This course is designed to introduce students to the museum as an institution which exists at a specific historical moment (late 18th and early 19th century) in a specific location (western Europe). Its changes over time must (and necessarily must) reflect changes in the larger social context in which it is located. At the heart of our inquiry (and it is an inquiry which we will carry on throughout as a discussion of the museum as a set of practices, understandings, aesthetics, and memories which are organized around a desire to collect and present, and which embody, produce, and structure "knowledge" (epistemology, culture, hegemony, resistance).

Because of its historically contingent nature, the museum has been embedded with "modernity" in a number of ways: (1) it developed as a "public" (even democratic) space; (2) it embodied modernity's classifying desires (the production of taxonomies, systems of organization, hierarchy, discipline); (3) it emerges alongside modern (western) colonialism and therefore reflects and reinforces colonialism's binary separation of people and nations into superior and subordinate, civilized and barbarian, these categories of defining and those who are classified; (4) it is a product of, and helps maintain, the narrative of the nation and, as such, serves crucial legitimating and sustaining functions.

When we visit museums, what we can see (if we are looking) is not only a building and its collected artifacts, but the narratives of many of the contested practices that underlie modernity. In this course, it is not until surprising that by the 19th century, the museum has emerged in a milieu of controversy over what is represented and who does the representing, as well as raising questions about who owns the museum, who is excluded from its space, and what meanings it conveys. The more critically the museum tells the (dis)continuing, the Low Museum, for example, the more obvious the conflicts will become and the more that many who work with and in museums will attempt to challenge some of these practices while upholding or transforming others. While we can only trace a few of these points (and controversies), students should get a sense of what is at stake and why museum matters.

**Course Objectives**

"Course objectives" are usually thought of as what instructors hope you walk away with at the end of the course. My objectives go a bit further - they are based on what I hope you will remember about what you did in this course ten years after it ended. In that sense, my course objectives are few, broad, and ambitious.
ASSIGNMENTS

(1) Leading the class: Two students will be in charge of each class session beginning on Feb. 13 (a date we will need to change since I’ll be out of town). Each of the two will write a separate, 3-5 page paper on any analytic or interpretative issue raised in the readings and/or for that week. The two participants will work in coordination with each other on which reading to cover. I expect that you will each bring in the readings - but it is not unimportant that you cover them all (unless that is what you plan). Together you will develop and lead the discussion. (Remember that these papers will be graded.)

(2) Museum Critiques (blog). You will be responsible for writing three museum critiques over the course of the semester. At least one in the fall, at least one during spring break. You will be writing critiques on website and in the “Museum Voices” section, which is a blog run by the museums. You will write about the museum and your experience of the museum visit. Each critique will count 10% toward your final grade.

(3) Museum Blog. You will be expected to post with some regularity (details to be discussed in class) on a blog set up for discussion about materials covered in class and museum visits. Your participation on the blog will count toward 10% of your final grade.

(4) Final Project: Your final project (which you can do with one other person) is to design a gallery or other limited area in a museum on your proposal that plan to be larger than this (i.e., designing a museum) will need my approval. See "Final Assignment" for details. The project is due in design, final assignment due on Monday, May 18, 11:00 AM. Absolutely no extensions beyond this day and time without an acceptable reason. This project will count for 30% of your grade.

Most assignments have flexible deadlines. For those with fixed deadlines, assignments are to be turned in on (or before) the date due. In later syllabus, I will mark your grade down if you don’t turn in museum critique on blog post in a timely fashion (as noted in each assignment). Similarly, if you don’t turn in the grade of your final project on time, the final project will be turned in on time and it won’t be graded. All but your final assignment (all critiques and blog entries) must be turned in the last day of the Reading Period, May 14, or they will not be counted. I will not allow late "incomplete" in the course to allow you to finish these assignments.

Except for the two due sessions you need, I won’t be giving you a participation grade, although I expect that you will participate to the best of your ability since the course will depend on it. As a community of practice, I expect that all will contribute equally to the success of our learning, and that a participation grade is not a good measure of encouraging you to be responsible for it.

http://hist469s13.weebly.com/
ACCESSING COURSE MATERIALS

You can access the course text in a variety of ways: (1) Books recommended for purchase are on sale at the bookstore (or can be purchased online). (2) All required readings that are in the recommended purchase books are on Blackboard under "Readings" (and not on ERES). (3) You can find all the books recommended for purchase on Reserve in Maclib. (4) Books can also be obtained through GIDU LINK. Please let me know if you are having any difficulty accessing any materials.

Plagiarism and the Honor Code: The word plagiarism derives from Latin roots meaning "to steal," "to pinch," and "to pinch." The paraphrasing of another author's work, and the presentation of it as one's own, constitutes plagiarism and is a serious violation of the ethics of scholarship (American Historical Association, Statement of Standards of Professional Conduct). Copying the work of others goes against everything that a liberal education is about. It is a serious attempt to remove the burden of the course, to me as a member of the course, and to the plagiarizer himself. The college requires that students sign an "Honor Code" for all assignments. This pledge states that "I affirm that I have neither given nor received help in the preparation or presentation of this assignment." The full Honor Code is posted to Blackboard. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, particularly in the context of joint or collaborative projects, please see me or refer it to class.

Students with Disabilities: Appropriate accommodations will always be granted to students with documented disabilities. Any questions about the necessary process of documenting disabilities should be addressed to Jane Lasson, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities (Peters C27-103; 65-8548). If you have a documented disability, please see me early in the semester.

Research Help: If you need help finding information or conducting library research, you may wish to schedule an appointment with a reference librarian. Librarians can help you plan research strategies, search databases effectively, and locate books, articles, and other resources for any type of research project. They can also help you find the library's website to get started. Crash research assistance is also available in all campus libraries.

Scheduling and Museum Visits: Museum visits will be a regular part of the course. I have arranged this class to be on Wednesday evenings, when some Cleveland museums are open late. We will coordinate schedules and arrange all museum visits at the start of the semester.

Books Recommended for Purchase:

Lawrence Venuti, Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonders: Prowed Acts, Mimed Humans, Mine on Toad, and Other Wonders of Jurassic Technology (University of Minnesota Press, 1996).


Bulfinch Press, American Literature: An Anthology of Contexts, 2nd ed. (Houghton, 2010; Wiley-Blackwell, 2012). [NOTE: Must be 2nd edition since it is considerably different than the 1st.]
SYLLABUS

Feb. 6: Introduction. What are we hoping to learn and what museums can tell us. What is a museum? Museum memories: museums you have known and loved.

- Benjamin Grosc, "Arts and Principles of the Construction and Management of Museums of Fine Art," in MS, Ch. 42 (p. 413-420) [1635].

NOTE: Fred Wilson, the conceptual artist, will be speaking at the Cleveland Museum of Art on Friday, Feb. 6 at 12:10 PM. [Tickets at 162-619. (Note: I will be presenting at the College Art Association meetings in New York this day, so we will need to reschedule the class.)

Feb. 12: Collecting: We will begin with psychology and explore some of the reasons or reflections on why people collect "stuff," whether the drive to collect is an inherent desire or reflective of time, place, and culture.


Feb. 20: Modernity and the Museum. As suggested above in the syllabus, museums are an important part of modernity, in a variety of senses. We begin to explore some of them here, and continue with this theme next week as well.


Feb. 27: Classification. More on modernity and the museum: here we focus on what the development of multiple museum projects tell us about the ways that knowledge is produced, challenged, and shaped.

- Cardwell, ed., MS, Ch. 10-15 (pp. 123-130).
- Barbara Yudkevitch-Shelboul, "Objects of Etruscan Art," in Karp and Levine, eds., Exhibiting Culture, pp. 383-413 (only those papers - article in English).

Watch 6: Display: Narrative and Ways of Seeing: Museums are texts. In order to appreciate how museums do their work, we will pay specific attention to how museums shape their narratives, using particular rhetoric of design to demonstrate authoritative knowledge or to allow visitors to raise questions, to assert strategic understandings or to call attention to their own procedures.

- Tony Bennett, Museum and馆: Narrative, Ideology, Performance, in The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics (London and NY: Routledge, 1993), Ch. 7 (pp. 177-209).
March 19: Authenticity: The authority of the museum often derives from its authenticity. But this isn't always been the case. Does authenticity matter? Why? Why not?

NOTE: Class today will involve a guest conversation, Steven Plank, from the Conservation, into our discussion. Prof. Plank, an expert on historical performances, will bring in the notion of authenticity in musical performances to bear on our own discussion of authenticity and the museum.


Optional:

March 20: The Nation: Because of their fundamental investment in taxonomy and its inherent hierarchies, museums have long played an important role in the practices of nationalism and colonialism. This is evident in the way that museums collect and classify "the other" in relation to "western" culture, and the way that museum narratives create privileged discourses about self and other.
SPRING BREAK

April 3: History and Memory: Not all museums are publicly runned, but they are, by virtue of their origins, public spaces. Therefore, they can spark controversy at every turn. Some museum controversies are emblematic and therefore allow us to appreciate what is at stake in the field of museum display. One of the most notable conflicts in the culture wars that have turned museums into battlegrounds the museum was the “Enola Gay” exhibit at the Smithsonian’s Air and Space Museum.

- Images for Paul W. Landis’s “Violence in the Museum” (Ch 32) (Note: scroll down on the page to see images).
- The Enola Gay controversy at the Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian. Edward J. Goring’s website “How Do We Remember a War That We Won’t Specify Nations to be Arraigned.”

April 10: Proposal for final projects due

April 10: Memory and Memorial. Memory (and occasionally memorial) is an essential component of what museums do. Most often, when we enter the museum, we are entering a space of memory even if the works in them are relatively of recent vintage. While examining the way in which museums work with and through memory, we also understand that the exploration of the past can open pathways to exploring particularly traumatic or conflicted times. Museums that confront criminal histories confront a set of difficult choices when coming to terms with their objectives.
April 17: Museums and the Community: The Museum of the American Indian. The process by which the Smithsonian launched a museum "of the American Indian" can suggest ways in which representation and narrative are crucial for communities which make up museum visitors and their subjects.

- Gerald M. Edgerton, "Museums and the Native Voice," in MS, Ch. 39 (pp. 377-391).
- Gabrielle Letourneau, "Technology Becomes the Object: The Use of Electronic Media at the National Museum of the American Indian," in MS, Ch. 54 (pp. 534-545).

April 24: Bibliography and Resource Guide for final project due

April 24: Museums and the Visitor. We continue the discussion of the museum and the communities it serves by expanding beyond museum built to explicitly represent a single community to the task of serving many.

- Eileen H. A. Griswold, "Changing Roles in the Art Museum: Reinterpreting Communication and Learning," in MS, Ch. 53 (pp. 517-520).
- Richard Schaff, "Museum as a Site of Social Inclusion," in MS, Ch. 56 (pp. 323-374).

May 1: New Museum Practice: Museums as Meta. The Museum of Jurassic Technology

May 8: The Future of the Museum: The context which surrounds the museum is one which is inherited from the past, particularly in the extent that the museum is a public space which exhibits artifacts and places them on display. Yet the museum has been under attack, not just in its class-bound terms as a space of high culture, but in terms of its ability to confront those hierarchies and narratives that have long defined its existence. We consider some possibilities.

- Robert R. James, "Museums, Corporations, and the Civil Society," in *JS*, Ch. 56 (pp. 540-561).

May 10, 11:00 AM. Final project due. No extensions without an official incomplete.