

HIS/IAR 547: History Museum Curatorship: Collections Management

Faculty: Mr. Jon B. Zachman

Introduction

This course is designed to introduce students to the professional principles and practices in the care and management of history museum collections and historic sites, including collections development, museum registration methods, cataloging, collections care and preservation. The course will provide an overview of 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. The course will also focus on two crucial documents: the collections management policy and the collections plan.

To achieve these goals, students will participate in discussions based on assigned weekly readings. Students will also be required to lead discussions of specific topics assigned by the instructor. During the first part of the semester, students will complete several “hands-on” exercises as part of the course, and the latter part of the semester students will be required to complete 30 hours outside of the classroom at the Greensboro Masonic Museum. This project will entail cataloging, data entry, photography and preventative conservation of objects. And finally, a writing assignment will be due at the end of the semester. This paper should incorporate the assigned readings and discussions and draw on other relevant materials.

Grading

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

- 40% Class participation and contribution to discussion
- 30% Hands-on exercises and class project at Greensboro Masonic Museum
- 30% Writing Assignment

Course Readings

The principal book for the course is *The New Museum Registration Methods* edited by Rebecca Buck and Jean Gilmore. Students will also read parts or all of three books: *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, numerous excerpts from various books and journals are included in the readings. Most of these readings are available on Electronic Reserve via Blackboard and a few are on reserve in the library. Select hand-outs and other materials will be distributed in class.

Each reading assignment and/or video will form the basis of the class lecture and discussion. For each weekly assignment the student will be required to:

1. Prepare two questions from the week's readings that you would like to discuss in class. These questions should reference the different readings and should provoke conversation and discussion. Be prepared to share your response in class.
2. Submit a written response to the weekly discussion question posted on Blackboard.

Students will email their reading assignments to the instructor as a word document attachment no later than 5:00pm on the Wednesday 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 Responses to questions posted on Blackboard must also be submitted no later than 5:00pm on the Wednesday prior to class.

The quality of these written submittals and verbal participation during class will form the basis of the faculty evaluation of each student's participation and contribution. Late submittals will be penalized. Submittals will be ranked as excellent, good, fair or poor.

Active participation in class discussions is critical! In addition to completing the reading assignments, students will also be responsible for leading the discussion of specific topics or reading assigned by the instructor. Class attendance is compulsory and unexcused absences will negatively impact the student's final grade.

Writing Assignment

The final paper will require students to respond to a hypothetical situation that a museum curator or registrar could face during their career in the museum profession. Drawing on readings and class discussions, students must organize their ideas and prepare a thoughtful, well-written response that addresses all of the relevant legal and ethical issues. Specific recommendations and actions should be fully explained and justified in a five to seven page typed double-spaced paper, plus end notes and a bibliography. The paper must be submitted to the instructor via email attachment or hard copy no later than 6:00pm on the last day of class.

Contact Information

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Office hours are by appointment.

Course Schedule and Assignments

WEEK ONE

January 22, 2009: Introductions and Course Overview

Class meets at HHRA 1206

WEEK TWO

January 29, 2009: Collectors, Collecting and Museums, Part 1

Class meets at Greensboro Historical Museum

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.

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.

Muensterberger, Werner. *Collecting: An Unruly Passion*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994. Chapter 1 "Passion, or the Wellspring of Collecting" and Chapter 2 "First Possessions" pp.3-24.

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

WEEK THREE

February 5, 2009: Collectors, Collecting and Museums, Part 2

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.

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)

Schwarzer, Marjorie. *Riches, Rivals & Radicals: 100 Years of Museums in America*. "Introduction," pp.1-27 and Chapter "The Collection" pp.69-119.

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

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

WEEK FOUR

February 12, 2009: Collectors, Collecting and Museums, Part 3

Collections Management Policy

Buck, Rebecca A. and Jean Allman Gilmore, eds. *The New Museum Registration Methods*. Introduction, pp. 45-62, 95-101, 221-223.

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

Greensboro Historical Museum Collections Management Policy, 2008. pp.1-20.

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

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

AAM Writing a Collections Management Policy—handout

Object Handling and Condition Reporting Exercise

WEEK FIVE

February 19, 2009: Collecting Cultural Property & NAGPRA

Buck and Gilmore. *The New Registration Methods*. pp. 309-319.

Malaro, Marie C. *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections*. Chapter 4 Section entitled "Objects Improperly Removed from Their Countries of Origin," pp.84-118.

McKeown, Timothy C., et al., "NAGPRA at 10: A Critique," in *Museum News*. September/October 2000. pp. 42-49, 67-69, 71-75.

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, continued

WEEK SIX

February 26, 2009: Museum Registration Methods: Acquisitions, Accessions Cataloging, Collections Documentation & Automation

Classification schemes; Management, Descriptive Data and Historical Information: Records and Inventory

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

Buck and Gilmore. *The New Registration Methods*. pp.1-44, 64-93, 117-119, 156-166.

Malaro. *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections*. Chapter 4 "The Acquisition of Objects: Accessioning," pp.58-82, and Chapter 11 "Promised Gifts," pp. 360-368.

Object Cataloging Exercise

WEEK SEVEN

March 5, 2009: National Tragedies and Contemporary Collecting

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.

Object Cataloging Exercise, continued

WEEK EIGHT

March 12, 2009: SPRING BREAK

NO CLASS

March 14, 2009: Tour of Greensboro Masonic Temple & Museum, 10:00am—12:00

WEEK NINE

March 19, 2009: What is Free Masonry & Care of Collections, Conservation, Preservation and Storage &

Ray Hall, Guest Speaker from Greensboro Masonic Lodge

AIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice

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

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

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.

Merritt, Jane. "Housekeeping for Museum Collections," Winterthur Museum, May 2002

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

AIC Definition of Conservation Terminology—hand out
Additional readings on Masonic History

WEEK TEN

March 26, 2009: What is Free Masonry, continued & Environmental Monitoring and Integrated Pest Management

Temperature, Relative Humidity, Light Levels, Pollutants, Housekeeping
Bill Simpson, Guest Speaker from Greensboro Masonic Lodge

Buck and Gilmore, *The New Registration Methods*. pp. 227-234, 255-266.

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.

AAM Technical Information Service, "Describing the Museum Environment"—handout

WEEK ELEVEN

April 2, 2009: Nazi-Era Collecting & Incoming & Outgoing Loans, Deaccessions, Ethics and Museum Law-- Standard Facility Report, Packing and Shipping, Couriers, Appraisals and Authentications

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.167-206, 277-287, 301-307, and Registrar's Code of Ethics. pp. 349-358.

Malaro. *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections* Chapter 12 "Tax Considerations Relevant to Gifts" pp.369-383 and Chapter 13, "Appraisals and Authentications, pp.384-405.

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

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

April 9, 2009: 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

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 THIRTEEN

April 16, 2009:

Class meets at Greensboro Masonic Museum

WEEK FOURTEEN

April 30, 2009

Final Papers Presented

Required Readings

Buck, Rebecca A. and Jean Allman Gilmore, eds. *The New Museum Registration Methods*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1998.

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.

Greensboro Historical Museum

130 Summit Avenue
Greensboro, NC 27401
Free parking in lot behind museum

Greensboro Masonic Temple

426 West Market Street
Greensboro, NC 27401
Free parking in gravel lot behind the building
Greensboro Masonic Museum is located on the second floor of the Masonic Temple

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