**University of Mary Washington – Department of Historic Preservation**

**Introduction to Museum Studies (HISP 200)**

Fall 2012, TR 11:00 – 12:15, Combs Hall Room 237

**Instructor:** Dr. Cristina Turdean

**Email:** cturdean@umw.edu

**Tel:**  540-654-1310

**Office hours:** TR 9:00-11:00 and by appointment

**Location:** 129 Combs Hall

**Course**

**Description:** The main goal of the course is to establishthe theoretical foundation for the students interested in pursuing future work and studies in history museums. Lectures, class activities, and field trips will introduce students to current practices and debates in the museum profession. Topics include the history and philosophy of museums; the social, economic, and political context that shapes museums; and the main functions of museums – collection and care of objects, exhibits, interpretation, education, and governance.

**Learning**

**Outcomes:** At the end of theclass the students will be able to

(1) demonstrate a working familiarity with the organization, functions, and practices of museums;

(2) discuss ethical issues in the philosophy of museums, their interpretation of the past and social role;

(3) use critical thinking skills in evaluating museum exhibits and public programs.

The writing intensive component of this course will prepare the students to demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of

(4) varying strategies to convey arguments, main ideas, and support/ evidence;

(5) varying patterns of composition organization and development;

(6) appropriate voice, tone, and rhetorical strategies for a specified audience;

(7) the writing process.

**Texts:** All the readings (articles in academic journals and book chapters) are available in

electronic format on Canvas.

**Canvas:** This class uses Canvas, the school’s learning management system. Use your

regular school ID and password to log in to Canvas at: https://canvas.umw.edu/ You will find this class listed on the first page, under “Courses.” All the materials (syllabus, readings, assignments, etc.) and announcements for this class will go through Canvas. For tutorials and training for students, check: http://canvas.umwblogs.org/

**Course**

**Assignments: Reading and class participation (15%):** This course combines lectures with class

discussions and class activities. Every week we will critically evaluate the argument and main themes of the assigned reading and formulate conclusions that will be further applied in other assignments. If you want a good grade in this class, make sure that you come to class *with all the readings* *done* and prepared to engage in the discussion with meaningful thoughts. The class participation grade will take into account both the quality and quantity of your contribution. You can check with me periodically about your partial grade and ask for help to improve your performance.

**“Museum news” blog entries (15%)** This assignment consists of a series of 5

entries that you will post on Canvas throughout the semester. Each entry will

be based on an article of your choice with news from the museum world, which

you will find in a U. S. source online. With a length of 250-300 words, each entry

should summarize the article and make meaningful connections to the ideas

discussed in class.

**Assignment #1 (15%)** To write this essay (1,200 -1,500 words) you have two topic choices:

1. visit an exhibit in a history museum of your choice (preferably outside of Fredericksburg) and write on your perception of the exhibit’s message and how the subject matter is presented to the public by the means of objects, labels, and the design of the space as discussed in the “Exhibits and Interpretation” section of the class. Essays on this topic are **due in class on October 9, in hard copy.**

2.visit a history museum of your choice (outside of Fredericksburg) and

discuss your perception of the entire museum space and visitors as discussed in

the “Museum and Audiences” section of the class. Essays on this topic are due in

**class on November 6, in hard copy.**

**Assignment #2 due in class on December 6, in hard copy (20%):** This 2,000 –

2,500 word essay summarizes your research of a history museum of your choice.

Separate guidelines explain all the written assignments.

**Exams (17.5% each)**: There will be two in-class tests with questions concerning

basic concepts, case studies, and readings we discussed in class.

## Grading: The final grade will be based on the following components:

1.”Museum news” blog entries 15%

2. Assignment #1 “Exhibit Review” or “The Visitor’s Experience” 15%

3. Assignment # 2 “Museum Assessment” 20%

4. Mid-term exam 17.5%

5. Final exam 17.5%

6. Class participation 15%

Grading scale: A 4.00 93-100%

A- 3.70 90-92%

B+ 3.30 87-89%

B 3.00 83-86%

B- 2.70 80-82%

C+ 2.30 77-79%

C 2.00 73-76%

C- 1.70 70-72%

D+ 1.30 67-69%

D 1.00 60-66%

F 0.00 <60%

If a student has a C- or below in the course by the middle of the semester, a

report of unsatisfactory (U) will be submitted.

**Academic**

**Honesty:** Students in this class are expected to comply with the University of Mary

Washington Honor System. Please check the following website to find

out more about the university policy on academic integrity -- including the

disciplinary sanctions against offenders

http://www.umw.edu/honor/documents/UMWHonorConstitution.pdf

and further information about plagiarism, cheating

http://www.umw.edu/honor/fredericksburg/default.php

Students who fail to cite their sources, plagiarize any part of their assignments

will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. Please consult me with questions about proper citation and attribution of sources.

**Office of**

**Disabilities**: If you have a disability and need special accommodations in this class, please made contact with the Office of Disabilities Resources (540- 654-1266) or online at http://www.umw.edu/disability/ and bring the official letter to me, no later than the end of the first week of the semester, so we can take the appropriate steps to meet your needs.

## Attendance,

## Absences, and

## Tardiness: Attendance is required in this class and will be checked at the beginning of

## each session. If you must miss a class due to exceptional circumstances, please

## let me know IN ADVANCE, preferably over the email. I reserve the right to turn

## down lame excuses and will not excuse absences for medical reasons that are

## not supported by doctor notes. Each unexcused absence will cost you 1% from

## the final grade for the entire class. Make-up examinations will be given only in exceptional circumstances. Should such a situation occur, please notify me well in advance. There will be no make-up assignments for missed field trips and

## unexcused absences on those days will cost you 2% of the final grade.

## Late turn in of Assignment #1 and #2 is penalized 2 points/ day. Late

## blog entries are penalized 1.5 points regardless of the delay. To pass the class

## you must turn in all assignments.

**Classroom**

**Etiquette:** Please turn off your cell phone at the beginning of the class and refrain yourself

from checking text messages during our meeting time. Your effort to arrive to

class on time will be highly appreciated. If you need to leave early, please notify

me at the beginning of the class.

## Computer

## Use: The course relies on numerous class activities, which require the use of personal

## computers. If possible, please bring your laptop to class on the following dates:

## 08/30, 09/04, 09/06, and 09/13.

**Weekly Schedule:**

Tue., 08/28 Intro and syllabus

**What is a museum?**

Thurs., 08/30 Historical context

Read: A. H. Saxon “P. T. Barnum and the American Museum” *The Wilson*

*Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Autumn, 1989), pp. 130-139.

Visit: [www.lostmuseum.cuny.edu](http://www.lostmuseum.cuny.edu)

Tue., 09/04 Legal and organizational context

Read: Stephen H. Weil “From Being Something *about* Something to Being Something *for* Somebody” in Stephen H. Weil, *Making Museums Matter* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), pp. 28-52.

**Objects and Collecting. Ideas and Practices**

Thurs., 09/06 Why and How Do Museums Collect? Collections Management Policies (I)

Read: James B. Gardner and Sarah M. Henry “September 11 and the Mourning

After: Reflections on Collecting and Interpreting the History of Tragedy” *The*

*Public Historian*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Summer 2002), pp. 37-52

Tue., 09/11 Collections Mgt. Policies(II) Acquisition and Accession, Deaccession and Disposal

Read: Richard Weizel “Mohegans Seek Objects’ Return” *New York Times,*

February 8, 1998, section CT1

Class screening: “The Return of the Sacred Pole”

Thurs., 09/13 Cataloging, Inventories, Records. Past Perfect

# Class activity: object cataloging

# Please download the free trial version of the Past Perfect software from

# <http://www.museumsoftware.com/> and bring your laptop to class.

Tue., 09/18 Collection Care

Read: Corinna Wu, “Old Glory, New Glory. The Star-Spangled Banner Gets Some

Tender Loving Care ”*The Weekly Newsmagazine of Science,* Vol. 155, No.26,

1999 available at <http://www.sciencenews.org/sn_arc99/6_26_99/bob1.htm>

Thurs., 09/20 Field trip to James Monroe Museum

In preparation for the trip, visit: <http://www.umw.edu/jamesmonroemuseum/default.php>

**Exhibits and Interpretation. Ideas and Practices**

Tue., 09/25 Interpretation

Read: Eric Gable “How We Study History Museums or Cultural Studies at

Monticello” in Janet Marstine (ed.) *New Museum Theory and Practice. An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp.109-125.

Listen to the podcast (11 minutes): “Thomas Jefferson Descendants Work to Heal

Family’s Past” (on the National Public Radio webpage at

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=131243217>

Visit: <http://www.monticello.org/>

Thurs., 09/27 Exhibits(I) Planning

Read: Peter Liebhold, “Experiences from the Front Line: Presenting a Controversial Exhibition during the Culture Wars” *The Public Historian*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Summer, 2000), pp. 67-84.

Visit: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/sweatshops/>

Tue., 10/02 Exhibits(II) Design

Read: Gretchen Jennings “Time to Listen” *Curator: The Museum Journal*, Vol. 46,

No. 4, 2003, pp.371-384.

Thurs., 10/04 Writing Essentials (Guest speaker: Dr Gwen Hale, Director of the Writing Center)

Class discussion of Museum News blog entries

Tue., 10/09 **Assignment #1(“Exhibition Review”) due in class today (hard copy)**

Read: Edward T. Linenthal “Anatomy of a Controversy” in Edward T.Linenthal

and Tom Engelhardt (Eds.) *History Wars. The Enola Gay and other Battles for the*

*American Past* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996, pp.9-63.

Visit: <http://www.nasm.si.edu/exhibitions/gal103/enolagay/>

Thurs., 10/11 Mid-Term Exam

Tue., 10/16 Fall Break

Thurs.,10/18 Field trip to Kenmore Museum

In preparation for the trip, visit: <http://kenmore.org/kp_home.html>

**Museums and Audiences. Ideas and Practices**

Tue., 10/23 The Visitor. Learning Theories and Understanding Audiences

Read: John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking *The Museum Experience* (Washington

DC, Whalesback Books, 1998), Part I “Before the Visit,“ pp.11-37 and Part III

“The Museum Visit Remembered,” pp.97-125.

Thurs., 10/25 The Visitor. Interpretive Methods and Applications (I)

Read: John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking *The Museum Experience* (Washington

DC, Whalesback Books, 1998), Part II “During the Visit” pp.41-93.

Mary Ellen Flannery, “’It Can’t Just Be Fun’: What Teachers Want from Field

Trips,” in *Museum*, January-February 2010.

Richter, Katrina, “Homeschoolers Are Always Late. What Every Museum Needs

To Know about Alternative Learners” *Museum News,* March/April 2007.

Tue., 10/30 The Visitor. Interpretive Methods and Applications (II)

Read: Erica Kiessner "Drinking it up: Museum Outreach extends to the Pub"

Museum, Vol. 88 No. 3 pp. 56-59, 2009 May/June.

Thurs., 11/01 Museums and Communities. Inclusion and Authority

Read: Ruth J. Abram “Kitchen Conversations: Democracy in Action at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum” *The Public Historian,* Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 2007), pp. 59-76.

Patricia Ard “Garbage in the Garden State: A Trash Museum Confronts New

Jersey's Image” *The Public Historian*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Summer 2005), pp. 57-66.

Visit: <http://www.tenement.org/>

Thurs., 11/06 **Assignment #1 (“The Visitor’s Experience”) due in class today (hard copy)**

Field trip to Fredericksburg Area Museum and Cultural Center

In preparation for the trip, visit: <http://www.famcc.org/>

**The Museum in the Digital Era. Virtual Exhibits and Digital History**

Tue., 11/08 Class webinar “The Digital Museum. Transforming the Future Now” (a digital

product of the American Association of Museums).Part I

Read: Sue Ann Cody “Historical Museums on the World Wide Web: An

Exploration and Critical Analysis” *The Public Historian,* Vol. 19, No. 4 (Autumn,

1997), pp. 29-53

Tue., 11/13 Class webinar “The Digital Museum. Transforming the Future Now” (a digital

product of the American Association of Museums). Part II

Read: Daniel Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig “Promises and Perils of Digital History”

in *Digital History. A Guide to Gathering, Preservin*g*, and Presenting the Past on*

*the Web* ( Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), pp. 1-17.

Scott Wands, Erica Donnis, Susie Wilkening “Do Guided Tours and Technology

Drive Visitors Away?” *History News,* Spring 2010, pp.21-25.

**Museum Marketing, Financing, and Governance**

Thurs., 11/15 Marketing and PR

Read: Kotler, Neil, “Delivering Experience: Marketing the Museum’s Full Range of

Assets” *Museum News*, May/June 1999.

Tue., 11/20 Museum Development

Read: Jacqueline Trescott **“Smithsonian Gifts With Strings Alarm Some Scholars;**

**Secretary's Dealings with Big Donors Questioned by Staff” *The Washington Post,***

May 26, 200, C.01

Jacqueline Trescott “Air Space Venue Renamed for Corporate Benefactor; 10

Million Turns Langley into Lockheed Martin Theater” *Washington Post*, March

20, 2002.

Amy K. Levin “Business as Usual: Can Museums Be Bought” in Amy K.

Levin (ed.) *Defining Memory. Local Museums and the Construction of History in*

*America’s Changing Communities* (AltaMira Press, 2007), pp.253-265.

Thurs., 11/22 Thanksgiving Break

Tue., 11/27 “The Working Museum”

Read: Franklin W. Robinson, “P.T. Barnum with a Ph. D.: The Museum Director as

Fund Raiser” *Museum News,* March/April 2001.

Harold and Susan Skramstad “Working Model: A Mechanism for the Effective

Board” *Museum News,* January/February 2003.

Thurs., 11/29 Writing Essentials (Guest speaker: Dr Gwen Hale, Director of the Writing Center)

Class discussion of Museum News blog entries

**The Code of Ethics for Museums. Professional Associations**

Tue., 12/04 Guest speaker: Scott Harris, Director of James Monroe Museum and Memorial

Library

Read: David Carr “Balancing Act: Ethics, Mission, and the Public Trust” *Museum*

*News*, September/October 2001.

Thurs., 12/06 **Assignment #3 (the paper) due in class today (hard copy)**

Workshop: CV and internship applications writing

Tue., 12/13 Final Exam 12:00-2:30 pm