

Introduction to Museum Studies

Course Syllabus

Instructor: Aliyah Muttaqi

Email: Aliyahmothlearning@gmail.com

Class Time: Monday or Thursday, 1:00-1:50 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time)

Course Description:

Welcome to Introduction to Museum Studies! As a student of this course, you will develop critical thinking around museum settings by analyzing how collections were obtained, what makes ownership of artifacts ethical, and how perceptions of cultures have been shaped by museums. In this course students will participate in class discussions and read articles each week to understand the nuances of problems in Western museums. This course is perfect for students who love trips to museums, history, science, and unique topics. This class meets once a week and is discussion based.

This course is designed to be an introduction into how museums work in the 21st century. Students will learn about the long-standing questions of ethics, colonialism and diversity in museum practices. As well as the treatment of cultural objects and heritage throughout time in museum settings. We will address this through analyzing articles on repatriation, laws, and practical issues such as cost and fragility of historical objects. Students will learn about different works of art and historical artifacts during classes as well. Throughout classes we will be looking at how history, art, anthropology and archaeology overlap in museum settings and develop critical thinking skills.

Objectives:

- To understand how to think critically about museums
- To understand what NAGPRA is
- To comprehend repatriation and have a grasp on current issues that involve repatriation
- To become familiar with the history of museums and how they have directly impacted studies and perception about race and culture
- To understand why studying museums is useful to Humanities, Social Sciences, and Law fields
- To have proactive thinking around diversity and develop problem solving skills

Text:

There is no required text for the course. Any readings will be made available electronically.

Schedule:

Week 1 & 2: *Introduction: Why Study Museums?*

Week 3 & 4: *What is a Museum?*

Week 5 & 6: *Treasure or Theft?*

Week 7 & 8: *What is Repatriation?*

Week 9 & 10: *NAGPRA*

Week 11 & 12: *Science and Race in Museums*

Week 13: *Fabricating Culture* (Pt.1)

Autumn Break

Week 14: *Fabricating Culture* (Pt.2)

Week 15 & 16: *Whose History?*

Winter Break

Week 17 & 18: *From Colonialism to Diversity*

Week 19 & 20: *Case Study - The Smithsonian*

Week 21 & 22: *Case Study – Berkeley*

Week 23 & 24: *Case Study – The British Museum*

Week 25: *Case Study – American Museum of Natural History* (Pt.1)

Spring Break

Week 26: *Case Study – American Museum of Natural History* (Pt.2)

Week 27 & 28: *Case Study – The Louvre*

Week 29 & 30: *The Culture of Community*

Week 31 & 32: *Moving Forward and Recent Developments*

Homework:

Students are required to complete readings outside of scheduled class days. It is recommended students take notes on readings to be prepared for the next meeting's discussion. There is no midterm or final for this course.

Student Expectations:

Cameras must be on throughout the semester.*

Students are required to participate in discussions.*

Grading is optional.

*For any exceptions, the reason must be listed in the sign-up form so we can accommodate your student's needs.