

**GW Anthropology 6200**  
***Museum Anthropology***  
**Fall 2014**



Instructor: Dr. Gwyneira Isaac

Time: Wed 6.10-8.30pm

Location: Anthropology Dept., NMNH Cooper Room

Office Locale: Anthro 363; Office Hours: Tuesdays 2.30-5.00pm

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**Course Purpose:**

Recognition of the plurality of knowledges is one of the fundamental shifts to have taken place within this century's social theory. Using an investigative framework based on the study of knowledge diversity, this course takes a critical approach to museum anthropology—examining its history, theory and current contributions to anthropological and museum-based research. We identify 19<sup>th</sup> century foundational schools of thought, such as comprehensive knowledge (Richards 1993), evolutionary schemas (Hinsley 1994), and historic factors and ideologies such as colonialism (Henare 2005) and post-colonialism (Lonetree 2012). We consider how social changes and ideology in the 20<sup>th</sup> century transformed anthropology and museums, creating the new-museology of the 20<sup>st</sup> century and the critical museology of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Shelton 2013). We look at repatriation and digital cultures to consider what these new ideologies tell us about contemporary approaches to knowledge diversity. We explore tribal museums and the critique of collaborative community driven anthropology—asking, how does

collaborative anthropology shape current frameworks about the production of knowledge? Through a collective research-project, this course introduces methods and practice in institutional ethnography, subsequently using interviews to develop an analysis of a Smithsonian initiative.

### **Course Requirements:**

**Coursework** – The aim of this seminar is to foster methodologies that will aid the development of investigative frameworks for anthropological and museum based research. This will be achieved through assigned readings, seminar discussions, research projects, papers and presentations. For each seminar meeting, students will hand in 1-2 page in response to questions or provocations posed to the reading (30% of the grade). Students will be required to submit a research paper on a topic related to the seminar (30% of the grade). Research papers should draw on relevant literature and theory and develop an analytical framework that reveals an understanding of museum anthropology. The class will also work as a group to conduct interviews with Smithsonian staff as part of the production of an ethnography of a Smithsonian project (30%). Students present their individual research to the group at the end of the semester (10% of the grade).

**Final Paper** – 30% Students will write a research paper on a topic of their choosing that draws on the reading, theories and frameworks presented in the coursework. Students are encouraged to select original topics that enable them to access Smithsonian resources for their research, such as collections, exhibits, museum initiatives and staff. Papers must be 15-20 pages in length. Paper topics must be chosen and an outline submitted by October 22, 2014. The outline will provide a summary of the topic, the range of perspectives and a short bibliography.

**Museum ethnography** – 30% Students will work alongside the instructor to create a group project in which students will interview Smithsonian staff, as a means to develop an ethnography of a Smithsonian initiative. Interviews will be transcribed and analysed, with future opportunities to develop the data as a report or published paper.

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### **Required Books**

Peers, Laura and Alison K. Brown (2003) *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*

Macdonald, Susan (2010) *A Companion to Museum Studies*. London: Wiley Blackwell.

Lonetree, Amy (2012) *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, November 2012.

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**1. Introduction** (August 27, 2014)

**2. Museums and The Origins of Anthropology** (September 3, 2014)

Richards, Thomas (1997) *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*

Henare, Amiria J. M. (2005) *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange*

Hinsley, Curtis (1994) *The Smithsonian and the American Indian*. Smithsonian Institution Press.

Shelton, Anthony (2010) Museums and Anthropologies: Practices and Narratives. In Susan MacDonald. *A Companion to Museum Studies*. London: Wiley Blackwell. Pp 64-80.

**Question:** *The idea that early museums were an unorganized hodgepodge of objects from around the world belies their nature as spaces for the ordering of the natural and cultural world. Comment.*

**3. Museums and the Social Construction of Knowledge** (Sept. 10, 2014)

Berger, P. L. and T. Luckmann (1966), *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Lowenthal, David (1985) *The Past Is A Foreign Country*.

Hall, Stuart (1997) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage Publications.

Mason, Rhiannon (2010) Cultural Theory and Museum Studies. In Susan MacDonald. *A Companion to Museum Studies*. London: Wiley Blackwell. Pp 17-32.

Latour, Bruno (2004) Why has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern. *Critical Inquiry*. Vol. 30 No 2. Winter 2004. Pp 225-248.

Shelton, Anthony (2013) Critical Museology: A Manifesto. *Museum Worlds*. Vol. 1. No. 1. 2013. Pp. 7-23.

**Question:** *The individual determines his or her conception of the world, not the group. Discuss.*

#### 4. *New Museology* (September 17, 2014)

Berlo, Janet Catherine and Ruth B. Philips (1995) 'Our (Museum) World Turned Upside Down: Re-presenting Native American Arts'. In *The Problematics of Collecting and Display*. *Art Bulletin* March (1995).

Kreps, Christina (2010) Non-western Models of Museums and Curation in Cross-Cultural Perspective. In Susan Macdonald, ed. *A Companion to Museum Studies*. London: Wiley Blackwell. Pp 457 - 472

Lonetree, Amy (2012) *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, November 2012.

Peirson-Jones, (1992) 'The Colonial Legacy and the Community: the Gallery 33 Project', in I. Karp, M. K. Kreamer and S. D. Lavine (eds.) *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*.

Shelton, A. (1992): 'Constructing The Global Village' in *Museums Journal*, Aug 1992, 25-28.

**Question: *It is museum that shape society not the other way around. Discuss.***

#### 5. *Repatriation* (September 24, 2014)

NAGPRA, law and regulations, available at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nagpra/>

Hollinger, Eric R., Edwell John, Jr., Harold Jacob, Lora Moran-Collins, Carolyn Thome, Jonathan Zastrow, Adam Metallo, Gunter Waibel and Vince Rossi 2013. Tlingit-Smithsonian Collaborations with 3D Digitization of Cultural Objects. *Museum Anthropology Review* 7(1-2) Spring-Fall 2013. 201-253.

Merrill, William L., Edmund J. Ladd, and T. J. Ferguson. 1993. The return of the Ahayu:da: lessons for repatriation from Zuni Pueblo and the Smithsonian Institution. *Current Anthropology* 34(5):523– 567.

Bender, Cora (2009) 'Transgressive Objects' in America: Mimesis and Violence in the Collection of Trophies during the Nineteenth Century Indian Wars. In *Civil Wars*, Vol.11, No.4 (December 2009), pp.502–513.

**Question: *Why are repatriation laws continually changing or being amended?***

#### 6. *Museum Ethnography* (October 1, 2014)

Thomas, Nicholas. 2010. The Museum as Method. *Museum Anthropology* Vol. 33. 6–10.

Isaac, Gwyneira (2005) *Mediating Knowledges: Origins of a Zuni Museum*. Museum Anthropology.

MacDonald, Sharon (2002) *Behind the Scenes of the Science Museum*. Bloomsbury Academic Press.

Diana Marsh – Guest lecturer to discuss ethnography of the Dinosaur exhibit ‘Deep Time’

**Question: Most museums are wholly self-aware of their role in the production of knowledge. Discuss.**

## 7. *Digital Culture* (October 8, 2014)

Brown, Deidre and George Nicholas (2010) Protecting indigenous cultural property in the age of digital democracy: Institutional and communal responses to Canadian First Nations and Māori heritage concerns. *Journal of Material Culture*. 17 (3) 307-324

Tapsell P (2009) Māori maps: Digitally bridging our communities. *Perspectives on Urban Life: Connections and Reconnections*. Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies conference. Available at: <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/conf2009/papers/CH3.2.html> (accessed 26 April 2012).

Srinivasan R et al. (2009a) Critical and reflective uses of new media technologies in tribal museums. *Museum Management and Curatorship* 24(2): 161–181.

Rowley S et al. (2010) Building an on-line research community: The Reciprocal Research Network. Available at: <http://www.archimuse.com/mw2010/papers/rowley/rowley.html> (accessed 26 April 2012).

Moore P and Hennessey K (2006) New technologies and contested ideologies: The Tagish First Voices Project. *American Indian Quarterly* 30(1–2): 119–137.

Parry, Ross (2013) The End of the Beginning: Normativity in the Post-digital Museum. In *Museum Worlds*. Vol 1. Pp 24-39.

**Question: Digital is the new analog. Discuss.**

## 8. *Museum ethnography – Planning Session* (October 15, 2014)

Interviews with staff booked this week.

**9. Collaborative Anthropology and the Co-Production of Knowledge:** (Oct. 29, 2014)

Peers, Laura and Alison K. Brown (2003) *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*

Knowles, Chantal. (2013) In *Reassembling the Collection: Indigenous Agency and Ethnographic Collections*. Edited by Harrison, R., A. Clark, and S. Byrne, Santa Fe: School of Advanced Research.

Isaac, Gwyneira, Bojorquez, April and Nichols, Catherine. (2012). Dying to be Represented: Museums and Día de los Muertos Collaborations. *Collaborative Anthropologies*, 5: 28-63.

**Question: Collaborative anthropology will always bias the discipline of anthropology, not the community. Discuss.**

**10. Community Museums** (October 8, 2014)

Erikson, Patricia Pierce (2002) *A Thousand Voices: The Makah Cultural and Research Center*.

Fuller, Nancy J. (1991) The Museum as a Vehicle for Community Empowerment: The Ak Chin Indian Community Ecomuseum Project. In Ivan Karp, Christine Muller Kreamer and Steven D. Levine, eds. *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Christen, Kimberly (2007). Following the Nyinkka: Relations of Respect and Obligations to Act in the Collaborative Work of Aboriginal Cultural Centers. *Museum Anthropology*. Vol. 30 No. 2. Pp. 101-124.

Poulot, Dominique (1992) Identity as Self-Discovery: The Ecomuseum in France. In Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, eds. *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*

**Question: To what extent do tribal museums meet the needs of their communities?**

**11. Transcription Week** (November 5, 2014)

Transcription of interviews. These will be pre-circulated and analyzed in class.

**12. Recovering Voices** (November 12, 2014)

Reading to be announced.

*13. Presentations* (November 19, 2014)

*14. Thanksgiving Week* (November 26, 2014 **no class**)

*15. Final Papers Due* (December 3, 2014)