



MUSE E-102

INTRODUCTION TO GRADUATE RESEARCH *in Museum Studies*

Harvard Extension

Fall 2022

Instructor

Dr. Jeffrey R. Wilson
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Time

Tues. 7:40-9:40 pm ET
web conference via Zoom

Course Website

<https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/110819>

Office Hours

Thursdays, noon – 1 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this interdisciplinary proseminar students develop the writing skills necessary to produce a successful graduate-level research project on a topic relevant to the field of Museum Studies. During the first half of the course, students read classic scholarly texts in Museum Studies and complete short assignments designed to hone their use of core elements of academic writing: summary, analysis, argument, counterargument, evidence. During the second half, students write a 10-page research essay that reflects their particular areas of interest within the field of museum studies. Assigned readings and class discussions address the theory that informs museum practice. In particular, we examine how museums mediate encounters with the collective past and reflect the politics of race, class, and gender as well as individual, communal, and national identities. We analyze how museums create meaning and invite interpretation. Students draw upon the resources of their local museums to see how they create what James Clifford has called “contact zones” between specialists (such as artists, researchers, scientists, and scholars) and the general public.

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COURSE GOALS

This course will help you:

1. Become familiar with a range of theoretical texts in Museum Studies.
2. Develop skills in analyzing theoretical texts.
3. Develop editing skills.
4. Develop skills in writing analytical essays.
5. Develop skills in conceptualizing and organizing the research and writing of a scholarly research paper on a museum studies topic.
6. Get to know and work with peers who are interested in the museum field and Harvard's Museum Studies Program!

REQUIRED TEXTS

The following required texts are available at the Harvard COOP and Amazon.com for purchase:

Carbonell, Bettina Messias, Ed. *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*. 2nd ed. Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. ISBN: 978-1405173810. NOTE: You need the 2nd edition of Carbonell, not the 1st from 2003, which has different essays.

Modern Language Association of America. *MLA Handbook*. 8th Edition, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-60329226-2-7.

Other readings will be posted as PDFs and links on the website for the course. We'll especially make use of:

[Harvard Guide to Using Sources.](#)

[Wilson, Jeffrey. *Academic Writing*.](#)

GRADES

1. Response Papers (30%)
 - Six short (one-page) analyses of self-selected topics.
 - Due each session by 10 am the day of class.
2. Research Project (30%)
 - Eight short preliminary papers.
3. Final Paper (25%)
 - An 8-10-page final research paper—the result of your research project.
4. Presentations (15%)
 - Two short presentations on your research project; one longer presentation leading discussion on assigned readings.

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HOW THE COURSE WORKS

Format: As a proseminar, our class is centered on discussion. Think of it as a standing appointment for amazing coffee-shop conversation with your extremely smart, talented, and fascinating classmates—but there’s always homework due (bwahahaha 😡). We’ll strive to have informed, friendly, supportive, passionate, productive, and enjoyable class discussions. Sometimes I’ll lead; usually you will. Often, I’ll guide the group through new course content, especially related to writing strategies, but I won’t be lecturing for hours on end (thank goodness). The joy and benefit of this class come from the ideas you’ll bring to our conversations and your papers. Put differently, we’ll be using *active learning*, a term that sounds fluffy and feel-good, but has some real [science](#) behind it. As such, it’s critical that you prepare for each meeting.

Online Class: As an online course, we’ll use two main platforms: Canvas and Zoom. Canvas is the venue for our calendar and assignments. Zoom is for our web conference meetings.

Zoom: For our class sessions, we’ll be gathering from all around the world through the web conferencing platform Zoom. Don’t worry: this isn’t complicated and is easy to set up! You will need to download Zoom software in advance of the first class session. Go to the Zoom link in our course menu, and you will be prompted to download software. This only takes a minute or two. For tech support, send an email to academictechnology@dce.harvard.edu or call (617) 998-8571.

Equipment: You will need both audio and video on your computer. You *must* have a functional microphone and camera by the first class, or you suffer a stern penalty—TEST IN ADVANCE!

Attendance: It’s the first step to success in this course. You’re expected to attend all classes, arrive on-time, and stay to the end of our sessions.

Participation: You’re expected to contribute to class discussions and writing workshops with energy and enthusiasm.

Professionalism: The online conference class might sound like a very relaxed format, but remember to conduct yourself in class as you do in a professional meeting: dress appropriately, set up your computer in a nice setting, don’t eat during class, don’t come in and out of class, try to avoid children hollering in the background, etc.

Assignments: Our course is built around a sequence of short assignments that build up the skills needed to succeed in the research project. The key to our course is keeping up with these smaller assignments, which break down the skills needed to write a good paper into manageable chunks. If you keep up with the sequence of assignments, you should be just fine for the final paper. Unless otherwise noted, all written work should be typed and properly formatted according to MLA Style (you will be submitting it electronically through Canvas).

Readings: There’s a lot. You need to do it all. It will take time. Plan accordingly. *It’s difficult* is not a very compelling excuse.

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Response Papers: You'll have short papers due at 5 pm on days we have class. It's crucial that you get these papers in on time because I'll review them before our class starts. I'll use your thoughts to shape our conversations in class, so write about what you want to talk about. For this reason, **NO LATE RESPONSE PAPERS ARE ACCEPTED** (the submission portal shuts down at 10 am, and you'll be graded accordingly).

Sessions: Each session involves a mixture of class discussion about the readings, instruction on writing strategies, in-class writing, and directions for upcoming assignments. This is why it's crucial to keep up with the sequence of assignments. The work you turn in each day will become a venue, in class, for introducing the next idea in the sequence of assignments. There will be a ten-minute break halfway through our class meetings.

Academic Writing: Throughout the course, I'll refer you at times to my book *Academic Writing*, which includes guidance and examples for writing and other topics. Our Canvas calendar will indicate the chapters relevant to each day. These chapters are meant to be a resource for you to read and review after topics have been introduced in class, when writing your papers, and hopefully far into your future at Harvard and beyond.

Academic Integrity: You are responsible for understanding Harvard Extension School policies on academic integrity (www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/student-conduct/academic-integrity) and how to use sources responsibly. Not knowing the rules, misunderstanding the rules, running out of time, submitting the wrong draft, or being overwhelmed with multiple demands are not acceptable excuses. There are no excuses for failure to uphold academic integrity. To support your learning about academic citation rules, please visit the Harvard Extension School Tips to Avoid Plagiarism (www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources/tips-avoid-plagiarism).

Accessibility: The Extension School is committed to providing an accessible academic community. The Disability Services Office offers a variety of accommodations and services to students with documented disabilities, permanent and temporary injuries, and chronic conditions. If you are a student with a disability, we engage you in an interactive process to provide you an equal opportunity to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from our academic and residential programs. Disability Services Coordinator, 51 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. voice: (617) 495-0977 fax: (617) 495-3662 e-mail: accessibility@extension.harvard.edu.

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SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

- Aug. 30 *Session 1: Introduction*
- Reading for Today:* [Clifford, "Museums as Contact Zones"](#)
- Sept. 6 *Session 2: Foundations*
- Reading for Today:* Carbonell, Ch 3, 5, 18, 32, 53; Sandahl, "The Museum Definition as the Backbone of ICOM"
Writing Due: Response Paper 1
- Class discussions will be led by students in Sessions 3-7.
- Sept. 13 *Session 3: Design, Function, Objects*
- Reading for Today:* Carbonell, Ch 14, 16, 19, 20, 54 15, 18, 32, 53; Salah-Din, "Documenting the Black Lives Matter Movement in Baltimore"
Writing Due: Response Paper 2
- Sept. 20 *Session 4: Nation, Gender*
- Reading for Today:* Carbonell, Ch 4, 6, 26, 28, 49; Kistler, "Art Museums in the Age of #MeToo"
Writing Due: Response Paper 3
- Sept. 27 *Session 5: Globalization, Difficult Histories*
- Reading for Today:* Carbonell, Ch 7, 32, 36, 52; MacGregor, "The Whole World in Our Hands"; Lonetree, "Native Americans and Museums"
Writing Due: Response Paper 4
- Oct. 4 *Session 6: Race, Audiences*
- Reading for Today:* Carbonell, Ch 17, 35, 37, 53; Sweeney and Schonfeld. "Interrogating Institutional Practices in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion"; Evrard and Krebs, "The Authenticity of the Museum Experience in the Digital Age: The Case of the Louvre"
Writing Due: Response Paper 5
- Oct. 11 *Session 7: Social Engagement, New Directions*
- Reading for Today:* Carbonell, Ch 39, 55, 56; Bello and Matchette, "Shifting Perspectives: The Millennial Influence on Museum Engagement"; Hebda, "Museums, Climate Change and Sustainability"; Cobley et al., "Museums in the Pandemic: A Survey of Responses on the Current Crisis"
Writing Due: Response Paper 6
- Oct. 18 *Session 8: Academic Research*
- Reading for Today:* Three Self-Selected Sources from Carbonell
Writing Due: Research Project: Short Essay
In-Class: Research Project: Brainstorming Presentations

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- Oct. 25 *Session 9: Working with Scholarship*
- Reading for Today:* Three Self-Selected Sources from Carbonell
Writing Due: Research Project: Possible Sources
- Nov. 1 *Session 10: Entering the Conversation*
- Reading for Today:* Three Self-Selected Sources from Outside Our Anthology
Writing Due: Research Project: Annotated Bibliography
- Nov. 8 *Session 11: Structuring Papers*
- Reading for Today:* Three Self-Selected Sources from Outside Our Anthology
Writing Due: Research Project: Literature Review
- Nov. 15 *Session 12: Writing Papers*
- Writing Due:* Research Project: Detailed Outline
- Nov. 22 No Class: Thanksgiving Break
- Nov. 29 *Session 13: Revising Papers*
- Writing Due:* Research Project: Paper
- Dec. 6 *Session 14: Finale*
- Writing Due:* Research Project: Final Essay
In-Class: Research Project: Final Presentations

A FINAL NOTE

Please send me an email when you have finished reading the syllabus. If you have any questions or concerns about the course, please let me know, and I'll either address them in an email response or in class at the beginning of our next session. Even if you don't have any questions or concerns, please send along an email—just so I know we're on the same page about the upcoming semester.