

# MUSEUMS PAST AND PRESENT

AS.389.201

FALL 2022

T/TH  
10:30-11:45am

3 credits

Johns Hopkins  
University



We examine museums, their purposes, and politics, as they emerged in Europe and developed around the world from private collections through today's public and private institutions.

This course has three main contentions:

1. The majority of museums are colonial institutions in both the conceptual and historical sense. Collecting in the Western tradition has gone hand in hand with an interest in the "other" and a desire to possess it, both literally in terms of owning objects and figuratively in terms of shaping their

interpretation. And museums grew tremendously during the time that Europe was most active in exploration, imperial expansion and colonization.

2. Over time, the mission of museums has generally shifted from prioritizing collections to prioritizing people. As those changes have taken place, the definition of who the public is, and what it means to serve that public has also changed, and indeed continues to change – today with renewed attention to inclusive practices, cultural competency, and digital audiences.

3. Collections and museums have shaped our modern academic disciplines - whether history, art-history, anthropology, or the natural sciences –in terms of what is studied, and what counts as being worthy of study, and how

we think, in other words, our "ways of knowing."

## Instructor

Dr. Jennifer P. Kingsley  
(she/her/hers)

## Best ways to reach me:

- Direct questions to the Discussions tab in CANVAS so other students can help answer them. I will monitor to make sure you are receiving the correct information. If your question is private you can email me.
- Catch me after class.
- office hours online every Thursday from 1 to 3pm over Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/92680418690>; pswd: 452738
- Email: [jkingsley@jhu.edu](mailto:jkingsley@jhu.edu) for an in-person appointment

## Course Requirements

This course involves scholarly and primary source readings as well as short videos, podcasts, or photo essays assigned for each class session. These provide essential background to inform our in-class work. We spend our time in class unpacking and interpreting the textual and visual evidence for museum history, with several hands-on opportunities to work directly from original materials. You will also occasionally need to complete a special assignment (such as a field trip) in preparation for class discussion.

**Participation (20%).** You should be on time and ready to participate in each session. I expect class discussion to be lively, respectful and substantive. Should you need to miss class for medical reasons, religious observances, or family emergencies write me ASAP so we can talk about how you can make up the work.

**Field Trip Report (10%)** 2-3 pages. The course includes working hands-on with campus collections, group visits to the Homewood Museum and to the BMA as they are on our campus; and one scavenger hunt visit to the Walters Art Museum on your own. In addition I am asking you to venture further afield at least once in the semester, either to a Baltimore or DC museum, and write up your experience in ways that connect what you saw and experienced to what you have learned from class. This assignment has a rolling deadline but must be completed by **12/6**.

**Essays (30%)** You will write two short (3-5 pages) essays this semester. Guidelines will be distributed at least two weeks before the due date for each essay. You

may ask for comments on drafts shared at least 48hrs before the due dates (9/22 and 11/3). You may also revise and resubmit for a new grade (just be aware that you are not guaranteed a higher grade by doing so – a thoughtful and substantive revision is more likely to result in a better grade than minor edits).

**Exams (40%):** There is a mid-term on 10/18 and a final exam (scheduled by the registrar). Exams typically include 1) a multiple choice section, 2) short (50 word) identifications of key players, places or concepts and 3) essays in response to a question prompt. We will have a mid-term review the Saturday before the first exam and review materials as part of our final discussion on the last day of class.

All work must be completed in order to pass.

In general, an A exceeds expectations, a B meets expectations, a C meets most expectations but may present problems in content or presentation. Within that general range, grades will be differentiated with a +/- as appropriate.

I set high standards but am aware that grades can be a source of stress. Please know that I am always open to a conversation about grading. I also ask that you do your utmost to turn your essays in on time but will not penalize if you need more time. For extensions contact me BEFORE the essay is due so that we can identify an appropriate extension. I am also able to offer exams remotely if you are quarantining & I will work with you to figure out a make-up if you are too sick take the exams at the scheduled times.

## Academic Integrity

Statement from the JHU Ethics Board: *The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitation of academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and/or the Chairperson of the Ethics Board beforehand. See the guide on 'Academic Ethics for Undergraduates' and the Ethics Board website (<http://ethics.jhu.edu>) for more information*

Simply put: Any work you do for this class must be your own unless part of an explicitly allowed collaboration. You must acknowledge any help you receive (from published sources, the internet, experts you interview, classmates etc.) in proper form (notes, bibliography). You also may NOT reuse work from another class to fulfill a requirement without the instructors explicit authorization.

*There are four options for the field trip report assignment. They are listed in "Notes" close to the course session for which they are most relevant. You may do the field trip at any time but the assignment requires you to discuss relevant course material and is best written after the relevant course session.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>What's due</b>	<b>Notes</b>
8/30	Introductions		
9/01	What is a collection		
9/06	Humanist Studioli		
9/08	Cabinets of Curiosity		Meet @BLC M-level
9/13	Collecting and Ordering Nature in the Enlightenment		
9/15	Europe's First Public Art Museums	Scavenger Hunt @ Walters	NO CLASS - Visit Walters and Post results to CANVAS by 9/17 midnight
9/20	Collecting the World - British Museum		
9/22	Exhibitionary Complex	ESSAY 1	Meet at Brody Learning Commons M-level
9/27	Museums and Colonialism		
9/29	Museums and Colonial Africa		Meet at Baltimore Museum of Art
10/4	Museums in the United States		
10/6	Preserving the American Past		Field Trip Report option 1: Maryland Historical Society
10/11	Museums & Slavery		Meet at Homewood Museum
10/13	Community Museums & the Black Museum Movement		Field Trip Report option 2: Nat'l Mus. of African American History and Culture or Reginald Lewis Museum
10/15	4pm MID-TERM REVIEW SESSION		
10/18	MID-TERM	EXAM	
10/25	Museums, World Fairs, Anthropology & Native Americans		
10/27	Northwest Coast at AMNH		
11/1	Collectors Museums		Field Trip Report option 3: Visit Evergreen Museum
11/3	Municipal Art Museums	ESSAY 2	
11/8	Inventing the Modern at MoMA		
11/10	Biological Sciences in the Museum		
11/15	Living Collections		Maryland Zoo. Meet @Mason Hall
11/17	Industry Museums		
11/29	Teaching Science in the Museum		Field Trip Report option 4: Visit Maryland Science Center
12/1	Medical Museums		Guest speaker
12/6	Museums in China	Last day to turn in Field Trip Report	Guest speaker
12/8	Sum up and Final Review		

## Course Overview

Museums reveal much about the interests, outlooks and attitudes of those who produced and used them. From what museums collect to how they display, from who controls the contents of museums to how they fit into larger social, political, and intellectual programs, museums offer a unique lens into societies of the past and present.

Our goal in this class is to study closely specific monuments and movements from which we will develop a sense of historical patterns and the place of specific people and institutions within those patterns. To that end, it will be important to make note of chronological relationships and each era's distinct ways of thinking about collections and object-based knowledge.

The course assumes no prior knowledge of museums, but does assume some background in European and American history. Let me know if I use a term or refer to a historical event that is unfamiliar to you or on which you would like a refresher.

The first half of the semester will be spent moving roughly chronologically through the history of collections and museums in Europe with a focus on the 16th to 19th centuries. The second half of the course examines museums beyond Europe, especially the distinct trajectories of different museum types after 1800 (science and medicine, history, art, natural history, industry) within the United States, while also considering select examples of museums in colonial and post-colonial Africa, in Chinese-speaking regions of East Asia, and in the Middle East.

English-language scholarship is biased towards northwestern Europe and the United States. As a result, course readings emphasize case studies from those areas. However, I will bring in comparisons from other parts of Europe and the world where/when relevant.



Homewood Museum shares the story of three families, one free and two enslaved, who lived here in the early 19th century.

## Learning objectives

Students will be able to....

- Identify major trends and developments in the history of museums
- Produce evidence-based arguments about how museums are shaped by and shape their historical moment and how they change over time.
- Communicate these arguments effectively
- Compare a range of museum types across time and space
- Describe key concepts and arguments about museum practices past and present
- Analyze how museums craft ways of thinking and knowing

## Submitting Assignments

Best = submit your assignment in CANVAS \_

Acceptable = turn in your assignment before class to my email, or hand a hard copy directly to me before class starts.

My least favorite = emailing or submitting your assignment as you're walking into class

Not acceptable = anything else, like having printer or computer trouble and not bringing the assignment to class, not uploading it before class begins, or begging me after class to let you turn it in later, or forgetting to do the assignments and asking to turn them in all at once at the end of the semester.

To avoid losing work, I recommend that you 1) not keep your work on only one computer or flash drive, and 2) use Hopkins One Drive to store documents in the cloud for remote access.



## Help & Resources

If you are feeling lost or overwhelmed...

### 1. Speak up or post in CANVAS

You may not be the only person with the same concern, and we all benefit from working questions out together.

### 2. Make an appointment with me

Email me to request an appointment to connect at any time, or catch me after class. Many questions & issues can be resolved this way.

### 3. Use the Writing Center

The Writing Center is a free resource at all stages of the writing process, from getting started to revising drafts to polishing a final essay. Make an appointment at <http://krieger.jhu.edu/writingcenter/>

### 4. Visit Academic Advising and Support

Academic advising offers many tutoring and mentoring services, including a study consulting program. Appointments can be made directly online from the webpage <http://advising.jhu.edu/tutoring-mentoring/>

### 5. Talk to a Counselor

The counseling center provides a safe, confidential, non-judgmental space and a variety of services from online "chat with a counselor" to crisis counseling. Crisis # 410-516-8278, press 1 for the on-call counselor 24/7. <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter/>

## Classroom Climate

I am committed to creating a classroom climate that values the diversity of experiences and perspectives that all students bring. Everyone here has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. I believe fostering an inclusive climate is important because research and my experience show that students who interact with peers who are different from themselves learn new things and experience tangible educational outcomes.

Please join me in creating a welcoming and vibrant classroom climate. Note that you should expect to be challenged intellectually by me, guest speakers, and your peers, and at times this may feel uncomfortable. But at no time in this learning process should someone be singled out or treated unequally on the basis of any seen or unseen part of their identity.

If you ever have concerns about harassment, discrimination, or any unequal treatment in this class, I invite you to share directly with me. I promise to take your communication seriously and to seek mutually acceptable resolutions and accommodations.

Reporting will never impact your course grade.

You may also share concerns directly with the Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion (Darlene Saporu, [dsaporu@jhu.edu](mailto:dsaporu@jhu.edu)), or the Office of Institutional Equity ([oi@jhu.edu](mailto:oi@jhu.edu)). In handling reports, staff will protect your privacy as much as possible, but faculty and staff are required to officially report information for some cases (e.g. sexual harassment).

## Accommodations

Anyone needing academic accommodations should obtain a letter from Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, [studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu). Please confirm this letter has been sent to me as soon as possible so that I can make sure to accommodate your needs. If you believe you have a need for accommodation but have not yet met with SDS, please do so right away – they are here to help and professionally equipped to advise us on which accommodations would be most helpful.

## Course Outline & Readings

\*all videos, photo essays etc..will be posted on CANVAS

### *Unit 1: Collecting in Europe Before the Museum*

**T 8/30**                    **Introductions: to each other, course, canvas**

**Th 9/1**                    What is a collection?

- Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities*, “The Collection” (selection), pp. 7-20
- Pearce, *Collector’s Voice*, vol. 1, “Abbot Suger Considers the Art Treasures of St Denis, Paris” (205-10)
- Video: Working with Textual Sources Part 1 & 2 ( \*Make sure to read the Suger text before watching the videos).

**T 9/6**                    Private Origins. Humanist Collecting & the "Studiolo"

- Dora Thornton, *The Scholar in His Study: Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 1-13
- Susan Pearce, *Collector’s Voice*, vol. 1: “Piero de Medici views his collections” (240-242)
- Video: Working with Visual Sources Part 1 & 2

**Th 9/8**                    Cabinets of Curiosity

Meet in Brody M-level in front of the Special Collections reading room. Arrive early to stow your bags in lockers and wash hands.

Guest: Earle Havens, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts Special Collections

- John E. Simmons, *Museums: A History* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 63-86
- Giuseppe Olmi “Science-Honour-Metaphor: Italian Cabinets of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” in *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosity in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Europe* ed. Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (North Yorkshire: House of Stratus, 1985/2001), 5 to top of 11.
- *The First Treatise on Museums: Samuel á Quiccheberg's Inscriptiones* 1565 trans. Mark A. Meadow and Bruce Robertson (2013), 61 to top of 71

### *Unit 2: Creating the Modern Public Museum in the 18th and 19th centuries*

**T 9/13**                    Collecting and Ordering Nature during the Enlightenment

- Photo Essay: Biological Sciences and the Botanic Garden
- Brian Johnson, “The Changing Face of the Botanic Garden,” in *Botanic Gardens: A Living History*, ed. Nadine Monem (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007) pp. 64-81
- Diderot, “Cabinet d’Histoire Naturelle” *Encyclopédie*

**Th 9/15**                    Europe’s first Public Art Museums

- videos: 3A Origins European Public Art Museums; 3B Art-Historical Hang; 3C Case Study of Louvre Museum.

In lieu of meeting in our classroom this week please visit the Walters Art Museum (open Wednesday to Sunday 10am to 5pm; Thursdays 1-8pm; a short walk from the JHU shuttle stop at Peabody. Free admission). Complete the scavenger hunt posted in CANVAS. As of August advanced timed-tickets were not required but that may change so please check here

for guidelines: <https://thewalters.org/visit/guidelines/>. Scavenger hunt results are **due to our discussion board on CANVAS by Saturday midnight**.

- T 9/20** Collecting the World at the British Museum
- Videos: 4A British Museum Introduction; 4B Hans Sloane and Natural History Collections; 4C Joseph Banks and Ethnographic Collections; 4D Austen Henry Layard and Antiquities
  - Owen, "Collecting Artefacts, Acquiring Empire," *Journal of the History of Collections*, 2006, 9-25

- Th 9/22** The Exhibitionary Complex  
Meet by Special Collections Reading Room
- Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," repr. in *Thinking About Exhibitions* ed. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne (London: Routledge, 1996), 81-112

Essay #1 DUE

*Unit 3: Museums Beyond Europe*

- T 9/27** Museums & Colonialism
- Savithri Preetha Nair, "Science and the Politics of Colonial Collecting: The Case of Indian Meteorites, 1856-70," *British Journal for the History of Science* 39, no. 1 (2006): 97-119
  - M.M. Lopes and I Podgorny, "The Shaping of Latin American Museums of Natural History, 1850-1900," in *Nature and Empire: Science and the Colonial Enterprise* ed. R. Macleod, *Osiris* 15 (Chicago, 2000), 108-118.

- Th 9/29** Case Study: Colonial Africa  
Meet at Baltimore Museum of Art - Guest Kevin Tervala
- Philip L. Ravenhill, "The Passive Object and the Tribal Paradigm: Colonial Museography in French West Africa," in *African Material Culture*, ed. Mary Jo Arnoldi, Christraud M. Geary, and Kris L. Hardin (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1996): 265-82.
  - Videos with Kevin Tervala: 6A Museums and Colonial Africa; 6B1 Museums and Colonial Africa – Art Collections; 6B2 Museums and Colonial Africa – Object Case Studies

- T 10/4** Museums in the United States
- Video: Early US Museums
  - Joyce Henri Robinson, "An American Cabinet of Curiosities: Thomas Jefferson's "Indian Hall at Monticello," *Winterthur Portfolio* 30.1 (1995): 41-58
  - Kate Stringer, "The Legacy of Dime Museums and the Freakshow: How the Past Impacts the Present," *History News* 68.4 (2013): 13-18

- Th 10/6** Preserving & Collecting the American Past
- Slide-deck to accompany Wallace article: Key moments and places in memorializing and interpreting the American past
  - Michael Wallace, "Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States," *Radical History Review* (1981): 63-76.
  - Pick a history museum you have visited in the past to consider where it fits (or does not fit) in Michael Wallace's typology / chronology – this will be the starting point for our in-class discussion.

**T 10/11** Interpreting Slavery

Meet at Homewood Museum

- Video: Interpreting African-American History in US Museums
- Listen to On the Media, NPR, episode on the Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/otm/episodes/worst-thing-weve-ever-done-on-the-media>
- Corrin, "Mining the Museum," essay in *Museum Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. pp. 388-97.

**Th 10/13** Community Museums & the Black Museum Movement

- Andrea A. Burns, *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement* (Amherst, 2013), 15-top of 25.
- J.R. Kinard, "The Neighborhood Museum as a Catalyst for Social Change" *Museum International* 37.4 (1985): 217-223
- Bunch, L. 2007. "Embracing Ambiguity: The Challenge of Interpreting African American History in Museums." *Museums and Social Issues* 2(1):45-56.

**10/15 Saturday, 4pm REVIEW SESSION FOR MID-TERM**

**T 10/18 MID-TERM**

**Th 10/20 FALL BREAK DAY**

**T 10/25** Museums, World Fairs, Anthropology & Native Americans

- Steven Conn, "Between Science and Art: Museums and the Development of Anthropology" *Museums and American Intellectual Life* (1998), 75-101

**Th 10/27** Northwest Coast at the American Museum of Natural History

- Photo essay on the Haida Canoe
- Ira Jacknis, "'A Magic Place': The Northwest Coast Indian Hall at the American Museum of Natural History", in *Coming Ashore: Northwest Coast Ethnology, Past and Present* ed. M. Mauzé, M. E. Harkin and S. Kan (eds) (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 221-50.

**T 11/1** The Collector's Museum

- Gamboni, "The Art of Keeping Art Together: On Collectors' Museums and Their Preservation" *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 52 (Autumn 2007): 181-189
- Anne Higonnet, "Self-Portrait as a Museum," *Res* 52 (Autumn 2007): 198-211

**Th 11/3** Municipal Art Museums, the first 150 years

- Video: Framing the Art Museum
- John Cotton Dana, "The Museum as Art Patron," Carbonell, *Museum Studies*, pp. 414-18
- Robert W. de Forest "An Address on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Museum" *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 15.6 (1920): 122-127
- Neil Harris, "The Divided House of the American Art Museum," *Daedalus* 128.3 (Summer 1999): 35-56

ESSAY 2 DUE



- T 11/8** Inventing the Modern at MoMA
- Susan Noyes Platt "Modernism, Formalism and Politics: The "Cubism and Abstract Art" Exhibition of 1936 at the Museum of Modern Art" *Art Journal* 47.4 (1988): 284-295
  - Dianne Sachko Macleod, *Enchanted Lives. Enchanted Objects: American Women Collectors and the Making of Culture, 1800-1940* (Berkeley, 2008): 156-168.

- Th 11/10** Biological Sciences in the Museum
- Conn, "'Naked Eye Science': Museums and Natural History," *Museums and American Intellectual Life 1876-1926* (1998), ONLY pp. 32-4 and 54-68
  - Pere Alberch, "Museums, Collections, and Biodiversity Inventories" *Trends in Ecology and Evolution* 8.10 (1993): 372-375
  - Leonard Krishtalka and Philip S. Humphrey, "Can Natural History Museums Capture the Future?" *BioScience* 50.7 (2000): 611-617

- T 11/15** Living Collections: From Creating to Conserving Nature  
Field Trip to Maryland Zoo
- Elizabeth Hanson, *Animal Attractions: Nature on Display in American Zoos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 130-161.

- Th 11/17** Industry Museums
- Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century of Progress Expositions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) chap. 6: "The Empire of Science," pp. 98-106

## **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

- T 11/29** Teaching Science in the Museum
- Frank Oppenheimer "The Palace of Arts and Science: An Exploratorium at San Francisco, California, U.S.A." *Leonardo* 5.4 (1972): 343-346
  - Hilde Hein, "Teaching without Schooling, Learning without Experts," in *The Exploratorium: The Museum as Laboratory* ed. H. Hein (Washington: Smithsonian Press, 1990), 125-146.

- Th 12/1** Medical Collections: Guest Speaker: Jessica Leigh Hester
- Alberti, "Organic Museum," in *Medical Museums: Past, Present, Future* pp. 17-29
  - Ken Arnold, "Museums and the Making of Medical History," in Robert Bud, ed., *Manifesting Medicine*. London: Science Museum, 2004, pp. 145-155 only ("Introduction" and "Museums and the History of Medicine").
  - Optional: *Morbid Curiosities: Medical Museums in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Amsterdam University Press, 2011), *chapt 6 "Viewing Pathology" from paragraph "the object of medical education" to paragraph before "museum affect"*

- T 12/6** Special Topic: Museums in China  
Guest: Tobie Meyer Fong
- Selina Ho Chui-fun, *Museum Processes in China: The Institutional Regulation, Production and Consumption of the Art Museums in the Greater Pearl River Delta Region* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), selection from introduction, pp. 17-30

•Andrew Solomon, “Don’t Mess with Our Cultural Patrimony” *New York Times Magazine* 17  
March 1996 <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/03/17/magazine/don-t-mess-with-our-cultural-patrimony.html?searchResultPosition=1>

**Th 12/8** End of Semester Discussion & Final Review

**Final Exam on date scheduled by registrar (will be posted  
@studentaffairs.jhu.edu after September 10.**