ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE MUSEUM
   Graduate Seminar

Week 1 January 17       Getting acquainted; goals and core concepts of the course

   HOW COLLECTIONS TAKE SHAPE IN THE PAST

Week 2 January 24       Just what is a museum anyway?
                        [Written Homework due]

Week 3 January 31       Says who? Documentation and Attribution

Week 4 February 7       Surely there must be more…: Enhancing Museum Records
                        [Interim Report #1 due]

Week 5 February 14      How did they end up here? Building Context of Collecting

Week 6 February 21      Artifacts at Home: Understanding Context of Use

Week 7 February 28      Learning to Look (and look up)

Week 8 March 7          Connected Lives: Châin Operatóire
                        [Interim Report #2 due]

March 14               SPRING BREAK – no class

Week 9 March 21        Collections visits this week – no class meeting

   AND CARRY MEANING IN THE PRESENT

Week 10 March 28       Record Systems: Putting Things Into Boxes

Week 11 April 4        Repatriation: Applying Knowledge to NAGPRA
                        [Interim Report #3 due]

Week 12 April 11       Who Cares? Identity, Ownership, & Museumification
                        [Interim Report #4 due]

Week 13 April 18       Visiting with the Dead: Physical Anthropology
                        [Interim Report #5 due]

Week 14 April 25       Student Presentations

May 4                  Final Collections Report due
Anthropology in the Museum
ANTH 6201: Spring 2018

General Course Information:

Where: Carolyn Rose Seminar Room, Rm 339
National Museum of Natural History
Smithsonian Institution
(escort required)

When: Wednesdays, 6:10 - 8 pm

Who: Dr. Candace Greene, Ethnologist
Dept. of Anthropology, NMNH
greenec@si.edu
Telephone (office): 202-633-1929
Telephone (cell): 682-300-9151
Office hours: by appointment

Course Description

This course is concerned with examining how anthropological collections take shape in the past and carry meaning in the present. It is built around individual research on actual Smithsonian collections and involves substantial research and writing.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- become familiar with the nature of collections and documentation
- develop research skills applicable to anthropological collections
- develop analytical skills, applying anthropology to understanding collections
- become familiar with issues in museum anthropology
Method of Instruction

Readings, class discussions, and especially hands-on experience in researching and evaluating a collection.

Method of Evaluation and Grading:

25%   Interim Collection Reports
55%   Final Collection Report
20%   Class participation

The basis for evaluation for each assignment will be available in advance. All work is due on the assigned date. Late submissions will be penalized.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the University's Code of Academic Integrity. It states "Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization and the fabrication of information." See http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity.
ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE MUSEUM

Week 1  Jan. 17  Getting acquainted; goals and core concepts of the course

[demonstration of ways we’ll think about objects through the course]

HOW COLLECTIONS TAKE SHAPE IN THE PAST…

Week 2  Jan. 24  Just what is a museum anyway?

Banks, Marcus
[consider the evident surface of objects against evidence of their history]

Gosden, Chris and Frances Larson
[think about museums as sets of networks among people]

Pearce, Susan M.
[think about all the things out there in the world, and the sub-set in the museum]

Thomas, Nicholas
[consider alternative perspectives of moving from questions to objects, or from objects to questions]

Week 3  Jan. 31  Says who? Documentation and Attribution

Greene, Candace S.
[focus on the concepts bound up in attribution and documentation]

Sturtevant, William C.  
[consider what issues computerization has and hasn’t resolved in 50+ years]

Guide to Collections Records, Ethnology and Archaeology Collections. Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History, Department of Anthropology.  
[read this one carefully; keep it for continual reference]

**Week 4   Feb. 7  Surely there must be more…: Enhancing Museum Records**

Grafe, Steven  
[look at how he gathered information, how he used it to construct collection history]

Hollinger, Eric R.  
2003 Inventory and Assessment of Human Remains and Funerary Objects Potentially Affiliated with the Menominee Tribe in the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution. Unpublished report, Repatriation Office, NMNH.  
[Focus on pages 21-47. Make a list of the types of sources used – with awesome results]

Norcini, Marilyn  
[look at types of information gathered to support an intellectual history]

**Week 5   Feb. 14  How did they end up here? Building Context of Collecting**

O’Hanlon, Michael.  
[think about how collecting was influenced – before, during, after “the scene”]

Van der Grijp, Paul
 [read this for a focus on donors as major agents]

Bell, Joshua A.
 [read this for a focus on members of the source community as major agents]

Morphy, Howard
 [the subtitle says it all – multiple agency]

**Week 6   Feb. 21**  **Artifacts at Home: Understanding Context of Production and Use**

Banerjee, Mukulika and Daniel Miller
 [think about the complex sentiments of a person **using** an object]

Rhoads, Bernadine, Herwona Toyebo and Beatrice Ahpeahtone Doyah Smith
 [think about the types of information people can provide about heritage objects]

Ettawageshik, Frank
 [think about whether tourist goods are lesser goods, or just different goods]

**Week 7   Feb. 28  Learning to Look (and look up)**

Greene, Candace S.
 [revisit this article from Wk. 3, focusing here on the process of attribution]

Greene, Candace S.

Hooper, Steven
2005 On Looking at a Tahitian God House. Journal of Museum Ethnography 17: 89-100. [another systematic process of learning from close and serious observation]

Week 8 Mar. 7 Connected Lives: Chaîne opératoire

Martinón-Torres, Marcos
2002 ‘Chaîne opératoire.’ The concept and its applications within the study of technology. Gallaecia 21: 29-43. [Good introduction to chaîne opératoire; use this as a way to think about the method and how it might be applied to your own objects of study]

Coupaye, Ludovic

Munn, Nancy D.
1977 The spatiotemporal transformations of Gawa canoes. Journal de la Société des Océanistes 33: 39-51. [OPTIONAL BACKGROUND: Semiotic and structural analysis of a canoe that usefully points outward from the object into the world]

------------------------------------------ Mar. 14: SPRING BREAK --------------------------------------

Week 9 Mar. 21 Collections Visits – No Class Meeting

…AND CARRY MEANING IN THE PRESENT

Week 10 Mar. 28 Record Systems: Putting Things Into Boxes

Turner, Hannah

Newell, Jenny
[use this article to think through the place of online images as surrogates]

Phillips, Ruth and Christopher Steiner
[the biggest issue of “fit” – consider what gets into what type of museum]

Pearce, Susan M.
[revisit this one from Wk 2, think again about all the things out there in the world, and the sub-set in the museum]

Banks, Marcus
[revisit this one from Wk 2, now considering image versus object]

Week 11 April 4 Repatriation: Applying Knowledge to NAGPRA

Hollinger, Eric R., Betsy Bruemmer and Anne-Marie Victor-Howe
2005 Assessment of Tlingit Objects Requested for Repatriation as Objects of Cultural Patrimony and Sacred Objects in the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution. Unpublished report, Repatriation Office, NMNH.
This will be provided in hard copy. Focus on pages 1-25.
[look esp. at complexity of determining communal property and right of possession]

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

Week 12 April 11 Who Cares? Identity, Ownership, & “Museumification”

Ames, Michael
[an early wakeup call on the politics of representing “others”]

Leopold, Robert
[issues and challenges in the domain of cultural privacy]
McMullen, Ann
[on-the-ground examination of cultural politics of “doing the right thing”]

Week 13 April 18 Visiting with the Dead: Physical Anthropology
Week 14 April 25 Student Presentations

FINAL REPORTS DUE: MAY 4
Anthropology in the Museum

COLLECTIONS ASSIGNMENT

Each student will select an accession that will be the basis for an ongoing assignment over the course of the semester, with interim reports due periodically.

Week 1 January 17 Select a collection from the list of options. Schedule an appointment with the teaching assistant to go to the Museum Support Center to examine your collection. Register your visit, using the online visitor request system, available at http://anthropology.si.edu.

Week 2 January 24 Due: Written homework
Using two commonly accessible reference sources, locate basic, preliminary information on the cultural designation under which material in your collection is cataloged. Establish the general geographic location; identify alternate names that may have been applied to this culture. Consider who lives in that location now.
* Prepare a one-paragraph written summary, citing sources used.
* Include a regional map with the collecting location marked. Choose a scale appropriate to the locality to be indicated.

Week 4 February 7 Due: Interim Report #1
Assemble all associated information in Smithsonian records. Check for: accession files; parts of the accession that may have been dispersed among Smithsonian units; other accessions from the same donor or collector; museum annual reports. Check across SI databases for field notes, correspondence files, or photographs in various SI archives. When viewing your collection, look for tags or writing on objects. Make copies of relevant documents for continued reference.
* Prepare a narrative summary of the information, citing all sources.
* Conclude the summary with an assessment of whether the catalog information is based on documentation received with the collection or attribution assigned by the museum.

Week 7 February 28
By this week, select an item from your accession for further research to be presented in Interim #3. Schedule an appointment with the professor for the week of March 21 to examine it and to look at comparative material.
Before the appointment date:
* Use the online databases to assemble a list of other things you would like to examine for comparative purposes.
* Provide a list of identifying numbers and a statement of what search parameters you used.
Week 8  March 7  Due: Interim Report #2
Part I.
Enhance the documentation through research and analyze it. Prepare a report of your findings including these elements:
  * Trace the provenance of both objects and information;
  * Assemble information on the donor, collector, and any others involved;
  * Assess their knowledge and intellectual perspective.

  * Evaluate the reliability of the original documentation based on new information that you have found.

Part II.
Enhance understanding of the collection by examining the context of collecting.
  * Assemble information on the place of origin at that time period.
  * Describe the cultural, economic, and political framework within which the collection was assembled, taking into account the perspectives of both the source community and the collectors.
  * Consider how these factors might have shaped the collection.

Week 11  April 4  Due: Interim Report #3
Prepare information about the object itself. Become familiar with the materials, techniques, and designs.

Locate comparative information about similar objects, using published sources, online museum catalogs, and on-site visits to Smithsonian collections.
  * Analyze how your object compares to these.

Research the meaning of the object within the culture of origin, using anthropological source materials.
  * Explain the cultural context of objects of this type.
  * Indicate if this has changed over time.

Evaluate museum records about the collection based on your research.
  * Assess if your findings challenge or support the catalog record.
  * Consider both ethnic identification and function.

Week 12  April 11  Due: Interim Report #4
NAGPRA applies only to Native American materials from the U.S. However, the issues that the law requires museums to address in considering repatriation claims are relevant for understanding collections from anywhere in the world.

For your collection or a selected item, apply the research you have already done to address three critical issues:
  * cultural affiliation (who could assert a cultural connection?)
* cultural context (does the collection contain human remains; funerary objects; objects of cultural patrimony; or sacred objects, as defined by NAGPRA?)
* right of possession (was title legally transferred? are there other legal or ethical issues?)

If you do not have enough information to fully address all issues, indicate what more you would need to know and how you would go about finding it out.

Week 13  April 18  Due: Interim Report #5
Develop two different idea statements (1-2 pages each) for thought-provoking exhibits that could include one or more objects from your selected collection. Show how these relate to concepts that have been addressed in this course.

Week 15  May 4  Due: Final Collections Report
The final report will be a compilation of the five interim assignments from the semester. Students are encouraged to revise their previous work to take advantage of additional information discovered, comments on earlier submissions, and their increased understanding of issues in museum anthropology.

In addition, prepare two short summaries based on your research to be added to the collections database, using the format provided. One will be a biographical sketch of the donor and/or collector; the other will be a short history of the accession.
Guidelines and Instructions for Collections Assignment

These are real collections! Results may vary!
I have not researched these in advance, so I don’t know how hard or easy different parts of the assignment will be. Students will have varying success in finding information. This may make particular parts of the assignment more or less fun, but it will not affect your grade as long as you can fully document the strategies that you developed to seek information and the sources that you consulted. Even negative information can be useful to future researchers, and should be included in the formal collection report.

The information that you assemble for assignments 1 through 3 will be added to the museum’s permanent records. Write for posterity. Your name is going to be on this for a long time.
- think of it as a professional report, not a school paper
- report results; save comments on your research experiences to share in class
- use clear, simple language
- provide complete information: complete citations for published works; full designations for repositories, and clear citations for unpublished material; full names and position titles for individuals; no acronyms without full explanations.
- check spellings and correct typographical errors.
- internet sources can be unstable; identify the source clearly in addition to giving the URL and the date accessed. If there is a physical edition, cite that first, noting that you consulted an electronic edition.
- think about someone reading this decades from now. Will it still make sense?

Interim reports: Submit interim reports in hard copy and also electronically as an email attachment. Include a cover sheet with the accession number and your name, email address, and date on each interim. Give your report page numbers. For assignments 1 and 2, include copies of key documentation for review. Interim reports will be graded and marked with suggestions for improvement if needed. I will return them in time for revisions to be incorporated into the final Collection Report. I prefer text files in Word; if you wish to use another program, check with me regarding format.

Final reports: Submit final reports in hard copy as well as in electronic form. Material must be submitted in a form that will facilitate inclusion into museum records.
Electronic versions: Submit through Blackboard. Assignments #4 and 5 should be clearly separated.
Hard copy versions: Clean copies on good quality standard paper are required; use paper clips if necessary but do not staple. Every page should be clearly marked with the accession number and other designations as needed to retain their order.

Material in assignments #1 - 3 of the final Collection Report may be added to the Department of Anthropology collection files. It also may be added to the online collections database. Your name will be included as the source of information unless other arrangements are made with the instructor.
Smithsonian Sources for Collection Information

Information on collections may be dispersed among different parts of the Smithsonian, each with its own database and appointment system. Here’s a list of some key resources with information on how to find information about what they have and how to arrange a visit.

**Dept. of Anthropology – Collections Section**

**Website**  The collections website ([http://anthropology.si.edu/cm/index.htm](http://anthropology.si.edu/cm/index.htm)) provides links to the online catalog and to a useful *Guide to Collection Records*. You can access the Visitor Request system from here to make appointments, and can view various exhibits that may relate to your collection. Explore this one!

**Online Catalog**  EMu is the database for the Anthropology object catalog. A public version is accessible at [http://collections.nmnh.si.edu/search/anth/](http://collections.nmnh.si.edu/search/anth/). It provides access to some but not all of the catalog data, and little of the accession data. For Interim #1, the TA will check the non-public database for other relevant information and will send any information found. You will use the online database as a major resource to locate comparative material for Interim #3.

**Vertical files**  Recent information contributed by researchers about accessions or objects may be available in paper files kept by the Collections Management section. (This is where paper copies of your reports will be filed.) The TA will check this source for you or you can do so yourself when you are at MSC.

**In Person**  Visits to the collection are week days by appointment, scheduled through the online Visitor Request system. The TA will handle visits for students enrolled in the course. Almost all of the archaeology and ethnology collections of the Department of Anthropology are held at the Museum Support Center in Suitland, Maryland, accessible via a free Smithsonian shuttle. A small number of items are in the Natural History Museum on the Mall, either on exhibit or adjacent to curatorial offices.

**Dept. of Anthropology - National Anthropological Archives (NAA)**

**Online catalog**  SIRIS is the online catalog for all Smithsonian archives as well as Smithsonian libraries. It is available at [http://www.siris.si.edu](http://www.siris.si.edu). NAA listings are under the heading for Archival, Manuscript, and Photographic Collections. You can restrict searches to just the NAA or search all participating Smithsonian archives. The NAA has extensive photographic collections in addition to manuscript materials. Lots of great documentation and contextual photos here.

**Website**  The NAA website includes a number of finding aids to the collection and may include information that is not available in SIRIS. It is available at [http://anthropology.si.edu/naa/](http://anthropology.si.edu/naa/).
In person  The collections of the archives are available by appointment only
tuesday-friday from 9 to 4:30. Appointments are made separately from the object
collection; schedule through the NAA’s online request system. The NAA is located
in the Museum Support Center in Suitland, Maryland, the same building as the object
collection. Information is available on the website.

Smithsonian Institution Archives
Accession files  Original accession records (prior to 1958) are available in the SI
Archives. The SI Archives also has indices to correspondence files and other
holdings that may relate to collections. It is located just off the Mall in the Capitol
Gallery building (next to L’Enfant Metro stop) and is open 9-5 M-F. You should
contact them in advance for an appointment. E-mail is osiaref@si.edu. See their
website for further information - https://siarchives.si.edu/.

Other resources  The SI Archives maintains extensive collections of manuscript
material relating to Smithsonian history, which may include information on
donors. Various finding aids and databases are available online; see listings on
their website, including links to SIRIS, the archive and library database.

National Museum of Natural History – Office of the Registrar
Accession files  Original accession records (and additions) since 1958 are
maintained in this office. Records for accessions prior to that date are available on
microfilm. Card indexes of donor names are available. This office is located in the
Natural History Museum on the Mall, and researcher space is very limited.
Records are available by appointment only - telephone 202-633-1630.

Smithsonian Collections Search Center
This system searches across all of the Smithsonian databases that are online. It is
available at http://collections.si.edu. It can be a great way to find unexpected resources.
Be certain to expand the left sidebar entry for Catalog Record Source to see which
Smithsonian repositories are represented and to filter your results. Some resources, such
as the National Museum of the American Indian, do not have all their records online.
Even when there is an online record, no repository includes all information in those
online records.

Smithsonian Institution Libraries
The Smithsonian has many specialized libraries with extensive holdings that may
be of value in your research. If you cannot find a book at GW, you can consult the
library section of SIRIS to see what is available at the SI. Collections are open to anyone
week days by appointment for on-site use, but materials can be checked out only by staff.
Information on the library system is available at http://www.sil.si.edu.

The reference staff of the Anthropology Branch of the SI Library is specially
trained in this field, highly knowledgeable, and very helpful. If you are having trouble
locating books or articles on your topic, they will be glad to provide assistance. The
Anthropology Branch is one of the best places anywhere for literature about objects!
YIKES – SO MANY SOURCES!

Indeed, the Smithsonian is big and can be confusing. Check out the exhibit we developed to help researchers - Accessing Anthropology: Online Databases and Other Resources – available at http://anthropology.si.edu/accessinganthropology/understanding/index.html.