Museum Studies Standard Course List

Fall

MSTD 6101 - Museum Management (required)
- M. Morris

An overview of the major activities in governing and managing a museum. Course introduces the student to the non-profit sector and the context of the legal and professional expectations for governance. Course covers the elements of forming a museum, strategic planning, the role of the CEO/Director, building the organization structure and staffing. Finance, operations, and facilities management are also covered. The course also includes sessions on fundraising, grant writing, business planning, special events, programs, performance measurement and accreditation, marketing, public relations, and managing change. A strong emphasis on ethical challenges and decision making is included.

MSTD 6104 - Managing People/Managing Projects
- M. Morris

Dealing with people is an area consistently mentioned as a major challenge for museum managers. Students study organizational behavior theory, the methods of building a motivated and skilled staff, and focus on the team process. Project management systems are taught including developing scope, schedule and budget, team dynamics, resource leveling, and working within a matrix environment. The role of the project manager is emphasized along with tools for managing change and negotiating conflict. Case studies are presented by practitioners working in museums today.

MSTD 6201 – Museum Collections: Theory and Practice (required)
- L. Schiavo

This class will serve as an introduction to creating, controlling, and protecting collections. We will look at the fundamentals of collections care (collections plans and policies, accessions, deaccessioning, loans, access, and the physical protection of museum objects) as well as legal and ethical issues related to collecting and collections management. Because guidelines to best practices run up against contingencies ‘on the ground,’ case studies will introduce students to challenges encountered in museum practice.

MSTD 6203 – Preventive Conservation Concepts
- C. Hawks, S. Sturman;

Examines the role of preventive conservation in museums by introducing materials commonly found in collections, the causes of their deterioration and the resources available to identify and mitigate collection risks. Students will learn how to handle objects, how to record object conditions in written and photographic formats, how to choose a conservator, how to test materials for use with museum collections, how to perform a qualitative assessment, and to understand the ethics that govern conservation. (Cross-listed with Departments of Anthropology and Fine Art).

MSTD 6204 - Preventive Conservation Techniques
- Mary Coughlin

Builds upon topics introduced in the Preventive Conservation Concepts course with emphasis placed on practical exercises and ethical issues. Students will learn how to evaluate and monitor collections, how to prepare a grant for collections care, and how to develop and implement policies and procedures to facilitate collections care. MSTD 6203(or its cross-listed equivalent in Fine Arts/Anthropology) is required for this class.

MSTD 6301 – Museum Exhibitions, Curatorial Practice and Planning
- K. Rice

The class focuses on the work of curators in the selection, display and interpretation of objects for collections and in exhibitions. Sessions emphasize ethics and collecting, exhibit conceptualization and development, working with the community, the production of meaning, and the politics of exhibiting.

MSTD 6302 - Museum Exhibition Design
- B. Brennan, A. Homish

Participants will focus on translating museum exhibition concepts into specific plans, models, and specification documents in this introductory class. Different computer design and graphic programs are introduced.

MSTD 6501 - Museum Internship
- K. Rice

Supervised practical training in Washington area museums (or elsewhere). Internships are supervised by one or more members of the sponsoring museum staff and focus on a variety of areas including museum management, conservation, collections management, exhibition design and development. Prior approval required.

MSTD 6502 - Directed Research
- Staff

Individual research on special topics in the museum field working with a MSTD professor or outside museum experts. Topics must be approved in advance by MSTD.

MSTD 6601 – Interpretation of Historic Houses and Sites
- Max A. vanBalgooy

1 Taught at the Smithsonian Institution

2 Taught at the Smithsonian Institution
How has historic house/site interpretation changed in the last two decades? The class explores how these museums use historical documents, objects, and ideas to craft new interpretations with respect to social, political, and cultural life in the past. Class usually partners with a local museum/site for group project.

**MSTD 6601-Digitization and Digital Asset Management: Policy, Practice, and Access**

- Stephanie Christensen

This course examines current methods in the creation and dissemination of digital surrogates, associated metadata, and digital descriptive records of museum collections. By exploring the workflows and guidelines necessary to implement a successful imaging project, this course examines the aspects of maintaining and managing digital assets.

**MSTD 6601-Museums, Interactivity, Technologies**

- A. Wong

This course takes an interdisciplinary and cultural studies approach to interrogating the notion of interactivity and the use of technologies in modern museum practice. Whereas today’s practitioners often reduce the definitions of interactivity and technology to electronic and digital technologies, this course situates current technologies within history and culture, recognizing them as in the process of remediation and convergence. Students will acquire a broad understanding of how and why museums turn to interactivity and technology to expand and serve audiences; inform, communicate, educate, and collaborate; for collections and exhibition practices; and for marketing and development. Students will learn about a wide array of technologies currently used by museums, including “interactives,” immersive installations, video, websites, social media, and mobile technologies. The course will expose students to theory and practice of interactivity and technology in museums to build knowledge and critical thinking about how to choose, implement, and evaluate the use of technology as practitioners.

**MSTD 6601-Museums and Community Engagement**

- Staff

This is a practicum class that allows a Museum Studies Professor to work with a small group of students and a community partner on a museum-related project.

**MSTD 6701-Museum Histories and Theories**

- L. Schiavo

This class traces the history and development of the “authoritative” modern museum. Students will discuss the conventions that have long distinguished art, ethnological, and history museums, as well as innovations that challenge those distinctions. Course covers the politics of exhibiting and cultural (re)presentation, the life histories of objects, and the roles of curators, designers, visitors, artists and "stake-holder" audiences in the production of meaning. Theoretical arguments will be grounded in the case studies of particular exhibitions and museums, including in parts of the developed world.

**Spring**

**MSTD 6101 – Museum Management (required)**

- M. Morris

An overview of the major activities in governing and managing a museum. Course introduces the student to the nonprofit sector and the context of the legal and professional expectations for governance. Course covers the elements of forming a museum, strategic planning, the role of the CEO/Director, building the organization structure and staffing. Finance, operations, and facilities management are also covered. The course also includes sessions on fundraising, grant writing, business planning, special events, programs, performance measurement and accreditation, marketing, public relations, and managing change. A strong emphasis on ethical challenges and decision making is included.

**MSTD 6102 – Museum Financial Management**

- Nik Apostolides

Overall financial management of the museum including financial planning and analysis, internal controls, accounting, budgeting and financial reporting, presentation and leadership. Theory applied to practical situations.

**MSTD 6201 – Museum Collections: Theory and Practice (required)**

- L. Schiavo

This class will serve as an introduction to creating, controlling, and protecting collections. We will look at the fundamentals of collections care (collections plans and policies, accessions, deaccessioning, loans, access, and the physical protection of museum objects) as well as legal and ethical issues related to collecting and collections management. Because guidelines to best practices run up against contingencies ‘on the ground,’ case studies will introduce students to challenges encountered in museum practice.

**MSTD 6202 - Collections Management**

- L. Palmer, D. Hull-Walski

**Taught at the Smithsonian Institution**
This class focuses on the implementation of collections policies and procedures: establishing and managing collections, management procedures and systems, documentation of collections, records preservation, collections access and storage, handling, packing and shipping, and inventory control. This is the second semester applied class for 6201.

**MSTD 6203 – Preventive Conservation Concepts**

-Mary Coughlin

Examines the role of preventive conservation in museums by introducing materials commonly found in collections, the causes of their deterioration and the resources available to identify and mitigate collection risks. Students will learn how to handle objects, how to record object conditions in written and photographic formats, how to choose a conservator, how to test materials for use with museum collections, how to perform a qualitative assessment, and to understand the ethics that govern conservation.

**MSTD 6204 - Preventive Conservation Techniques**

-C. Hawks, S. Sturman

Builds upon topics introduced in the Preventive Conservation Concepts course with emphasis placed on practical exercises and ethical issues. Students will learn how to evaluate and monitor collections, how to prepare a grant for collections care, and how to develop and implement policies and procedures to facilitate collections care. MSTD 6203 (or its cross-listed equivalent in Fine Arts/Anthropology) is required for this class.

**MSTD 6302 - Museum Exhibition Design**

-B. Brennan, A. Hornish

Participants will focus on translating museum exhibition concepts into specific plans, models, and specification documents in this introductory class. Different computer design and graphic programs are introduced.

**MSTD 6302 - Advanced Exhibition Design**

-B. Brennan, Andrew Scott

The Advanced Exhibition Design studio expands upon skills introduced in the beginning design course. Working with GW Historians and Museum Curators students will design three new exhibitions for the GW Museum, opening in late 2014 on the Foggy Bottom campus. Students will divide into teams to design entrance treatments and graphics programs (labels graphic panels), produce detailed structural drawings (using CAD and/or Vectorworks), construct models and produce 3D renderings in Sketchup. **Requires the fall Introductory Museum Exhibition Design class.**

**MSTD 6304 - Exhibition Development**

-K. Rice

Class emphasizes exhibition content and includes sessions on evaluation, team work, audience engagement, learning styles, budgeting, exhibition layering, language and best practices. Students follow an idea from conceptualization through organization to scripting—with extensive peer review. Class includes guest speakers.

**MSTD 6305 – Visitor Perspectives – Museum Evaluation in Exhibitions**

-S. Yalowitz, S. Palmquist

Of the many components involved in exhibition development, incorporating the visitors’ voice is often misunderstood, neglected, or under-used. This course will review current learning theory and visitor research related to exhibition development. Emphasis will be placed on how an understanding of the visitor experience informs the various stages of exhibition development, from concept generation, design, interpretation, and installation. Students will then put theory into practice by conducting visitor research on a local exhibition and organizing a public review of that exhibition by area museum professionals.

**MSTD 6501 - Museum Internship**

-K. Rice

Supervised practical training in Washington area museums (or elsewhere). Internships are supervised by one or more members of the sponsoring museum staff and focus on a variety of areas including museum management, conservation, collections management, exhibition design and development. **Prior approval required.**

**MSTD 6502 - Directed Research**

-Staff

Individual research on special topics in the museum field working with a MSTD professor or outside museum experts. Topics must be approved in advance by MSTD.

**MSTD 6601 - Building Museums**

-M. Morris

This course is designed to prepare students for one of the most prevalent issues in the field today. The course examines the ways in which buildings relate to fulfilling a museum's mission and strategic plan. Topics covered include architectural planning and design, contracting, project management, funding, marketing, and impacts on collections and staff. Roles and responsibilities of board and staff are featured. Students learn how to successfully manage the process of renovation, expansion or building a new museum. Case studies of building programs will be presented along with site visits and guest speakers. **(Offered alternate years)**

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5 Taught at the Smithsonian Institution
6 Taught at the Smithsonian Institution
MSTD 6101 - Leading Change in Museums
- M. Morris

This is a seminar course that emphasizes readings and class discussion on a variety of topics including change theory, best practices in business, non-profits, and museums. The course emphasizes leadership skills, ethics, and organizational culture. Leadership challenges for middle managers are explored. Guest lecturers illustrate contemporary issues of board relations, interim leadership and succession planning, managing retrenchment, creating innovative programs, defining compelling visions, dealing with controversy, advocacy and stakeholder management, and establishing new organizational structures. (Offered alternate years, with MSTD 6101-“Building Museums”)

MSTD 6601-Gender, Race and the Museum - L. Schiavo

Will explore the role that museums have played in the construction and reification of the categories of race (including whiteness) and gender, and the representation of the lives of women, African Americans, Native Americans, and other cultural minorities. The class will focus on museums in the United States but will include some non-US examples. We will also look at how these represented—and often unrepresented—groups have created opportunities to tell their own stories and exhibit their own cultural productions in museums such as the National Museum of the American Indian and the National Museum of Women in the Arts. Class readings and discussion will cover issues such as identity politics, feminism, essentialism, and the performance of identity in the museum setting.

MSTD 6601-Displaying Jewish Culture - J. Weissman Joselit

The class explores the profound relationship between modernity and the visual, public display of Jews and of Judaism, including a close reading of pivotal exhibitions. (Cross-listed with History and Judaic Studies) (Offered alternate years, fall semester)

MSTD 6601 - Archival Practices
- J. Fleckner

This course will provide an introduction to the basic theories, methodologies, and current issues relating to archives management. The course addresses the challenges of managing and preserving non-traditional collections such as photographs, film and video, sound recordings, and electronic records. Key aspects of archival practices covered are: what are archives and why are they important; what are the basic archival principles; what are the components of an archival program; how are archival records appraised, arranged and described, and made available for use; and what are some of the current legal and preservation issues facing archivists.

MSTD 6601 –Museum Fundraising - Kathy Southern

Fundraising is an increasingly important skill of today’s museum professional. From the director to the curator, to the educator, to the development specialist, everyone may be called in from time to time to participate in the development effort. This course will cover the basics in fundraising today including sources of funds, best practices and approaches, annual funds and capital campaigns, and the internal management of the fundraising effort. Student work will include donor research, grant writing and a museum project.

MSTD 6601- Museums and Digital Technology
- A. Wong

How is digital technology redefining museums and affecting their work? This course will explore the historical, contemporary, and future implications of that question in relation to issues ranging from education and interpretation to information and brand management. Our discussions will be couched within the larger impacts of digital media on culture, society, and everyday life, and be inspired by texts and guest speakers on a wide array of topics and from a wide array of disciplines.

MSTD 6601 - Cultural Property
- T. Kline, Channah Norman

This seminar explores the ethical and legal principles involved with ownership and restitution of stolen art and other cultural property wrongfully removed from their owners or countries of origin. Reported claims brought against museums are used to examine current museum policies and procedures on acquisition, exhibition, repatriation, retention and restitution of museum collection objects.

MSTD 6601- Material Culture
- A. Wong

Why and how do things matter? This course considers answers by introducing students to the field of material culture studies, as well as to cultural landscape studies. Studies will learn about and interrogate theories and methods of studying material culture. Further topics will include “the folk,” visual culture, consumer culture, food culture, “sense of place,” technology and materiality of digital media. Our discussions will be rounded out with field trips to local museums and guest speakers.

MSTD 6601-Museums and Community Engagement
- Staff

This is a practicum class that allows a Museum Studies Professor to work with a small group of students and a
community partner on a museum-related project.

Summer

**MSTD 6501 – Museum Internship**
- K. Rice

Supervised practical training in Washington area museums (or elsewhere). Internships are supervised by one or more members of the sponsoring museum staff and focus on a variety of areas including museum management, conservation, collections management, exhibition design and development.

**MSTD 6502 – Directed Research**
- Staff

Individual research on special topics in the museum field working with a MSTD professor or outside museum experts. Topics must be approved in advance by MSTD.

**MSTD 6601- Museums and the Law**
-W. Lehman

Museums must comply with laws regulating a wide range of activities. While some of these issues are common to charitable organizations of all kinds, others are unique to the museum community. Often museum professionals are called on to address these issues without benefit of experienced legal counsel. In this course we will examine many of the common legal issues encountered by museum professionals. Topics will include museum organization and governance, labor relations, fundraising and marketing, collections management, intellectual property, cultural property and ethics. Emerging topics in museum law will also be considered. By the end of the semester students will have a basic working knowledge of the legal concepts applicable to museum administration and the ability to make intelligent decisions about when to seek professional legal advice.

**MSTD 6601 – Museums and the Public**
-J. Daniel Rogers

This course is designed to introduce students to the wide range of problems, possibilities, and choices that are part of the cultural landscape of how museums interact with their audiences through public programs. Students will have the opportunity to consider the social issues that museums face as well as the solutions chosen by specific institutions as they engage both national and local audiences. The course addresses the museum’s power to represent society and social identity through selective exhibiting and collecting. (Cross listed with Anthropology)

**MSTD 6601 - Archival Practices**
-J. Fleckner

This course will provide an introduction to the basic theories, methodologies, and current issues relating to archives management. The course addresses the challenges of managing and preserving non-traditional collections such as photographs, film and video, sound recordings, and electronic records. Key aspects of archival practices covered are: what are archives and why are they important; what are the basic archival principles; what are the components of an archival program; how do archival records appraised, arranged and described; and made available for use; and what are some of the current legal and preservation issues facing archivists. (Offered alternate years with “Archival Practices” in summer)

**MSTD 6601- Oral History**
-J. Fleckner

This class introduces students to the basic principles and practices of oral history as a documentary method with particular attend to its uses in a museum context and the management of its products as unique, original historical records. The course will cover history of oral history, significant intellectual, legal, and ethical issues in the practice of oral history; project planning; interview techniques, copyright and access, and preservation. (Offered alternate years with “Archival Practices” in summer)

**MSTD 6601-Museums and Community Engagement**
-Staff

This is a practicum class that allows a Museum Studies Professor to work with a small group of students and a community partner on a museum-related project.

**MSTD 6601 – Marketing the Museum**
-Michael Fetters

What is “museum marketing?” The answers to that question can be as varied as the types of museums responding. Over the last twenty years, in particular, the variety and number of activities that can be considered part of marketing have grown dramatically. Lines between media relations, public affairs, events, sales, branding, development and retail blur, while the media and technologies available for reaching targeted audiences expand. This course will explore the diversity of opportunities — and responsibilities — represented today under the museum marketing umbrella. The course will cover the development of a marketing plan including situational analysis and market research; segmentation and targeting; positioning and intent; identification of business, marketing and social objectives; strategies and key performance metrics. Course participants will research and develop a museum marketing plan, gaining a deeper understanding of the research and planning that goes into a museum marketing campaign. The course will also examine issues related to the role of marketing within a museum and how marketing efforts can be effective without being at odds with the mission of a museum. The overall goal of the course will be to provide participants with an understanding of available marketing tools and a disciplined approach to assessing what tools/techniques are needed and appropriate for an individual museum to optimize its awareness- and audience-building efforts.

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8 Taught at the Smithsonian Institution
9 Taught at the Smithsonian Institution
10 Taught at the Smithsonian Institution
MSTD 6601 – Museums and Community Engagement  
- Staff

MSTD 6601 DE-Leading Museums in Turbulent Times: Issues and Solutions [Distance Education class]  
- M. Morris

This course will engage the student in analyzing the best practices in the field regarding leadership, organizational transformation and relevance. Students will learn about modern planning, risk analysis, and decision-making approaches. Case studies of innovative solutions applied by successful museums will be studied. Topics addressed will include globalization, ethical challenges, governance, partnerships and mergers, sustainable practices, staff engagement, and organizational redesign.