

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.



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 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

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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

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

January 27, 2011: 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.

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.

Colorado Historical Society Collection Plan, 2005. pp.1-23

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

February 3, 2011: 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. [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.

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

Object Handling and Condition Reporting Exercise



WEEK FIVE

February 10, 2011: Collecting Cultural Property & NAGPRA

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, 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

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, and Chapter 11 "Promised Gifts," pp. 360-368.

**WEEK SEVEN****February 24, 2011: What is Free Masonry?**

Bill Simpson, 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.

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

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.

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

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**March 24, 2011: Nazi-Era Collecting, Ethics and Museum Law**

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**March 31, 2011: Deaccessions, Incoming & Outgoing Loans**

Standard Facility Report, Packing and Shipping, Couriers, Appraisals and Authentications

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.]

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.



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

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**April 14, 2011: National Tragedies and Contemporary Collecting**

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**April 21, 2011: Final Papers Presented****Required Readings**

Buck, Rebecca A. and Jean Allman Gilmore, eds. *Museum Registration Methods*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, Fifth Edition, 2010.

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



Greensboro Masonic Temple, Market Street Entrance, Parking Lot Entrance

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

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