

HTS 3803-A; 8803-B: INTRODUCTION TO MUSEUM STUDIES

American Museum of Papermaking (AMP)
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Spring 2009, T, Th, 3:05 – 4:25
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COURSE OVERVIEW:

Museums have long played a vital role in the preservation of invaluable physical artifacts, manuscripts, books and documents, but they have also played an important role as research institutions and centers for scholarship. Perhaps most importantly, museums have also served as an accessible gateway for the public to explore and learn about history and culture. In this course, jointly taught by HTS professor August Giebelhaus and the Director of the Robert C. Williams American Museum of Papermaking, Cindy Bowden, we will explore a series of major topics in the field of museum studies. We will address such theoretical issues as the role of material culture in scholarly work and topics related to interpretation, preservation, and educational outreach. However, our intent is also to deal with a number of more practical and applied issues such as accessioning and registration of artifacts, exhibit design and planning, budgeting, fundraising, and public relations.

Using the venue and collections of the American Museum of Papermaking on campus we will combine classroom presentations and discussion with a fair degree of hands-on activity. For example when discussing systems of registering articles in a museum collection, students will all have experience in working with artifacts and learning how to record them. All museums are of course not historical in nature and some of you might find yourselves associated with an art, science, technology, or ethnographic museum at some point in your career. Many of the general issues that we will address should have valuable carry over to museum studies generally, without specific reference to historical or sociological content.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND METHOD OF ASSESSMENT:

The major capstone project for students in the course will be the research, design, and construction of a new museum exhibit, “The Art of the Book,” that will be displayed in the Neely Lobby on the main floor of the Georgia Tech Library and Information Center. All students in the class will be members of a curatorial committee to research and present a story board design for the new exhibit, culling artifacts from the Paper museum permanent collections. The class will be further subdivided into three other committees; one each for: (1) exhibit design and construction; (2) marketing and public relations, and (3) educational programs. Contributions of each class member to the committees will be evaluated by the other students in

each respective committee. Final grade evaluation will be based on the contributions of each student to the exhibit project (30%), a required research paper (30%), a mid-term exam (30%), and classroom discussion and contribution (10%). The written research paper related to our planned exhibit will be due on February 5, and the mid-term exam is scheduled for March 12.

Research Paper: Each student will be asked to research a topic related to the class museum exhibit project, "The Art of the Book." The main topics that we envision for the exhibit stem from the available artifacts in the museum permanent collections on bookmaking. They include, but are not limited to, the subjects of (1) papermaking; (2) marbling and paste paper; (3) gilding; (4) binding; (5) typeface; and (6) illustrations. In a carefully written 7-10 page paper (typed, double-spaced), each student will report on their research and make their material available to the class for purposes of designing the museum exhibit. The special library collections of the American Museum of papermaking will be available to everyone for their research, but we will expect students to also seek information from online sites, other libraries, and additional sources. The paper must contain a bibliography and appropriate citation reference in the form of either footnotes or endnotes. We remind you that the paper is due on February 5; this relatively early date is necessary so that we can incorporate individual research into the class planning of the exhibit itself.

GEORGIA TECH HONOR CODE:

Students in this class will be expected to abide by the honor code and avoid any instances of academic misconduct including but not limited to: 1) possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or oral information in the preparation of an exam or paper; 2) substitution of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another individual or individuals; 3) false claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the student. See published Honor Code for additional information (the full text of the code, the history of its development and implementation, and other related information may be found on the web at <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/>).

REQUIRED TEXT: (available at Georgia Tech and Engineer's Bookstores)

Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord (eds.), *The Manual of Museum Exhibitions*. AltaMira Press: New York and Oxford, 2001. ISBN # 978-0-7591-0234-7

In addition to the assigned readings in the above two texts, article length pieces on special topics listed on the syllabus have been placed on on-line reserve at the Georgia Tech Library and Information Center.

CLASS CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS:

Week 1: January 6, 8

Topic: What is a Museum?

- the history and role of museums
- different kinds of museums: size and function
- introduction to the field of museum studies

- formation of the curatorial team for the class project exhibit

Reading: Lord and Lord, Chapters 1, 2; Nancy Villa Bryk, “Reports of our Death have Been Greatly Exaggerated: Reconsidering the Curator”

Week 2: January 13, 15

Topic: Registration and Care of Artifacts

- importance of physical objects in understanding culture
- accessioning and registration of artifacts
- preservation, environmental monitoring, and control
- borrowing, lending, and insuring of collections

Reading: Lord and Lord, Chapter 10; John T. Schlebecker, “The Use of Objects in Historical Research;” Steven M. Beckow, “Culture, History, and Artifact;” James B. Gardner, Collections Planning;

Week 3: January 20, 22

January 20 Topic: Exhibition Planning

- what are the steps to creating a museum exhibit?
- graphics and design -- music, lighting, and display
- differing approaches for different types of exhibitions
- evaluation before, during, and after the exhibit
- **Reading:** Lord and Lord, chapters 3, 4, 6; Kathleen McLean, “Museum Exhibitions and the Dynamics of Dialogue”

January 22: Neely Lobby, Georgia Tech Library and Information Center. We will meet at the opening of the College of Architecture exhibit entitled “Documenting design: The Work of Alan Buchsbaum,” at 4:00. We are attending this exhibit opening to get us thinking about our own exhibit planned for the same space, and to also think about the organization of our own opening on April 23.

Week 4: January 27, 29

Topic: Creating a Story Board for an Exhibition

- interpretive planning and thematic structure
- the story board as visual description of the script
- artifacts and story boards
- determining style, color, and use of appropriate imagery

Reading: Lord and Lord, chapters 10 – 13; Jane and Ed Bedno, “Museum Exhibitions: Past Imperfect, Future Tense”

Week 5: February 3, 5

February 3 Topic: Museums, Archives, and Research

Guest Speaker: Jody Lloyd Thompson, Director, Georgia Tech Archives

- the museum as research center
- working with archives
- archival practices
- dealing with the public

Reading: Richard Pearce-Moses, “Janus in Cyberspace: Archives on the Threshold of the Digital Era;” “John Carlin, “Your Past is Disappearing”

February 5 Topic: How to Create an Exhibit – Research Paper Due

Guest Speaker: Juan Chevere, Program Manager, American Museum of Papermaking

- building an exhibit
- presentation of types of exhibit display
- hands-on instruction in creating displays
- initial planning of the “Art of the Book” exhibit

Reading: Lord and Lord, chapters 14-15

Week 6: February 10, 12

February 10 Topic: Museums and Education: How to Reach an Audience

Guest Speaker: Fran Rottenberg, Education Curator, American Museum of Papermaking

how to address different age groups

- how to address different age groups
- meeting the needs of tour groups
- dealing with school groups
- working with school curricula

Reading: Lord and Lord, chapters 16, 17; Mihlay Csikszentmihalyi and Kim Hermanson, “What Makes Visitors Want to Learn”

February 12 Topic: Meeting the Special Needs of Tour Groups and Individual visitors

Guest Speaker: Carrie Bruce, Research Scientist, Georgia Institute of Technology

- making museum public space accessible
- dealing with people with disabilities
- planning flexibility into museum exhibits
- large-print labels, tactile experiences, and other ways to reach diverse audiences

Reading: Lord and Lord, chapter 5

Week 7: February 17, 19

Topic: The “Art of the Book” Exhibit: Planning Education Programs

- review of story board and evaluation of the script
- developing exhibition text
- defining educational goals
- preparation of supplemental materials and hand-outs

Reading: Lord and Lord, chapters 7, 8

Week 8: February 24, 26

Topic: Marketing and Public Relations

Guest Speaker: Julie Herron Carson, Media Consultant, formerly with Atlanta Botanical Gardens

- press releases
- dealing with the media
- memberships
- public relations

Reading: Andy Leon Harney, “Moneychangers;” Thomas Aageson, “Five Steps to Effective Museum Marketing”

Week 9: March 3, 5

Topic: Ethics and Museums

- ethics in the obtaining of artifacts and collections
- what and how to exhibit?
- dealing with controversial subjects
- influence of sponsors and financial patrons

Reading: Lord and Lord, Chapter 18; William L. Boyd, “Museums as Centers of Controversy” Franklin Robinson, “The Moral Dilemma of American Art Museums.” Neil Harris, “Exhibiting Controversy”

Week 10: March 10, 12

March 10 Topic: Museum Administration

- legal status and managerial structures
- management and staff
- building a museum board
- how to use a museum board

Reading: Marie C. Malaro, “Museum Governance”; Harold Skramstad, “Working Model for the Effective Board”

March 12: Midterm Examination

Week 11: March 16-20: Spring Break – No Classes

Week 12: March 24, 26

Topic: Budget and Planning

- making a budget
- elements of financial planning
- human resources
- operating costs: supplies and equipment

Reading: Lord and Lord, chapter 9; Jerold Kappel, “Hard Money”

All Public Relations News Releases and Invitations to the April 23 Opening should be sent out by March 26

Week 13: March 31, April 2

March 31 Topic: Fund Raising

- museum memberships
- sources of external funding
- the role and importance of grant writing
- a role for commercial sponsorship?

Reading: John E. Rorer, “Developing an Arsenal: Strategies for Slaying the Financial Dragon”; Harriet Fowler, “Fear and Loathing in Lexington”

April 2 Topic: Web Design and New Museum Technologies

Guest Speakers: Tom Bowden, Georgia State University and Jack English. Broadcast Solutions

- how to build a web site
- new educational technologies
- electronics in the new museum
- podcasts/cell phone tours

Reading: George F. McDonald, “Digital Visionary;” Brian Wallace and Katherine Jones-Garmil, “What Will the Internet Mean to Museums;” James Yasko, “Podcasting in Museums;” John Chadwick, “The Origins of Museum-L”

Week 14: April 7, 9

Topic: Final Layouts for “Art of the Book” Exhibit

Week 15: April 14, 16

Topic: Exhibition Set-up, Neely Lobby of the Georgia Tech Library and Information Center

Week 16: April 21, 23

Topic: Museum Exhibit Final Set-up

Exhibit Opening: April 23, 4:30 to 6:00