

MUSEUM STUDIES
HISTORY | THEORY | CONTROVERSY
ARHS 371 • CRN 10474 • Spring 2025

Professor: Dr. Katherine Calvin
Time: Tuesday 1:10-4:00 PM
Classroom: Gund Gallery 102

Office: Gund Gallery 114
Office Hours: Tues 9-11 + Wed 1-4
Email: calvin1@kenyon.edu



From left: Visitors take pictures of the Mona Lisa at the Louvre, Paris, on April 9, 2018; Just Stop Oil activists in the National Gallery in London on October 14, 2022; the new Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza, 2024

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar examines both the historical development of the museum as an institution and the evolution of museum studies and theory as a scholarly field. We will also consider contemporary debates about the role of the museum in relation to topics including collection management, cultural representation, and museum finance. During seminar meetings, students will discuss a topic central to museum studies, such as heritage, memory, and spatial order, using primary and secondary readings as well as their own written responses. This advanced course prioritizes original research, with individual and group projects designed to resemble the work done by many museum professionals today. Students will share their findings during three in-class presentations. This seminar counts toward the 300-level course requirement for both the major and minor in art history. Your active engagement with assigned readings and participation in discussion is essential to the success of our class. Because the course will raise a variety of both relevant and challenging issues, I encourage you to bring up contemporary connections throughout the semester.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum from Boulée to Bilbao*. University of California Press, 2008.

All other required readings will be posted to the Moodle course site.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Overview the historical development of museums and professional roles therein from the early modern period to the present

- Engage with museum studies scholarship and critical theory in relation to topics such as collecting, display, nationalism, and cultural representation
- Conduct and present original, data-backed research on an issue facing museums today
- Collaborate with classmates to design and present an acquisition proposal to complement the existing collection of a real-world arts institution
- Design, present, and write a multi-part research paper on a topic of their choosing related to some aspect of museum studies using primary sources and secondary scholarship

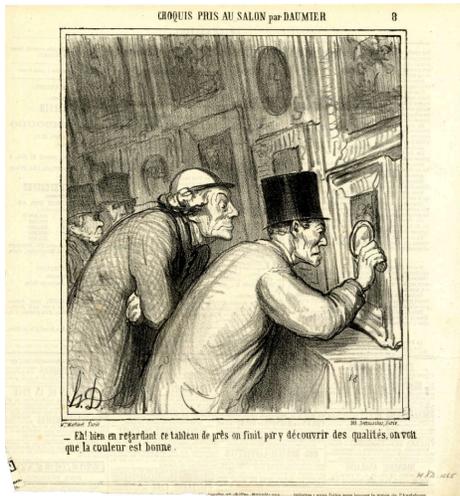
GRADE DISTRIBUTION AND SCALE

Reading Responses	20%	Survey & Literature Review (Unit 1)	20%
Discussion Participation	5%	Acquisition Group Project (Unit 2)	20%
Institutional History Spotlight Talk	5%	Final Research Project	30%

Final letter grades are determined based on the following scale:

A (94-100)	A- (90-93)	B+ (88-89)	B (84-87)	B- (80-83)	C+ (78-79)
C (74-77)	C- (70-73)	D+ (68-69)	D (64-67)	D- (60-63)	F (below 60)

I will use traditional rounding to determine grades that fall between whole values. Any mixed number with a decimal value of five tenths or higher will round up to the next whole number. (For example, 93.5 will round up to an A as a 94, but 93.4 will not.)



From left: Honoré Daumier, “Well, after looking at this painting closely, you eventually find some quality...” 1865, lithograph, British Museum; George Cruikshank, *Seizing the Italian Relics*, 1814, hand-colored etching, BM

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

1. **READING RESPONSES** — 20% of final grade:
 - Students will be asked to write and post reading responses on the Moodle forum before the beginning of class. Prompts and word count information will be posted to Moodle.
 - Of the EIGHT assigned reading responses, only SIX will count toward your final grade (i.e. you can drop or skip two responses). I encourage you to use one of your drop/skip options on the day you give your institutional history spotlight talk; however, this is not required.

2. DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION —worth 5% of final grade:
 - Each student is expected to attend all class meetings, complete assigned readings before class, and actively participate in discussions. Students who want to achieve the highest participation grades should aim to contribute thoughtfully to discussion during each session.
 - Please reach out to Prof. Calvin via email if you need to miss class if, for example, you are sick, so we can make a plan together. Unexcused absences may affect participation grades.

3. INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY SPOTLIGHT TALK — one presentation worth 5% of final grade:
 - Each student will research and present one 7-8 minute “spotlight talk” on the institutional history of a museum connected to the week’s topic.
 - More details about this assignment will be discussed in class and posted to Moodle.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW & SURVEY (UNIT 1 PROJECT) — one project worth 20% of final grade:
 - Each student will conduct a literature review of current research and best practices regarding one issue of their choosing important to museums today. In addition to the review of existing research, students will also build and conduct a survey to collect additional data on their topic. Students will present their review and survey findings in a 6-7 minute presentation during class on Tuesday February 11.
 - More details about this assignment will be discussed in class and posted to Moodle.

5. ACQUISITION GROUP PROJECT (UNIT 2 PROJECT) — one project worth 20% of final grade:
 - In small groups, students will research and propose the acquisition, or purchase, of one work of art for the Gund. Students will collaborate with Prof. Calvin and museum staff at the Gund to evaluate the current collection, areas for potential expansion and collaboration with Kenyon programs, and artist research. Each group will present their proposals to members of the Gund’s acquisition committee during class on Tuesday March 25.
 - More details about this assignment will be discussed in class and posted to Moodle.

6. FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT — multi-part research project worth 30% of final grade:
 - During the semester, students will propose, research, present, and write on a subject of their choosing related to the course content. The overall project will be worth 30% of the student’s final grade but is subdivided into the following assignments and due dates:
 - Mandatory meeting with Prof Calvin to discuss initial ideas by March 26
 - Proposal & annotated bibliography (5%), due April 1
 - Class presentation (5%), scheduled for either April 22 or 29
 - Final paper (20%), due Monday May 5th at 6:30 PM on Moodle



From left: The Crystal Palace during the 1851 World’s Fair; Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, designed by Frank Gehry, 1991-7; Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s “Couple in the Cage” performance in Madrid, 1992

KENYON COLLEGE LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Kenyon College acknowledges that the lands on which we live, work, celebrate, and heal are the ancestral homelands of the Miami, Lenape, Wyandotte, and Shawnee peoples, among others. The disputed Treaty of Greenville (1795) and the forced removal of Indigenous peoples from this region allowed for the founding of the College in the early 1800s. As a community, we are committed to confronting this dark past while also embracing through education and outreach the many Indigenous communities that continue to thrive in Ohio.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

At Kenyon College we expect all students, at all times, to submit work that represents our highest standards of academic integrity. It is the responsibility of each student to learn and practice the proper ways of documenting and acknowledging those whose ideas and words they have drawn upon (see Academic Honesty and Questions of Plagiarism in the Course Catalog). IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS about citing sources or images, please ask me any time before your assignment is due!

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

It's my central aim that this course is accessible to every student. If you ever have questions or concerns about how to increase our class's accessibility, please reach out to schedule a meeting. I will be happy to talk with you, and to do whatever I can to facilitate your participation and learning. The guiding principles of our class will be flexibility, community, and communication. We can change any aspect of the course as we figure out what works for us as a group, and for you as an individual.

Whether or not you have a documented disability, I will be glad to meet with you at any point to discuss your access needs. However, a student with a disability who thinks they may need an accommodation to access a campus program, activity, or service should contact Student Accessibility and Support Services (SASS) to discuss specific needs. Advance notice is required to review documentation, evaluate accommodation requests and provide notice or arrangements for any accommodation. Any students who face challenges securing food or housing can apply for the Student Support Fund through The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI). Please reach out to me if you have critical needs in these areas, especially during this unprecedented time.



From left: Cover of the *Harlem on My Mind* exhibition catalogue, 1969, Metropolitan Museum of Art; Sackler P.A.I.N.'s first protest against museums who have made naming arrangements with Purdue Pharma's Sackler family at the Met's Temple of Dendur, photo via [Artnet](#); Installation view of Maurizio Cattelan, "America," 2016, 18-carat gold functioning toilet, Guggenheim Museum, NYC

COURSE CALENDAR AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

This schedule is subject to change. Any changes or updates will be communicated in a timely fashion through e-mail or posted to the Moodle course website.

Week ONE

Tuesday January 14 – MUSEUM VISIONS

Behind-the-scenes visit to Something Blue, the upcoming exhibition at The Gund

Readings:

- Svetlana Alpers, “The Museum as a Way of Seeing,” in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, eds. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 25-32
- David Joselit, Prologue to *Art’s Properties* (Princeton University Press, 2023), ix-xviii

Unit ONE – AIMS & HISTORY

Week TWO

Tuesday January 21 – MAKING MEANING(S)

Readings:

- Andrew McClellan, “Ideals and Mission” (Ch. 1 in *The Art Museum*), 13-52
- Mieke Bal, “The Discourse of the Museum,” in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, eds. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (Routledge, 1996), 201-218
- Michael Baxandall, “Exhibiting Intention: Some Preconditions of the Visual Display of Culturally Purposeful Objects,” in *Exhibiting Cultures*, 33-41
- Ann Landi, “[Wall Talk: Do We Even Need Museum Wall Labels](#),” *ARTnews*, December 21, 2015

Assignment:

- ★ Reading Response 1 due

Week THREE

Tuesday January 28 – SPACE & ORDER

Readings:

- Andrew McClellan, “Architecture” (Ch. 2 in *The Art Museum*), 53-106
- Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” *New Formations* 4 (1988): 73-102
- Carol Duncan, “The Art Museum as Ritual,” *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (Routledge, 1995), 7-20
- “Frank Gehry,” in *Building Culture: Sixteen Architects on How Museums are Shaping the Future of Art, Architecture, and Public Space*, ed. Julian Rose (Princeton Architectural Press, 2024), 106-125

Assignment:

- ★ Reading Response 2 due

Presentations:

- IHST 1 (Institutional History Spotlight Talk) + IHST 2
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Week FOUR

Tuesday February 4 – COLLECTIONS

Conversation with architect Edwin Chan about his architectural and design studio EC3 and previous work with Frank O. Gehry & Associates

Readings:

- Andrew McClellan, “Collecting, Classification, and Display” (Ch. 3 in *The Art Museum*), 107-154
- Steven Lubar, Lukas Rieppel, Ann Daly, and Kathrinne Duffy, “Lost Museums,” *Museum History Journal* 10.1 (2017): 1-14
- Alice Beale and Tom Pyrzakowski, “Playing the odds: the fine line between keeping an object safe and making it accessible,” in *Collections Management as Critical Museum Practice*, eds. Cara Krmpotich and Alice Stevenson (UCL Press, 2024), 153-164
- Yesomi Umolu, “[On the Limits of Care and Knowledge: 15 Points Museums Must Understand to Dismantle Structural Injustice.](#)” *Artnet*, June 25, 2020

Assignment:

- ★ Reading Response 3 due

Presentations:

- IHST 3 + IHST 4
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Week FIVE

Tuesday February 11 – UNIT 1 PRESENTATIONS

Assignment:

- ★ Survey & Literature Review (Unit 1 Project) due
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Unit TWO – VALUE & REPRESENTATION

Week SIX

Tuesday February 18 – CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

In-class field trip to The Annex + conversation with anthropology Prof. Emily Ibrahim

Readings:

- James Clifford, “Museums as Contact Zones,” *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press, 1997), 188-219

- Amy Lonetree, “Museums as Sites of Decolonization: Truth Telling in National and Tribal Museums,” in *Contesting Knowledge*, ed. Susan Sleeper-Smith (University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 322-337
- Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Destination Museum,” *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (University of California Press, 1998), 131-176

Assignment:

- ★ Reading Response 4 due

Presentations:

- IHST 5 + IHST 6 + IHST 7

Week SEVEN

Tuesday February 25 – MUSEUM MONEY

Readings:

- Andrew McClellan, “Commercialism” (Ch. 5 in *The Art Museum*), 193-232
- John Zarobell, “Museum Funding: Who Shapes Institutions?” in *Art and the Global Economy* (University of California Press, 2017), 35-56
- Laura Raicovich, “Revelations,” *Culture Strike: Art and Museums in an Age of Protest* (Verso, 2021), 15-42
- Nizan Shaked, Introduction to *Museums and Wealth: The Politics of Contemporary Art Collections* (Bloomsbury, 2022), 1-14

Assignment:

- ★ Reading Response 5 due

Presentations:

- IHST 8 + IHST 9 + IHST 10

Tuesdays March 4 & 11 – SPRING BREAK

Week EIGHT

Tuesday March 18 – HERITAGE & OWNERSHIP

Conversation with Robin Goodman, Exhibitions and Collections Registrar at The Gund

Readings:

- McClellan, “Restitution and Repatriation” (Ch. 6 in *The Art Museum*), 233-268
- Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Whose Culture Is It?” in *Whose Culture? The Promise of Museums and the Debate over Antiquities*, ed. James Cuno (Princeton University Press, 2012), 71-86
- Emiline Smith, “The Ongoing Quest to Return Nepal’s Looted Cultural Heritage,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 23.2 (2022): 264-271
- Bénédicte Savoy, *Africa’s Struggle for Its Art: History of a Postcolonial Defeat* (Princeton University Press, 2022), vi-viii; 1-10; 29-34; 58-67; 139-142

- Samuel Reilly, "[How to make a new museum in Nigeria](#)," *Apollo: The International Art Magazine*, October 24, 2024

Assignment:

- ★ Reading Response 6 due

Presentations:

- IHST 11 + IHST 12
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Week NINE

Tuesday March 25 – UNIT 2 PRESENTATIONS

Assignment:

- ★ Group Acquisition Project Presentations (Unit 2 Assignment)
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Unit THREE – ACCESS & AUDIENCES

Week TEN

Tuesday April 1 – CURATION: CARE & CONTROVERSY

Conversation with Daisy Desrosiers, the David and Francie Horvitz Family Foundation Director and Chief Curator at The Gund

Readings:

- Paul O'Neill, "Biennial Culture and the Emergence of a Globalized Curatorial Discourse: Curating in the Context of Biennials and Large-Scale Exhibitions since 1989," *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* (MIT Press, 2012), 51-85
- Bridget R. Cooks, "Black Artists and Activism: Harlem on My Mind (1969)," *American Studies* 48.1 (2007): 5-39
- Holland Cotter, "[The Met Aims to Get Harlem Right, the Second Time Around](#)," *New York Times*, February 19, 2024
- Maura Reilly, "What is Curatorial Activism?" *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating* (Thames & Hudson, 2018), 16-33

Assignment:

- ★ Research proposal and annotated bibliography due
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Week ELEVEN

Tuesday April 8 – EDUCATION: PUBLICS & ACCESS

Conversation with Jodi Kovach, the Pamela and Christopher Hoehn-Saric Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs and Education at The Gund

Readings:

- McClellan, "The Public" (Ch. 4 in *The Art Museum*), 155-192

- John Cotton Dana, “The Gloom of the Museum,” (1917), in *Reinventing the Museum: The Evolving Conversation on the Paradigm Shift*, ed. Gail Anderson (Altamira Press, 2012), 17-35
- J. T. Eisenhauer Richardson and Dana Carlisle Kletchka, “Museum Education for Disability Justice and Liberatory Access,” *Journal of Museum Education* 47.2 (2022): 138-149
- “[Museums Today: Activating Art Collections for University Science Curricula](#),” podcast featuring Jodi Kovach (Kenyon) and Lori Kartchner (George Washington University)

Assignment:

- ★ Reading Response 7 due

Presentations:

- IHST 13 + IHST 14
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Week TWELVE

Tuesday April 15 – THE FUTURE OF THE MUSEUM

Guest speaker via Zoom: Dr. Lauryn Smith, Assistant Curator at The Frick Pittsburgh

Readings:

- Zachary Small, “[teamLab, Art’s Greatest Sugar Rush, Is Building an Empire](#),” *New York Times*, December 7, 2024
- Tara Young, “Things I Wish I Had Known When I Was Twenty Four” and “Where Are Museums Going?” in *So You Want to Work in a Museum?* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 133-149

Assignment:

- ★ Reading Response 8 due

Presentations:

- IHST 15 + IHST 16

SATURDAY APRIL 19: FIELD TRIP TO [THE FRICK PITTSBURGH](#)

Week THIRTEEN

Tuesday April 22 – RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS, DAY ONE

Week FOURTEEN

Tuesday April 29 – RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS, DAY TWO

[FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE: Monday May 5th at 6:30 PM on Moodle](#)