: Group Work Day (Group B on Zoom)**

## **Unit 4: Museums are Not Neutral**

### **Thursday, April 1: Diversity & Inclusion (Group C on Zoom)**

- Reading: Kinsley, “Inclusion in Museums”; Ng et al, “Activating Diversity and Inclusion”
- Guest Speakers: Dr. Amanda Regan and Dr. Eric Gonzaba (tentative)
- In Class: Lab 9

### **Tuesday, April 6: Decolonization of Museums (Group A on Zoom)**

- Reading: *Do Museums Still Need Objects?*, Ch 2 and 3
- Watch: Museum scene from Black Panther scene

### **Thursday, April 8: Interpreting Slavery for the American Public (Group B on Zoom)**

- Reading: Brooms, “Lest We Forget”; *Interpreting African American History and Culture at Museums and Historic Sites*, Ch 2 and Ch 4

### **Tuesday, April 13: Holocaust Memorialization (Group A on Zoom)**

- Reading: Linenthal, *Preserving Memory*, Ch 1; Astor, “Holocaust is Fading From Memory”; Harris, “German Memory of the Holocaust”

**Thursday, April 15: What does the Public Need in a Museum? (Group B on Zoom)**

- Reading: Steinhauer, “Museums have a duty to be political”; Rodríguez, “The Myth of Museum Neutrality”
- In Class: Lab 10

**Tuesday, April 20: Portfolio Work Day (Group C on Zoom)**

**Thursday, April 22: Portfolio Work Day (Group A on Zoom)**

**Tuesday, April 27: Portfolio Work Day (Group B on Zoom)**

**Thursday, April 29: Portfolio Work Day (Group C on Zoom)**

- Museum Evaluations due April 30 at midnight

**Tuesday, May 4: Lab Portfolios & Final Project Presentations Due (Group A on Zoom)**

- Group B presents Lab and Final Project Portfolios
- Group C presents Lab Portfolio only
- Group A does not present

**Thursday, May 6: Final Project Portfolio & Presentations (Group B on Zoom)**

- Group C presents Final Project Portfolio
- Group A presents Lab and Final Project Portfolio
- Group B does not present

**\*\*Lab and Final Project Portfolios both due Monday, May 10 at noon\*\***