MUSEUMS AND SOCIETY

http://krieger.jhu.edu/museums/

The Program in Museums and Society is concerned with the institutions that shape knowledge and understanding through the collection, preservation, interpretation, and/or presentation of art, material culture, heritage, or natural and scientific specimens. It focuses on the role of museums (broadly defined) and their collections in societies past and present, including their historical, cultural, intellectual, and political significance.

A minor in Museums and Society complements study in a range of fields, including but not limited to anthropology, archaeology, history, history of art, and history of science and technology. Many courses include visits to or focused work in local and regional institutions, including on-campus collections (Archaeological Museum, Homewood Museum, Evergreen Museum and Library, and the Sheridan Libraries).

Whether they are researching a historical artifact or debating the obligations of public institutions, students in the program are challenged to approach their discipline from a new angle. While some may choose to pursue a museum career, the program has the larger goal of encouraging critical, careful thinking about some of the most influential cultural institutions of our day.

Programs

- Museums and Society, Minor (https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/arts-sciences/full-time-residential-programs/degree-programs/museums-society/museums-society-minor/)

For current course information and registration go to https://sis.jhu.edu/classes/

Courses

AS.389.155. The History of Fake News from The Flood to The Apocalypse. 3 Credits.

"Fake News" is everywhere in both past and present. Explore that history first-hand through JHU's rare book collection of literary and historical forgeries spanning millennia of human history. Students learn how to examine and investigate rare books.

Area: Writing Intensive

AS.389.165. Hands on History: Material Cultures of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Digital Age. 3 Credits.

This hands-on course deals entirely with JHU's collections of rare books and manuscripts as a springboard to build skills in the close visual and physical examination of rare books and manuscripts. You will investigate the technological and aesthetic transformation of textual artifacts from ancient papyri to Gutenberg imprints to digital surrogates, and contribute to the accumulation of historical clues about their meaning and significance as material cultural objects. You will learn what goes into curating and conserving book and manuscript collections today, and how to evaluate the quality and significance of collections. Materials/topics will include ancient Babylonian cuneiform and Egyptian papyri; medieval illuminated manuscripts; incunabula; Renaissance illustrated books of the Scientific Revolution and Spanish Golden Age; cheap print and unique ephemera; early books by and about women; forgeries; and "digital humanities" initiatives at JHU. Students will make regular visits to the Special Collections Reading Room in the BLC throughout the semester.

Area: Writing Intensive

AS.389.201. Introduction to the Museum: Past and Present. 3 Credits.

This course surveys museums, from their origins to their most contemporary forms, in the context of broader historical, intellectual, and cultural trends including the social movements of the 20th century. Anthropology, art, history, and science museums are considered. Crosslisted with Archaeology, History, History of Art, International Studies and Medicine, Science & Humanities.

AS.389.202. Introduction to the Museum: Issues and Ideas. 3 Credits.

Museums face practical, political and ethical challenges, including economic difficulties, debates over interpretation of culture and pressure to demonstrate social value. This course considers how museums are answering these challenges.

AS.389.220. Queer Sixties. 3 Credits.

Introduction to queer & trans politics and culture in the period immediately preceding the gay liberation movement, from the early to late 1960s, focusing on intersections of race, sexuality, and gender. Course examines how we have come to narrate queer & trans history and investigates the ways archival practices shape conceptions of queer & trans life. Students learn research methods as they draw on and contribute to the university's digitized archival collections.

AS.389.230. Queer & Trans Public History. 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to a blend of public history, queer studies and transgender studies. Students learn oral history and archival research methods as they draw on and contribute to the university's archival, museum, and library collections.

AS.389.240. Archaeological Museum Practicum: Collections Management. 3 Credits.

Students will learn current procedures for surveying, cataloguing, documenting and rehousing collections using objects from the Archaeological Museum. This is a hands-on practicum course working closely with museum staff.

AS.389.242. Museum Education: From Contested Knowledge to Reflective Narrative. 3 Credits.

This practicum course critically considers current art and history museum education practices and explores social justice discourses through museum visits, visitor studies, and museum learning strategies.
AS.389.250. Conservation of Material Culture: Art, Artifacts and Heritage Sites. 3 Credits.
This course will introduce students to the field of art conservation through the study of paintings, paper, books, objects, contemporary sculpture and historic preservation. Topics covered will include: methods of manufacture, agents of deterioration, preservation initiatives, conservation treatment and ethics, and conservation science. Cross-listed with History of Art. Class usually meets at 1:30 - 3:50 PM, except for days with field trips.

AS.389.260. Cultural Heritage in Crisis. 3 Credits.
We explore the possible futures of cultural heritage and museums in times of accelerating climate change, pandemics, armed conflict and political and social turmoil by examining past and contemporary events.

AS.389.275. Interpreting Hopkins as Historic Site. 3 Credits.
This hands-on course explores interpretive strategies for historic sites and culminates in the production of original, research-based, outdoor interpretive exhibits on the Homewood Campus.

AS.389.280. Of and For Everyone: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access in the Museum. 3 Credits.
How are museums responding to the pressures to be more equitable, inclusive, and accessible towards public audiences and their staff? Students go behind the scenes of the Smithsonian, Baltimore Museum of Industry and Baltimore Museum of Art to meet with working groups and staff charged with transforming their institutions. Includes site visits, hands-on experiences and research on best practices.

AS.389.303. World of Things. 3 Credits.
The course introduces and applies new concepts about materials, and materiality to museum objects. It treats the museum as a site for investigating the relationship between people and things.

AS.389.311. From Treasure House to Production House: Exploring New Roles for the Museum in the 21st Century. 3 Credits.
Students work with the Director of, the Peale Center for Baltimore History and Architecture as it reinvents itself as a museum for the twenty-first century. Involves working with community story-tellers in residence. Extra time is to allow for field trip travel - most days class runs 1:30-3:50.

AS.389.314. Commemoration, Mourning, and Race: The Stories of Mount Auburn Cemetery. 3 Credits.
In partnership with Mount Auburn Cemetery in Baltimore, owned and operated by the Sharp Street Memorial United Methodist Church, this community-engaged course will address the African American cemetery in general, and the Mount Auburn Cemetery in particular, as a place of multiple meanings: a sacred site of private mourning, a public place of commemoration, a representation of racism, an historic accomplishment. This course will require on-site research that contributes to the cemetery's interests.

AS.389.315. Ancient Color: The Technologies and Meanings of Color in Antiquity. 3 Credits.
What role did the colorful surfaces of sculptures, vessels and textiles play in the ancient world? We examine historical texts and recent scholarly and scientific publications on the technologies and meanings of color in antiquity, and use imaging and analytical techniques to study polychromed objects from the Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum.

AS.389.322. Tigers to Teapots: Collecting, Cataloging, and Hoarding in America. 3 Credits.
Course will examine the collecting behavior of Americans. Students will explore how collectors have defined the holdings of the nation's museums, galleries, and libraries and used objects to shape taste and status in the U.S.

AS.389.324. The BMA Seminar: Digital Interpretation. 3 Credits.
When museums shut their galleries in response to the global pandemic they saw a surge in digital audiences and engagement, although not everyone can access digital content equally. Continued public health risks bring new challenges to digital interpretation, while universal access as well as embedded racial and gender bias remain significant issues. Students research what works and what doesn't in digital interpretation for art museums, centering social equity and accessibility in their assessment, and develop principles and guidelines for the museum's digital interpretation strategy.

AS.389.325. Women of the Book: Female Miracle Workers, Mystics, and Material Culture, 1450-1800. 3 Credits.
From psycho-spiritual autobiographers to mystical bi-locating nuns, convent crèche-keepers to choristers of sacred music, from rock-star-status mystics to the hidden careers of women printers, engravers, and miracle-makers, this course will explore the remarkable intellectual, cultural, and imaginative contributions of women who found refuge, agency, and power within alternative lives.
Area: Writing Intensive

AS.389.329. Author/Canon/Archive. 3 Credits.
Why are some literary works from the past reprinted, anthologized, and considered worthy of study, but not others? Why are some works “lost” and some “rediscovered,” while others simply fall out of favor? Focusing on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American literary culture, we will use rare books and archival materials from JHU collections to examine Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Stephen Crane, Charles Chesnutt, and Zora Neale Hurston, along with a few authors you’ve never heard of, in terms of the relationship between authorship, stewardship, and status.

AS.389.340. Critical Issues in Art Conservation. 3 Credits.
The course examines recent controversies in the conservation of major global art works and sites, raising questions concerning the basic theoretical assumptions, practical methods and ethical implications of art conservation. Cross-Listed with History of Art and Anthropology.

AS.389.346. Scribbling Women in the Literary Archive. 3 Credits.
Students examine select texts and archival materials related to Emily Dickinson, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Edith Wharton, Ida B. Wells, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Sui Sin Far, Alice Duer Miller, and Zora Neale Hurston. Students interrogate how these writers navigated the constraints of gender, as informed by race and class, in the decades before and after the 19th Amendment and consider literary collecting in relation to gendered cultural politics.

AS.389.347. Landscaping Baltimore: Designing and Interpreting JHU’s Neighborhood. 3 Credits.
This course will explore the landscape history and current arrangement of the area around JHU’s Homewood campus, including Evergreen Museum, coinciding with the bi-centennial of the birth of Frederick Law Olmsted whose design firm played a central role in developing plans for and around JHU. The course will culminate in a student-produced exhibit for a public audience.

AS.389.348. Queer Oral History. 3 Credits.
Students learn to conduct, analyze, and interpret their own oral histories as they contribute to a wide-ranging project documenting queer worldmaking in the Baltimore-Washington D.C. region. We engage with scholarship from performance studies, queer of color critique, LGBTQ history, and public humanities to consider the politics of storytelling and the promises of public-facing oral history projects. Students have the option of developing podcasts, multimedia projects, and public humanities proposals as their final assignment.
AS.389.357. Heaven on Earth: Art, Power, and Wonder in the Vatican from Antiquity to the Enlightenment. 3 Credits.
A material cultural exploration of the Vatican from the founding of St. Peter's basilica in antiquity to the establishment of the Vatican Library and Museums in the Renaissance and Enlightenment.
Area: Writing Intensive

AS.389.373. Encountering American Art. 4 Credits.
Students investigate the Baltimore Museum of Art's American art collection and its presentation to the public alongside current scholarship on American art to develop strategies for a new permanent collection display that aligns with the museum's commitment to artistic excellence and social equity. M&S Practicum. Co-taught with BMA curator Virginia Anderson.

AS.389.379. Interpreting Historic Sites for the 21st Century. 3 Credits.
Students go behind the scenes at JHU's own Evergreen Museum and Library to investigate how historic sites design spaces for learning, community engagement, leisure, as well as for exhibitions and special events. Students consider the history of Evergreen and its inhabitants and create concepts for how to engage communities in that history and story. Multiple class meetings take place at the Evergreen Museum.

AS.389.384. Object Encounters at the Baltimore Museum of Art. 3 Credits.
Using the Baltimore Museum of Art as a laboratory, students examine canonical narratives in art museums and iterate new approaches to objects in museums that build equity, interrogate privilege, decolonise, revisualise and offer alternative stories. Class meets at the museum every other week.

AS.389.405. Visualizing Africa. 3 Credits.
Examines the history of African art in the Euro-American world, focusing on the ways that Western institutions have used African artworks to construct narratives about Africa and its billion residents.
Area: Writing Intensive

AS.389.410. Sharing Knowledge: Participatory Archives, Collaborative Storytelling, and Social Justice. 3 Credits.
This course introduces students to collaborative humanities projects that encourage democratic participation among publics more broadly conceived than the academy. We investigate indigenous research methods; collaborative oral history and ethnography; interactive theater; and community archives. Final projects draw on the university's archival, museum, and library collections.

AS.389.420. Curatorial Seminar. 4 Credits.
In collaboration with a local museum, conceptualize and develop an exhibition, potentially including but not limited to: checklists, exhibition texts, interpretive strategies, and programming. Exhibition theme varies year to year. Concepts, ethics and practicalities of curation are key concerns. Research visits to regional museums and private collections are relevant.
Area: Writing Intensive

AS.389.502. Independent Study- Museum and Society. 1 - 3 Credits.
You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration > Online Forms.

AS.389.521. Capstone in Museums and Society. 1 - 3 Credits.
The Capstone allows students to develop and carry out their own, hands-on research project in a museum, collection, archive, or other living resource. Final projects must involve some form of public presentation (exhibition, lecture, poster, web-based, etc.) and a work of self-reflection (journal, brief paper, blog, or other). Projects must be approved and overseen by a supervising faculty member and approved by the Program's Director, in keeping with the University's Independent Work Policy. Instructor permission required.
You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration > Online Forms.

AS.389.522. Capstone in Museum and Society. 1 - 3 Credits.
The Capstone allows students to develop and carry out their own, hands-on research project in a museum, collection, archive, or other living resource. Final projects must involve some form of public presentation (exhibition, poster, web-based, etc.) and a work of self-reflection (journal, brief paper, blog, or other). Projects must be approved and overseen by a supervising faculty member and approved by the Program's Director, in keeping with the University's Independent Work Policy.
AS.389.201;AS.389.202;You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration > Online Forms.

Cross Listed Courses

Anthropology
AS.070.379. Social Ecology Studio. 3 Credits.
This course will grapple with the social and cultural dimensions of contemporary ecological problems through a local, project-based approach. Coursework will be organized on a studio basis in partnership with a local environmental organization, Friends of Stony Run. Continuing a collaborative project initiated in the fall of 2019, we will work together to develop interpretive materials for the Stony Run stream and urban watershed adjoining our campus.

English
AS.060.617. Black Print Culture.
Students interested in black print culture will engage in intensive archival research, both collaborative and individual, using the Sheridan Library's Rare Book and Manuscript collections. Texts include poems, printed lectures, pamphlets, novels, periodicals, ephemera, correspondence, etc., alongside relevant critical and theoretical reading.
Area: Writing Intensive

First Year Seminars
AS.001.164. FYS: Curating Women. 3 Credits.
From the women who created the Museum of Modern Art in New York City to the "Because of Her" working group across the Smithsonian's museums, this First-Year Seminar investigates the hidden women of many distinct social positions, racial and ethnic identities whose labor shaped the museums we know today and considers how museums tell the stories of women, including transgender women, in the arts, sciences, and history.
AS.010.382. The Politics of Display in South Asia. 3 Credits.

Through an examination of colonial exhibitions, the rise of national, regional, and archaeological museums, and current practices of display and representation in institutions, we will explore how the image of South Asia has been constructed in the colonial, modern, and contemporary eras. We will engage with the politics of representation, spectacle, and the economies of desire as related to colonialism and the rise of modernity. Readings from postcolonial theory, museum studies, anthropology, history, and art history.

Area: Writing Intensive

AS.010.384. Art and Colonialism: Nineteenth-century India. 3 Credits.

This seminar explores the technologies of colonial power, from small ephemeral watercolor images of religious processions to massive multi-volume photographic projects documenting the “people of India,” and extending to the establishment of new urban and architectural spaces, archaeological museums, and art schools, the circulation of diplomatic art collections, and the commissioning of survey data. We will engage with the anti-colonial movements of resistance and uprising that took place across this century, examining the central participation of modern artists with these political movements, and explore the way this period fundamentally shaped the foundations for the study of South Asian art and archaeology. Readings will include colonial and postcolonial theory, Orientalism, historiography; we will be actively working with materials in the library's Special Collections.

Area: Writing Intensive

AS.010.444. Classics Research Lab: Antioch Recovery Project (ARP). 3 Credits.

Antioch Recovery Project investigates mosaics from the ancient city of Antioch (modern Antakya, Turkey, near the border with Syria) now in the collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art. Excavated by an international team of archaeologists in the 1930s, hundreds of ancient mosaics from the cosmopolitan city were subsequently dispersed to museums across the globe, with twenty-four mosaics entering the collection of the BMA. Phase I will focus on the digital documentation and analysis of the mosaic of Narcissus as a prototype for ongoing research bringing together the fragments of ancient Antioch for contemporary beholders. The Greek myth of Narcissus tells the story of a beautiful Theban hunter doomed to love his own reflection and is the origin of the modern psychiatric term “narcissism.” Researching the mythology, materials, conservation history, archival material, historiography, and contemporary reception of the Narcissus mosaic and myth offers extensive opportunities to collaborate with scholars across a range of disciplines at JHU, in the Baltimore museum community, and beyond. Investigators will move between the Baltimore Museum of Art, the CRL processing lab in Gilman Hall, and Special Collections. The course will involve some travel to visit other mosaics from Antioch now in collections at Harvard's Dumbarton Oaks in Washington D.C., and the Princeton Art Museum in Princeton, New Jersey.

Modern Languages and Literatures

AS.211.329. Museums and Identity. 3 Credits.

The museum boom of the last half-century has centered largely around museums dedicated to the culture and history of identity groups, including national, ethnic, religious, and minority groups. In this course we will examine such museums and consider their long history through a comparison of the theory and practice of Jewish museums with other identity museums. We will study the various museological traditions that engage identity, including the collection of art and antiques, ethnographic exhibitions, history museums, heritage museums, art museums, and other museums of culture. Some of the questions we will ask include: what are museums for and who are they for? how do museums shape identity? and how do the various types of museums relate to one another? Our primary work will be to examine a variety of contemporary examples around the world with visits to local museums including the Jewish Museum of Maryland, the National Museum of African American History and Culture and the National Museum of the American Indian.
Near Eastern Studies

AS.130.247. Digging for Legitimacy: Archaeology, Museums, and Ideology. 3 Credits.
Archaeology was born out of Western Colonial endeavors into Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas. Large scale excavations conducted by the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and the United States resulted in the removal and transfer of valuable (culturally and monetarily) material culture from local stewards and stakeholders to the West. To this day the discipline of archaeology is still saddled by its colonial past and the Hollywood interpretation of archaeologists as saviors of ancient treasures. Today, most interaction between people and ancient objects is facilitated via the museum. In this course we will explore 19th-21st century archaeological and museum practices and the role they play in modern narratives of identity and representation in the America and the Middle East. Students will engage with the historical, legal, economic, and ethical implications of archaeology and analyze how political, religious, cultural, and academic institutions have leveraged archaeology and cultural artifacts to reify and legitimize their pursuits and ideologies.

AS.130.248. Up the Nile: New Approaches to the History of Egyptology and Nubiology. 3 Credits.
King Tut, Napoleon, Champollion, Ozymandias, Nefertiti: the history of Egyptology is filled with big characters, huge monuments, and glimmering objects. But it is also made up of colonialist practices, looted sites, and forgotten scholarly contributions. “Up the Nile” examines the antiquarian, colonialist, racist, Western-centric, and patriarchal roots of modern Egyptology and Nubiology, and addresses how scholars and enthusiasts alike are continuing to grapple with these lasting legacies and biases. This class investigates how the Egyptians and Nubians thought of their own histories, as well as how other ancient cultures viewed the cultures of the Nile. It moves roughly chronologically, tracing understudied and marginalized voices from the Islamic, Medieval, and Ottoman periods into the 20th and 21st centuries. It examines the origins of scholarship, modern collecting, Egyptomania, and museums, delving into the problems and repercussions that still haunt us today. “Up the Nile” will engage with important and difficult aspects regarding Egyptology’s and Nubiology’s colonialist, racist, and sexist past and present. It asks: who decides who writes history, then and now?

AS.130.334. Egyptian Funerary Arts in the Archaeological Museum. 3 Credits.
This class will aim to cover the production and choice of funerary objects for Egyptian elite tombs in several eras of antiquity: the Middle and New Kingdoms, the Third Intermediate Period, and the Late Periods. Students will work with specific objects after learning generally about them, and they will carry out analyses of materials, pigments, construction methods, and erosion and degradation effects. They will create a virtual exhibition for the Museum's website and present their results for inclusion in the museum cataloguing project.

AS.133.706. Egyptian Funerary Arts in the Archaeological Museum.
This class will aim to cover the production and choice of funerary objects for Egyptian elite tombs in several eras of antiquity: the Middle and New Kingdoms, the Third Intermediate Period, and the Late Periods. Students will work with specific objects after learning generally about them, and they will carry out analyses of materials, pigments, construction methods, and erosion and degradation effects. They will create a virtual exhibition for the Museum's website and present their results for inclusion in the museum cataloguing project.

For current faculty and contact information go to http://krieger.jhu.edu/museums/directory/