



# Museum &

# Exhibition Studies

## at UIC Program Handbook

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**“Another art world is possible.”**

—Occupy Museums, 2013

## WELCOME TO MUSE!

### Master of Arts in Museum and Exhibition Studies: Program Overview

Welcome to MUSE, an interdisciplinary graduate program with a social justice focus. MUSE emphasizes the evolving social and political contexts of today's cultural institutions, including museums of art, anthropology, architecture, history, nature, science, youth and contemporary culture, and provides students with the intellectual and professional engagements essential to careers in diverse positions, including curators, exhibition developers, gallery directors, museum educators, collections managers, and social media directors.

MUSE students take five required courses addressing exhibition-making, collections, writing for exhibitions, strategies of public engagement, and museum genres and histories; take two required capstone courses; choose elective courses and can opt to do a supervised internship; participate in skill-developing projects; and complete a capstone during the two-year program.

MUSE uses Chicago's cultural institutions as classrooms, and UIC's Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, Gallery 400, and 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Gallery support research and practice opportunities on campus. Our position within a major urban research university also provides access to a wide range of resources.



### Faculty & Program Staff

**Core Faculty:** Therese Quinn (Museum and Exhibition Studies), Lucy Mensah (Museum and Exhibition Studies), and Maria Eugenia López-García (Museum and Exhibition Studies).

**Graduate Academic Advisor:** Becky Fall (School of Art & Art History)

**Affiliated Faculty:** Brian Bauer (Anthropology), Jennifer Brier (History, Gender and Women's



Studies), Rosa Cabrera (Rafael Cintrón Ortiz Latino Cultural Center), Lennard Davis (English, Disability Studies), Anna Guevarra (Global Asian Studies), Robert Johnston (History, Jewish Studies), Ronak K. Kapadia (Gender and Women's Studies and Global Asian Studies), Mario La Mothe (Anthropology), Lisa Yun Lee (Art History), Mark Martell (Global Asian Studies), Karyn Sandlos (Art Education), Carrie Sandahl (Disability Studies), and David Stovall (Black Studies, Criminology, Law and Justice).

**MUSE course instructors have included:** Joy Bivins (Chicago History Museum), William Estrada (Mobiel Street Art Cart), Jeffreen M. Hayes (Threewalls), Skyla Hearn (DuSable Museum of African American History), Aaron Hughes (National Veterans Art Museum), Claudine Ise (Bad At Sports, Artforum), Lisa Yun Lee (National Public Housing Museum), Lisa Junkin Lopez (Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace), Faheem Majeed (Floating Museum), Kamilah Rashied (Art Institute of Chicago), Jessica Roberts (University of Illinois at Chicago), Rhoda Rosen (School of the Art Institute of Chicago), Jennifer Scott (Jane Addams Hull-House Museum), Lorelei Stewart (Gallery 400), Carlos Tortolero (National Museum of Mexican Art) and Emma Turner-Trujillo (Field Museum), Matt Matcuk (Field Museum of Natural History), and Sam Ramos (Art Institute of Chicago).

### **Advisors and Readers**

In addition to those already noted these have included: Esra Akan (Art History), Elise Archias (Art History), Catherine Becker (Art History), Rosa Cabrera (Rafael Cintrón Ortiz Latino Cultural Center), Penelope Dean (Graham Foundation), Ömür Harmanşah (Art History), Roberta Katz (Art History), Barbara Koenen (DCASE), Jonathan Mekinda (Art History), Virginia Miller (Art History), Sabrina Raff (Art), Ella Rothgangel (St. Louis Art Museum), Carrie Sandahl (Disability and Human Development), Kevin Schultz (History), Ashley Smith (Arizona Historical Society), Blake Stimson (Art History), and David Sokol (Art History), and others.

### **Lecturers**

These have included: Johanna Burton (New Museum), Kemi Ilesanmi (The Laundromat Project), Ethan Lasser (Chipstone Foundation, Milwaukee Art Museum), Margaret Lindauer (Virginia Commonwealth University), Porchia Moore, Occupy Museums (everywhere), Sarah Pharaon (International Coalition of Sites of Conscience), PJ Gubatina Policarpio (Museum of Modern Art), Kamilah Rashied (Art Institute of Chicago), Kameelah Janan Rasheed (artist), John Ronan (John Ronan Architects), Rhoda Rosen (Northwestern University and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago), Stephanie Smith (The Smart Museum at the University of Chicago), Eric A. Stanley (director Criminal Queens), Lisa Stone (Roger Brown Study Collection), Nato Thompson (Creative Time, NY), Chris E. Vargas (Museum of Transgender History & Art, director Criminal Queens), Hamza Walker (The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago), and others.





**“A Museology that is not life-oriented is not worthy; All the memories are kept in our bodies; Our museological practice involves affection, fraternity, reciprocity, love, joy and poetry; Memory is a conscious channel of resistance, a struggle against the leveling forces that destroy those ways of life that are not framed into colonialism—the capitalistic system, patriarchy, among others. Memory is, at the same time, a claim for human values, dignity and social cohesion, becoming a direct action of occupation of the present, allowing the invention of possible futures.”**

—MINOM-ICOM, Córdoba Declaration, XVIII International MINOM Conference, Córdoba/ Argentina, 2017

## Museums and Cultural Justice

### Therese Quinn

Chicago has a vibrant history of museums created by participants in movements for justice.

The oldest museum of Black art and culture in the United States—founded as the Ebony Museum, and now called the DuSable Museum for Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, the Haitian settler credited as the first permanent non-indigenous resident of Chicago—was started in Chicago in 1961 by Margaret Burroughs, an African American educator (Rocksborough-Smith, 2011). Two Mexican American Chicago Public School teachers, Carlos Tortolero and Helen Valdez, took the lead in cofounding the National Museum of Mexican Art, the only accredited Latino museum in the United States, in 1982 (Storch, 1994). And in 1998 Peggy Montes, a Black teacher, started Chicago’s Bronzeville Children’s Museum, the first and only African American children’s museum in the United States (The Historymakers, 2019). These institutions collect the material culture, exhibit the art, and share the histories of groups that are underrepresented in mainstream museums, and also provide essential employment opportunities for people of color, who are largely excluded from the nation’s museum workplaces.

Elected representatives have also taken up the cause of cultural justice. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Illinois State Representative Cardiss Collins, the first African American woman to represent

the Midwest in Congress, focused her attention on “minority employment in senior level managerial positions” within museums in major American cities. Chicago’s hearings were held at the Field Museum of Natural History in 1989, with leaders of the major public museums asked to report on their hiring practices (101st Congress, 1990). Employment data revealed the museums were segregated workplaces; the most diverse was 81% White at the senior levels.

Representative Collins was determined that these institutions, located rent-free on public land and receiving federal support through their tax exempt status, should serve communities by hiring diverse staffs and by producing “culturally responsive” content. Without evidence of attempts to desegregate staffs and subject matters, she suggested, museums’ subsidies should be reconsidered. Today, decades after these efforts by Collins and so many others, museums are still segregated workplaces, with Whites now holding 84% of curator, conservator, and educator positions (McCambridge, 2017).

Museums, in other words, like all public institutions, are shaped by their contexts. They are fantastic, and also as flawed as our society is, and they are ready for reimagining. In this way, they are similar to schools. Both schools and museums can be powerful sites of learning and experience. Yet, to survive as public entities and fulfill their potential as essential assets to a thriving democratic sphere, both schools and museums must be urged and supported to redefine themselves. The MUSE Program proposes ways that cultural workers can use the resource of museums to facilitate visitors’ probing explorations of the world, drawing out their critical potential, and pointing the way toward the futures we deserve, by asking “power-sensitive” questions (Lather, 1991) and addressing justice centered themes, including commitments to activism, democracy, equality and inclusion, in your papers and projects. For example, “Who benefits?” is a “perennially essential” starting point, according to the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (Brantlinger, 2004).

Applied to the employment structures, funding streams, and curatorial decisions that shape the status quo of museums and exhibitions, could lead to ideas about reshaping these spaces around goals of fair employment practices and access, for starters, challenging the status quo of cultural work. Projects developed from these lines of thought might include initiating a “community curated” exhibit at an elementary school, senior residence or community center; designing an audio program for blind/low vision gallery visitors; exploring how faith systems are represented within museums; and surveying if and how museums represent queer and trans people and communities. We are excited to see what you come up with in the program. Museums, their home communities, and the whole world will benefit from your work.

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Much of this text is adapted from *School: Questions About Museums, Culture, and Justice to Explore in Your Classroom* (2020, Teachers College Press) by Therese Quinn.





### Advising

**Program Advising:** Every MUSE student will have access to the MUSE Graduate Academic Advisor (Becky Fall, [rfall@uic.edu](mailto:rfall@uic.edu)); this advisor will meet with you regularly and help you support your goals in graduate education and beyond with suggestions for elective courses, faculty to meet, museums and galleries to explore, and more. The Graduate Academic Advisor can answer questions about credits, registration, schedules, and other Program-related concerns.

**Capstone Advising:** As you progress through the program, you will choose committee members who will advise your capstone thesis/project process, as detailed later in this handbook. Usually one committee member will serve as your “Faculty Advisor” or “Chair”; this is distinct from your Graduate Academic Advisor. Your Graduate Academic Advisor can help offer suggestions as you identify university-based faculty and field professionals to guide your Capstone work.

### Program Overview and Requirements

#### Program Requirements at a Glance

- Minimum number of semester credit hours required: **48 credit hours**, comprised of:
  - 5 x core classes (20 credit hours at 4 credits per core class)
  - 2 x “Capstone” courses (8 credit hours cumulatively)
  - Minimum 20 total credit hours of elective courses
  - *N.B. [check this link](#) for more information about course registration.*
- Capstone Project or Thesis, including:
  - Selection of faculty committee
  - Proposal document ([submit at this link](#))
    - Some students will need to complete CITI training and obtain an IRB determination letter, exemption, or approval (consult with your committee to determine this requirement)
  - Completed Thesis or Project report
  - Oral defense with committee
- Final Reflection Paper
- Other requirements:
  - Minimum Grade Point Average required: 3.0
  - Only 400- and 500-level courses count for graduate credit
  - Credit toward a graduate degree is only given for courses in which a student receives a grade of A, B, C, P, or S.

#### Required Core Courses (20 credit hours total)

- **MUSE 532: Museum Collections (4 Credits)**  
This seminar critically investigates museum practices and histories linked to collections. Students meet in class and at historic and heritage sites in the Chicago area; explore the

shifting social meanings of collecting; become familiar with theoretical frameworks that offer ways of understanding collecting; and gain practical experiences with collections.

- **MUSE 542: Exhibition Practices (4 Credits)**

This course examines key issues in making exhibitions today, including historical precedents, theories, techniques, audience, collaboration, context, new technologies, and the relationship of exhibitions to changes in the fields they present. Students will critically analyze exhibitions as entities, evaluating them in relationship to stated aims; recognize sources of influence and interest and relating exhibitions to institutional contexts; and discern goals for programs. In class, all will learn steps necessary for developing exhibitions, from idea conception and planning, to evaluation.

- **MUSE 543: Writing for Exhibitions (4 Credits)**

This is a practicum in producing texts for sites across physical and virtual museum and exhibition environments, from labels to exhibition catalogs. Includes digital and virtual exhibition venues. Students will read, discuss, and debate theories of what constitutes effective and engaging exhibition writing. At the same time, students will tackle practical writing exercises aimed at developing and strengthening writing skills through the production and workshoping of a selection of text forms.

- **MUSE 544: Public Engagement in Museums (4 Credits)**

This participatory seminar examines the ways that museums and related institutions create opportunities for audiences to engage with ideas, objects, and actions through programs, exhibitions, and other museum products. Through course readings, conversations with museum and gallery professionals, and museum and exhibition visits, students will learn institutions' methods for reaching the public, evaluating museum and exhibit visitor experiences, and the possibilities and limits for diverse publics to express agency within these diverse settings.

- **MUSE 545: Museum Genres, Practices, and Institutions (4 Credits)**

This seminar examines the history of museums through critical inquiry and close readings of literary, theoretical, and other kinds of media and "texts" produced about and by museums. Students will gain perspectives on the institutional contexts, the social practices, and the political potentials of museums. The seminar room serves as a "base station," and the class also meets at museums and cultural sites throughout the city as a laboratory for readings and discussion; these visits often include conversations with museum professionals and practitioners at Chicago's diverse cultural institutions. Students will also independently visit museums to inform their engagement with readings; documentation of visits via social media will be a course assignment.

## **Capstone Research Courses, aka "Capstone 1 and 2" (8 credit hours maximum)**

You will take these courses while developing your Capstone Project or Thesis. If you plan to complete a thesis, you should enroll in MUSE 598 for your Capstone Courses; if you plan to complete a project, you should enroll in MUSE 597.

Typically students take one of these courses in the spring semester of their first year ("Capstone 1") and repeat it again in the fall of the second year ("Capstone 2"). Capstone 1 addresses research theories and proposal development; Capstone 2 addresses research methods and the Capstone

defense and symposium presentation. The culminating, or capstone, experiences for MUSE students are tailored to individual intellectual paths and career goals. Students completing Capstones during the summer or any term beyond the program's two years must submit a timeline for completion at the beginning of each additional semester.

- **MUSE 597: Project Research and Implementation**

Variable credit hours (0-8); typically taken for 4 credits in second semester ("Capstone 1") + 4 in third semester ("Capstone 2").

This course helps you develop a Capstone Project appropriate to student interests and career goals as developed in consultation with a faculty advisor. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading only. May be repeated to a maximum of 8 hours.

- **MUSE 598: Master's Thesis Research**

Variable credit hours (0-8); typically taken for 4 credits in second semester ("Capstone 1") + 4 in third semester ("Capstone 2").

This course helps you develop a Capstone Thesis and complete individual research under faculty direction. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading only. May be repeated to a maximum of 8 hours.

## Elective Courses (20 credit hours minimum)

Choose classes from departments across the university, or check for MUSE electives such as:

- **MUSE 400: Topics in Museum and Exhibition Studies (4-5 credits)**

Rotating instructors and subject matter. This course will investigate a problem, topic or issue relevant to the interdisciplinary field of Museum and Exhibition Studies.

- **MUSE 582: Internship (4 credits)**

MUSE students can elect to complete 160 internship working hours to receive credit. These hours can be completed at one site or multiple sites. We accept a broad range of experiential learning experiences as qualified internship, including assistantships, paid work, and student-initiated projects, as long as you have a supervisor at the site willing to verify your work. All internships should include an educational component. Apply for a Provost's Graduate Internship Award to fund your internship.

Approval: Internships must be approved by the Director prior to the start date. To initiate approval, students must complete and turn in the Internship Placement form available at <https://artandarthistory.uic.edu/important-forms-and-docs>

Credit: At completion, the Intern Supervisor must submit a letter verifying successful completion of internship; students are responsible for securing and delivering this to the MUSE office. *N.B. Students should register for MUSE 582 during the semester they are interning; credit will be recorded after the letter has been received by MUSE staff.*

- **MUSE 546: Seminar in Museum and Exhibition Studies (4 credits)**

Instructors and subjects vary. Investigation of a problem, topic or issue relevant to the interdisciplinary field of Museum and Exhibition Studies. Content varies.



## Interdepartmental Graduate Concentrations

Interdepartmental Graduate Concentrations allow students in one program to add a formal concentration from another program to their studies. Currently, MUSE students have the opportunity to join the concentrations in Black Studies and Gender & Women's Studies. If you are interested in pursuing any of these concentrations, please contact the MUSE Graduate Academic Advisor ([rfall@uic.edu](mailto:rfall@uic.edu)) or Director.

## Annual Progress Report

Toward the end of the Spring Semester, the Graduate Academic Advisor will send out an annual progress report survey to all first-year students. This survey is mandatory. It will ask you to submit information about:

- Completed and current courses;
- Progress toward the fulfillment of requirements (including coursework, internships, and more);
- Advancement toward the thesis or project, as appropriate;
- The name of your faculty advisor;
- The names and titles of other advisors you are working with;
- Your achievements in the past academic year (e.g., grants and awards, papers and projects presented, boards served on, exhibitions and programs developed, positions related to museums and exhibitions that you hold, etc.);
- Any other information that you would like to share with the MUSE Program.

## Final Reflection Paper

This paper (4-6 pages, double-spaced) is due from all graduating students before grades are submitted. Email these to the program advisor. The reflection paper is a document that you will use to look back on the development of your Capstone and perhaps respond to the feedback you will have received in your final meeting with advisors; and reflect on other aspects of your graduate studies at UIC, including courses, assistantships, internships, funding, electives, advising, and more.

The paper does not require new research. We know the end of the semester is busy, and hope that the modest length is broad enough to be manageable while offering enough space for the reflection to be meaningful

## Suggested Organization for MUSE Program Years

MUSE is designed to be completed in two years (two semesters + one summer + two more semesters). If at any point you need to adjust this timeline, just contact your Graduate Academic Advisor to discuss possible new completion schedules.

### Year One

#### Fall

- Key tasks
  - Focus coursework on completing your Core Courses

- Consider whether you would like to complete a Capstone Project or Thesis
- Meet with faculty around the university and/or working professionals whose work interests you
- Additional tasks
  - Document your graduate education experience
  - Explore diverse museums, galleries, and related institutions as potential internship sites
  - Learn how to use the library databases and archives
  - Plan to work on the Museum and Exhibition Studies publication; register for the spring seminar
  - Apply for an Award for Graduate Research to support your research; the fall deadline is in October
  - Look campus-wide for classes
  - Clean up your résumé; start a cover letter for internship-seeking
  - Decide which conferences you want to attend; join one or more of their organizations

## **Winter Break**

- Key task
  - Finalize decision to complete either a Capstone Project or Thesis
- Additional tasks
  - Research internship deadlines; some internships have winter applications
  - Go on a study trip
  - Research international study and research opportunities; your capstone and internship can take place anywhere in the world

## **Spring**

- Key tasks
  - Focus coursework on completing your Core Courses
  - Enroll in Capstone 1 (MUSE 597 or 598, depending on whether you plan to complete a Capstone Project or Thesis)
  - Decide whom you would like to invite to chair your Capstone committee, meet with them to discuss your ideas, and ask them to advise your work
  - Develop a schedule for meeting with your Capstone advisor and other committee members as well as research/writing/project work
  - Draft a Capstone proposal and discuss it with your Capstone advisor
- Additional tasks
  - Apply for an Award for Graduate Research to support your research; the spring deadline is in March
  - Apply for and solidify summer internships and research residencies
  - Look up the deadlines for conference proposal submissions and plan an individual or group session
  - Take the first capstone class and develop a schedule for meeting with your capstone advisor/readers

## **Summer**

- Key tasks
  - Work on Capstone!
  - Develop a Capstone work/writing schedule during Year 2
  - Establish communication and review schedule to share with your Capstone committee
  - If required by your Capstone committee, complete CITI training and submit an IRB

determination request

- Additional tasks
  - Complete a hands-on internship (optional)
  - At your internship site, interview employees about their positions (ask how they got their jobs, what they do, what they like and don't like about their work, and if they plan to remain in their positions or seek new ones) and ask for challenging, interesting projects
  - Visit museums small and large, obscure and mainstream, quirky and traditional
  - Document everything

## Year Two

### Fall

- Key tasks
  - Fulfill any outstanding Core Courses
  - Enroll in Capstone 2 (MUSE 597 or 598, depending on whether you plan to complete a Capstone Project or Thesis)
  - Enroll in exciting electives
  - Meet regularly with your Capstone advisor to discuss your progress
  - Refine your Capstone work schedule for the Fall and Spring and share key days with your committee
  - If required by your Capstone committee, complete CITI training and submit an IRB determination request
  - Submit the [Capstone Proposal Form](#) with your completed proposal
- Additional tasks
  - Attend and present your work at a conference.
  - Request support for your graduate work-focused travel.
  - Interview a scholar or professional in the field; tell her about your capstone.
  - Do a group project with your peers—propose an exhibit for the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Gallery or a panel discussion at Gallery 400 or Hull-House Museum, for example. Don't forget to send out a press release!
  - Document everything.

### Spring

- Key tasks
  - Fulfill remaining course/credit-hour requirements
  - If you are completing a Capstone Thesis, gather signatures for the [Committee Recommendation Form](#) *early in the semester* and submit it to the Graduate Academic Advisor (Becky Fall, [rfall@uic.edu](mailto:rfall@uic.edu))
  - In consultation with your faculty advisor and Capstone committee, schedule a defense date
  - Finish your Capstone and prepare for Thesis or Project defense!
  - Complete any revisions required after your defense
- Additional tasks
  - Visit the Office of Career Services to practice interviewing and plan your next steps.
  - Network by attending and presenting your exciting research and projects at conferences everywhere.



## PROGRAM CAPSTONES

### What is a MUSE Capstone?

Capstones are opportunities for MUSE students to engage in extended research and practice focused on their areas of interest; demonstrate professional competence to prospective employers; and to contribute to the field of museum and exhibition studies. Your Master's Capstone is the culminating experience that launches you into the next phase of your life, so consider its topic and form carefully. The topic should be interesting to you and others, useful, and feasible—you should be able to complete it during the program. Finally, these projects and theses are opportunities to pose questions and explore ideas about museums and exhibitions, cultural work and institutions, and social justice.

There are two kinds of Capstones: Project and Thesis. Keep reading for more information on these options.

Below is a sampling of the capstones completed by MUSE students:

- Marina Álvarez (2021), Women, Graffiti, Nation: Writing Anti-colonial Resistance in the Public Spheres of Mexico
- June Ahn (2020), Greenspace: A Yearlong Series of Public Engagement at the UIC Plant Research Laboratory
- Ivan Guzman (2019), The Packingtown Museum: Creating a Museum and Engaging a Mexican, Immigrant, Working-Class, Spanish Speaking Community
- Noora Al Balushi (2018), Representing People with Disabilities and Women at the National Museum of Oman
- Matthew Yasuoka (2017), Hawaii/Hawai'i: Space, Alterity and the Settler Imaginary
- Alice Kovacic (2016), Through Story: A Guide to Oral History for Community Organizations
- Jamie Lewis (2015), Reinterpreting Ethnographic Collections: Online Community Curation of the Philippine Collection at The Field Museum



### Capstone Committees

**Thesis:** A [thesis committee consists of three members](#). Of these members, one needs to be a faculty member with [full membership in UIC's Graduate College](#), and one needs to have been awarded tenure (typically, someone with the title of Associate or Full Professor). Additionally, one member of any thesis committee must be from the student's home department. *A single member may fulfill all of these requirements.* All members must hold a Master's degree or higher in any subject.

**Project:** Project committee composition is determined within the home department (MUSE). MUSE requires that project committees consist of at least two members: the primary faculty advisor (chair), who must be a UIC faculty member, and one additional member who may be faculty or a professional in the field.

## Project Option

### Project Overview

Projects may stem from internships, class assignments or courses of independent study, and can involve UIC or outside institutions and organizations. Students may pursue projects related to Collections, Exhibition Planning, Museum Education, Online Resource Development, or other approved areas. **Students should work closely with a primary advisor to develop a project that relates to their future professional and intellectual goals.**

Students are responsible for all logistical aspects of their project, including arranging space and funding. The program can assist in finding appropriate locations and museum/exhibit professionals with whom to work.

### Project Semester Credit Hours

8 credit hours in MUSE 597 (Project research) required; typically 4 are taken in the second semester and 4 in third semester. Students must turn in all required proposals before registering for MUSE 597. Students must attend all Capstone meetings and workshops to receive credit.

### General Project Requirements

- The Project starts with a Capstone Proposal, refined in consultation with your Capstone advisor
  - N.B. Most Capstone Projects do not meet the standards to require a Human Subjects Review. However, there is a chance your Project may require [CITI training and/or an IRB determination letter](#). Consult with your Capstone advisor to determine if this is required for your Project. This must be completed and you must have your IRB determination letter (or exemption, or approval) in hand *before you begin work or research on the Project in earnest*—that is, around the time you finalize your Proposal.
- Projects should be documented (film; screen shots; photographs; written descriptions), and after completion the documentation should be supported with a written report of the process and results, and a conclusion that offers thoughts about the implications of this project for the student and for museum and exhibition studies (6-8 pages).
- The project concludes with the written report and an oral defense with visual presentation:
  - The oral defense—including a brief presentation of visuals and a discussion of the project's results—will be scheduled between the twelfth week and the close of the semester, and after the advisors have reviewed the written report (at least three weeks before the defense).
- A digital version of the presentation should be provided to the Director before the end of the semester, along with a final digital draft of the report.
- A [Certificate of Approval](#) (aka "Project Approval Form") signed by the committee must be submitted to the Graduate College by the date listed on the Academic Calendar, typically the Friday before graduation. Submit the signed form to the Graduate Academic Advisor (Becky Fall, [rfall@uic.edu](mailto:rfall@uic.edu))

## Capstone Project Timeline

- By the end of the first semester:
  - Students should have an idea of which option (Project or Thesis) they intend to pursue and sign up for the corresponding capstone class (MUSE 597 for a Project and MUSE 598 for a Thesis).
- By the fifth week of their second semester:
  - Students should approach a Project advisor to discuss their Master's Project idea.
- By the tenth week of their second semester
  - Students should choose a primary advisor who is a UIC faculty member and share a Project Proposal draft with them for discussion (see Project Proposal Outline on the next page).
- By the end of the second semester:
  - Share a finalized Capstone proposal with the instructor of the Capstone 1 course. Include the names of people you think you will ask to be committee members.
  - Students should learn about Human Subjects & IRB requirements for all students and faculty conducting research (this may include Capstones).
- Over the summer:
  - If required by your Capstone advisor, complete your [Initial Investigator Training \(CITI\)](#). Some committee members may also need to complete this training; check with OVCR about this. Direct questions about Human Subjects & IRB to (312) 996-4995 and [ovcrweb@uic.edu](mailto:ovcrweb@uic.edu).
- No later than the fifth week of their third semester:
  - Students should finalize a two-member committee, consisting of the Capstone advisor and one additional member, either University faculty or a professional in the field.
  - Students should submit a [Capstone Proposal Form](#).
  - *If required by your Capstone advisor*, complete CITI training, submit an IRB determination request, and send the IRB determination letter (exemption or approval) to the Graduate Academic Advisor (Becky Fall, [rfall@uic.edu](mailto:rfall@uic.edu))
- By the twelfth week of the *final* semester:
  - Complete Capstone Project and submit to your committee
- By the end of the final semester:
  - Complete oral defense of project
  - Complete revisions required by committee following defense
  - Collect signatures on [Project Approval Form](#) and submit to Graduate Academic Advisor (Becky Fall, [rfall@uic.edu](mailto:rfall@uic.edu))
- At least three weeks before the scheduled defense:
  - Submit Project documentation and written report to your committee members for review

## Project Proposal Outline

Preparing a capstone project proposal is part of your graduate experience. It is an opportunity to organize your thoughts about your topic, to decide how you will pursue the work, and to spell out what resources (financial, material, and technical) you need to carry it out.

- **Title Page:** With your name, date, working title, committee members, or follow format of thesis.
- **Introduction:** This should include a problem statement and give a clear explanation of what the project is about, why the work is worth doing, and how the results support the goals of



the MUSE program and contribute to museum and exhibition studies. To address: How will it advance our understanding or thinking? Why is it important to do it this way, as opposed to another way? Who is your audience; who is this for? What are your objectives for the project, i.e. its outcomes? This section succinctly introduces your topic and project.

- **Literature Review:** The literature review must be up-to-present date. Discuss published work pertinent to your research—i.e., the literature needed to define the research problem, describe the study area, or explain the choice of methods to be employed. This section supports your case for doing the work; establishes your theoretical framework; and demonstrates knowledge of your subject matter. Describe what has been said about your topic, what you are contributing, and how this advances our understanding of the subject.
- **Methods/Work Tasks:** How are you going to do this project? This section describes all steps needed to complete the project, from researching and defining critical content to include, to evaluating its success in addressing the problem or gap you are addressing.
- **Management Plan:** Include here a project timetable indicating when specific work tasks will be started and completed. This section should also include a schedule with deadlines for draft versions and reviews, revision timeframes, an outline for each element of the project, plans for seeking funding, and a preliminary budget. The plan should clearly indicate which aspects of the plan have already been completed (such as during an internship and in a class), and which will be completed by others (collaborators, supervisors).
- **Determination Letter (not typically required, so check with your advisor about this):** The UIC [Office for the Protection of Research Subjects \(OPRS\)](#) may determine that capstones do not “meet the definition of human subject research” (meaning you may proceed without further review). If they determine that your capstone does meet the definition, you must receive either exemption or approval of your research plan from OPRS. *NOTE: Most Capstone Projects will not require a determination, but some might!*
- **References:** These should be presented in the format (e.g., MLA/APA) of your choice.
- **Page Numbers:** Number your pages!
- **Naming Files:** Your digital file should be named as follows: Last name\_First name\_Project\_Proposal\_Date. For example: Quinn\_Therese\_Project\_Proposal\_2024\_01\_01

Your objective is to write a proposal that is intelligible to an educated non-specialist, and convince them that the proposed work is worth doing. At the same time, the writing should be sufficiently detailed, that an expert reader will be convinced that you know what you are doing and that the approach you propose is feasible.

- **Next Steps:**
  - The Project Proposal forms the basis of the written summary your readers will respond to at your defense. Your final Project Report should use the Capstone Outline format that follows the Thesis section in this handbook.
  - You must submit this proposal through the [Capstone Proposal Form](#).

# **“Deconstructing the museum apparatus can transform it into a space for on-going cultural debate.”**

—Lisa Corrin, *Mining the Museum: Artists Look at Museums*, 1991

## **Thesis Option**

### **Thesis Overview**

The Thesis option involves conducting research and writing a well-developed thesis paper of flexible length **to be determined in consultation with your thesis advisors**. Thesis topics can focus on a variety of museum and exhibition studies and related topics, likewise selected in consultation with advisors. Students intending to pursue additional graduate study or engage in research as part of their professional work are encouraged to select this option.

### **Thesis Semester Credit Hours**

8 credit hours in AH 598 (Thesis research) required; typically 4 credit hours are taken in the second semester and 4 in third semester. Students must turn in all required proposals before registering for AH 598. Students must attend all Capstone meetings to receive course credit.

### **General Thesis Requirements**

- The Thesis starts with a Capstone Proposal, refined in consultation with your Capstone advisor
  - N.B. Most Capstone theses do not meet the standards to require a Human Subjects Review. However, there is a chance your Project may require [CITI training and/or an IRB determination letter](#). Consult with your Capstone advisor to determine if this is required for your thesis. This must be completed and you must have your IRB determination letter (or exemption, or approval) in hand *before you begin work or research on the thesis in earnest*—that is, around the time you finalize your Proposal.
- The thesis concludes with an oral defense with your committee members:
  - The oral defense—including a brief presentation of visuals and a discussion of the thesis’s conclusions—will be scheduled by the tenth week of the final semester
  - You should send a finalized version of your thesis to your committee at least three weeks before the scheduled defense so they have time to review it thoroughly.
  - Your committee may require revisions to the thesis, which you will need to complete before you file it with the Graduate College.
- A digital version of the presentation should be provided to the Director before the end of the semester, along with a final copy of the revised and approved thesis.
- An Exam Report Form signed by the committee must be submitted to the Graduate College

by the date listed on the Academic Calendar, typically the Friday of the eleventh week of the semester (earlier in summer).

- The Graduate College will provide this Exam Report Form in advance
- Submit the signed form to the Graduate Academic Advisor (Becky Fall, [rfall@uic.edu](mailto:rfall@uic.edu))
- See the “Capstone Outline” section below for further details about expectations for thesis structure.

## Capstone Thesis Timeline

- By the end of the first semester:
  - Students should have an idea of which option (Project or Thesis) they intend to pursue and sign up for the corresponding Capstone class (MUSE 597 for a Project and MUSE 598 for a Thesis).
- By the fifth week of their second semester:
  - Students should approach a potential advisor to discuss their Master’s Thesis idea.
- By the tenth week of their second semester:
  - Prepare to research and write your thesis by visiting the Daley Library and learning to use the databases; opening a RefWorks account; and looking at examples of Master’s Theses on the shelves. Ask the library’s wonderful reference librarians for assistance with these steps.
  - Choose a primary thesis advisor. See “Capstone Committees” section above for requirements.
- By the end of the second semester:
  - Share a finalized Capstone proposal with the instructor of the Capstone 1 course. Include the names of people you think you will ask to be committee members.
  - Students should learn about Human Subjects & IRB requirements for all students and faculty conducting research (this may include Capstones).
- Over the summer:
  - If required by your Capstone advisor, complete your [Initial Investigator Training \(CITI\)](#). Some committee members may also need to complete this training; check with OVCR about this. Direct questions about Human Subjects & IRB to (312) 996-4995 and [ovcrweb@uic.edu](mailto:ovcrweb@uic.edu).
- No later than the fifth week of the third semester:
  - Students should finalize a [three-member committee](#), consisting of the Capstone advisor and two additional members (either two University faculty members or one faculty member and one professional in the field)
- By the end of the third semester:
  - *If required by your Capstone advisor*, complete CITI training, submit an IRB determination request, and send the IRB determination letter (exemption or approval) to the Graduate Academic Advisor (Becky Fall, [rfall@uic.edu](mailto:rfall@uic.edu))
  - Students must also complete a [Capstone Proposal Form](#).
- No later than the first week of the final semester:
  - A thesis draft must be complete and distributed to the full committee no later than the first Friday of the student’s final semester. The thesis advisor should approve the draft before distribution to the full committee.
- No later than the sixth week of the final semester (earlier for summer terms):
  - Pencil in a defense date with your committee members
    - Students are responsible for reserving a room (contact Graduate Academic Advisor Becky Fall at [rfall@uic.edu](mailto:rfall@uic.edu) to reserve a classroom), and coordinating

the date and location with their committee members.

- Circulate a [Committee Recommendation Form](#) to your committee and submit the signed form to the Graduate Academic Advisor (Becky Fall, [rfall@uic.edu](mailto:rfall@uic.edu))
  - This form MUST be submitted at least four weeks prior to a thesis defense in order for the Graduate College to provide documents to be signed by the thesis committee at the defense. *If the form is submitted late, we cannot speed up the process.*
- At least three weeks before the scheduled defense:
  - Submit a finalized draft of your thesis to your committee for review.
    - N.B. Committee members routinely require extensive revision and rewriting of the thesis drafts before approval.
- By the tenth week of the final semester:
  - Complete oral defense of project
    - The oral defense of the thesis will take place after the committee has approved the final draft of the thesis. The defense should take place no later than 3 weeks after the final version of the thesis has been approved.
  - Complete revisions required by committee following defense
  - Submit your thesis to iThenticate (portal invitation to come via email after your Committee Recommendation Form is accepted by the Graduate College)
  - File your final revised thesis with the Graduate College
  - Collect signatures on Exam Defense Form (provided by Graduate College following receipt of the Committee Recommendation Form) and submit to Graduate Academic Advisor (Becky Fall, [rfall@uic.edu](mailto:rfall@uic.edu))

### Thesis Proposal Outline

Preparing a Capstone proposal is part of your graduate experience. It is an opportunity to organize your thoughts about your research topic, to decide how you will pursue the work, and to spell out what resources (financial, material, and technical) you need to carry out the research.

The proposal needs a thread of logic. It should build from a statement of the research problem or gap in knowledge, and follow an outline of detailed objectives that must be achieved (or questions that must be answered) if the problem is to be solved. The presentation of methodology should be clearly connected to the stated objectives.

- Open with a title page that includes a working title, your name, and the date.
- The Introduction should give a clear understanding of what the proposal is about, why the work is worth doing, and how the results will contribute to general knowledge. It provides the context within which the rest of the proposal is read and offers an assessment of the likely significance of the work. How will it advance our understanding or thinking?
- The Literature Review must be up to the present date. Discuss published work pertinent to the proposal (i.e., the literature needed to define the research problem, describe the study area, or contribute to understandings of the topic). This section supports your case for doing the work.
- The Methodology/Methods section explains how you will answer your research question—for example, you might conduct oral histories, look at original materials in archives, or conduct observations in museums, depending on the questions or topic you are exploring—and offers a rationale for why the methods you are using are the best for your thesis.
- Include References in the consistent format (MLA/APA) of your choice.
- Make sure your pages are numbered.

- Your digital file should be named as follows: Last name\_First name\_Thesis\_Proposal\_Date.  
For example: Quinn\_Therese\_Thesis Proposal\_2024\_01\_01

You may require a number of iterations to produce a final version of the proposal. Your advisor has a responsibility to provide you with feedback on the writing before you submit it, but you must in turn be professional in providing them with enough time to do this. A few days before the deadline is not appropriate—if you are in doubt about how long is needed, discuss this in advance with your advisor.

Your objective is to write a proposal that is intelligible to an educated non-specialist, and convince them that the proposed work is worth doing. At the same time, the writing should be sufficiently technically detailed, especially when it comes to methods, that an expert reader will be convinced that you know what you are doing and that the approach you propose is feasible. As a resource and guide to research, writing, and referencing we recommend the [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#).

You must submit this proposal through the [Capstone Proposal Form](#).

**“It is the intellectual as a representative figure that matters—someone who visibly represents a standpoint of some kind, and someone who makes articulate representations to his or her public despite all sorts of barriers.”**

—Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 1994



## Capstone Outline (Project Reports and Thesis Papers)

This format should be used for both final Capstone Thesis papers and Project Reports. All Capstone Theses and Project Reports may be archived in the UIC library and can be accessed by the public.

### Capstone Thesis and Project Report Outline

The following information is to guide you in composing the different sections of a capstone thesis or project report. The sections are described in the order they are to appear in your paper. This list is not inclusive of all possible sections, however—project reports may include other materials you decide are relevant (timelines, budgets, work samples, and more), and if you are writing a thesis you should refer to the [Graduate College Thesis Manual](#) for details. You will also need to choose and use a consistent referencing style (MLA and APA are two of the most common).



1. **Title Page:** If producing a thesis paper refer to the [Graduate College Thesis Manual](#) for specific formatting information. The title should clearly state your topic—the subject of your thesis or project. A title that does not communicate the content of your thesis/report can be misleading. How will your title help a potential reader search for material on your topic?
2. **Table Of Contents:** Use appropriate headings. List page numbers for each individual chapter or section of the entire thesis.
3. **Introduction:** The Introduction should give a clear understanding of what the proposal is about (the question/idea/problem you are exploring/addressing), how you came to this set of concerns, why the work is worth doing, and how the results will contribute to general knowledge and/or the field. It provides the context within which the rest of the thesis/report is read.
4. **Literature Review:** The literature review must include material up to the present date. Discuss published work pertinent to your research—i.e., the literature needed to define the research problem, describe the study area, or explain the choice of methods to be employed. This section supports your case for doing the work, establishes your theoretical framework, and demonstrates knowledge of your subject matter. Describe what has been said about your topic, what you are contributing, and how this advances our understanding of the subject.
5. **Methodology/Methods:** This is where you describe how you plan to answer your research question/s, or engage the work of your project.
6. **Discussion:** In this section describe what happened: Offer your evidence and how it answers your questions, supports your claims, and/or offers insight on this subject; share the

experience of engaging with the work of your project.

7. **Conclusion:** Here you will sum up what you learned through this research/project. State any implications your research has for the field, other researchers, or related institutions. Name and claim your original contributions.
8. **References:** All works cited should be included in your references page(s) using a consistent style (MLA/APA).
9. **Appendices:** Provides the reader with supporting material including project documentation, images, figures, charts, and other data.

## FUNDING YOUR STUDIES

### Finding Funding

The university is vast and there are support opportunities to be found. Here are our suggestions:

#### **Look Widely**

Start by reading through the [Funding Your Education pages](#) on the Graduate College website. Put the fellowship and award application deadlines in your calendar and don't miss any of them.

Check out the extensive resources available on the [Graduate College's Fellowships](#) website. Contact GC Fellowships Coordinator Benn Williams ([bwilli7@uic.edu](mailto:bwilli7@uic.edu)), get on his weekly "funding roundup" email, and look through his valuable [Fellowship Toolbox](#) for further resources.

#### **Find Positions**

Don't be shy! Get a résumé ready with help from the [Office of Career Services](#). Send it out with email inquiries about campus jobs.

Look for and learn about [Graduate Assistantships](#) here.

Join [Handshake](#), a national employment database, where many UIC positions are posted—especially for graduate students.

Here are some additional places to look: From the home page of the university, check the Campus Unit Listings using the [Directory](#). Start by thinking about what you are interested in and look for initiatives that match. For example, if you are interested in gender and women's studies, email the program (and include your résumé) to check on hiring possibilities.

Also look under "I" for Institutes. The Institute for Humanities is one that has hired MUSE students. And check out "C" for Centers. The Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change are good partners to the MUSE Program and are often sources of internships and Graduate Assistantships.

Feel free to ask us in the MUSE Office for help and letters of support—we want you to reap all the benefits the university can offer.

### Fund Your Travel

There are several options for funding travel related to your work.

#### **Research and Conference Travel**

Apply for funds to do research and related projects in other places. [MUSE Research Travel Grants](#) are competitive and require an internal application.

Plan to apply for the [Award for Graduate Research](#) to support your work; there are two deadlines every year: October and March. Begin your application as soon as you enter the MUSE Program.

Apply to present your papers and projects at conferences. If your presentation is accepted you can [seek support from the MUSE program](#). (See further information about conferences below in the “Build Connections and Get Your Work Out There” section.)

Travel funding is also available from the [Graduate Student Council](#), from the [Graduate College](#), and through the [President’s Research in Diversity Travel Award](#).

**“Social advance depends as much upon the process through which it is secured as on the result itself.”**

—Jane Addams, *Peace and Bread in the Time of War*, 1922

## International Research, Residencies, and Presentations

The MUSE program encourages students to apply for support for international study and presentations; our research and conference travel grants can be used for these purposes. It’s also possible to do international internships. For example, a MUSE student interned at an International Site of Conscience (<http://www.sitesofconscience.org/>), the District Six Museum in South Africa, during her first year in the program.

If you have ideas for international travel related to your graduate studies, let us know and we’ll try to make it happen.





## RESOURCES ON CAMPUS

### UIC IT Office

Visit this website to explore services, trainings and equipment lending options, including cameras, recording devices, and more. <https://it.uic.edu>

### Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change

The UIC's [Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change](#) (previously the Centers for Diversity) constitutes six autonomous and collaborating units under Academic Affairs. They are great partners to the MUSE program, regularly hiring our students to assist with their programs and inviting us to use their resources in our courses, and hosting exciting events including lectures and exhibitions.

The Centers include:

- African-American Cultural Center
- Arab American Cultural Center
- Asian American Resource and Cultural Center
- Disability Cultural Center
- Disability Resource Center
- Gender & Sexuality Center
- Rafael Cintrón Ortiz Latino Cultural Center
- Women's Leadership and Resource Center.

### Libraries

UIC has [two libraries](#)—The Daley Library on the east campus, which houses most materials you will use, and the Health Sciences Library on the west campus. Learn to use the databases and explore the archives and special collections. You can always make a [one-on-one appointment with a librarian](#) for personalized help.

### Writing Center

The [Writing Center](#) provides individual tutoring for your writing, including resumes, papers, and more; you can make appointments online. Its website also has links to resources for academic writing, research, style guides such as MLA/APA, etc.

### Department of English Editors

Check the [Department of English webpage](#) for names of graduate students and lecturers available for editing services.

### Office of Career Services (OSC)

Anytime, but especially in your final semester, you should visit the [OCS website](#) to learn about the services it offers, from advising to videotaped mock interviews. Use them!

### Past and present positions of MUSE alumni

Don't hesitate to reach out to MUSE alums. Some of their past and present gigs include:

- Women's Board Education Fellow, Art Institute of Chicago
- Community Engagement and Programming Coordinator, Rebuild Foundation

- Visitor Service Engagement Representative, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Project Manager for Marketing & Development, Adler Planetarium
- Research Assistant, MIR Appraisal Services
- Botany Contractor, Smithsonian Institution, Museum of Natural History
- Invertebrate Zoology Contractor Smithsonian Institution, Museum of Natural History
- Associate Registrar, John Michael Kohler Arts Center
- Collections Manager, Registrar and Exhibitions Coordinator, Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art
- Collections Assistant, The Field Museum of Natural History
- Academic Operations Facilities Specialist, Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design
- Editorial & Program Assistant, Smart Museum of Art
- Curator of Public Art, Albright-Knox Art Gallery
- Exhibit Specialist, The California Museum
- Curatorial Assistant, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
- Public Programs Fellow, Studio Museum in Harlem and Museum of Modern Art
- Manager of Operations, Hong Kong Pavilion at the Venice Biennale/ M+ Museum in Hong Kong
- Kress Interpretive Fellow, National Museum of Mexican Art
- Development Manager, Girls on the Run-Chicago
- Civic Engagement Educator, UIC Latino Cultural Center
- Student aide for student with learning disabilities, British International School
- Exhibitions and Graphic Design Specialist, Centro Cultural Universitario Bicentenario, San Luis Potosí, Mexico

## RESOURCES OFF CAMPUS

### List of Chicagoland Museums, Galleries, and Other Internship Possibilities

A. Phillip Randolph Pullman Porter Museum  
Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum  
Alphawood Gallery  
American Indian Center of Chicago  
American Writers Museum  
Art Institute of Chicago (Rolling internship deadlines)  
Arts Club of Chicago  
ALARM Press  
Beyondmedia Education  
Brookfield Zoo  
Bronzeville Children's Museum  
Busy Beaver Button Museum  
Cambodian American Heritage Museum and Killing Fields Memorial  
Chicago Architecture Foundation  
Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design  
Chicago Art Department  
Chicago Artists' Coalition  
Chicago Botanic Garden  
Chicago Children's Museum  
Chicago Cultural Alliance  
Chicago Cultural Center  
Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs  
Chicago History Museum  
Chicago Public Art Group  
Chinese American Museum of Chicago  
City of Chicago  
Chicago Park District  
Clarke House Museum  
DANK Haus German American Cultural Center  
DePaul University Art Museum  
DuSable Museum of African American History  
Esperanza Community Services  
The Field Museum of Natural History  
Frances Willard Historical Association  
Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio  
Frank Lloyd Wright Frederick C. Robie House  
Gallery 400  
Garfield Park Conservatory  
Glessner House Museum  
Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts  
Haitian American Museum of Chicago  
Hyde Park Art Center  
Illinois Arts Alliance Foundation (IAAF)

Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center  
Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures Museum  
International Museum of Surgical Science  
James Charnley House  
Jane Addams Hull-House Museum  
Japanese American Service Committee  
Landmark Preservation Council  
Leather Archive and Museum  
Lill Street Art Center  
Lincoln Park Conservatory  
Lincoln Park Zoo  
Little Black Pearl  
Logan Arts Center (University of Chicago)  
Loyola University Museum of Art  
Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art (Northwestern University)  
Mitchell Museum of the American Indian  
Morton Arboretum  
Museum of Contemporary Art  
Museum of Contemporary Photography  
Museum of Science and Industry  
Muslim American Leadership Alliance  
National Hellenic Museum  
National Museum of Mexican Art  
National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture  
National Public Housing Museum  
National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum  
Newberry Library  
Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum of the Chicago Academy of Sciences  
Renaissance Society (University of Chicago)  
Poetry Foundation  
Roger Brown Study Collection  
John G. Shedd Aquarium  
Smart Museum of Art (University of Chicago)  
Smith Museum of Stained Glass Windows  
South Side Community Art Center  
Spertus: A Center for Jewish Learning & Culture  
Stony Island Arts Bank  
Swedish American Museum and Children's Museum of Immigration  
Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art

## National Internship Sources

**Metropolitan Museum of Art** (January deadline):  
<https://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-met/internships>

**National Gallery of Art** (January deadline):  
<https://www.nga.gov/education/interns-fellows.html>

**Smithsonian, Office of Fellowships and Internships** (Several deadlines): <https://www.si.edu/ofi>



## **Build Connections and Get Your Work Out There**

You should consider submitting your work, individually or with others, for presentation at a conference or publication in a journal. These are great ways to build skills, meet new people, to network for jobs, and to have some intellectual fun. The MUSE program and the university will help support your conference attendance, and we can also help you prepare your proposals for conferences and journals.

The following is a short list of some national and international organizations that host conferences and journals about or amenable to work on museums. But don't stop with this list; there are many interesting organizations and publications out there, each with its own culture and value, and even if you aren't presenting your own work, you'll benefit from attending sessions on all kinds of topics.

### **Organizations and Conferences**

#### **Allied Media Conference**

Held every summer in Detroit, the conference brings together a vibrant and diverse community of people using media to incite change: filmmakers, radio producers, technologists, youth organizers, writers, entrepreneurs, musicians, museum workers, dancers, and artists. AMC defines "media" as anything used to communicate with the world. You are a media-maker. The conference defines media-based organizing as any collaborative process that uses media, art, or technology to address the roots of problems and advance holistic solutions towards a more just and creative world.

#### **American Alliance of Museums**

The primary museum-specific conference in the United States is hosted by the [American Alliance of Museums \(AAM\)](#). This conference often feels more like a trade show, with sessions on nuts-and-bolts physical plant issues sponsored by for-profit companies, than a place to share critical perspectives on museums. It is expensive and attended mostly by executive level museum professionals from larger institutions. That said, it's still worth checking out and over the years has been the site of some activist museum-worker interventions...and could always use more of that. Plan an action and/or submit a proposal for a critical symposium, then apply to the MUSE office for funding.

#### **American Studies Association**

This association is "devoted to the interdisciplinary study of American culture and history" and its conference would be a great place to submit your critical papers and presentation proposals about museums. Attend to learn from the other presenters and to enjoy roaming through the publications exhibits where you'll find books and journals on all subjects. [www.theasa.net/](http://www.theasa.net/)

#### **Association of Midwest Museums**

Especially if interested in seeking museum employment in the Midwest, this would be an excellent conference to attend and submit your proposals to. The [organization's website](#) has job listings and a salary survey, in addition to other resources.

#### **Cultural Studies Association**

With divisions like cultural policy studies, visual culture, critical feminist studies, environment, space and place, technology and pedagogy, you'll find something at this conference aligned with your

specific museum and exhibition interests. The [organization](#) has low student membership rates.

### **The Inclusive Museum**

This conference, which is one aspect of the [Inclusive Museum](#) “community,” takes place yearly. The community is widely diverse, with advisory board representatives from many countries, and the conferences are always held in different locations around the world. The other ways the community interacts are through a weblog, a journal, and a book series. You can participate in all of these. The overall focus of the group is on how museums can become more inclusive. They ask: In this time of fundamental social change, what is the role of the museum, both as a creature of that change, and perhaps also as an agent of change?

### **Museum Next**

This organization and conference started in 2009 to bring together global museum practitioners interested in the future of the institutions. It hosts three gatherings each year: One focused on tech, one in Europe, and one in the US.

### **National Art Education Association (NAEA)**

This organization hosts two conferences—the main art education meeting, which often includes sessions of relevance to those with museum and exhibit interests, preceded by a gathering focused on museum education. The [webpages](#) for each gathering are good sources of information about museum-related topics.

### **Museum Education Pre-Conference:**

<http://www.arteducators.org/community/museum-education>

### **National Council on Public History**

The [website](#) of this public history organization is loaded with resources, including jobs postings, links to their blog and FB page, and a bibliography of suggested readings. You can join the group and the International Federation for Public History through the main page, and there are student membership rates. The conference looks awesome, with a wide range of presentation formats invited.

## **Social Media**

Join the [Museum-L listserv](#) for job postings and more. Go here for details:

[ICOM](#) has a good list of other discussion boards and listservs:

Get involved with local groups through Facebook. Below are a few good ones:

- The Chicago Museum Exhibitors Group
- Chicago Cultural Organizations Research Network (CCORN) Drinking About Museums
- Emerging Museum Professionals
- Museum Workers Speak

## **Journals**

### **Curator: The Museum Journal**

Review the Table of Contents and Abstracts for Curator [online](#), and take a look at its related blog,

then look for its articles in the UIC databases. Wide-ranging content by professionals in the field.

### **Fwd: Museums Journal**

A yearly journal produced by University of Illinois at Chicago Museum and Exhibition Studies graduate students and published by Chicago based StepSister Press, [Fwd: Museums](#) is a space for challenging, critiquing, and reimagining museums and our work within them. The first issue of Fwd: Museums—exploring the theme “Inaugurations”— was released in 2016.

### **Journal of Museum Education**

Published three times yearly by the Museum Education Roundtable, [this journal](#) is welcoming to papers by students and emerging scholars, and is an excellent source for your research while in the MUSE program.

### **Sociomuseology**

This journal published by the University of Lisbon, Portugal, publishes work on the newest and evolving museological frameworks including new, liberatory, and altermuseologies, and eco and community museums, and more. Three volumes of the journal have been published as books. Ordering and other information can be found on the [website](#) of the Movement for a New Museology (MINOM).

## **Suggested Readings**

Selected texts with critical and social justice perspectives on art, exhibitions, history, museums, and cultural work:

- Elizabeth Alexander, *The Black Interior* (Graywolf Press, 2004).
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- Melissa Adler, *Cruising the Library: Perversities in the Organization of Knowledge* (Fordham University Press, 2017).
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- Gregory Chamberlain, *The Radical Museum: Democracy, Dialogue and Debate* (Museum Identity, 2011 (especially Lisa Junkin's essay about Sex +++ at the Hull-House Museum).
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- Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum* (Museum 2.0, 2011)





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Changing the world.**