ART AND MUSEUM STUDIES M.A. PROGRAM – COURSES FOR FALL 2019

This listing is intended for general guidance in course selection for fall 2019. Course availability may change.

Museum Studies

AMUS 500
Museum Studies Foundations
W 9:30-12:00
Professor Lisa Strong

Museum Studies Foundations is the core course for the MA Program in Art and Museum Studies. The course will provide an overview of museum theory and practice by examining the history of museums and their collections, their functions and professional standards, and current debates about museum ethics, the role and authority of museums, audience, mission, and management. Our focus will be on art museums, but selected topics in historic and ethnographic museums will also be considered.

Note: All AMUS students are automatically registered for this required course. However, you have the option of enrolling either for three credits (the default) or for no credit (the course will be listed on your transcript but will not count toward your total number of credits or affect your grade point average). This would allow you to take an additional elective in the fall. We recommend this choice only for those with a previous museum studies course or comparable experience, and only after consultation with the program Director during fall registration.

AMUS 506
Museum Practice Workshop
M 2:00-4:30
Professor Mike Lesperance, Professor Carma Fauntleroy, and Professor Anne Kingery-Schwartz (and guest lecturers)

Designed to expand upon the program’s core course through concentrated study of museum specializations that are introduced in AMUS 500, this is a practice-based, team-taught course. Professionals in the areas of exhibition development and design, conservation studies, and institutional leadership direct three-session units, and we will have a special session on the ethics of collection and display. Students' projects will emphasize the collaborative nature of museum work.
AMUS 510
Collections Management
W 2:00-4:30, Meets at Dumbarton House, 2715 Q Street, NW
Professor Jerry Foust

The course focuses on general museum concepts and procedures as they relate to collections (objects and their documentation) and their management (e.g., preparation, preventive maintenance & conservation, housing, problem solving) as a whole. The course objectives are to introduce the participants to basic care and preservation of collections as well as a basic understanding of the history and current status of the governance of cultural materials. By the end of the course, participants should understand the definition and role of collections within a museum context; understand the philosophy of cultural preservation and the meaning of cultural patrimony; understand the importance of collection ethics and the role of collections within museum accountability and accreditation programs; be familiar with museum policy development and the relationship between a collecting plan, a collections management policy, and a collections management plan; understand the importance of a collections management policy, its development, content, and application; and how such a policy governs the daily activities within a museum’s collections.

AMUS 520
Museum Education & Interpretation
T 9:30-12:00
Professor Harriet McNamee

Students will be active participants in learning about museum education theories and practice. This course situates the functions of museum education and interpretation within the broader context of a changing paradigm in museums. During site visits to area art museums, educators will discuss aspects of interpretation, programming, and research that are unique to their museum. Class discussion will include such topics as how visitors learn in an art museum, new approaches to interpretation, education programming for varied audiences, building audiences and community, and the relationship of mission to education and interpretation.

AMUS 535
Curating Art Museums & Galleries
R 2:00-4:30
Professor Albey Miner, Director and Chief Curator, the Maria and Alberto de la Cruz Gallery

Curators are at the heart of the art world yet their role is a notoriously fluid one. This course will encourage participants to think critically about the discipline as it exists today, and will provide an extensive inquiry into curatorial practice. The class will address such issues as working with living artists, curating permanent collections, the place of biennials and art fairs, and strategies for engaging the public. Through readings and site visits to art museums around the city, students will have the opportunity to learn directly from practitioners in the field and
gain an understanding of the ideas and practical concerns that shape how art is presented. Class projects will involve in-depth analyses of current exhibitions well as developing proposals for museum projects.

**AMUS 530**  
**Museum Internship**  
Meetings and location specific to internship  
Professor Lisa Strong

Schedule determined by student and museum supervisor; 15–20 hours/wk. Museum internships, required for the MA program, provide concentrated practical experience within selected museum departments as well as an overview of the operations of a museum. Some of our internships include a staff-directed seminar; most involve a linked research project as well as an internship journal. Expectations and placement will be discussed during the orientation session.

**Art History**

**ARTH 353**  
**Exiles and Diasporas**  
M, W 11:00-12:15, Walsh 398  
Professor William Bourland

For much of its history, art has been defined in no small measure by the movement of ideas, symbols, technologies, and peoples across the globe—a tendency that has only accelerated with the advent of modernity and globalization. Sometimes these forms of movement and exchange are the purview of the traveler and the nomad; at other times, forced exile and migration mean disconnection from homelands or adaptation to new cultural landscapes. This course takes an interdisciplinary and theoretical approach to questions of tradition, memory, nation, migration, and translation. Case studies will largely focus on art from a range of disciplines drawn from a global range of artists working in the 20th and 21st centuries—from Afro-diasporic syncretism to international surrealism; from the dislocations of WWII and decolonization to the shifting landscapes of recent decades of war and economic upheaval.

**ARTH 411**  
**Icons and Iconoclasm**  
M 2:00-4:00, Intercultural Center 216  
TBD

Christian icons have been a source of enthusiasm and contention from late Roman times on. Did the Bible really forbid sacred images? Did Christians believe that a presence animated the material icon? What made the sacred portrait such a powerful focus of devotion and the arts? This course will introduce students to the rise of the Christian icon as a new artistic mode of
thought and life in the European Middle Ages. We will explore how and why Christians chose to adapt portraiture to their religious, social and personal lives. We will also examine iconoclasms throughout history, and articulate different understandings of how and why images, idols, and icons were destroyed. These discussions will enhance our comprehension of iconoclasms of the present-day. Open to juniors and seniors; seats reserved for graduate students.

ARTH 428
Bosch, Bruegel, and Life
T 2:00-4:30, Walsh 295
Professor Al Acres

This seminar investigates the work and careers of two of the most original and influential artists of the Renaissance: Hieronymus Bosch (c. 1450-1516) and Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525-1569). Although they worked in different generations and cities, they have often been regarded in light of each other. In his own time, Bruegel was even referred to as the “second Bosch.” Both artists represented humanity, daily life, and the world itself in unprecedented ways. As it explores the breadth and variety of their careers, this seminar will focus especially on how Bosch and Bruegel developed new ways not merely to observe daily life, but also to ponder and perhaps improve it. As we address the art itself and its richly varied history of reception and interpretation, we will also consider the enduring vitality of these paintings, prints, and drawings as instruments of reflection in our own time. International exhibitions, symposia, and new publications marking the quincentennial of Bosch’s death (1516) make this a particularly ripe time to consider him. We will visit the National Gallery of Art for one or two class meetings. Open to juniors and seniors; seats reserved for graduate students.

ART431
Museum Architecture
R 2:00-4:30, Walsh 399
Professor Stephanie Rufino

Museum architecture shapes visitors’ art experience and plays an integral role in the life of a city or region. In this course students will think critically about the architecture of the art museum. Questions to be considered include: How does architecture contribute to a museum’s visiting culture? What is architecture’s appropriate role – should buildings be at the forefront of a museum experience or remain as a backdrop? What challenges arise when designing buildings for contemporary art? How have signature buildings impacted an area’s economic standing? The work of designers such as Renzo Piano, Tadao Ando, Zaha Hadid and Snøhetta will be explored. Case studies addressing institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Louvre will also be analyzed. Students will gain familiarity with field scholarship, visit multiple area museums and complete writing and presentation assignments. Open to juniors and seniors; seats reserved for graduate students.

ART458
Abstraction
What is “abstraction” in art? How, when, and why did it happen? What does it mean? Obviously all abstract pictures do not look alike, and each artist seeks something different through his or her unique abstract language. How can we know what a picture “means” when it has no discernible “subject?” Why do people fear and scorn abstract images? May abstract art be called “dehumanized,” as José Ortega y Gasset claimed in 1949? Did the CIA use abstract expressionist painting as a weapon against the Communists? These and many other questions comprise the subject of this seminar. Starting with nineteenth-century Symbolist art theory and continuing with Wassily Kandinsky’s famous 1911 tract “Concerning the Spiritual in Art,” we will proceed to consider Mondrian and Neo-Plasticism; Malevich and Suprematism; Abstract Expressionism and the New York School; and Minimalism. Time permitting, we will look at the state of abstract art today. Open to juniors and seniors; seats reserved for graduate students.