

## **HIS/IAR 547: History Museum Curatorship: Collections Management**

### **Contact Information**

Jon B. Zachman  
Office: 373-4589  
Cell: 362-6312

Email: [Jon.Zachman@greensboro-nc.gov](mailto:Jon.Zachman@greensboro-nc.gov)

Office hours are Tuesday from 5:00-6:00pm and by appointment.

### **Introduction**

This course is designed to introduce students to the legal and ethical issues associated with the care and management of museum collections. Students will learn about collections-related jobs in the museum field: curator, registrar and collections manager, and explore what it means to be physically and intellectually responsible for museum objects. Students will learn hands-on and be given opportunities to apply best practices and professional standard related to the acquisition, management and interpretation of history museum collections, including collections development, museum registration methods, cataloging, and preventative conservation. And finally students will study and evaluate two crucial documents: the collections management policy and the collection plan.



Charles Wilson Peale's *The Long Room, Interior of the Front Room in Peale's Museum*, 1822.

To achieve these goals, students will participate in and lead weekly discussions based on assigned readings. During the first part of the semester, students will complete several “hands-on” exercises and in the latter part of the semester students will be required to complete 30 hours outside of the classroom at one of the following local museums: the Greensboro Masonic Museum, the High Point Museum, Korner’s Folly or Mendenhall Plantation, subject to the approval of the instructor. These projects are intended to reinforce what was covered in the classroom. On a first come, first served basis, students are responsible for contacting the museum where they wish to work and coordinating their work schedule with the appropriate museum staff person. In most cases, student will be asked to work in pairs. All projects must be approved by the instructor no later than September 11, 2012 and the required 30 hours must be completed by the last day of class, November 27, 2012. For whatever reason, if you have difficulty completing your 30-hour class project before the last day of class, it is your responsibility to communicate with me before it becomes problem.

## **Grading**

Each student will be evaluated by the instructor based on the following:

- 10% Weekly discussion questions, Blackboard postings and other assignments
- 10% Hands-on exercises
- 10% Collecting Plan evaluation and presentation
- 20% Class participation and discussions leadership
- 25% 30-hour collections project
- 25% Writing assignment: Collections Management Policy

## **Grading Scale**

A=93-100; A-=90-92; B+=87-89; B=83-86; B-=80-82; C+=77-79; C=73-76; F=72 and below

## **Academic Integrity**

Students will be asked to sign a copy of the Academic Integrity Pledge for each major assignment in this class. If you haven’t already done so, please review the Academic Integrity Policy in the Student Policy Handbook during the first week of class.

<http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy>

Any instances of cheating, plagiarism, misuse of academic resources, falsification of information, and facilitating of academic dishonesty will be treated with utmost seriousness by the History Department and the University.

## **Course Readings**

The principal book for the course is *Museum Registration Methods*, Fifth Edition edited by Rebecca Buck and Jean Gilmore. Students will also read parts or all of *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections*, *Legacies: Collecting America’s History at the Smithsonian* and *The Ethics of Collecting Cultural Property: Whose Culture / Whose Property?* In addition, several excerpts from books and journal articles are available on Electronic Reserve via Blackboard or at the library. Select hand-outs and other materials will be distributed in class.



Charles Wilson Peale's *The Artist in His Museum*, 1822.

## Weekly Assignments and Class Participation

Each week students will submit two discussion questions drawing on the week's readings and other assignments. These reflective questions should reference the various readings and/or videos and provoke conversation. The quality of these written submittals will be scored as excellent (3 points), good (2 points), fair (1 point) or poor (0 points).

Questions should be posted to Blackboard and emailed me no later than 9:00am on the Monday prior to class. Each submittal must include your name and the date. In the subject heading of the email, please identify it as HIS 547, date of class. Send emails to [Jon.Zachman@greenboro-nc.gov](mailto:Jon.Zachman@greenboro-nc.gov) with your questions in the body of the email. Late submittals will automatically be docked one point.

Active participation in class discussions is critical! In addition to active participation in class, students will take turns leading or co-leading the discussion of specific topics or readings assigned by the instructor. Class attendance is compulsory and unexcused absences will negatively impact the student's final grade.

## Collecting Plan Evaluation

Students will work in small groups to prepare a written evaluation of an actual Collecting Plan, which they will present to the class. Each team will be assigned a different institution and their task will be to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their document based on best practices and standards defined by the American Association of Museums. The typed evaluation and presentation are due the third week of class

## Writing Assignment: Collections Management Policy

Students will work in small groups to prepare a Collections Management Policy for a local museum assigned by the instructor. Each team will be assigned a different institution and their task will be to work together with appropriate museum staff to revise and/or create a written policy based on the best practices and standards defined by the American Association of Museums. Each policy should address the specific needs of the institution in the following collections-related areas: accessions, deaccessions, loans, collections documentation, access to records, storage and preventative conservation and collections care.

This final writing assignment will be due the last day of class when each student team will make a presentation to the entire class.

## Course Schedule and Assignments

### WEEK ONE

#### August 21, 2012: Course Overview and Introductions

Class meets at MHRA, Room 3207

*What is a museum? Who is responsible for the collection?*

### WEEK TWO

#### August 27, 2012: Collectors, Collecting and Museums, Part 1

Class meets at MHRA, Room 3207

Akin, Marjorie. "Passionate Possession: The Formation of Private Collections," Chapter 9 in *Learning From Things: Method and Theory of Material Culture Studies*. pp. 102-128.

Buck, Rebecca A. and Jean Allman Gilmore, eds. *Museum Registration Methods*. Fifth Edition, pp.2-21.

*Everything Is Illuminated*. Film written and directed by Liev Schreiber, 2005. Adopted from the 2003 Novel by Jonathan Safran Foer.

Frost, Randy O. and Gail Steketee. *Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things*. Chapter 2: "We Are What We Own: Owning, Collecting and Hoarding" pp.44-62.

Malaro, Marie C. *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections*. Chapter 1, "What Is a Museum? What is Required of Its Board Members?" pp.3-21 and Chapter 2, "Museums are Accountable to Whom?" pp.22-26.



Jonathan and his collection, *Everything is Illuminated*, 2005

### **WEEK THREE**

#### **September 4, 2012: Collectors, Collecting and Museums, Part 2**

Class meets at MHRA, Room 3207

#### Collections Development and Collection Plans

Gardner, James B. and Elizabeth E. Merritt. *The AAM Guide to Collections Planning*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2004.

“Building the Intellectual Framework,” pp.5-10.

“Writing the Collections Plan,” pp.11-26.

“The Planning Process,” pp.27-32.

“Museum Politics,” pp.33-37.

*Collections Plan*, Newton History Museum at The Jackson Homestead, 2006, pp.1-9.

*Collecting Plan of the State Historical Society of Iowa*, 1993. pp.1-16.

*Howard County Historical Society Collecting Plan*, 2008. pp.1-7

*Permanent Collection Collecting Plan*, Rogers Historical Museum, 2002. pp.1-7.

#### ***Collecting Plan Evaluations and Presentations***



Boat Hall, National Museum, about 1890

## WEEK FOUR

### September 11, 2012: Collectors, Collecting and Museums, Part 3

Class meets at MHRA, Room 3207

What is a collections management policy and why should I care?

Buck, Rebecca A. and Jean Allman Gilmore, eds. *The New Museum Registration Methods*. Introduction, pp. 45-62, 95-101, 221-223. [MRM5. pp. 24-33, 209-232, 277-285.]

Lubar, Steve and Kathleen M. Kendrick. *Legacies: Collecting America's History at the Smithsonian*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001.  
(copy loaned by instructor)

Malaro, Marie C. *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections*. Chapter 3, "Collections Management Policies," pp.45-57.

Historical Society of Frederick County, *Collections Management Policy*, 2002. pp.1-16.

Lower East Side Tenement Museum, *Collections Management Policy*, 2001. pp.1-9.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Collections Management Policy*, 2008, pp1-10.

Newton History Museum at The Jackson Homestead, *Collections Management Policy*. 2002. pp.1-16.

AAM Writing a Collections Management Policy—handout

**Deadline for confirming 30-hour Collections Project**

**WEEK FIVE****September 18, 2012: Collecting Cultural Property & NAGPRA**

Class meets at the Greensboro Historical Museum

Buck and Gilmore. *The New Registration Methods*. pp. 309-319. [MRM5. pp.408-425, 448-457.]

Henry, James Pepper, "20 Years and Counting," in *Museum News*. November/December 2010. pp. 50-57.

Kidwell, Clara Sue. "Every Last Dishcloth," Chapter 8 in *Collecting Native America 1870-1960*. pp. 232-258.

Messenger, Phyllis Mauch. *The Ethics of Collecting Cultural Property: Whose Culture/ Whose Property?* Intro, Chapters 1, 2, 6-10, 12.

UNESCO: A Brief History—hand-out

***Object Handling and Condition Reporting Exercise*****WEEK SIX****September 25, 2012: Museum Registration Methods, Collections Documentation & Automation**

Class meets at the Greensboro Historical Museum

Blackaby, James R. AASLH Special Report 3 "Managing Historical Data: The Report of the Common Agenda Task Force"

Blackaby, James R. and Patricia Greeno, *The Revised Nomenclature for Museum Cataloging*. Chapter 1 "Looking at Nomenclature," pp.1-5, and Chapter 2 "Using Nomenclature." pp. 6-12.

Buck and Gilmore. *The New Registration Methods*. pp.1-44, 64-93, 117-119, 156-166. [MRM5. pp. 38-61, 109-118, 150-192, 206-208, 233-276, 300-306.]

Malaro. *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections*. Chapter 4 "The Acquisition of Objects: Accessioning," pp.58-65

**Object Documentation Exercise****WEEK SEVEN****October 2, 2012: The Art of Cataloging**

Class meets at the Greensboro Historical Museum

***Object Cataloging Exercise***

*Mid-term Grade Consultation this week*

**WEEK EIGHT**

**October 9, 2012: What is Free Masonry?**

Class meets at the Greensboro Historical Museum

Bill Simpson, Guest Speaker from Greensboro Masonic Lodge

Ray Hall, Guest Speaker from Greensboro Masonic Lodge

Davenport, Reynold S. *Freemasonry Revealed*. 1980. <http://www.grandlodge-nc.org/>

Morris, S. Brent. *The Complete Idiots Guide to Freemasonry*. Chapter 1, "What is Freemasonry?," pp.3-16.

Additional hand-out or other readings on Masonic History



**WEEK NINE**

**October 16, 2012: FALL BREAK**

**NO CLASS**

**WEEK TEN**

**October 23, 2012: Care of Collections, Conservation, Preservation and Storage**

Class meets at the Greensboro Historical Museum

*AIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice*

Buck and Gilmore. *The New Registration Methods*. pp.103-116, 120-125, 227-234,



255-266.[MRM5. pp.287-299, 307-313, 369-380.]

Butcher-Youngmans, Sherry and Gretchen E. Anderson. AASLH Technical Leaflet # 171 "A Holistic Approach to Museum Pest Management," in *History News*, Vol. 45, No.3, May/June 1990.

Heald, Susan and Kathleen E. Ash-Milby. "Woven by the Grandmothers: Twenty-four Blankets Travel to the Navajo Nation," in *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (1998), pp.334-345.

Mellor, Stephen P. "The Exhibition and Conservation of African Objects: Considering the Nontangible," *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation*, Vol. 31, No.1 (1992), pp.3-16.

Williams, Don and Louisa Jaggard. *Saving Stuff: How to Care for and Preserve Your Collectibles, Heirlooms, and other Prized Possessions*. Chapter 1 "Your Treasures Want to Live in an Egyptian Tomb," pp.3-13 and Chapter 2 "Deciding What Stuff to Save, Give Away, or Toss" pp.14-22.

AAM Technical Information Service, "Describing the Museum Environment"—handout  
AIC Definition of Conservation Terminology—hand out

## WEEK ELEVEN

**October 30, 2012: Nazi-Era Collecting, Ethics and Museum Law**

Class meets at the Greensboro Historical Museum



Treasure Found, *The Rape of Europa*, 2008.

AASLH Technical Leaflet #224. "Ethics Position Paper: The Capitalization of Collections," in *History News*. Vol. 58, No. 4, Autumn 2003.

American Association of Museums. *Guidelines Concerning the Unlawful Appropriation of Objects During the Nazi Era*. 2001.

American Association of Museums. *Recommended Procedures for Providing Information to the Public about Objects Transferred in Europe during the Nazi*

*Era*. 2000.

Buck and Gilmore. *The New Registration Methods*. pp. 277-280, and Registrar's Code of Ethics. pp. 349-353. [MRM5. pp. 62-77, 394-407.]

*The Rape of Europa*. Menemsha Films; an Actual Films production; co-produced by Robert Edsel; directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen and Nicole Newnham, 2008.

Weisz, Jackie. *Codes of Ethics and Practice of Interest to Museums*.

AASLH Statement of Professional Ethics, pp.8-9.

AAM Code of Ethics for Museums, pp.10-16.

Curators' Code of Ethics, 1996. pp.181-186.

## WEEK TWELVE

### November 6, 2012: Deaccessions, Incoming & Outgoing Loans

Class meets at the Greensboro Historical Museum

Buck and Gilmore. *The New Registration Methods*. pp.127-155, 167-206, 281-287, 301-307. [MRM5. pp. 85-99, 100-108, 120-146, 315-349, 438-446.]

Miller, Steven H. "Guilt-Free Deaccessioning," in *Museum News*. September/October 1996, pp.32, 60-61.



Tour of GHM Archives by Elise Allison

**WEEK THIRTEEN****November 13, 2012: Risk Management, Disaster Planning and Emergency Plans**

Copyright, Insurance, Rights and Reproduction, and Security

Buck and Gilmore. *The New Registration Methods*. pp.225-226, 237-254, 267-275, 288-300. [MRM5. pp. 352-368, 381-391, 427-437.]

*Emergency Management Plan for the Museum of Anthropology*, 2006. pp.1-23.

Flitner, Arthur. AASLH Technical Leaflet #147 "An Insurance Primer for the Local Historical Organization,"

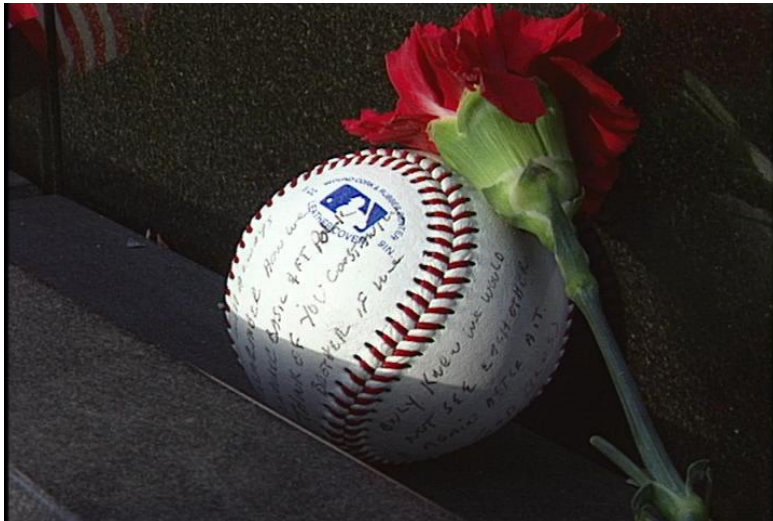
Lindblom, Beth C. and Karen Motylewski. AASLH Technical Leaflet # 183, "Disaster Planning for Cultural Institutions."

Vogt-O'Connor, Diane. "A Precarious Balance: Collections Access and Intellectual Property Rights," in *CRM Cultural Resource Manager*. pp. 61-65.

Common Security Mistakes—hand out

**WEEK FOURTEEN****November 20, 2011: National Tragedies and Contemporary Collecting**

Class meets at the Greensboro Historical Museum



Objects left at Vietnam Veterans Memorial, *Objects and Memory*, 2008

Gardner, James B. "Collecting a National Tragedy," in *Museum News*. March/April 2002. pp. 42-45, 66-67.

Linenthal, Edward T. "Oklahoma City, September 11, and the Lessons of History," in *History News*. Vol. 57, No. 1, Winter 2002. pp.12-15.

*Objects and Memory: A Documentary Film*. produced and directed by Jonathan Fein and Brian Danitz, 2008.

Roe, Kathleen and Christine Ward. "And the Walls Came Tumbling Down... New York's Historical Community Responds to the World Trade Center Disaster," in *History News*. Vol. 57, No. 1, Winter 2002. pp.18-21.

**WEEK FIFTEEN****November 27, 2012:** Final Papers Presented

Class meets at the Greensboro Historical Museum

**Required Readings**

- Buck, Rebecca A. and Jean Allman Gilmore, eds. *Museum Registration Methods*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, Fifth Edition, 2010.
- Gardner, James B. and Elizabeth E. Merritt. *The AAM Guide to Collections Planning*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2004.
- Lubar, Steve and Kathleen M. Kendrick. *Legacies: Collecting America's History at the Smithsonian*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001.
- Malaro, Marie C. *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, Second Edition, 1998.
- Messenger, Phyllis Mauch. *The Ethics of Collecting Cultural Property: Whose Culture/ Whose Property?* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1999.

**Required Video recordings**

- Everything is Illuminated*. Warner Independent Pictures; a Big Beach production; produced by Peter Saraf and Marc Turtletaub; directed by Liev Schreiber, 2007.
- Objects and Memory: A Documentary Film*. produced and directed by Jonathan Fein and Brian Danitz, 2008.
- The Rape of Europa*. Menemsha Films; an Actual Films production; co-produced by Robert Edsel; directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen and Nicole Newnham, 2008.

**Recommended Readings**

- Bachmann, Konstanze, editor. *Conservation Concerns: A Guide for Collectors and Curators*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992.
- Fisher, Charles E. and Hugh C. Miller, eds., Heritage Preservation and National Park Service. *Caring for Your Historic House*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1998.
- Landrey, Gregory J., et al., *The Winterthur Guide to Caring for Your Collection*. Delaware: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 2000.
- Lanmon, Dwight P. *Evaluating Your Collection: The 14 Points of Connoisseurship*. Delaware: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1999.
- Malaro, Marie C. *Museum Governance: Mission, Ethics, Policy*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994.
- Schwarzer, Marjorie. *Riches, Rivals & Radicals: 100 Years of Museums in America*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2006.
- Shapiro, Michael S. et al., *A Museum Guide to Copyright and Trademark*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1999.
- Simmons, John E. *Things Great and Small: Collections Management Policies*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2006.
- Williams, Don and Louisa Jaggard. *Saving Stuff: How to Care for and Preserve Your Collectibles, Heirlooms, and other Prized Possessions*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005.

\*This syllabus is subject to change due to extenuating circumstances.