

Rice University ANTH/HURC 341

Museums and Heritage: Exhibiting Art, Exhibiting Culture

Spring 2020

M/W 4:00 - 5:15 PM Rayzor 123



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Course overview

This course provides a wide-ranging introduction to the study of cultural heritage and museums with a particular focus on issues related to the preservation, collection, and exhibition of cultural heritage materials. We will examine the various ways that art and heritage objects (broadly defined) are displayed and represented in museums and collections of art, natural history, history, and heritage and the ethics related to those displays. Topics will include looting and the ethics of collecting; the politics of display; museums, heritage, and identity; the changing role of museums; and exhibition design.

Course Objectives

At the end of the course, the student should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and changing social and political contexts of museums
- Understand the historical, shifting roles of objects, including art, in museums, particularly with regard to the concept of heritage
- Understand contested arenas involving the representation of peoples and cultures, ethical issues of cultural property, and concepts of preservation, education and context in relation to museums and heritage
- Discuss critically, in written and verbal form, current issues concerning museum missions, representation of the past and present, interpretation of cultural objects, and the role of museums in society
- Critically evaluate exhibition and presentation in museum settings

Course Content

Most of our class meetings will consist of some lecture material and discussion and in-class activities that build on the readings for that day. Reading the assigned articles before coming to class is essential.

Syllabus and Digital Resources (Canvas, Kanopy)

The syllabus, readings, and web resources are available on Canvas. The syllabus is a work in progress and may be updated during the semester. Any changes or updates will be posted in Canvas and you will receive an email signaling the update. It is your responsibility to check for Canvas announcements. We will also use Canvas email announcements to post directions to museums. Kanopy, which is accessible through the Fondren Library at <https://rice.kanopy.com/>, hosts all relevant film content to be assigned.

Course Grading

Grades will be based on three papers and/or presentations, a final project (expanded upon in separate handouts) and class participation. For any questions regarding grading and the quality of work, please refer to the **Grade Parameters** under the **Resources** page on Canvas. There are no examinations.

Assignment	Description	Due Date	%
Class participation	Preparation, attendance, and participation. Class discussions will be a part of every class. You will prepare brief reading responses (described below) for at least 8 of the asterisked classes. These will provide the basis for class discussion.	Hard copy at the end of each of 8 classes	30%

<p>Paper #1</p> <p>Exhibit Comparison</p> <p>1000-1500 words</p>	<p>Visit one exhibit or gallery at the MFAH and one anthropological or archaeological exhibit/gallery at the HMNS. Reflect on the similarities and differences between the two in terms of kinds of objects displayed, narrative approaches, 'technologies of presentation' (see Moser article), etc. Write a 1000-1500 word paper, keeping in mind, and referencing as appropriate, the Greenblatt and Moser articles assigned for Jan 29.</p>	<p>February 5</p>	<p>15%</p>
<p>Paper #2</p> <p>The Power of Objects</p> <p>1000 words</p> <p>3-minute in-class presentation</p>	<p>For this assignment, you will chose either a single object that is particularly evocative for you (see Turkle reading on Evocative Objects) or three objects that carry information about you – they tell us something about who you are. You will make a brief (3 min) presentation on your object(s) in class on February 17. Bring either the objects or a photo of them. You will also write a short essay (1000 words) on how and why the one object is evocative or how and why the three objects describe you.</p>	<p>February 17</p>	<p>10%</p>
<p>Paper #3</p> <p>Updating the MacDonald Hall of the Americas, Houston Museum of Natural Science</p> <p>2000-2500 words</p>	<p>The MacDonald Hall of the Americas is currently being updated. If you were advising the curators on this project, what kind of changes and approaches would you recommend? Your may organize your paper in one of two ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For the first half of the paper, comment critically on general aspects of the existing displays, making substantive reference to the class readings, especially Ames (Cannibal Tours), Trouillot, and the readings for February 24, February 26, and March 2. Then focus on one specific display or aspect of the MacDonald Hall and make the case for why and how it should be changed. Include ideas for specific changes that you would recommend, comparing the existing exhibit to the proposed revision of replacement. <p>OR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Devote the entire paper to some aspect of the MacDonald Hall that you would change. Make the case for how and why it should be changed, and the drill down to details of the changes you would recommend. Again, substantive reference to the class readings, especially Ames (Cannibal Tours), Trouillot, and the readings for February 24, February 26, and March 2 is essential. 	<p>March 25</p>	<p>25%</p>
<p>Final Project</p> <p>Museum Hack</p>	<p>Choose an object in the Menil or MFAH, and hack it. What does that mean? As this course progresses, you'll gain an understanding of the elements and systems of museums and heritage. Use that knowledge to manipulate the museum object's presentation for your own purposes. Find an object on display that evokes something in you. Be there, with the object, for as much time as you need, act like a fool if you need to, but get to know the object (don't endanger the object!). Use the accession number, museum website, scholarly publications on the object or similar objects, the readings</p>	<p>In-Class Draft Presentations: April 20</p> <p>Final Presentations: Finals week, TBA</p> <p>Papers: May 4</p>	<p>20%</p>

	<p>from class, and any other tools you can think of to reimagine the object and tell its story (whichever story you think most important) to us. You will present the object in 7 minutes at the museum. Your presentation should be seamless, professional (if potentially goofy) and powerful. It can be a traditional lecture or reading on the object's history, a performance piece or anything in between. To accompany your hack, you will write a 2000-word argument for your hack. What is your focus and why? Why have you chosen to present this object in this way? How does your hack support or explode the ideas of museums and heritage we've discussed in class? You'll need to support your hack with readings from class and from outside it.</p>		
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Reading Responses

Responses covering the readings assigned for that day's class are due at the beginning of **each class that is asterisked in the syllabus**. Reading reflections are not essays; they are targeted responses that provide the following for each assigned reading:

- The most important **takeaway point**, from your perspective.
- One **thoughtful question** that you think will contribute to the discussion of the readings in class, plus a sentence indicating how it highlights or opens up a topic that is significant in the readings (i.e., provide a context for the discussion question). Ideally the question will take us deeper into the topic rather than leading to tangents or side alleys. When we approach one of your questions in class, we will ask you to contextualize your question with regard to the readings, as in, *what aspects of the readings does it bring together, can you expand on the question so we understand what you hope will be illuminated by discussing it*, etc.
- One **unfamiliar word or concept** that you looked up, plus a sentence about what you learned.

Everyone is expected to turn in **8 sets of questions** over the course of the semester.

Please email us with an update on how many responses you have left before the end of class **on March 25**.

Other Important Information

Classroom courtesy: As we are providing PDFs of all assigned readings, laptops and tablets are permitted in class, **but please restrict your use of them to taking notes and reviewing readings**. Please keep social media, texting, and email use to outside of class time. Mobile phones must be on silent and put away during class meetings.

Museum Etiquette: While you may take mobile phones with you into the museum, please be sure to silence them and do not take calls, text, or use social media while in the galleries. Should you choose to, you may take photos of many of the objects and spaces we view, but be aware that not all museums allow photography, and not all objects can be photographed; please ask us or a museum guard if you are unsure. Generally, flash photography is not accepted. **Always have your Rice ID with you when visiting a museum** (whether with our class or on your own), so that you can be allowed a free entrance; make sure the badge or sticker given to you upon entry is visible on your clothing. Please keep voices low in the galleries, but do not be afraid to talk or approach the objects. When possible, try to limit your belongings when visiting; check any backpacks, large purses, umbrellas, and heavy coats in the coat check. Plan to bring a notepad or notebook and a pencil to take notes when visiting during class meetings or on your own for assignments. Please plan to arrive 10 minutes ahead of the start of class when visiting a museum, so that we can begin promptly; if you arrive late or lose the group during the visit, please contact one of us to locate and join the group.

Absences: Kindly note that attendance and active participation is required for all class meetings and is part of your participation grade. **If you are absent for a class, you may make up for that absence by writing a short response to any of the assigned readings for that day (1-2 pages, double-spaced).** In the case of an absence during a class without assigned readings, you may write a response to a reading from a previous week. Excessive absences (2+) may affect your participation grade. Please contact one or both of us via email ahead of class if you cannot attend.

Extensions/Late submissions Policy: In keeping with Rice's policy, individual extensions are generally not granted except in cases of family emergencies or documented illness. However, we are aware that conflicts with due dates for projects or examinations in other courses can occur; in cases like this, please contact one or both of us well ahead of the paper or project due date and we can work with you to find a solution.

Accommodation for Disabilities and Religious Holidays: Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with one of us during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities should also contact Disability Support Services in the Ley Student Center. Any student who has a religious holiday that affects school work or conflicts with class meetings, please also speak to one of us; all such discussions will be confidential.

We all learn in different ways. Please feel free to manage your classroom experience in the way that is best for you. You may make audio recordings of lectures or discussions, take pictures of the board, sit or stand wherever you like in the classroom, bring in food or beverages, leave the classroom when necessary, etc. Students who want transcripts for audio/visual material should let one or both of us know as soon as

possible so that we can make them. If there is something we can do to create a more comfortable learning environment for you, please never hesitate to ask, even if you're not registered with Disability Services.

Pronouns, Names, and Titles: In this class, everyone has the right to go by the name and pronouns (e.g., she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/their) that they prefer. You may introduce yourself using whatever name you wish to use and should write your preferred name on all assignments. You are welcome to address either of us as you feel comfortable, either using our first names (Laura: she/her/hers; Claire: she/her/hers) or titles (Prof. or Dr. Heath-Stout; Ms. Spadafora).

Reading and Assignments

January 13 **Introduction**

January 15* **What is Heritage?**

Harrison 2010 "What is Heritage?" In Harrison (ed.) *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*: 5-13; 25-26.

Hoelscher 2011 "Heritage." In Macdonald (ed.) *A Companion to Museum Studies*: 198-216.

Solnit 2019 "Monumental Change and the Power of Names." In Solnit, *Whose Story is This? Old Conflicts, New Chapters*: 163-169.

Stolberg 2015 "Even as museum piece, confederate flag is in dispute." *New York Times* <https://nyti.ms/1H42iRG>

Bankoff 2015 "Who is Bree Newsome, the Woman Who Took Down South Carolina's Confederate Flag?" *New York Magazine* <https://nym.ag/39FOMcZ>

January 20 **No Class**

View *The Great Museum* (2014, 99 min) on your own time: <https://rice.kanopy.com/video/great-museum>

January 22* **A History of Heritage**

West and Ansell 2010 "A history of heritage." In West (ed.) *Understanding Heritage in Practice*: 7-42.

January 27* **What is a Museum?**

Dillenberg 2011 "What, if anything, is a museum?" *Exhibitionist*: 8-13.

Handler 1993 "An anthropological definition of the museum." *Museum Anthropology*: 33-36.

Alpers 1991 "The museum as a way of seeing." In Karp and Lavine (ed) *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*: 25-32.

Duncan 1998 "The Art Museum as Ritual." In *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*: 7-20.

January 29

Objects: Power, Memory, Narrative

Museum Visit: MFAH

Greenblatt 1991 "Resonance and wonder." In Karp and Lavine (ed) *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*: 42-57.

Moser 2010 "The devil is in the detail: Museum displays and the creation of knowledge." *Museum Anthropology*: 22-32.

February 3*

Museums in Historical Context

Duncan 1998 "From the Princely Galley to the Public Art Museum." In *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*: 21-47.

Ames 1992 "The Development of Museums in the Western World." In *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes*: 15-24.

Keene, S 2006 "Can museums survive the postmodern?" *Archaeology International*: 36-39.

February 5*

Evocative Objects

Paper #1: Exhibit Comparison due at start of class

Turkle 2007 "Things that matter." In *Evocative Objects*: 3-10.

Select two of the following object chapters to read from Turkle: Mann (World Book, 179-183), McLaughlin (Bracelet, 111-117), Mitten (Axe Head, 119-125), or Pollack (Rolling Pin, 225-231).

Stewart 1993 "Objects of Desire: Part I: The Souvenir." In *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*: 132-151.

February 10*

Objects in Collections: Why Do We Collect?

Clifford 1985 "Objects and selves." In Stocking (ed) *Objects and Others*: 236-245.

Wells 2015 "Collecting art for love, not money." *New York Times*,
<https://nyti.ms/1OzSzsW>

Macdonald 2011 "Collecting Practices." In Macdonald (ed) *A Companion to Museum Studies*: 81-95.

Stewart 1993 "Objects of Desire: Part II: The Collection, Paradise of Consumption." In *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*: 151-166.

February 12*

The Cultural Biography of Things

Appadurai 1986. "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value." In Appadurai (ed) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, 3-63.

(Last names A-F read 3-29, skim last pages and Kopytoff)

Appadurai 1986. "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value." In Appadurai (ed) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, 3-63.

(Last names G-S read 29-58, skim first pages and Kopytoff)

Kopytoff 1986 "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process. In Appadurai (ed) *The Social Life of Things*: 64-91.

(Last names T-Z read 64-91, skim Appadurai)

February 17

Objects and their Stories

In-class 3-min Presentations

Paper #2: The Power of Objects due at end of class

February 19

**Flipping the Narrative: Biographies of the Objects Themselves
Museum Visit: Menil Collection**

Van Dyke 2010. "Losing One's Head: John and Dominique de Menil as Collectors" In Schipsi and Helfenstein (ed) *Art and Activism: Projects of John and Dominique de Menil*: 119-137.

Papalexandrou 2018. "Collecting Greek Antiquities in the '60s: a group of Early Greek Bronze Horses in the Menil Collection." In *Biographies of Objects*: 1-23.

February 24*

Ethnographic Objects and "Primitive" Art

Ames 1992 *Cannibal tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums*: Chapt. 5-7 (pp. 47-76).

Errington 1998 "Three ways to tell the history of (primitive) art." In *The Death of Authentic Primitive Art and Other Tales of Progress*: 49-69.

Lidchi 2006. "Culture and Constraints: Further Thoughts on Ethnography and Exhibiting" *International Journal of Heritage Studies*: 93-111.

Chwatal 2018. "Decolonizing the Ethnographic Museum: Contemporary Art and the Weltmuseum Wien." *Art Papers* <https://www.artpapers.org/decolonizing-the-ethnographic-museum/>

February 26*

Exhibits and the Politics of Interpretation/Representation

Ames 1992 "Cannibal Tours, glass boxes and the politics of interpretation." In *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes*: 139-150.

Simpson 1996 "Cultural reflections." In *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-colonial Era*: 7-13

Trouillot 1995 "The Power in the Story." In *Silencing the Past*: 1-30.

Steinhauer 2018 "Museums Have a Duty to Be Political." *The Art Newspaper*.
<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/comment/museums-have-a-duty-to-be-political>

March 2*

Exhibiting Native American Culture and Art

Deloria 1969 "Anthropologists and Other Friends." In *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*: 78-100.

Lonetree 2012 "Introduction: Native Americans and Museums." In *Decolonizing Museums*: 1-22.

Shannon 2009 "The construction of native voice at the National Museum of the American Indian." In Sleeper-Smith (ed) *Contesting Knowledge: Museums and Indigenous perspectives*: 218-247.

March 4

Museum Visit: McDonald Hall of the Americas, HMNS

Nason 2004 "'Our' Indians: the unidimensional Indian in the disembodied local past." In *The Changing Presentation of the American Indian*: 29-45.

Berlo and Phillips 2004 "Our (museum) world turned upside down: Re-presenting Native American arts." In Preziosi and Farago (eds) *Grasping the World*: 708-715.

March 9*

Art and Heritage in its Context

Brunwasser 2012 "Zeugma After the Flood." *Archaeology*.

Bergmann 1996 "The Pregnant Moment: Tragic Wives in the Roman Interior." In Kampen (ed) *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece and Rome*: 199-218.

Kwon. "One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity." *October*: 85-110.

March 11*

When is Heritage Art? When is Art Heritage?

Museum Visit: Menil Collection

Mead 2007 "Den of Antiquity: The Met defends its treasures." *The New Yorker*.

Clarke 2003 "From Theory to Practice: Exhibiting African Art in the Twenty-First Century." In McClellan (ed) *Art and its Publics*: 165-182.

March 16

No Class - Spring Break

March 18

No Class - Spring Break

March 23*

The Value of Museums?

Cuno 2011. *Museums Matter: In Praise of the Encyclopedic Museum*: Introduction and Chapter 4: 1-9, 89-113.

Thomas 2016 "We need ethnographic museums today - whatever you think of their history." *Apollo* <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/we-need-ethnographic-museums-today-whatever-you-think-of-their-past/>

Cotter 2009. Why University Museums Matter. *New York Times*. <https://nyti.ms/2smQzgO>

March 25*

The Art Museum and its Discontents

Museum Visit: Moody Center for the Arts

Email update: How many reading responses do you have left? Due before start of class.

Wallach 1998. "The Battle over the 'West as America' and

Revisionism Has Transformed Art History but not Museums."
In Exhibiting Contradictions: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States: 105-123.

Corrin, 1994 "Mining the Museum: Artists Look at Museums, Museums Look at Themselves." In Corrin (ed) *Mining the Museum: An Installation by Fred Wilson*: 1-22.

March 30*

Looting / Ethics

Barker 2003 "Archaeological ethics: Museums and collections."
In Zimmerman (ed) *Ethical Issues in Archaeology*: 71-80.

Brodie and Sabrine 2018. "The Illegal Excavation of Syrian Cultural Objects: A View from the Ground." *Journal of Field Archaeology*: 74-84.

Freudenheim 2006 "Museum collecting, clear title, and the ethics of power." In King and Levin (eds) *Ethics and the Visual Arts*: 49-63.

April 1*

Repatriation

Cuno 2008 "Introduction: The Crux of the Matter." In *Who Owns Antiquity? Museums and the Battle Over Our Ancient Heritage*: 1-20.

Tythacott and Arvanitis 2013 "Museums and Restitution: An Introduction." In Tythacott and Arvanitis (eds) *Museums and Restitution: New Practices, New Approaches*: 1-16.

Rose-Greenland 2016 "Cultural Internationalism and the Italian Model of Repatriation." *Brown Journal of World Affairs*: 143-154.

April 6*

Non-Western Views of Objects and Museums

Colwell 2017 "War Gods." In *Plundered Skulls and Stolen Spirits*: 13-25, 33-54.

Tapsell 2015 "Ko Tawa: Where are the glass cabinets? In Silverman (ed) *Museum as Process: Translating Local and Global Knowledges*: 262-278.

Kreps 2011 "Non-Western models of museums and curation." In Macdonald (ed) *A Companion to Museum Studies*: 457-469.

April 8*	Preservation and Conservation: The Western perspective Guest Speaker: Evelyn Mayberger <i>Due at start of class: Object selection for Museum Hack</i> Hedley 2003 "Long Lost Relations and Newfound Relatives: Issues in the Cleaning of Paintings." In <i>Appearance, Opinion and Change: Evaluating the Look of a Painting</i> : 172-178.
April 13*	Preservation and Conservation: Non-Western Objects Maynard 1975 "Restoration of aboriginal rock art: the moral problem." <i>Australian Archaeology</i> : 54-60. Hung 2003. "On Rubbings: Their Materiality and Historicity." In Zeitlin and Liu (eds) <i>Writing and Materiality in China</i> : 29-45. Kennedy 2009. "How to Conserve Art that Lives in a Lake." <i>New York Times</i> https://nyti.ms/2jENGX1
April 15	Guest Speaker: Abigail Diaz
April 20	In-class Presentations
April 22	No Class
Finals Week (Date TBA)	Final Presentations
May 4	Museum Hack due via email by 11:59 PM CT