

Anthropology 20A **Introduction to Museum Studies** Fall 2009
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Important! The dates, assignments and activities in this syllabus are subject to change.

This course is intended to introduce the student to professional careers in museums and galleries, and to working with artifacts and folk art. The course will cover most aspects of the management and work of museums, but will concentrate most intensely upon the planning, design, and installation of an exhibit of items from one or several cultures.

Textbook: *The Manual for Museum Exhibitions*, Lord and Lord

This is mostly a "hands on" type of class, meaning that as a major part of this course students will be engaged in the running of the ECC Anthropology Museum, and in designing and installing the year's exhibit. These activities are meant, together with the course texts and lectures, to impart information to the student for which the student is responsible. There will be a midterm and final exam on the text, reserve readings, and lecture material. The midterm will have multiple choice questions, and the final will be part essay, part multiple choice questions. There may also be one or two short documents that the student will collaborate upon and submit for evaluation.

Course Objectives

1. Describe the historical development of museums.
2. Identify the differences among various categories of museums and discuss the effect of these differences in scale on museum organization.
3. Evaluate the role played in museum operations by curators, conservators, exhibits designers, preparators, registrars, collections managers, and education staff in order to understand the training that is appropriate to enter these careers.
4. Prepare drafts of various policies which govern museums in the areas of a museum's mission, object acquisition, and ethics.
5. Recognize the environmental and physical factors which endanger an artifact and the safeguards and technology utilized in artifact conservation.
6. Apply techniques of collections management including how to (1) pack valuable and delicate objects for transit, (2) recognize and document materials, problems, and damage in objects in a condition report, (3) make photographic records of artifacts and of damage and (4) handle and store objects with different environmental requirements.
7. Identify how to conduct artifact registration including managing a collection

database.

8. Research and create an exhibit plan which would lay out the themes and organization of an exhibit.
9. Prepare a scale design for a section of an exhibit with multiples views, and showing the position of objects, props, furniture, mounts, graphics, and labels by both traditional means and by using an autocad system.
10. Install a section of an exhibit with objects, mounts, furniture, graphics, labels, and props.
11. Research and write label copy for an exhibit that would organize and presents an exhibit's themes, and which describes and explains the significance of objects on view.
12. Identify current trends in museum exhibit type, planning, and design.

The grade will rest upon attendance (including attendance upon any field trips), completion of lab hours, several short tests covering material in the texts and lectures, contributions to class projects, completion of the stages of the development of the year's exhibit, the installation of the exhibit, and a final exam.

Mounting an exhibit demands a fair amount of responsibility, so it is critical that students adopt a responsible attitude towards participating in the work of the class. Absences will have a detrimental effect on a student's grade in proportion to the total number of absences beyond three, and how the absences affect the carrying out of an installation. Non-disruptive absences from class meetings can be mitigated by putting extra time into the museum.

The student also shares in the fiduciary responsibility of the Anthropology Museum for proper care while handling rare and fragile borrowed objects. To participate in this class the student must pass on the first try the object handling test. Even after passing the test if the student displays carelessness in handling objects the student will be dropped from the class.

Students must also complete **condition reports** on every artifact that they request and receive before the exhibit's opening. This ensures that the student knows which artifacts fall under their responsibility, and is knowledgeable about their condition.

Grading

The grade will be thus distributed:

exams	35%
attendance	28%
development and installation of exhibit	37%

How does the grading system work? You receive points for each test:

35 pts. for the object handling test

25 pts. for the first midterm
 50 pts. for the second midterm
80 pts. For the final
 = 190 pts

and points for each contribution:

preliminary exhibit plan.....40 pts.
 draft of label copy.....10 pts
 final label copy.....40 pts.
 draft exhibit section design.....10 pts.
 final exhibit section design.....40 pts.*
 installation.....60 pts.

= 200 pts

* If it is a computer-assisted design.....30 bonus pts. !

The due dates for these assignments will be listed in the syllabus but may be adjusted, given shifting circumstances. A notation will be marked on those assignments done on time, and then they will be handed back to be retained by the student in a **portfolio** until the end of the semester. The portfolio will then be handed in to the instructor and reviewed during the final period. The grade on assignments handed in late will be dropped 10% per class meeting it is late, and I will be strict on this! Designs handed in during the last three weeks of class will receive no credit.

Installation: Following the exhibit opening, I will examine exhibits and grade the installation, including label copy and conservation aspects. Notes on the exhibit will be given to the student – amounting to areas where points have been deducted. The student has until the end of the semester to act on the notes to receive a restoration of ½ of the points that have been deducted.

Museum Time Requirements

The time requirements for the class are 5 hours per week: three hours lab, two hours lecture (Friday's class meeting counts as a lab). This amounts to **85 hours** for the semester. The grading, with respect only to the time portion of the class requirement, will therefore be as follows:

85 hours+ = A = 150 pts. (100%)
 77-84 hours = B = 120 - 135 pts. (80-90%)
 68-76 hours = C = 105 - 119 pts. (70-79%)
 60-67 hours = D = 90 - 104 pts. (60-69%)

Attendance: You will be given a **timesheet** upon which you will record all of the time

you put into every aspect of the class. The timesheet will be handed in on the last day of class. Decisions can't be made and the exhibit can't advance without the attendance of involved students at class meetings. Any student with six consecutive absences will be dropped and not readmitted. If you are tardy to class, that is if you show up after I have taken attendance, this will count as ½ of an unexcused absence resulting in a 30 min. time deduction. I will compare your timesheet against my attendance records at the end of the semester, and I will go exclusively with my records in the case of excessive discrepancies (3+).

What is acceptable as lab time?: Generally, any expenditure of time towards the realization of your exhibit is acceptable as lab time on your time sheet – this includes, in addition to time spent in the workroom or gallery, sessions with the Vectorworks tutorial, research, trips to see comparable exhibits, trips to pick up or return artifacts, time spent in writing labels, making designs, etc. However, obviously it is crucial that the net result of time invested outside of lecture is an exhibit which is **complete** by the opening reception. If your exhibit is substantially incomplete by the date of the reception, then the most points you may earn towards the time requirement is 119. As it is, your claims towards time spent on research will be evaluated against the evidence of your exhibit – e.g. if you claim 5 hours visiting web sites related to tile and brick making, and the result is a label reading "**Brick**" I will be more than a little skeptical. Time spent researching topics unrelated to your final exhibit will also be discounted. If you undertake a special trip, please seek clearance from me first and supply material evidence of this trip with your time sheet (a receipt of some kind will do).

Extra Credit

Students may also make up point deficits by putting more time above 150 pts. into the museum, to the tune of 4 points per hour.

Final Grade

The maximum number of points that can be earned outside of extra credit is 540. Therefore, the **semester grade scale** will be

$$540 - 486 = A$$

$$485 - 432 = B$$

$$431 - 378 = C$$

$$377 - 324 = D$$

Week	Subject Matter
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- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Introduction to museums and museum work:
Survey of Museums through space and time
Museum organization and careers in museums
Discussion of the upcoming exhibit |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The mission of museums: mission statements, policies, and ethics.

Introduction to the ECC Anthropology Museum's policies

Lord and Lord: Chpt. 1, Chpt. 4 to pg. 57.

Activity: Tour of the El Camino Anthropology Museum

Assignment: Begin to develop the preliminary exhibit plan and bibliography. Begin background research on the exhibit in order to be able to choose a section of the exhibit to work on.

- 2 Background lecture on the Museum theme: Tibetan history and culture.
Lord and Lord: Chpts. 2-3,5 to pg. 110

Introduction to Vectorworks: the museum's autocad software.

Activity: compose exhibit teams, and select an area of the exhibit to be designed.

Assignment: Revise exhibit plan with regard to your team's section.

- 3 Exhibit planning I: Types of exhibits and the development of an exhibit plan.

The museum environment, artifact handling and conservation.

Lord and Lord: Chpt. 5: 110-141, Chpts. 6 & 8 to pg. 296, Chpt. 11

Activity: training in museum environmental equipment and artifact handling.

Revised exhibit plan due Friday September 18th

- 4 Lecture: Collections management and registration

Activity: demonstration of Microsoft Access

Lecture and activity: the documentation and packing of art and artifacts. Training in museum photography and packing techniques.

Exhibit planning II - Designing an exhibit: exhibit structure and display psychology

Lord and Lord: Chpt. 7

Preliminary artifact list due Friday September 25th

Fri. Sept. 25th Test #1: artifact handling and conservation (note, you will be asked to drop this class if you don't pass this test; passing is 70%)

- 5 Exhibit planning III: Creating an exhibit design: principles and techniques

Lord and Lord: Chpt. 13

Activity: exhibit drawing exercise

Assignment: Design exhibit section

Friday Oct. 2nd: exam on Tibetan history and culture

6 Exhibit planning IV – Curatorship - labels and graphics

Lord and Lord: Chpt. 10; Chpt. 12

Activity: demonstration of the museum's vinyl cutter

Monday October 5th, draft of exhibit section design due. (note: you will not be permitted to proceed on to the installation until draft and final exhibit designs are submitted).

Artifact arrangement and the making of furniture ("props").

Activity: carpentry and plexiglass demonstrations

Assignment – commence composing the final section design.

7 **Monday October 12th Midterm 2 on textbook readings and lectures**

Exhibit Execution: light and color Lord and Lord: Chpt. 15

Mount-making in various media

Activities: Dismantling of current exhibit; Mount-making demonstration

Friday October 16th Final exhibit design due, with list of necessary materials.

8 Packing and shipping/registration of incoming artifacts

Wednesday October 21st: draft of introductory label copy due

9 **Activity:** put out Day of the Dead display.

10 **Day of the Dead Reception Monday, November. 2nd**

Work on exhibits **Friday November 6th, final version of label copy due.**

11 Commence construction of exhibits.

- 12 Work on exhibits.
- 13 Work on exhibits.
- 14 Work on exhibits.
- 15 **Exhibit Opening Wednesday December 9th** Work on exhibits must be completed before noon on this date.

Receive notes on exhibit.

Museums and education Lord and Lord: Chpt. 8.4

Activity: correct exhibit flaws; clean up of installation aftermath.

Lecture: Funding and Grant Writing

- 16 Future trends in museums Lord and Lord: Chpt. 18

Activity: Behind the scenes tour (TBA)

Review for final

Dec. 18th: Deadline for responding to exhibit notes.

- 16 **Final Exam/portfolios due on last class meeting.**