

HISP 208- Introduction to Conservation

DATES, TIMES AND LOCATION:

Fall Semester 2012

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

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Prefer to be contacted by email

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course offers an overview of 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:

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

All reading assignments are required and should be completed prior to the class session for which they are assigned. There is one required textbook:

Caple, C. (ed). 2011. *Preventive Conservation in Museums*. Leicester Readers in Museum studies. London: Routledge.

Additional readings will be drawn from a wide variety of sources. These readings (indicated below in italics) are available on Canvas. Readings may be added over the course of the semester.

ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS:

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

Assignment 1: **Position Paper on Ethics**, 1 page, Due Thursday, September 13th. (10%)

Assignment 2: **Conservation Outreach Assignment**. Due Thursday October 11th (12.5%)

Assignment 3: Practical in Class: **Lifting Fragile Pottery**. Due Thursday October 18th (12.5 %)

Assignment 4: Practical in Class: **Mending Ceramics** Due Thursday November 8th (12.5%)

Assignment 5: Practical in Class: **Assessing materials**. Due Thursday November 15th (12.5%)

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

Assignment 7: **Paper based on assigned article**. 1500 words. Due on December 6th (15%)

Final Exam (15%)

EXAM:

The final exam will be on Thursday December 15th 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 beginning of the class on the date noted on the syllabus. Unless the instructor's permission has been obtained first, assignments that are late will automatically have 10 points deducted from them for each day they are late.

HONOR CODE

You are expected to follow the University's Honor Code. All written assignments (ethics assignment, outreach assignment, paper and final exam) must be pledged. All source material must be properly cited, using an established system, such as the Chicago manual of style, MLA, APA or AAA systems.

FINAL GRADE:

Please note that **no passing grade** can be achieved in this course without completing all the activities (ethics paper, outreach assignment, 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 August 30th

Introduction to the course and introduction to Conservation

Readings: *Caple, C. (2000) Conservation Skills Judgment, method and Decision making. London, Routledge (p29-46). Chapter 3; Monger, G. (1988) Conservation or Restoration? The International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship 7: 375-380.*

Week 2: Thursday September 6th

History of Conservation and Ethics

Readings: *Pye, E. Chapter 3-History of Conservation from Caring for the Past: issues in Conservation for Archaeology and Museums. London: James and James. p36-56; McClure, I (1998) The History of Painting Conservation and the Royal Collection. "Preserving Conceptual Integrity: Ethics and theory in Preventive Conservation" by Miriam Clavir, Chapter 31 in Caple. Walker Tubb, K and Sease, C.(1996) Sacrificing the wood for the Trees – should conservation have a role in the Antiquities trade? (p. 193-197):*

Optional reading: *Pintus, S. (2009) An account of the flood and the days that followed (p. 10-15); Saese (1996) A short History of Archaeological Conservation (p 157-161)*

Week 3: Thursday Sept 13th

Position papers due

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

Readings: *Kinnes et al, Bush Barrow Gold (p 25-39); Corfield, The reshaping of archaeological metal objects; some ethical considerations (p 261-265): Editorial.*

Week 4: September 20th

Mechanisms of decay and Introduction to Preventive conservation

Readings: "Framework for Preservation of Museum Collections" by Charlie Costain, Chapter 1 in Caple; *Hatchfield, P., Crack Warp Shrink Flake. Museum Jan-Feb 2011*

Week 5: September 27th^h

Preventive conservation continued

Readings: "Integrated Pest Management" by David Pinniger and Peter Winsor, Chapter 13 in Caple; "The Museum Environment-Light" by G. Thomson, Chapter 22 in Caple. "Selection of materials for Storage and Display of Museum Objects" by Lee and Thickett, Chapter 17 in Caple.

Week 6: October 4th

Public outreach and communicating about conservation

Readings: *Cane, S. (2009) Why do we conserve? Developing Understanding of conservation as a social construct*; *Brooks, M. (2008). Talking to ourselves: Why do conservators find it so hard to convince others of the significance of conservation.*

Additional readings to be posted on Canvas

Week 7: October 11th

Conservation Outreach Assignment due

Planning Conservation decisions/Surveys/ Documentation/ Health and safety

Readings: "Collections Conservation" by Suzanne Keene. Chapter 28 in Caple.

Watson, J. (2010) Artifacts in Use. Richmond: OHS Press. p. 171-180; Applebaum, B. Chapter 13 of Conservation Treatment Methodology.

Week 8: October 18th

Lifting Fragile Artifacts hands-on activity due in class

Field Conservation and lifting artifacts

Readings: *Jones, J. (2001) A Bronze Age Burial from North-East England: Lifting and Excavation. Price, J (1992) Retrieving the Larger Structure—Ideas and case studies in lifting.*

Week 9: October 25th

Metals—Technology and Decay

Readings: *Selwyn, L (2004) Metals and Corrosion: A Handbook for the Conservation Professional.*

Ottawa: Canadian Conservation Institution. Pp 1-34; "Saving Archaeological Iron Using the Revolutionary Preservation System" by Mathias, C et al., Chapter 21 in Caple;

Week 10: November 1st

Organic materials

Readings: *Hoadley, B. Chapter 2: Figure in Wood (p.25-35). "Sweetness and Blight: conservation of Chocolate works of art" by Glenn Wharton et al, Chapter 34 in Caple; Chen et al: Preservation of Archaeological Textiles through Fibre Mineralization.*

Week 11: November 8th

Inorganic Materials

Practical in class: Mending Ceramics.

Readings: *Oakley, V and K. Jain (2002) Essentials in the Care and Conservation of Historical Ceramic Objects p. 1-19; Koob, S. Conservation and Care of glass Objects p. 1-27*

Week 12: November 15th

TBD

Assignment 5 to be performed in class

Week 13: November 22nd

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14: November 29th

Presentations

Week 15: December 6th

Presentations

Papers due in class

Course Review

Final Exam: Thursday December 13th 3:30-6:15