

## VAH1045B Collecting Art and Culture – Winter 2018



L: Ole Worm, The Museum Wormianum, 1655

R: Rosamund Purcell, "One Room," 2011

**Thursdays 2:30-4:20**  
**Middlesex College, Room 110**  
**Tutorials: Thursdays 4:30-5:30**

Professor: Dr. Kirsty Robertson  
 Office: VAC 221  
 Office hours: Thursdays 12:30-1:30 or by appointment  
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### Teaching Assistants

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Office hours tba.

### Course Description

Anti-requisite: The former VAH 1050F/G  
 Format: 2 lecture hours and 1 tutorial hour

This introductory course serves as a starting point to study the foundations of art history. It focuses on historical and contemporary practices of collecting art and cultural objects and introduces key principles of museum and curatorial studies. Taking a thematic approach, the course explores current debates in the field. Various kinds of museums and their histories are introduced (art museums, natural history museums, botanic gardens, zoos, etc.). Within these overviews, topics include discussions of how collecting practices have changed over time;

museum architecture from the 17<sup>th</sup> century through to the twenty-first; the opening up of the museum to new audiences and different curatorial practices; as well as questions about who owns cultural property, and the repatriation of cultural objects. Bringing discussion of museums up to the current day, we will also look at the destruction of museums in times of conflict, theft, forgery, and trade in illegal antiquities. Students will also be introduced to the field of art history, and will learn important skills in how to write about, analyze, and understand art and culture. The learning outcomes for the course will be achieved through lectures, readings, discussions, films, a collecting assignment, a test, and an exam.

### Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the history and organization of museums.
- Students will learn how to describe and analyze different kinds of museums and different kinds of collections.
- Students will learn how to discuss and analyze the contentious histories of museums, and will be able to debate museum ethical issues.
- Students will learn appropriate language for the discussion of museums, culture, and art.
- Students will learn how to compare the principles of collecting, classification, and display from different historical periods and/or geographic areas.
- Students will be able to use critical thinking skills in evaluating museum exhibits and public programs.
- Students will be able to analyze how museum architecture conveys ideas.
- Students will learn how to participate in group discussion in tutorials.

### RESOURCES

#### OWL Sakai

We will be using OWL to supplement the in-class portion of the course. I will post slides from class as PDF files for your review, and the syllabus and other resources will also be available. Go to <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>. Use your Western user name and password to sign on. Please be sure to check your browser and make sure everything is working at the beginning of the course. See the ITS technical assistance info on the above mentioned web site, and contact ITS for additional technical assistance. The ITS Support number is (519) 661-3800.

#### Textbook and Articles

The required text is available for purchase from the University bookstore.

Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander. *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums* **third edition**. New York: Alta Mira Press, 2017.

Supplementary short articles for the tutorials are available on OWL in the Resources folder.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### Assignments

In class test (mid-term): 20% February 8

Short field trip assignment: 5% due March 1

Collecting assignment: 25% due March 15  
Tutorial attendance and participation: 10%  
Final exam: 40%

### **Collecting Assignment**

A description of the Collecting assignment can be found in the Assignments folder, under Resources, on Owl. It can also be found on the tutorial syllabus. You are responsible for following the directions of the assignment and submitting it on time.

### **Mid-term Test and Final Exam – February 8 (20%) and April exam period (40%)**

The test and exam will consist of multiple choice, short-answer questions, slide identifications, and essay questions. Examination material will be drawn from lectures and from course readings. The final exam is cumulative. Under Western's regulations, if students miss 15% of their classes, without written corroboration for health or bereavement, they can be debarred from final exams.

### **Tutorials**

Each week, this course consists of two hours of lecture and one hour of tutorial. Attendance at tutorials is mandatory. Attendance and participation in tutorials will be graded. Although Teaching Assistants (TAs) have some flexibility in the structure of their tutorials, certain issues in common will be addressed across the sections, including extended discussion of lecture materials and discussion of short articles addressing contemporary issues in museums. TAs are responsible for issuing and grading all tests, exams, and written assignments. Your TA is your first point of contact for questions about the course.

In addition to reviewing lectures, the tutorial will introduce new material relevant to collecting and museum studies issues of the past and present. This tutorial will give you a valuable opportunity to pose questions, solicit feedback, and to apply your knowledge of the visual arts through participation in group discussion.

Your TA and your classmates depend on your presence and your contributions. Regular oral participation will help to increase your confidence in other classes, and ultimately in the real (non-university) world. Please be sure to arrive at the tutorial promptly and prepared for discussions of any assigned readings.

Attendance and punctuality are mandatory. Students are required to come prepared to each tutorial, having completed all necessary readings and assignments. Your grade is derived from your attendance and from the quality and frequency of your participation.

### **Late Policy**

Students are expected to complete all assignments on time. Assignments are considered late after the start of class the day they are due. Extensions, granted for valid reasons, must be negotiated BEFORE the assignments are due. Late assignments will be penalized by 5% each day, unless appropriate documentation (a doctor's note, for example) is provided. Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counseling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. *Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the professor or the department.*

**Attendance:**

Attendance at lectures is required and will be monitored. Tutorial attendance will be monitored and graded. Students are expected to attend all class sessions and be prepared for and participate in lectures and discussions. Students who miss less than two classes are not required to seek accommodations for their absences from either the lecture or tutorials. For subsequent absences students will need to seek accommodations according to the Medical Accommodation policy below.

- Under Western's regulations, if a student misses 15% of their classes, without written corroboration for health or bereavement, they can be debarred from participation in the final exam.
- If a student is consistently absent from a portion of class, they will be considered as exceeding the 15% cut off.
- After three unexcused absences, a student's final grade may be lowered by half a letter grade.