

# MUSEUM STUDIES (MSMS-GA)

## MSMS-GA 1089 Digital Humanities: Collections and Connections (4 Credits)

*Typically offered occasionally*

Two of the most important aspects of digital media are their capacity to allow for the organization of and creation of connections between data. Collecting and connecting technologies have enabled the development of complex information management and network creation systems, which are the foundations of everyday experience in the digital age. Because these systems play such a significant role in how we communicate with one another they are critical to understanding how new media can play a role in public discourse and scholarly conversations. This course will consider how different tools and platforms, such as WordPress, Omeka, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest, allow us to curate the things in our world and build networks within which to share our experiences. It will also consider how we can analyze these networks and collections to present intellectual arguments in new ways and tell more compelling stories. Along with practical work with digital tools, this course will include readings on network culture and digital curation by authors such as McLuhan, Gitelman, Castells, Shirky, Manovich, Cohen, Ramsay, and Galloway. This is one of two topics courses in the Digital Humanities (the other DH: Analysis and Visualization will be offered in the spring). These non-sequential courses provide a survey of questions and technologies fundamental to modes of academic inquiry made possible by new media and computational methods. While the two courses will cover different sets of technologies and digital practices, both will consider how we make our work public via digital platforms that provide rhetorical and design flexibility in making intellectual arguments.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## MSMS-GA 1500 History and Theory of Museums (4 Credits)

*Typically offered Fall*

Introduction to the social, cultural, and political history of museums. This course focuses on the formation of the modern museum with an emphasis on the U.S. context. Museums of natural history, anthropology, science, technology, history, and art are addressed from a variety of disciplinary approaches that explore the institution and its practices with respect to governance, colonialism, nationalism, class, gender, ethnicity, and community. Frequent visits to New York museums are required, along with weekly writing assignments, and a final paper.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## MSMS-GA 1501 Museum Collections and Exhibitions (4 Credits)

*Typically offered Fall*

Introduction to the care and management of objects and collections and to the process of organizing a temporary exhibition. Assignments consist of individual reports and working in small teams to prepare and present proposals on specific functions of collection management and to make an exhibition proposal. Museum professionals (registrars, conservators, curators) speak on issues specific to their practice. Museum visits are scheduled as part of regular classroom meetings. As far as possible, the course covers museums of all disciplines.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## MSMS-GA 1502 Museum Management (4 Credits)

*Typically offered Spring*

Overview of management, finance, and administration for those aspiring to managerial and supervisory positions in museums. Topics covered include organizational structure and the roles and relationships of museum departments; operational issues, including security and disaster planning; museum accounting and finance, including operating and capital expense budgeting; leadership and strategic planning; and legal and ethical issues facing museums.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## MSMS-GA 1750 Intro to Public History (4 Credits)

*Typically offered occasionally*

Reviews the history of public history from the early twentieth century through the present, focusing on historians' relationships, dialogues, and collaborations with public audiences. Considers issues involving memory, identity, heritage, commemoration, historic preservation, history museums, oral history, film, and digital history.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## MSMS-GA 2220 Museums and the Law (4 Credits)

*Typically offered not typically offered*

Legal issues pervade so many aspects of the world of museums. The law can both constrain and enable the behavior of museum staff, administration, and others who work with these cultural organizations. Therefore, it is difficult to work in, for and with museums without some training in or familiarity with the law. In this course, we will examine how museums are affected by a variety of legal regulations, including cultural heritage legislation, intellectual property issues, such as copyright, trademark and moral rights, first amendment and censorship claims, work-place hazards, contracts, and nonprofit and tax laws, such as valuation, charitable transfers, payments in lieu of taxes and the unrelated business income tax. Readings will consist of case law and secondary sources detailing the most pressing legal issues facing different types of museums, and group discussions will be supplemented by mock case studies and negotiation exercises.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

**MSMS-GA 2221 Strategies for the 21st Century Museum: Money and Power (4 Credits)***Typically offered Fall*

Overview of organizational development principles as they relate to the fund-raising and grantsmanship process. Topics include sources of funding, current trends, and fund-raising techniques; earned income; public relations; volunteers; and membership. Includes a practicum in proposal writing and work experience with an arts organization in program development and fund-raising.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**MSMS-GA 2222 Conservation and Collections Management (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

As an introduction to museum conservation, this seminar combines class room discussion with museum laboratory visits to provide an understanding of how conservation functions in the context of contemporary culture. The seminar is divided into three broad topics: museum collections care, the history and philosophy of western conservation, and the conservation of modern and contemporary art. It provides technical information about how artifacts age in the museum environment while examining conflicts that arise between professional and non-professional stakeholders. The seminar addresses concerns of living artists as well as indigenous groups and others with claims to the disposition and care of cultural materials. While enrollment is open to all NYU graduate students, priority will be given to Museum Studies students with research interests in exhibition and collections management.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**MSMS-GA 2223 Historic Sites, Cultural Landscapes, and the Politics of Preservation (4 Credits)***Typically offered Spring*

This course will examine the cultural politics that influence reuse of historic spaces for museums and other public purposes. Through course readings, site visits and individual archival research, students will explore sites ranging from historic houses and period rooms presented as museum installations to restored villages and communities to dramatic reuse of historic space for cultural tourism. Students will pay particular attention to the social and political contexts in which original use and subsequent reuse took place, and analyze primary documents that illustrate both motivations and strategies for interpretation.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**MSMS-GA 2224 Museum Education (4 Credits)***Typically offered Fall*

This seminar provides an overview of the field of museum education in the context of the institution's relationship with constituent communities and with application to a broad range of audiences. Among the topics considered are teaching from objects, learning strategies, working with docents and volunteers, program planning, and the educational use of interactive technologies.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**MSMS-GA 2225 Museums & Interactive Technologies (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

This course presents a survey and analysis of museum use of interactive technologies. Among the topics discussed in detail are strategies and tools for collections management, exhibitions, educational resources and programs, Web site design, digitization projects, and legal issues arising from the use of these technologies. Each student develops an interactive project in an area of special interest.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**MSMS-GA 2226 Museums and Political Conflict (4 Credits)**

In contemporary Museum Studies, it is often said that museums are inherently political institutions. But how do politics actually happen in museums? What has "politics" meant for key exhibitions and collections and what avenues of political theory emerge from the museum in general? In this seminar, we will move beyond the general to examine how specific political concepts took shape in historic exhibitions and museum practices from the 1930s to the present. As such, our challenge will be twofold. On the one hand, we will consider how political movements have used the museums as an implement for advancing power and influence. On the other hand, we will consider how museum practices have "taken up" various kinds of politics: how museum objects and officials have engaged and advocated the agendas and outcomes of political parties, governments, policies, revolutions, and elections. Case studies will include: Degenerate Art (1937), Paris World Exhibition (1937), Rivera's "Man at the Crossroads" (1934), The Guggenheim Museum (1959), Yad Vashem (1965), Harlem on my Mind (1969), The Perfect Moment (1990), The Last Act (1994), The Jewish Museum of Bologna (1998), Sensation (1999), The Apartheid Museum (2001), Holocaust Cartoons (2006), among others. Through these case studies, students will examine the museum's role in the public sphere and the process whereby exhibitions contribute to— or undermined—key aspects of deliberative democracy.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**MSMS-GA 2227 Art Exhibition History After 1960 (4 Credits)**

Focusing on group exhibitions after 1960, this seminar will explore the history of exhibitions and various approaches to the study of exhibition history. Major developments of this period include the growth of independent curating and new curatorial strategies, an increasing focus on thematic exhibitions, the expansion of biennials outside the Euro-American centers, and the use of discursive forms. Among the exhibitions that we will discuss are artist-curated exhibitions such as DYLBY and 9 at Leo Castelli, exhibitions of Minimalism and Post-Minimalism including Primary Structures and Eccentric Abstraction, conceptualist exhibitions organized by Seth Siegelaub, Germano Celant's Arte Povera + Azioni Povere, Harald Szeemann's When Attitudes Become Form and Documenta 5, collaborative exhibitions of the 1980s organized by Colab and Group Material, Magiciens de la Terre, the 1993 Whitney Biennial, iterations of the Havana, Gwangju, Johannesburg, and Sao Paulo biennials, Okwui Enwezor's Documenta 11, and exhibitions that intersect with political movements including Tucuman Arde, The Bulldozer Exhibition, and China/Avant-Garde. Students will give two short presentations as well as a longer presentation of their research on a particular exhibition or series of exhibitions, and submit a final paper on this research topic along with a file of exhibition documentation.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

**MSMS-GA 2228 Museums and Communities (4 Credits)**

We have witnessed a rise in civic engagement and social justice programming in museums today. Community, history, and fine arts museums now include civic activism, community participation, and community organizing in their mission and core activities. A movement toward civic engagement and social justice manifests in all aspects of museum practice, including exhibition, education, and collections care. In this seminar, we investigate the theoretical underpinnings of these programs along with their practical implementation and evaluation. We assess museum activism in the context of inequality and racism within the museum itself and community resistance against museums. Students build an understanding of community programming in the context of current literature on the museum in the public sphere, the museum as contact zone, placemaking, and museum ethics. Guest speakers address community-based programming, including the logistics of program development, program evaluation, and program website design. The seminar combines project-based learning with reading, discussion, and writing about theory that motivates and critiques community-based museum programming. Students choose their own final projects. Options include assessing an existing community-based museum program, designing a new museum-based program and developing its website, and writing a seminar paper.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

**MSMS-GA 2229 Heritage, Memory, and Negotiating Temporalities (4 Credits)**

What is heritage, how is it produced and to what extent does it (re)arrange relationships between time, memory and identity? How do some heritages come to be memorialized and institutionalized and others excluded and rendered peripheral? This seminar will cover the historical development of the concept of heritage as well as exploring the genesis of international heritage administration, charters, conventions, and national heritage laws. It will highlight emerging trends and practices including exploring the concept of "social memory" and contrast it with the more formalized techniques of heritage didactics and curation. We will explore the increasing interest in "bottom-up" heritage programming that directly involves the general public in the formulation, collection, and public presentation of historical themes and subjects as an ongoing social activity. Case studies from different regions and social contexts will be explored: "conflicted heritage," "minority heritage," "indigenous heritage," "diasporic heritage," "sites of conscience," long-term community planning and involvement in "eco-museums", the relationship between heritage, development and tourism and public heritage interpretation centers. Students will be asked to address specific problems in sites or organizations presented during the course and will formulate socio-interpretive assessments of projects or research of their choosing in the U.S. or abroad.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

**MSMS-GA 3009 Telling the Sogdian Story (4 Credits)**

*Typically offered occasionally*

The Sogdians were the middlemen of the transcontinental trade known as the Silk Road, amassing great wealth which financed a flowering of civilization in their homeland, the area around Samarkand in present-day Uzbekistan. But they were also purveyors of culture to their imperial neighbours, transporting craftsmen, artists, Buddhist monks and others, and introducing new artistic and religious ideas and contributing to military and diplomatic affairs as far west as Europe and as far east as Japan. This project-based course will investigate how best to use digital media to create a fuller, multi-faceted portrait of the Sogdians, and tell the story of how their adaptability and mobility allowed them to influence the art and culture of people across Asia without the traditional trappings of empire wielded by the adjacent Iranian, Chinese, and Byzantine empires. As part of an ongoing project at the Smithsonian Institution's Asian museums of art, the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, students will work with Sogdian scholars, curators from the Smithsonian, and digital exhibition specialists to learn about this unique culture and then develop prototypes and research texts for a full-scale digital exhibition to be hosted by the Smithsonian. The course will show the practical applications of collaborative interdisciplinary humanities scholarship and highlight the challenges of making coherent and complex intellectual arguments for broad audiences in the digital medium.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

**MSMS-GA 3330 Topics in Museum Studies (4 Credits)**

*Typically offered occasionally*

Current issues in the museum profession and the interdisciplinary study of museums. Outside museum scholars, specialists, and university faculty offer in-depth examination of topics

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**MSMS-GA 3332 Exhibition Planning & Design (4 Credits)**

*Typically offered Spring*

This course focuses on the planning, development, and design of exhibitions, permanent, temporary, and traveling. It is a participatory class where students learn basic exhibition design techniques, including spatial layouts and the use of graphics, audiovisual aids, lighting, colors, materials, and fabrication methods. Students gain insight into exhibition planning and development and the roles played by various museum professionals. There are visits to designers to discuss their work and to museums and other venues to analyze exhibition design techniques. Individual student projects provide hands-on experience.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

**MSMS-GA 3335 Museums & Contemporary Art (4 Credits)**

*Typically offered occasionally*

This course investigates historical, theoretical, and practical aspects of the collecting and exhibiting of contemporary art in museums. Topics include curatorial strategies for exhibition and collection development, conservation issues, museums and social activism, and conflicts of interest that arise for museum staff and trustees.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

**MSMS-GA 3915 Research in Museum Studies (1-4 Credits)**

*Typically offered Fall and Spring*

Independent research on a topic determined in consultation with the program director.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**MSMS-GA 3990 Internship (2 Credits)**

*Typically offered Fall, Spring, and Summer terms*

Students nearing completion of their master's in museum studies, or their certificate and their academic degree, must apply in writing to the program internship coordinator. Placements are made on an individual basis and are project oriented. For one or more semesters, a minimum of 300 hours is spent as an intern at a museum or other suitable institution.

A daily log, diary, and progress report are required. Students must earn a grade of B or better to receive the M.A. or advanced certificate. Students nearing completion of their master's in museum studies, or their certificate and their academic degree, must apply in writing to the program internship coordinator. Placements are made on an individual basis and are project oriented. For one or more semesters, a minimum of 300 hours is spent as an intern at a museum or other suitable institution. A daily log, diary, and progress report are required. Students must earn a grade of B or better to receive the M.A. or advanced certificate.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**MSMS-GA 3991 Research Seminar (2 Credits)**

*Typically offered Fall*

Students conduct research combining their academic and professional interests, using appropriate methodology. They formulate a topic, prepare an annotated bibliography, and write the qualifying paper based on their research. M.A. students also develop their thesis proposal.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No