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 collection 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 and in 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. A writing assignment due at the end of the semester 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: contribution to discussion, hands-on exercises and weekly assignments
10%  Collecting Plan evaluation
25%  Class project at Greensboro Masonic Museum
25%  Writing assignment due last day of class

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

Course Readings
The principal book for the course is *The New Museum Registration Methods* or *Museum Registration Methods*, Fifth Edition edited by Rebecca Buck and Jean Gilmore. Students will also read parts or all of these 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.
Weekly Assignments
Each week I will post an announcement on Blackboard outlining the following week’s assignments. In addition to materials included on the syllabus, students will be expected to complete all assignments posted to Blackboard. These will include, but are not limited to the following:

- Prepare two discussion questions from the week’s readings that you would like to discuss in class. These questions should reference the different readings and/or videos and should provoke conversation and discussion. Be prepared to share your response in class. The questions are due no later than 9:00am the day of class. OR
- Lead or co-lead the class discussion of weekly readings or video assignment

And

- Submit a response to the weekly discussion question posted on Blackboard. OR
- Complete other weekly assignments. For example, bring to class an example of a mission statement from a history-based museum or other institution in the United States. Be prepared to share, explain and defend your selection.

Students will post to Blackboard and email their discussion questions to the instructor in the body of the email no later than 9:00am on the day of 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

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 or poor.

Active participation in class discussions is critical! In addition to completing the reading assignments, students will also be responsible for leading or co-leading discussions 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 the document based on AAM standards. The typed evaluation and presentation are due the third week of class.

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

Email: Jon.Zachman@greensboro-nc.gov

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

Course Schedule and Assignments

WEEK ONE
January 13, 2011: Introductions and Course Overview
Class meets at Gatewood, Room 204

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

WEEK TWO
January 20, 2011: Collectors, Collecting and Museums, Part 1
Class meets at Greensboro Historical Museum

Mission Statements


WEEK THREE
January 27, 2011: Collectors, Collecting and Museums, Part 2
Collections Development and Collection Plans


Collecting Plan Evaluations and Presentations
WEEK FOUR
February 3, 2011: Collectors, Collecting and Museums, Part 3
Collections Management Policy


AAM Writing a Collections Management Policy—handout

*Object Handling and Condition Reporting Exercise*
WEEK FIVE
February 10, 2011: Collecting Cultural Property & NAGPRA


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 17, 2011: Museum Registration Methods: Acquisitions, Accessions Cataloging, Collections Documentation & Automation
Classification schemes; Management, Descriptive Data and Historical Information: Records and Inventory


WEEK SEVEN
February 24, 2011: What is Free Masonry?
Bill Simpson, Guest Speaker from Greensboro Masonic Lodge

Object Cataloging Exercise
WEEK EIGHT
March 3, 2011: More about Free Masonry
Ray Hall, Guest Speaker from Greensboro Masonic Lodge

Additional readings on Masonic History

Mid-term Grade Consultation this week

WEEK NINE
March 10, 2011: SPRING BREAK
NO CLASS

WEEK TEN
March 17, 2011: Care of Collections, Conservation, Preservation and Storage
Temperature, Relative Humidity, Light Levels, Pollutants, Housekeeping

AIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice


AAM Technical Information Service, “Describing the Museum Environment”—handout
AIC Definition of Conservation Terminology—hand out
WEEK ELEVEN
March 24, 2011: Nazi-Era Collecting, Ethics and Museum Law


American Association of Museums. Recommended Procedures for Providing Information to the Public about Objects Transferred in Europe during the Nazi Era. 2000.
AAM Code of Ethics for Museums, pp.10-16.
WEEK TWELVE
March 31, 2011: Deaccessions, Incoming & Outgoing Loans
Standard Facility Report, Packing and Shipping, Couriers, Appraisals and Authentications


First Ticket to the Peale Museum, Etching by C.W. Peale, 1788

WEEK THIRTEEN
April 7, 2011: Risk Management, Disaster Planning and Emergency Plans
Copyright, Insurance, Rights and Reproduction, and Security

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

Common Security Mistakes—hand out
WEEK FOURTEEN
April 14, 2011: National Tragedies and Contemporary Collecting

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

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

WEEK FIFTEEN
April 21, 2011: Final Papers Presented

Required Readings
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.


Recommended Readings


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.*

To Be Scheduled
Tour of Greensboro Masonic Temple & Museum
Tour of GHM Archives