



Arcadia University Center for Italian Studies

ROMA AHMH 320

Museum Practices in Rome: the History of Collecting and Exhibiting Works of Art

Credit Hours: 4

Course description

Collecting is one of the most common attitudes of human nature. However, what happens when the individual instinct of collecting materials gains an institutional aspect and becomes part of a public exhibition?

The course focuses on the history of collecting and the conservation of cultural heritage, on collecting itself as a process, and on the nature of collections as part of our effort to construct an intelligible world view. From the attitude of the private collector to the birth of the public museums, the topics will be analyzed in relation to anthropological, social, historical and artistic context. Due to its extremely diverse panorama of galleries, public collections and temporary exhibitions, Rome makes a perfect case study for analyzing museum work.

Through lectures, class discussions, fieldtrips and visits, readings, films and individual research projects, students will have the opportunity not only to explore Rome's cultural life but also to see the issue of collecting both as an anthropological question and as a very topical matter of national identity.

Learning Outcomes

The overall goal of the course is to define the nature, development, structure and organization of museums. Students will acquire a good knowledge of the main international museum organizations and will be able to critically assess the nature of the museum audience and its needs. The course is based on Rome museums in order for students to learn to analyze the changing political and social contexts that influence the nature and structure of museums and how museum exhibitions influence contemporary society. Students will be asked to engage in a variety of learning activities that are designed to help each achieve the goals of the course.

The course will:

- develop a critical discourse around questions as the anthropological basis of collecting, the perception of a collection and the bias between a private collection and a public museum
- familiarize students with museum and gallery activities while examining larger aspects of these institutions
- provide the students with a basic understanding of topics such as the history of collecting and institutional practices, museum ethics
- assess the impact of business entrepreneurship and the tourism industry on the structure of museums and collecting
- assess collection processes from antiquity to the present, specifically patronage
- examine the attitude of the Italians towards their cultural heritage and heritage institutions

Course Requirements

Required readings:

- Hooper-Greenhill, E. (ed.) *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, Routledge, 2007. ISBN: 0415070317; Cost: To Be Determined.

Additional readings:

- Ames, M. *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: the anthropology of museums*. London: University College of London Press, 1992
- Boswell, D. (ed.) *Representing the Nation: a reader. Histories, heritage and museums*. London: Routledge, 1999
- Clifford, J. 'Museums as contact zones'. In D. Boswell et al (eds). *Representing the Nation: a reader. Histories, heritage and museums*, London: Routledge. 1999
- Crooke, E. *Politics, Archaeology and the Creation of National Museum of Ireland: an expression of national life*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000
- Greenberg, R. *Thinking About Exhibitions*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Jones, S. Crossing boundaries. *Museums Journal* 29, 1994
- Kaplan, F.E.S. (ed.) *Museums and the Making of 'Ourselves': the role of objects in National identity*. London: Leicester University Press, 1996
- Karp, I. and S.D. Levine (eds) *Exhibiting Cultures: the poetics and politics of museum display*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992
- Karp, I., C. Mullen Kraemer and S.D. Levine (eds) *Museums and Communities: the politics of public culture*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992
- McClellan, Andrew. *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.
- McClellan, Andrew. (ed.), *Art and its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium*, Malden (MA) – Oxford – Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2003. LANDMAN LIBRARY – DIGITAL RESOURCES
- Merriman, N. *Beyond the Glass Case*. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991
- Pearce, S. *On Collecting: an investigation into collecting in the European tradition*. London: Routledge, 1995
- Sharon McDonald (ed.), *A Companion to Museum Studies*, Malden (MA) – Oxford – Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. LANDMAN LIBRARY – DIGITAL RESOURCES
- Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, Sheila Watson (eds.), *Museum Revolutions: How Museums change and are changed*, London-New York: Routledge, 2007. LANDMAN LIBRARY – DIGITAL RESOURCES
- Stone, P.G. and B.L. Molyneux (eds) *The Presented Past: heritage, museums and education*. London: Routledge, 1994

A COURSE PACK with further readings (articles & book chapters) related to the lectures and visits will be handed out in class.

Texts and Papers

Mid-Term Exam, Final Exam, Oral Presentation of the Research Project and Research Report.

A research project presented both as an essay and as an oral presentation in class, will allow students to put into practice the principles of collecting and museum design.

Midterm exam (20%), Final exam (30%), Class Participation (10%), Independent Research Project (40%)

Independent research project; “A Virtual Museum” (40%).

You are required to develop a proposal for an exhibition based on a collection and present it to an audience. Your project should be accompanied with textual explanations, diagrams of the layout of the exhibit, photocopies of the pieces you will exhibit and where they go in the exhibition. Your exhibition should address the following questions: Why is this exhibition important? Have there been others treating this material? What social, political and economic realities underwrite your exhibition script? What ethical issues are involved? Where will the exhibit be held? (In an existing museum? In a new facility? In the U.S. or abroad? or should it be a virtual exhibition on the internet). How, if you choose to do so, can you make use of existing sites on the internet and their publicity to make your point? Which internet sites are “safe” to use to promote heritage? The research project is divided into two phases;

a. Phase One (15% of the total research project grade, due March 8, by 9pm)

Phase One should include a tentative research statement, a brief description of your exhibition, a basic analysis of your chosen exhibition theme along with a basic bibliography and any illustrations that might be used for your final exhibition. Minimum limit 800 words, 2.0 space, Times New Roman font.

b. Phase Two (25% of the total research project grade, due May 10, by 9pm)

Phase Two should include your definitive research statement, your research analysis, a full explanation of your exhibition along with the tools and materials you will be using to organize and set up your exhibition. Your final paper should answer some of the questions presented above and should demonstrate critical thinking. Minimum limit 1500 words, 2.0 space, Times New Roman font.

Class Schedule

Week 1	Classroom	Introduction to Museums; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Art of Collecting • History and philosophy of Museums
Week 2	Classroom	Collecting cultural heritage; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Collecting: shaping the world” • Naturalia & Artificialia: “curiosity cabinets” and scientific collections in early modern Europe • Types of museums; anthropological, science, open air and site “Museums as leisure” by Malcolm Foley and Gayle McPherson. <i>International Journal of Heritage Studies</i> 6 (2): 161-174 [2000] use JSTOR
Week 3	Onsite Meeting Point: In front of the entrance	Roman Forum/ Imperial Fora <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antiquities as economic status • Archaeological Parks Via dei Fori Imperiali entrance (Bus 23 to Piramide metro station, change to bus 60 for Piazza Venezia)

Week 4	Classroom	<p>Collections Care: Collection management: legal and ethical issues from antiquity to the present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The transatlantic trade in African ancestors” by Monica L. Udvardy, Linda L. Giles and Hohn B. Mitsanze in <i>American Anthropologist</i> 105 (3): 566-580 [2003] (<i>use</i> JSTOR) • “Who does the past belong to?”
Week 5	Onsite Meeting Point: In front of the entrance	<p>The Vatican Museums</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curatorial Praxis • Repatriation <p>Viale Vaticano (Bus 23 to Piramide metro station. Take Metro Line B to Termini station change to Metro Line A, Direction Battistini, Stations: Ottaviano-S. Pietro-Musei Vaticani)</p>
Week 6	Classroom	<p>The Enlightenment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and interpretation; the “visitor” experience • “Exhibitions and interpretation. Museum pedagogy and cultural change” • Phase One of Research Paper due
Week 7	Classroom	Midterm Exam
Week 8	On-site Meeting Point: In front of the equestrian statue in the middle of the square	<p>The Capitoline Museums Piazza del Campidoglio 1 (Bus 23 to Piramide metro station, change to bus 60 for Piazza Venezia)</p>
Week 9	Onsite Meeting Point: In front of the entrance	<p>National Museums: from Napoleon to 1911</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “New Age of Collecting” • Re-appropriating museum identities <p>Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna (GNAM) Viale delle Belle Arti, 131 (Bus 23 to Piramide metro station. Metro B (Rebibia) to Policlinico. Change to tram line 3 (Thorvaldsen) to Galleria Arte Moderna or tram line 19 (Risorgimento/S. Pietro) to Galleria Arte Moderna)</p>
Week 10	On site Meeting Point: in front of the Museum Andersen	<p>The small private museum: Visit to Museum Andersen Museo Hendrik Christian Andersen Via Pasquale Stanislao Mancini 18 (Bus 23 to Piramide metro station. Metro B to Termini change to Metro A (Battistini) to Flaminio)</p>

Spring Break		
Week 11	Classroom / On-site visit to the MACRO	Conservation Ethics in modern museums <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Inglorious restorations; Destroying old masterpieces in order to save them” by Eric Scigliano. <i>Harper’s Magazine</i> August 2005: 61-68. Use JSTOR • MACRO
Week 12	On- site Meeting Point: In front of the entrance	International Organisations and museum collections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICCROM (International Centre for the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property in Rome) Via di San Michele 13 (Bus 23 to the Pyramid of Cestius. Change to bus 75 or 44 to Via di San Michele)
Field study to Pompeii and Naples Archaeological Museum “The discipline of pleasure; or, how art history looks at the art museum” by Colin Trodd. <i>Museum and Society</i> 1 (1): 17-29 [2003]. Use JSTOR		
Week 13	Classroom/ Onsite visit to the Centrale Montemartini Museum	Repatriation, the illicit trade and national identities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Legal group to fight ‘retentionist’ policies” by David D’Arcy. <i>The Art Newspaper.Com</i>, 2002 and “Stealing History. The Illicit Trade in Cultural Material” by Neil Brodie, Jenny Doole and Peter Watson. (McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2000). Use JSTOR • Centrale Montemartini Museum
Week 14	On-site Meeting Point: In front of the entrance	Contemporary Art Museums <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable practices in museum design • MAXXI MAXXI Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo / National Museum of the Arts in the 21st Century via Guido Reni, 4 A (Metro Line A, stop Flaminio - Tram Line 2, stop “Apollodoro” Buses 53, 217, 280, 910) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase Two of research paper due
Week 15	Classroom	Final Exam

