

## **Anthropology 6201.10 Museums and Anthropology**

January 12 to April 20, 2011

Wednesdays 6:10-8:00 pm

Classroom: National Museum of Natural History, Room 339 (Anthropology [Rose] Seminar Room). Conference room phone: 202-633-1914.

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is concerned with examining how anthropological collections take shape in the past and carry meaning in the present. Students will have the opportunity to critically examine the artifacts themselves, but especially a variety of information typically maintained by museums to document collections. Research questions will be explored based on contemporary material culture theory involving study of the records, the objects, the changing meaning given to objects, and the context of collecting.

Questions raised by the class include: How do museum records represent, and sometimes misrepresent, objects? What are the ways museum collections have relevance? How does the meaning of a collection change?

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

As a result of this course students will be able to:

- 1) Think critically about the nature of collections and their documentation;
- 2) Understand the role of collections in public presentation and for a range of research topics;
- 3) Develop an understanding of contemporary theory about material culture;
- 4) Understand the relevance of collections to source communities.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- 1) Readings are assigned from various sources, provided to each student as pdfs on CD. See schedule below.
- 2) Project: Prepare a documentation package and analysis of a collection and of a specific artifact within the collection. Review accession, catalogue, archival, and other sources of information to evaluate and analyze the museum and cultural context of a collection. Students give a final presentation on their project.
- 3) Students are evaluated on the basis of class participation (20%), interim collection study (25%), and the final collection study (55%).

## LECTURE THEMES

- Collections as knowledge (how collections take shape)--includes the how and why of collecting, the use of accession records to understand the history of a collection, building information around a specific artifact or collection when the records are minimal, and the critical examination of existing records. This will be a hands-on use of objects and archival information.
- The changing meaning of objects (theories and cultural heritage)--topics ranging from community assertion of ownership to symbolism and theories of materiality.
- Special topics--repatriation, cultural property issues, the artist and museum interpretation, and the importance of collections to source communities.
- There will be guest speakers to elaborate on perspectives from cultural studies, art history, and ethnic studies.
- Scheduled visit to the Museum Support Center (MSC) to explore collections and Independent visits to archives.

## SCHEDULE

Lectures are held in the Anthropology Seminar Room (Rose Room), # 339, National Museum of Natural History

W	January 12	<b>Introduction</b> --Core concepts of the class and an introduction to objects, ideas, and museum records
W	January 19	<p><b>Museums and Collections...and Anthropology</b></p> <p>1. Tilley, Christopher 2006 Theoretical Perspectives Introduction. <i>In Handbook of Material Culture</i>, C. Tilley et al. eds. Pp. 7-12. London: Sage.</p> <p>2. Gosden, Chris and Frances Larson 2007 What is a Museum? <i>In Knowing Things: Exploring the Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum, 1884-1945</i>, by Chris Gosden and Frances Larson. Pp. 1-13. Oxford: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>2. Lawson, Barbara 1994 Artifact Collecting and Anthropology. <i>In Collected Curios: Missionary Tales from the South Seas</i>, by Barbara Lawson. Pp.1-20. Montreal: McGill University.</p>
W	January 26	<b>Visit to the Museum Support Center—Exploring Collections and Documentation</b> (to be scheduled before 5pm)
W	February 2	<b>Guest lecture</b> —first half of class, collections and their changing meaning

		<b>Review of visit to MSC and next steps for collections projects</b>
W	February 9	<p><b>Says Who? Documentation and Attribution</b></p> <p>1. Greene, Candace S. 1992 Attribution, Documentation, and the Ideal Type. <i>In Art and Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture and Museum Studies in Honor of Jane Powell Dwyer</i>. H. Juli, ed. Pp. 9-17. Brown University Research Papers in Anthropology, 5. Providence: Brown University.</p> <p>2. Sturtevant, William C. 1966 Ethnographic Collections and Curatorial Records. <i>Museum News</i> 44(7):16-19.</p>
W	February 16	<p><b>Theorizing The Meaning of Things</b></p> <p>1. Appadurai, Arjun 1986 Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value. <i>In The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective</i>. Arjun Appadurai, ed. Pp. 3-6. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>2. Kopytoff, Igor 1986 The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process. <i>In The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective</i>. Arjun Appadurai, ed. Pp. 64-68. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p>
W	February 23	<p><b>Enhancing Museum Records</b></p> <p>1. Grafe, Steven 2001 Walking in Strange Gardens: Early Floral Design in the Columbia River Plateau, by Steven Grafe. <i>In Painters, Patrons, and Identity: Essays in Native American Art to Honor J.J. Brody</i>. Joyce M. Szabo, ed. Pp. 263-280. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.</p> <p>2. Norcini, Marilyn 2008 Frederick Johnson's 'River Desert Algonquin' Materials at the University of Pennsylvania Museum: A Collection History, by Marilyn Norcini. <i>Museum Anthropology</i> 31(2):122-147.</p>
W	March 2	<p><b>Collectors and Collecting</b></p> <p>1. O'Hanlon, Michael. 2000 Introduction. <i>In Hunting the Gatherers: Ethnographic Collectors, Agents, and Agency in Melanesia, 1870s-1930s</i>. Michael O'Hanlon and Robert Welsch, eds. Pp. 1-34. New York: Berghahn Books.</p>

		2. Rosman, Abraham and Paula Rubel 1998 Why They Collected: The History of Artifact Collecting in New Ireland. <i>Museum Anthropology</i> 22(2): 35-49.
W	March 9	<b>Guest Speaker</b>  <b>Project discussion time</b>
W	March 16	No Class, Spring Break
W	March 23	<b>Understanding Context of Use</b> 1. Banerjee, Mukulika and Daniel Miller 2003 Mina's Story. <i>In</i> The Sari, by Mukulika Banerjee and Daniel Miller. Pp. 11-19. New York: Berg.  2. Rhoads, Bernadine Herwona Toyebo 2000 Keintaddle. <i>In</i> Selections from Gifts of Pride and Love: Kiowa and Comanche Cradles. B. Hail, ed. Pp. 88-93. Bristol: Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Brown University.  3. Smith, Beatrice Ahpehtone Doyah 2000 My Grandmother Guohaddle. <i>In</i> Selections from Gifts of Pride and Love: Kiowa and Comanche Cradles. B. Hail, ed. Pp. 52-57. Bristol: Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Brown University.  4. Udvardy, Monica L., Linda L. Giles, and John B. Mitsanze 2003 The Transatlantic Trade in African Ancestors. <i>American Anthropologist</i> 105(3):566-580.
W	March 30	<b>Guest Speaker--Repatriation: Applying Knowledge to NAGPRA</b>  1. 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. <b>Focus on pages 1-25.</b> 2. McMullen, Ann 2008 The Currency of Consultation and Collaboration. <i>Museum Anthropology Review</i> (Online). October 28. <a href="http://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/mar/article/view/88/169">http://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/mar/article/view/88/169</a> 3. NAGPRA, law and regulations, available at <a href="http://www.cr.nps.gov/nagpra/">http://www.cr.nps.gov/nagpra/</a>
W	April 6	<b>Who Cares? Identity, Ownership, &amp; "Museumification"</b>

		<p>1. Ames, Michael 1992 Cannibal Tours, Glass Boxes, and the Politics of Interpretation. <i>In</i> Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums, by M. Ames. Pp. 139-150. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.</p> <p>2. Brown, Michael F. 2003 The Missionary's Photographs. <i>In</i> Who Owns Native Culture? By Michael F. Brown. Pp. 11-41. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.</p>
W	April 13	Student Presentations
W	April 20	Student Presentations

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states: "Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information." For the remainder of the code, see: <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>.

### **SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

#### *DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)*

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/>  
*UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC) 202-994-5300*

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals

<http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices>

### **SECURITY**

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.