

Dr. Elaine A. King

SYLLABUS: *Museums & Society*

Carnegie Mellon
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British Museum, London

“Museums have a basic role as educational institutions. The objects preserved in the collections of museums tell the saga of the earth through time. It is a fascinating story told with authentic specimens and artifacts. At the same time, it is important to remember that museums are not ends unto themselves. To accomplish their mission, they must provide pleasure and excitement as well as information and education.”

—Edson and Dean, *The Handbook for Museums*

Museums in America are changing inside and out. The museum has a new position in global communication, dissemination of information, and cultural understanding. New demands and expectations from various audiences—visitors, community, schools, donors—are challenging the way they organize their staffs, shape collections, and create exhibitions and programs.

Museums In the 21st Century: Audience, Mission, and Function:

Course Description: This course examines how art museums reveal much about the society in which they exist. The social and cultural ideologies of those who build, pay for, work in, and visit them all are part of the museum equation. Additionally we will consider the ways in which art history is (and has been) constructed by museum acquisitions, exhibitions, and installation and how this history is connected to the every increasing art market and its influences. In this class we also consider the ways in which museums are constructed and how the worldwide boom in museum architecture since the late 1980s has influenced the museum image and the public's interest. We will examine curatorial practice and exhibition strategies as they affect exhibitions and programs. The relationship between the cultural contexts of viewer and object, the nature of the translation of languages or aesthetic discourse, and the diverse ways in which art is understood as the materialization of modes of experience and communication will be examined and discussed. The course will have several field trips and guest speakers.

Learning Objectives

- The student who successfully completes this course will understand the basic functions of a museum how its mission evolves over time and the importance of audience relationships.
- The student will be able to evaluate what comprises a functioning museum today and why strategic planning is needed and needs to be revisited.
- The student will have the opportunity to analyze the field of museums and respond to what makes a good museum in the 21st century.
- The student will understand what is needed to create and sustain a significant museum.
- To provide the students an educational experience in the museum field by improving problem solving and critical thinking skills.
- Critically evaluate museum Web sites and interactive elements within a museum
- Have an understanding of the role of technology in museums

Requirements:

- Come to all classes on time and be an active contributor to class discussion.
- Complete all assigned readings for each class and projects.
- Complete all assignments and projects on time.
- Attend all outside trips to scheduled museums.

Method of Evaluation:

Grades are determined by the quality of the writings assignments, class participation, and attendance.

NOTE: Midterm is **NOT a traditional EXAM!** They are written assignments and are NOT in-class.

- **Course Assignments [3]:** **30% [10% each]**
 - a. **Analysis of a Museum** either the Carnegie Museum or the Frick—How is this institution evolving? Has it changed since its founding [year] and what is it doing to keep up with the evolving society? 4-5 pages.
 - b. **Review of an exhibition of your choice** at the Carnegie Museum
 - c. Third assignment to be announced.
- **Team Project Assignments: 2 groups** **Total: 40%**
 - a. Invention of a Museum for the Future
 - i. Project Abstract
Abstract Due: 17th February **5%**
 - ii. Group Presentation Project in class and in Ellis Gallery
(Presentation—all in groups receives the same grade: **20%**)
 - iii. Individual summary paper of the project and Museums and Society
Due-**6th May** in my door at Loge #408) **15%**
- **Take home Midterm Examination [Distributed on 24th February]**
 - a. **Due on 2nd March** **15%**
Type/double space, please!
NO FINAL EXAM
- **Class Participation/Attendance** **15%**

- a. Four or more absences will result in automatic failure.
- b. You cannot earn an "A" if you have more than three unexcused absences.
- c. You will **not be graded down** for disagreeing with the instructor or classmates. A free and lively discussion is the heart of all courses. However, You will need more than just your opinion—you need to substantiate your position. Keep up with the readings. Your arguments must reference in some way the assigned reading.

Letter grades will be awarded as follows:

A = 100-90

B = 89--80

C = 79-70

D= 69-60

R=Below-60

****NOTE:** Only at Mid-term are +/- **grades** given.

Please remember that I do grade on Improvement!

Difficulties/Disabilities:

If there is an individual who is in need of academic accommodations and who is registered with the office of services for Individuals with Disabilities, please make an individual appointment with the course instruction to discuss accommodations. Upon individual request, this syllabus can be made available in alternative forms. If any individual who is not registered with the office of services for Individual with Disabilities but has need of academic accommodations, please contact the office and this instructor.

Academic Integrity:

The very nature of higher education requires that students adhere to accepted standards of academic integrity. Therefore, Oakton Community College has adopted a Code of Academic Conduct and a Statement of Student Academic Integrity. These may be found in the Student Handbook. You may also find a summary of the Code of Academic Conduct in the College Catalog. Among the violations of academic integrity listed and defined are: cheating, plagiarism, falsification and fabrication, abuse of academic materials, complicity in academic dishonesty, falsification of records and official documents, personal misrepresentation and proxy, and bribes, favors, and threats. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of behaviors that constitute academic dishonesty. Pursuant to the due process guarantees contained in the Policy and Procedures on Student Academic Integrity, the minimum punishment for the first offense for a student found in violation of the standards of academic integrity is failure in the assignment. In addition, a disciplinary record will be established and kept on file in the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs for a period of 3 years.

Articles to be taken from the following along with other texts and posted on BB.

Gale Anderson, *Reinventing the Museum, The Evolving Conversation on the Paradigm Shift*, 2nd edition, (AltaMira Press, 2012)

Timothy Ambrose and Crispin Paine, *Museum Basics*, 3rd edition (Routledge 2012)

Civilizing Ritual, Carol Duncan

Mary (and Edward P.) Alexander, *Museums in Motion: an Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 2nd edition (AltaMira Press 2007)

Stephen E. Weil, *Making Museums Matter* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003)

Thinking about Exhibitions, Greenberg, Ferguson, Naire

Also significant articles will be posted.

Books on Reserve:

- Museum Governance. Mission, Ethics, Policy (Paperback), Marie C. Malaro
- National Standards and Best Practices for U.S... (Paperback)
- The American Association of Museums, Elizabeth E. Merritt
- Museum Marketing and Strategy: Designing Missions, Building Audiences, Generating Revenue and Resources by Neil G. Kotler, Philip Kotler, and Wendy I. Kotler

Introduction:

All museums share the responsibility of preserving and interpreting some aspect of our cultural and natural heritage for the benefit of the public and society. However, museums are more than the collections they house and the exhibits and programs they present. They are also comprised of people. Each museum is a complex network of individuals whose common goal is to create knowledge and to share information and experiences with other people, the museum audience. This course provides a broad introduction to the museum world. During part of the course we focus on what a museum is, and examines the various types of museum (art, history, natural history, science, etc.). The other part of the time we investigate the various jobs and responsibilities that people have within museums as they work on exhibitions, education, research, collection management, and conservation.

Topics to be explored:

What are the responsibilities of museums in today's society?

How have museums evolved?

- The forces that shaped the changes and growth of museums.
- The scope and breadth of museums in the 21st century, and whether a single definition of "museum" covers the diversity.

How are the essential purposes of museums changing?

- The roles that mission and vision play in shaping a museum's activities.
- How museums figure out how to offer something distinctive and valuable.

How is museum work changing and why?

- Who does the work and how it varies by museum type and size.
- How internal and external changes affect jobs and organizational structure.
- How non-profit life cycles affect the way organizations operates.
- The forces that are influencing changes in the way museums are structured and organized.
- Managing change.

What trends are shaping exhibitions today?

- The relationship between exhibitions and mission, vision, collections and audience.
- Where exhibition topics come from and who participates in exhibition planning.

***NOTE:** This can vary because of museum visits and other factors. We will meet several museum people. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus as necessary.









Students are encouraged to become familiar with the following:

Go to The American Alliance of Museums [formerly the American Association of Museums]: <http://www.aam-us.org/about-museums> -

These pages provide important information: Spend time viewing this:

- NAME (National Association of Museum Exhibition) <http://www.n-a-m-e.org/index.html>
- Curator's Committee (an SPC of AAM): <http://www.curcom.org/>
- Association of Art Museum Curators: <http://www.artcurators.org/>
- College Art Association: <http://www.collegeart.org/>
- Association of Art Museum Directors: <http://www.aamd.org/about/>
- Ethics of Acquisition. ICOM. (1970). <http://icom.museum/acquisition.html>

Interesting sites to visit regarding museums and mission statements:

-  The Exploratorium: <http://www.exploratorium.edu/>
-  United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: <http://www.ushmm.org/>
-  Te Papa Museum, <http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/pages/default.aspx>
-  Lower East Side Tenement Museum: <http://www.tenement.org/>
-  Wing Luke Asian Museum: <http://www.wingluke.org/>
-  The Metropolitan Museum of Art: <http://www.metmuseum.org/>
-  Science Museum of Minnesota: <http://www.smm.org/>
-  The Mashantucket Pequot Museum, Connecticut: <http://www.mashantucket.com>

WEEK ONE: 13 January

- Introduction to Class and Getting Acquainted Session/Syllabus
- Short Discussion on the following points:
- *Key Issues and Questions:* 1. What is a museum? Who established the first museums and why? What was their role or function? Why must museums change over time? What are the different types of museums? What are the similarities and differences between the different types of museums? What were the differences and similarities between the earliest museums founded in the U.S. and those in Europe and other parts of the world?
- Film: **The Changing Landscape of Museums Today**

Reading Assignment: on Blackboard: Check BB for reading assignments

- Cuno, "Against the Discursive Museum"
- Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, pp. 7 - 20
- Kimmelman, "Art, Money and Power"
- Malraux, *Museum Without Walls*
- Smith, "Memo to Art Museums"
- Winter, "Change in the American Art Museum"

Discuss Writing Assignment #1: An analysis of a museum—be sure to read the museum's mission statement — Due **3rd February**— 10%Detailed assignment sheet on BB.

WEEK TWO: 20 January

Discussion of Readings and **video on the evolution of the Lurve**.

Students are assigned groups: A, B or C. Get to know your group. Your group is posted on BB along with members emails.

Readings: Theme—Comprehensive Museum

Continue discussion from last week's readings. New Museology Chapter, Kimmelman and Roberta Smith's short texts, also be sure to have read:

Stephen's Weil's From Being about Something to Being For Someone: Ongoing Transformation

Future Readings: See BB

- Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*
- Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, pp. 21-71
- Hudson, *Museums of Influence*
- Elizabeth Alton, *How Historic Museums Are Focusing on Technology*

WEEK THREE – 28 January: MUSEUM Visit— 3 February: Frick Art Museum.

Meet at Frew St. behind Hunt Library at 9:00 AM:

Must be in place at CM at 9:30

Discussion on previous week's readings

Group Project Details:

Select from either I, II or III Projects: Each must select a different topic. Or, if the group comes up with another topic, please consult, Dr. King

Both groups should meet and discuss this prior to next class on the 10th February.

Abstract for group's Museum Project is due on 17th February

We will present your projects and data in the Ellis Gallery in April.

I will meet with the group in the future to discuss details, methods and etc.

Suggested Social Topics Surrounding Museums:**I. Evaluation of a museum's impact in Pittsburgh and its community.**

Select the Warhol, Mattress Factory, Carnegie Museum or Frick. You will be required to interview people [at the museum and community—students, faculty, etc, collect data and examine shows, etc. Trace archives, newspaper reviews, etc.

Who visits the museum? Who is its target audience? How does it try to extend its audience beyond a certain middle-class educated individual? School program?

Does it work closely with the universities in the city? Artists? The Elderly?

Select from the Warhol, Mattress Factory, Carnegie Museum or Frick. How has the programming changed over time? Use of new technology, social medium, outreach beyond its immediate locale?

Read this article from BB: Measuring the impact of museums on their communities: The role of the 21st century museum

II. Repatriation of Art-- Demands for restitution from museums.

Select a museum such as the National Gallery of Art in DC, Metropolitan Museum of Art or MOMA. Do an in-depth study about how it has dealt with stolen cultural works. Provide Data about this—artifacts, how found the art was found out to be stolen and how resolved. Numerous case studies exist on this topic.

Art repatriation is the return of art or cultural objects, usually referring to ancient or looted art, to their country of origin or former owners (or their heirs). The disputed cultural property items are physical artifacts of a group or society that were taken from another group usually in an act of looting, whether in the context of imperialism, colonialism or war. The contested objects range widely from sculptures and paintings to monuments and human remains. This especially applies to WWII and the Nazi's looting wealthy Jewish families.

- I can provide you with in-depth information on this subject also. Also, look up the book *Ethics in the Visual Arts*, King & Levin. It is in the library. NPR: <http://www.npr.org/2015/04/02/396688350/after-nazi-plunder-a-quest-to-bring-the-woman-in-gold-home>. Also, Two good movies to watch include: *The Monuments Men* and *Woman in Gold*

Who's Right? Repatriation of Cultural Property

<http://ipdigital.embassy.gov/st/english/publication/2010/10/20101022140412aidan0.7519953.html#axzz3wrlsKgbR>

III. THE MUSEUM AS INSTITUTION

The museum as a public institution is concerned not only with the ordering of objects and knowledge, but also with the ordering of people and society. We consider the continuing role of the museum visit as a 'civilizing ritual' (to use Carol Duncan's phrase) and an opportunity for the acquisition of social capital (see Pierre Bourdieu). Concerning the relationship of knowledge and power, the group is to examine how the museum may be regarded as a cultural artifact endowed with an aura of authority constructed through its 'scientific' classifications, its techniques of display, and the performance of curatorial expertise.

A great choice might be one of the Smithsonian museums in DC.

Should public museums be places where political argument happens? Why is this so rarely the case, especially when compared with politically engaged programming in museums in Europe, Mexico, South America and even parts of the Middle East?

Select a museum of your choice and analyze it beyond being a place that collects and organizes shows. Go on the web or try to get into its archive and examine the types of exhibitions it has presented over the past decade. What types of exhibitions are presented? What type of programming does it organize? Who serves on his board? Where does its funding come? Is there a particular ideology/political slant to its show? When it comes to create deep meaning and connection for visitors, how do programs and special events compare with exhibitions? Who is the director of the museum? Its curators and stuff?

Suggested readings: *

Barrett, J. 2011, *Museums and the Public Sphere*, Oxford: Wiley. (Chapter 2: 'Historical Discourses of the Museum', pp.45-80)

*Bennett, T. 1988, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', *New Formations* 4: 73-102. (Also republished in Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum*, see below)

*Hooper-Greenhill, E. 1992. *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 1: 'What is a Museum?', pp.1-22)

Lecture: Museums and Social Responsibility and change: This week will look at the role of socio-cultural institutions to preserve and promote public culture, and specifically at the museum. We will look into the institutionalization of public culture in Europe and the United States, with the notions of spectacle and public exhibitions, and examine how the modern museum balances the interests of the public with that of the government.

- The roles that mission and vision play in shaping a museum's activities.
- Do museums have a social responsibility?
- How can traditional museum agendas, that are manifest in deeply entrenched systems and structures, be challenged in order to bring about a museum sector that is better positioned to deliver on social inclusion agendas? What roles should they play in their communities?

- Should they be agents of social change or social justice?
- How are museums changing?
- How museums figure out how to offer something distinctive and valuable?

Due 3rd February: Writing Assignment #1: An analysis of a museum — — Bring this with you!

Readings: Methodologies - Museums and Display

Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing"

Baxandall, "Exhibiting Intention"

Coombes, "Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identity"

Cuno, "View from the Universal Museum"

Other to be announced.

Museum visit information:

Meet at Behind Hunt Library along Frew Street 9:00 AM

Must be in place at 9:30

King to collect Museum Analysis assignment

KEEP UP WITH THE ASSIGNED READINGS

Week Four: February 3rd: Visit to a Museum

WEEK FIVE: 10 February

- **Return graded assignments**
- **Assigned groups are to meet** to discuss their PROJECT
- **Discussion on the museum visit.**
- **Discussion on the readings.**
- **Viewing of video on Global Museums and Display.**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-PFHJK8Ioo>

Part 2: Conversation with Ann Temkin: http://youtu.be/zhvwmy_xOU
 Part 3: Conversation with Frances Morris: <http://youtu.be/Y0m7uWQCDJM>
 Part 4: Conversation with Suhanya Raffel: <http://youtu.be/emZe5mPnqHI>
 Part 5: Q&A: <http://youtu.be/ISRZGw1jFko>

II Writing Assignment: Due 24th February

Review of an exhibition at the Carnegie Museum—Take into consideration who is the targeted audience? What type of information is provided for viewers to help them gain a better understanding and context? Is it relevant to the people of Pittsburgh? What does it aim to accomplish? Who organized the show? Is it relevant to the community?

- **Readings BB:** The American Art Museum
 - Wallach, *Exhibiting Contradiction*
 - “A Success/Failure Matrix for Museums,” By Stephen E. Weil
 - Additional to be announced

Museum Visit Carnegie Museum of Art: 17th February. Marilyn Russell, Head of Education
 Meet Walk over or meet behind Hunt Library: 9:00 AM
 Must be in place at 9:30 promptly

Readings: BB:

To be announced: See Black Board.

Abstract for I & II’s group’s Museum Project is due on 17th February

WEEK SIX: 17 February: Museum Visit—Carnegie Museum of Art
Abstract for group’s Museum Project is due on 17th February

From here on you will be given weekly agenda sheets providing you with reading assignments and writing. Also, the focus of the class for that week.

Reminder II Assignment due on 24th February: Review of an exhibition.

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