

HISP 208- Introduction to Conservation

DATES, TIMES AND LOCATION:

Fall Semester 2010

Thursdays, 3:30-6:15

Combs hall 012, Basement laboratory

INSTRUCTOR:

Emily Williams

OFFICE HOURS:

Thursday 2:00-3:30; or otherwise by appointment

OFFICE:

121 Combs Hall; Phone: 540-654-1312

Email: ewillia2@umw.edu

Prefer to be contacted by email

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course offers an overview to the field of conservation, with a particular focus on archaeological materials. The course will cover the definition of conservation, its history, ethical issues, material specific points and the fundamentals of preventive conservation. Students will learn how to identify materials and learn about their degradation. There is no scientific laboratory component but the class will include hands-on exercises designed to reinforce the lectures.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- 1) To provide an understanding of the nature of conservation and to examine ethical debates which play a role in defining the future of the field.
- 2) To define the conservator's role and examine the factors that influence decision making in conservation.
- 3) To generate an awareness of the decay processes that affect cultural materials and to examine fundamental conservation techniques that may be used to counteract these processes.
- 4) To generate awareness of the conservation literature and its utility to allied fields.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS:

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

The following books are required and will be available in the University Bookstore:

Pye, E, 2000. **Caring for the Past**. London: James & James. ISBN: 1-902916-10-7

Landrey et al, 2000. **The Winterthur Guide to Caring for your Collection**. Winterthur: The Winterthur Museum. ISBN: 978-0-912724-52-2

Additional required and suggested readings will be provided and will be posted on Blackboard. Others will be handed out in class.

ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS:

Students are responsible for all required readings and lecture materials. Additional handouts for class will be made available on Blackboard. All provided materials should be considered as resources for both in class and out of class assignments. Students are required to complete two written assignments, an in-class presentation, four in class practicals and a final exam to receive their final grade.

Assignment 1: **Position Paper on Ethics**, 1 page, Due Thursday, September 9th. (10%)

Assignment 2: Practical in Class: **Lifting Fragile Pottery**. Due Thursday October 7th (12.5%)

Assignment 3: Practical in Class: **Mending Ceramics**. Due Thursday October 21st (12.5 %)

Assignment 4: Practical in Class: **Assessing Materials** Due Thursday November 4th (12.5%)

Assignment 5: Practical in Class: **Testing Plastics**. Due on Thursday November 11th (12.5%)

Assignment 6: **In class presentation**. Days vary (10%)

Assignment 7: **Paper based on assigned article**. 1500 words. Due on the day that presentation is made. (15%)

Final Exam (15%)

EXAM:

The final exam will be on Thursday December 9th from 3:30-6:15pm

GRADING:

Letter grade descriptions quoted below are taken from the Academic Catalog. This and the Dictionary of Academic Regulations should be consulted for further explanation of these and all other academic regulations. When numerical grades are used in computation, the following equivalents will be used:

Below 60	F	80-82	B-
60-66	D	83-86	B
67-69	D+	87-89	B+
70-72	C-	90-93	A-
73-76	C	94-100	A
77-79	C+		

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments are due at the end of the class they are assigned in. Assignments that are late will automatically have 5 points deducted from them unless the instructor's permission has been obtained first.

FINAL GRADE:

Please note that **no passing grade** can be achieved in this course without the completion of all the activities (ethics paper, practical exercises, presentation, paper and Final exam). You must be present in class and participate in the exercise to receive a grade.

COURSE SYLLABUS

Week 1: Thursday Aug 26th

Introduction to the course and introduction to Conservation

Reading: Pye Chapters 1-2: Pye Chapter 9

Week 2: Thursday September 2nd

History of Conservation and Ethics

Readings: Pye Chapter 3

Week 3: Thursday Sept 9th

Position papers due

Ethics continuation and Discussion of Bush Barrow gold (ethics position papers).

Readings: Kinnes et al, Bush Barrow Gold (p 25-39); Shell and Robinson, The recent reconstruction of the Bush Barrow Lozenge Plate (p 249-260; Corfield, The reshaping of archaeological metal objects; some ethical considerations (p 261-265): Editorial.

Week 4: September 16th

Mechanisms of decay and introduction to preventive Conservation

Readings: Pye Chapter 5.

Week 5: September 23rd

Preventive Conservation continued

Readings: Landry Chapter 1; Handouts provided

Week 6: September 30th

Planning Conservation decisions/ Documentation/ Health and safety

Readings: Pye Chapter 6

Week 7: October 7th

Lifting Fragile Artifacts hands-on activity due in class

Field Conservation and lifting artifacts

Readings: Hand outs provided

Week 8: October 14th

Metals—Technology and Decay

Readings: Landry Chapter 8; Handouts provided

Week 9: October 21st

Mending ceramics hands on activity in class.

Inorganic Materials—

Readings: Landry Chapter 5; Handouts provided

Week 10: October 28th

Organic materials

Readings: Landry Chapter 4; Handouts provided

Week 11: November 4th

Presentations

Week 12: November 11th

Testing plastics practical

Identification and deterioration of Plastics--Guest Lecturer: Lisa Young, Alexandria Archaeology and National Air and Space Museum

Presentations

Readings: Landry Chapter 4; Handouts provided

Week 13: November 18th

Practical: Assessing Materials

The Role of Scientific analysis in conservation

Readings: Landry Chapter 2; Handouts

Week 14: November 25th

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15: December 2nd

Collaboration in Conservation; Public outreach and communicating conservation

Course Review

Readings: Pye Chapters 8 and 10

Final Exam: December 9th 3:30-6:15