

## **MST 502 Museum Exhibition**

### **Spring 2009 Section: 001**

#### **Thursday 4:00 – 6:30, Figge Art Museum**

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Wednesday, 2-3:00 at QC campus;

Thursday, 1-3 at Figge Art Museum; anytime by appointment

### **Purpose/Goals**

The goals of this course are threefold 1) to provide students with an understanding of current theories, research tools, and practices used in museum exhibition planning; 2) to explore exhibitions in a variety of museums and gain insights from museum curatorial staff; and 3) to gain hands-on experience in the research, planning, installation, and programming processes involved through the curatorial experience culminating with student-generated exhibitions.

### **Outcomes (skills developed during the course)**

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- ✓ Interpret museum objects using a theoretical framework
- ✓ Articulate a definition of exhibitions and their significance to museums
- ✓ Develop exhibition questions and thesis statements
- ✓ Use the research process to address questions through writing and interpretative planning and programming
- ✓ Incorporate current exhibition standards to critique and create an exhibition
- ✓ Examine the roles of curator, design, installation, funding, interpretation, and programming related to exhibitions
- ✓ Curate an exhibition through all steps of the planning and installation process

### **Required Course Textbooks:**

Lord, B. & Lord, G. D. (2001). *The manual of museum exhibitions*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Serrell, B. (2006). *Judging exhibitions: A framework for assessing excellence*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

### **Supplemental Readings (not required for purchase):**

Dubberly, S. (2001). *Exhibition planning and management: Reprints from NAME's recent and recommended*. Washington, DC: American Association of Museums (AAM).

Greenberg, R., Ferguson, B. W., & Nairne, S. (2007). *Thinking about exhibitions*. New York: Routledge.

Karp, I., Kratz, C. A., Szwaja, L., & Ybarra-Frausto, T. (2006). *Museum frictions: Public cultures/global transformations*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Karp, I., & Lavine, S. D. (1991). *Exhibiting cultures*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian.

\* Additional readings, articles or book chapters, will be assigned in class and available on the course website.

### **Course Assessment:**

Assignments are due on a given date. Late work will not receive full credit.

Weekly participation	30 points (30%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class participation/discussion/activities (15)</li><li>• Discussion board on course website (5)</li><li>• Group discussions (5)</li><li>• Exhibition journal (5)</li></ul>	
Object Interpretation Project/Podcast	15 points (15%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Critical analysis/research (10)</li><li>• Podcast (5)</li></ul>	
Exhibition Critique	15 points (15%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Critical analysis (10)</li><li>• Presentation (5)</li></ul>	
Final Project	40 points (40%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Team exhibition plan (roles of team members) (5)</li></ul>	

- Portfolio of all stages of exhibition plan/implementation (10)
- Exhibition narrative/interpretation (10)
- Evaluation plan (5)
- Class presentation (10)

### **Grading Scale:**

90 – 100 points = A

80 – 89 points = B

70 – 79 points = C

60 – 69 points = D

59 points or lower = F

### **Attendance Requirements:**

This class is dependent upon your participation. Your voice and perspective are important to our weekly discussions in the classroom, on our course website, and on our museum fieldtrips. **Excused** absences will be negotiated with the instructor through documentation. Since our seminar course meets only once a week, each **unexcused** absence will result in a ten-point reduction of the final grade.

### **University Policy Regarding Student Accommodations:**

In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. For the instructor to provide the proper accommodation(s) you must obtain documentation of the need for an accommodation through Disability Support Services and provide it to the instructor. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Support Services at 309-298-2515 for additional services.

## Spring 2009 MST 502: Museum Exhibition

### Calendar of Readings and Assignments:

\*Readings are listed on the day they will be discussed.

**Week 1      January 22              Overview of the Course**  
Looking at Art/Looking at Artifacts: An Interpretation Activity  
**Discussion Board Topic: What is a museum exhibition?**

**Week 2      January 29              Exhibitions as a Research Process**  
Readings:

- AAM: Code of Ethics for Curators
- Karp & Lavine: *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* Part 1: Culture and Representation – Intro & Chapters 1-3 (pp. 11-56)
- Weil: *Making Museums Matter* Chapter 3 (pp. 28-52)

### **Assignment 1 Introduction/Criteria**

**Week 3      February 5              The One-Object Exhibition**  
Readings:

- Sazonov, V. P. (2007). The one-picture gallery. In R. Greenberg, B. W. Ferguson, & S. Nairne (Eds.) *Thinking about exhibitions* (pp. 21-38). New York: Routledge.
- Barnet, S. (2000). *A short guide to writing about art* (Chapters 1-2, pp. 1-100). New York: Longman.
- Nygren, E. J. (1997). Up-close and insightful: The focused exhibition in American art. *American Art*, 11(2), 16-19.
- Schlereth, T. (1985). Material culture research and historical explanation, *The public historian*, 7(4), 21-36.

Introduction: Analytic Model/Asking Questions

**Week 4      February 12      No class Lincoln's Birthday, but continue with readings**

**Reading:**

- Howell, M. & Prevenier, W. (2001). *From reliable sources: An introduction to historical methods*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Chapters IV & V, pp. 88-150
- Lord & Lord, Chapter 10, Curatorship in the Exhibition Process, pp. 345-371

**Discussion Board Topic #2: What is the role of the curator? What is the role of research in exhibitions?**

**Week 5      February 19      Exhibitions: Where Do We Start?**

**Readings:**

- Lord & Lord:
  - Chapter 1, Introduction: The Exhibition Planning Process, pp. 1-8
  - Chapter 2, The Purpose of Museum Exhibitions, pp. 11-25
  - Chapter 3, Where do Exhibition Ideas Come From?, pp. 27-38

**Assignment 1: Object Interpretation/Podcast Due**

**Week 6      February 26      Exhibition Planning**

**Readings:**

- Lord & Lord:
  - Chapter 4, How Will We Know When We Get There?, 39-66
  - Chapter 9, Financial Planning and Management of Exhibitions, pp. 317-343
- Select one of the Following in class 2-19:
  - Robert Storr, Show and Tell, chapter in *What makes a great exhibition*, posted on course website
  - Susan Vogel, Always True to the Object..., in *Exhibiting Cultures*
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**Week 7      March 5      What's a "Good" Exhibition?**

**Readings:**

- Eisner & Dobbs, Silent Pedagogy, article posted on course website
- Serrell, Judging Exhibitions, Parts I-IV, pp. 1-146

**Discussion Board Topic #3: What is a “good” exhibition? How can Serrell’s Framework adapt to non-science museums?**

**Week 8      March 12                      Exhibition Development: Putnam Museum**

**Reading:**

- Lord & Lord, Chapter 5, Planning and Designing Exhibition Facilities, pp. 69-141.
- Select one article (sign up in class on March 5)

**Week 9      March 19                      No class spring break**

**Week 10     March 26                      Galleries/Spaces: Family Museum**

**Readings:**

- Lord & Lord,:
  - Chapter 6, Exhibition Galleries, pp. 143-195
  - Chapter 13, The Role of the Exhibition Designer, pp. 405-424

**Assignment 2: Exhibition Critique Due**

**Discussion Board Topic # 4: What is the role of the exhibition designer?**

**Week 11     April 2                              Gallery Construction/Installation**

**Readings:**

- Lord & Lord:
  - Chapter 7, Gallery Facilities and Equipment, pp. 197-257
  - Chapter 14, Construction and Installation, pp. 425-436
  - Chapter 15, Lighting the Show, pp. 437-441

**Week 12     April 9                              Interpretation**

**Readings:**

- Lord & Lord:
  - Chapter 11, Interpretive Planning, p. 373-392
  - Chapter 12, Exhibition Text, pp. 393-404
- Select one reading from the following (pick in class 4/2)

- Gurian, Noodling Around with Exhibition Opportunities, in *Exhibiting Cultures*, pp. 176-190 (handout)
- Falk & Dierking (handout)
- Role of technology in interpretation (handout)

**Week 13      April 16                      No class. Individual Group Sessions**

**Discussion Board Topic #5: What role does museum education play in the exhibition planning process?**

**Week 14      April 23                      Public Programming**

**Readings:**

- Lord & Lord, Chapter 8, Planning and Managing an Exhibition Programme, pp. 261-315
- Find an article or book chapter to share

**Week 15      April 30                      Project Management, Retail, and Publications**

**Readings:**

- Lord & Lord:
  - Chapter 16, The Role of the Project Manager, pp. 443-454
  - Chapter 17, Exhibition Retail, pp. 455-465
- Review a publication (select in class April 9)

**Week 16      May 7                              Group Work Session/Final Presentations**

**Week 17      May 14                              Final Presentations: Final Projects Due**

All final projects due to Ann during the regularly scheduled time

\* The calendar of readings and assignments is subject to change although all attempts will be made to follow the schedule as presented to you on January 22, 2009.

\* When possible, course handouts will be available on the class website on Western Online versus handed out in class.

Article/Book Chapter Supplemental Readings (Sign up for 1)

Gurian, E. H. (1991). Noodling around with exhibition opportunities. In I. Karp & S. D. Lavine (Eds.) *Exhibiting cultures: poetics and politics of museum display* (pp. 176-190). Washington, DC: Smithsonian.

**AND**

Vogel, S. (1991). Always true to the object, in our fashion. In I. Karp & S. D. Lavine (Eds.) *Exhibiting cultures: poetics and politics of museum display* (pp. 191-204). Washington, DC: Smithsonian.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. (1991). Objects of ethnography. In I. Karp & S. D. Lavine (Eds.) *Exhibiting cultures: poetics and politics of museum display* (pp. 386-443). Washington, DC: Smithsonian.

Ramirez, M. C. (2007). Brokering identities: Art curators and the politics of cultural representation. In R. Greenberg, B. W. Ferguson, & S. Nairne (Eds.) *Thinking about exhibitions* (pp. 21-38). New York: Routledge.

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