

ANTH 4720 Museums and Anthropology (2024-25)

Teacher: Dr. Sharon Wong Wai-yee

Office: NAH408, Humanities Bldg, New Asia College.

Phone: 3943 7705 (office) Email: sharonwwy@cuhk.edu.hk

Lecture: Tuesday 10:30-12:15pm UCA_104

Tutorial: Tuesday 1:30-2:15pm UCC_109

Course Outline

Museums are important institutions and serve contemporary societies' economic, social and political needs. This course aims to study the issues on museology from anthropological perspectives. What is a museum? Why are museums established? Who needs museums? The course will examine museums' origin, classification, structure, function and practice with examples from art, history, and anthropology exhibits worldwide, and students are encouraged to find their examples. The course will introduce the collection, management, exhibition design, and techniques in museums; discuss museums and ArtTech. This course will also analyze how national identities and gender are constructed and enhanced through exhibitions; and discuss roles played by different stakeholders of museums from the (inter)national, regional and local communities.

Major contents of this course

1. What is a museum? Why do museums occur? Who needs museums?
2. The cultural contexts and classification of modern museums
3. Basic practices of museums: acquisition, documentation, preservation, exhibition design, presentation, education and research
4. Museology from an anthropological perspective: collection and colonialism; exhibition and stereotyping, identity construction and gender interpretation; the social inclusion, public engagement and other roles of modern museums; museums and ArtTech
5. Museum in the 21st century- debates on its cultural, economic, social and political roles

Learning outcomes

After taking this course, students are expected to:

- understand the basic functions of museums;
- understand the economic, social and political roles played by museums in contemporary societies;
- have a basic knowledge on museum practices from exhibition design to visitor

study;

- develop the ability to integrate data from different disciplines and present data in a well-organized manner;
- cultivate the ability of critical thinking, particularly through analyzing exhibition contents.

Learning activities

2-hour lectures and 1-hour tutorial per week for one semester, including a museum field trip

Grade descriptors are as follows for the assessment of this course:

Grade Overall course

- A Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
- A- Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
- B Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
- C Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
- D Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes
- F Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Course Assessment

(1) Participation and discussion in the tutorials (10%)

(2) Group presentation (10%)

(3) Mid-term report, approximately 12-15 pages (40%)

Student will be required to write 12-15 pages individual paper on a study of the missions, and the ways it is illustrated through the collections, building and exhibition design, etc. of a selected museum (Due date 1st November, Friday, 5pm)

(4) Final paper, approximately 12-15 pages (40%)

Student will be required to write 12-15 pages individual paper on a study of selected topic(s) from lecture 9-13 of selected museum(s) (Due date 6th December, Friday, 5pm)

Lecture topics and reading materials

NB: Required readings are essential for the lectures and tutorial. Students are expected to finish all the weekly readings before the lecture and tutorial.

Medium of instruction

Cantonese

Submissions & academic honesty

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on academic honesty; and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on cheating in examinations and plagiarism. Any such offence will lead to disciplinary action including possibly termination of studies at the University. Students should know how to properly use source material and how to avoid plagiarism.

As required by the university, from Sept. 2008, students must submit a soft copy of their computer-generated text assignments to VeriGuide at a specified URL. The system will issue a receipt containing a declaration of honesty statement. Students should sign the receipt, print a hard copy of their assignment, and **submit the hard copy and the receipt to teachers for grading**. The university says that assignments without the receipt will NOT be graded.

Please check the website "Honesty in Academic Work" at:

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> for more information on plagiarism and on how to submit papers through VeriGuide

Lecture Topics

Week 1 (3rd Sep.)

Introduction: What is a museum? Definition, objectives, classification and structures of modern museums

Required Readings:

ICOM 2022. *ICOM Statutes*. Prague: 26th General Assembly of ICOM.

Preziosi and Farago eds. 2004. "What are Museums for?" In *Grasping the World: the Idea of the Museum*. Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, pp.1-21.

Pearce, Susan. 1999. "Museums of Anthropology or Museums as Anthropology?", *Anthropologica* 41 (1): 25-33.

Week 2 (10th Sep.)

The occurrence of museums: Historical background and issues for the birth of museums

Required Readings:

Macdonald, Sharon. 2016. "New Constellations of Difference in Europe's

21st-Century Museumscape.” *Museum Anthropology* 39(1): 4-19.

Denton, Kirk A. 2014. *Exhibiting the Past: Historical Memory and the Politics of Museums in Postsocialist China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, Chapter 1.

Week 3 (17th Sep.)

Museums, power, capital and class: A comparative study of the founding and development of museums in China and Europe

Required Readings:

Lu, Tracey L-D. 2014. *Museums in China: Materialized Power and Objectified Identities*. Oxford: Routledge, Chapters 3-5.

Friedel, Julia, von Gliszczynski, Vanessa. 2019. “Collected. Bought. Looted? Case Studies from a Colonial and National Socialist Context.” *Bought Collected Looted? How Things Came into the Museum*. Frankfurt: Historisches Museum Frankfurt, pp.55-63.

Week 4 (24th Sep.)

Museums and buildings: Discuss buildings, symbolic structures, the environments of museums, and the relationship between buildings, museums and preservations

Required Readings:

徐明福 2001 《英法博物館建築之旅》 35-49 , 96-117 , 148-164 頁。台南：台灣建築與文化資產出版社。

Week 5 (1st Oct.) National Day (Public Holiday, No Class).

Week 6 (8th Oct.)

Basic practices of museums: acquisition, documentation and preservation

Required Readings:

Burcaw, G. E. 1997. *Introduction to Museum Work*. New York: AltaMira Press, Chapters 7-12.

Biedermann, Bernadette. 2017. “‘Virtual Museums’ as Digital Collection Complexes. A Museological Perspective Using the Example of Hans-Gross-Kriminalmuseum.” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 32(3): 281-297.

Week 7 (15th Oct.)

Exhibition design: constructing the framework and engaging visitor involvement

Required Readings:

Lord, Barry and Gail Lord. 2014. *The Manual of Museum Exhibition*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, pp.233-250.

Suggested Reading:

George, Adrian. 2015. *The Curator's Handbook: Museums, Commercial Galleries, Independent Spaces*. London: Thames & Hudson, pp.39-59.

Week 8 (22nd Oct.)

Presentation and exhibition techniques

Required Readings:

Lord, Barry and Gail Lord. 2014. *The Manual of Museum Exhibitions*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, pp.293-338.

鄭建榮 2014 《博物館展示規劃經驗之要點》，《陶博館研究集刊 2013-2014》，新北：新北市立鶯歌陶瓷博物館，88-97 頁。

Suggested Reading:

Heike Zech (ed.) 2023. *Horizons. Histories and Future of Migration*. Nürnberg: Germanischen Nationalmuseums, pp.28-55, 66-81, 116-121.

Week 9 (29th Oct.)

Education and ArtTech: Museum as (in)formal education institute; can ArtTech replace museum objects?

Required Readings:

Ambrose, Timothy. 2012. *Museum Basics*. London: Routledge. (General Reference book)

Calvi, Licia and Vermeeren, Arnold P.O.S. 2024. “Digitally Enriched Museum Experiences – What Technology Can Do.” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 39(3):335-356.

****Mid-term Report: completed report with Veriguide receipts to be submitted to Blackboard by 5pm Friday, 1st November.**

Week 10 (5th Nov.)

Museum, identity and civil society

Required Readings:

Massola, Catherine. 2023. “Community Collections: Returning to an (Un)imagined Future.” *Museum Anthropology* 46(1): 59–69.

Sandell, Richard. 1998. “Museums as Agents of Social Inclusion.” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 17(4): 401-418.

Week 11 (12th Nov.)

Museum and gender

Required Readings:

Heitman, Carrie C. 2017. "The Creation of Gender Bias in Museum Collections: Recontextualizing Archaeological and Archival Collections from Chaco Canyon, New Mexico." *Museum Anthropology* 40 (2): 128-142.

Belk, Russell W. and Wallendorf, M. 2003. "Of Mice and Men: Gender Identity and Collecting." In Susan M. Pearce ed. *Interpreting Objects and Collections*. London, New York: Routledge, pp.240-253.

Week 12 (19th Nov.)

Ecomuseum and its roles

Required Readings:

Chang, Yui-tan. 2009. *Ecomuseums: The Rise of a Cultural Movement*. Nantou: Five Senses Arts Management Association, pp. 190-236.

Week 13 (26th Nov.)

Museums in the 21st century: marketing, globalization and cultural diplomacy

Required Readings:

Grincheva, Natalia. 2020. "Digital Heritage Imperialism: A History of the World in 100 Objects" in *Museum Diplomacy in the Digital Age*. London: Routledge, chap.4.

****Final Paper:** completed paper with Veriguide receipts to be submitted to Blackboard by 5pm Friday, 6th December.

Tutorial topics

Week 1: No tutorial. Students to prepare and read readings.

Week 2

Discussion: what can we learn from the historical context of museum occurrence?

Week 3

Discussion: is museum a place to trivialize or glorify culture?

Week 4

Discuss the function of museum buildings, the environments of museums, and the relationship between buildings, museums and preservations

Week 5 Public holiday. No tutorial. Students to prepare and read readings.

Week 6 Discussion: the practices of museums and exhibition design

Week 7-8

No tutorials. Two tutorials together will be replaced by a museum fieldtrip. Students

to form small groups and prepare for the group presentation

Week 9

Group presentation and discussion: Museum as (in)formal education institute; Can ArtTech replace museum objects?

Week 10

Group presentation and discussion: museum, identity and civil society

Week 11

Group presentation and discussion: issues about museum and gender

Week 12

Group presentation and discussion: ecomuseum and its roles

Week 13

Group presentation and discussion: challenges and problems for museums in the 21st century