MUSE 780
The Culture of Museums
Spring 2015
Syllabus

Time & Place: Wednesday 5:30 – 8PM Wescoe Hall 4022

Instructor: Peter Welsh
Office: Lippincott Hall, Room 6
Contact: 785-864-4543 phwelsh@ku.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3pm – 5pm (mostly), after class, and by arrangement. Note: I am happy to meet with students most any time, but please, call or email first to be sure I am around, even during Wednesday office hours. The contact phone number is for the Museum Studies office, and Lauren has access to my calendar, so she can set up appointments if you can’t reach me.

Course Objectives: Culture of Museums is the second of a 2-semester course sequence, and highlights classic texts and current directions in museum studies. It is organized around the core conceptual domains of museums – Materiality, Representation, and Engagement. The course establishes the framework for understanding changes on the horizon for museums, and enables students to be familiar with classic texts in the field. Museums of art, history, natural history, are included, as well as museums large and small.

Textbooks:
Readings for the course will be available on Blackboard and in the Museum Studies office (see below for details).

Grading:
Readings and Class Participation
All-Class Readings 30%
Seminar Presentations 30%
Research
Final Paper 40%

Assignments
Readings and Class Participation: Readings are a fundamental to of the course – over half of your grade will be based on evidence of your active engagement with the literature assigned. You will be expected to have read the material assigned before each class, and be prepared to discuss it critically.

All-Class Readings. Each week there will be two or three articles or chapters that Everyone in the class will read. For each of these readings, one person will prepare a short written summary/outline and analysis of the work (2 – 3 pages, usually). Over the course of the semester, you will complete two summaries. Distribute your summary to the rest of the class before NOON of the day of the class using the Discussion Board feature of Blackboard (you should also have a copy with you for reference during class). Your summary should include:
$ the author’s main points, or arguments;
$ analysis of the author's arguments (use examples);
    – consider examples used by the author to build the argument, and,
    – think about how this work connects to wider bodies of thought
$ several questions for discussion.
All-Class Reading Assessment

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<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion Leader:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Summary</strong></td>
<td>Concisely identifies several issues raised and shows their relevance to broader topics in the field.</td>
<td>Clearly identifies key points in the material.</td>
<td>Fails to produce a written response, or submits a response that indicates poor understanding of the material.</td>
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<td><strong>Critical Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Effectively develops an argument – in agreement or not with the author – that is logically compelling and sustained by evidence.</td>
<td>States a position relevant to topics identified and employs evidence in support of the argument.</td>
<td>Simply summarizes material without evidence.</td>
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<td><strong>In-Class Contribution</strong></td>
<td>Presents views in a way that engages the class and offers insightful interpretations.</td>
<td>Actively leads discussion, and raises relevant points.</td>
<td>Does not lead the discussion, or does not offer relevant topics.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Class Member’s Role</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Discussion Participation</strong></td>
<td>Notes relevant points and offers insightful comments that guide the discussion in interesting directions.</td>
<td>Engages actively with the points raised by the discussion leader to more fully develop the topic(s) presented.</td>
<td>Does not join the discussion, or raises irrelevant points.</td>
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Seminar Presentation. Each week we will have several volumes that elaborate and inform the topic. One student will take responsibility for each work and will lead discussion concerning the material. The books will be available in the Museum Studies office. It is encouraged, but not required, that you meet with me before class to discuss book and structure their presentation. In class, the student will lead discussion and emphasize the key elements in the work. You are not required to develop your presentation in writing, but you might find it to be helpful. Over the course of the semester, you will complete three summaries.

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<th>Excellent</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Seminar Presentation Assessment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Discussion Leader’s Role:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Summary of Work</strong></td>
<td>Effectively and efficiently identifies several issues and shows their relevance to the field as well as to the All-Class Readings.</td>
<td>Clearly identifies key points in the material as they relate to the All-Class Readings.</td>
<td>Fails to identify relevant points or to connect the work to other readings or to the field.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Develops discussion points that probe key issues and that draw classmates into the conversation with interest and engagement.</td>
<td>Identifies pertinent topics in the text and uses examples from the text to encourage discussion.</td>
<td>Simply summarizes material, and offers no points that encourage discussion.</td>
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<td><strong>Discussion Leadership</strong></td>
<td>Presents views clearly, engages insightfully, and encourages lively discussion by the class.</td>
<td>Raises relevant points and encourages discussion.</td>
<td>Fails to identify topics that promote discussion.</td>
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<td><strong>Class Member’s Role</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion Participation</strong></td>
<td>Notes relevant points and offers insightful comments drawn from All-Class readings or other relevant sources that guide the discussion in interesting directions.</td>
<td>Engages actively with the points raised by the discussion leader to more fully develop the topic(s) presented.</td>
<td>Does not join the discussion, or raises irrelevant points.</td>
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Research Paper: Write an analytical consideration of a museum topic. The paper should address a specific question, have relevance to the literature, and construct a clear argument. We will use the final class meeting during Finals Week for students to present their papers in a conference-like setting. Approximate length: 5,000 words.

*Topics should be approved by April 2nd. Final paper due Friday, May 16, 2014.*
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<th>Research Paper Grading</th>
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<td><strong>Topic Selection</strong> (10%)</td>
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<td>Topic is creative, focused, and manageable and addresses potentially significant yet previously less-explored areas in the field.</td>
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<td><strong>Literature/Sources</strong> (20%)</td>
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<td><strong>Communication</strong> (20%)</td>
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<td><strong>Analysis</strong> (30%)</td>
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<td><strong>Conclusions</strong> (20%)</td>
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# Semester Overview

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| 28 Jan | **Materiality 1 – Theories of Things**  | Everyone:  
Miller (2005) Materiality, 1-117 (Introduction, Meskell, Rowlands, Myers), 182-205 (Keane), 231-255 (Thrift)  
[NOTE: you only need to read Miller’s Introduction closely (pp 1-46) the other chapters are for your reference.]  
Seminar Leaders: Morton (2013) Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World [This video might also be useful: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NS8b87jnqw ]  
Harman WELSH |
| 4 Feb  | **Materiality 2 – Objects In Motion** | Everyone:  
Appadurai (1986) Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value, 3-63  
Myers and Miller (2001) Introduction (Myers); Alienable Gifts and Inalienable Commodities (Miller), 3-65; 91-118  
Spitta (2009) Misplaced Objects: Migrating Collections and Recollections in Europe and the Americas | Appadurai Megan  
Myers Welsh Miller Brittany |
| 11 Feb | **Materiality 3 – Objects as Agents/Actors** | Everyone:  
Myers (2004) Social Agency and the Cultural Value(S) of the Art Object, 203-211  
Myers Jillian |
| 18 Feb | **Materiality 4 – Assemblages/Collections** | Everyone:  
Newell (2012) Old Objects, New Media: Historical Collections, Digitization and Affect, 287-306 | Macdonald Rachel  
Newell Brecken |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Representation</th>
<th>Seminar Leaders</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Mar</td>
<td><strong>Voice and Authority</strong>&lt;br&gt;Gifford-Gonzalez (1993) You Can Hide, but You Can’t Run: Representation of Women’s Work in Illustrations of Palaeolithic Life, 23-41&lt;br&gt;Everyone: Golding (2009) Section 2 Including New Voices and Forms of Practice, 67-78</td>
<td>Simpson Brittany (S1) Golding Abby (S2)</td>
<td>Simpson Brittany&lt;br&gt;Golding Abby</td>
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<td>11 Mar</td>
<td><strong>Self-Representation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Hendry (2005) Museums Are Transformed, 28-55&lt;br&gt;Everyone: Hoobler (2006) 'To Take Their Heritage in Their Hands': Indigenous Self-Representation and Decolonization in the Community Museums of Oaxaca, Mexico, 441-60</td>
<td>Ravelli Brecken (S1) Hallam Suzi (S2) Hendry Meg (S3)</td>
<td>Ravelli Brecken&lt;br&gt;Hallam Suzi&lt;br&gt;Hendry Meg</td>
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<td>18 Mar</td>
<td><strong>Death of the Curator?</strong>&lt;br&gt;Thomas (2010) The Museum as Method, 6-10&lt;br&gt;Everyone: O’Neill (2012) Curating as a Medium of Artistic Practice: The Convergence of Art and Curatorial Practice since the 1990s, 87-130</td>
<td>Adair Rebecca (S1) Whitehead Kayle (S2)</td>
<td>Thomas Andrew (S1)&lt;br&gt;O’Neill Abby (S2)&lt;br&gt;Adair Rebecca&lt;br&gt;Whitehead Kayle</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Paper Topics Approved</td>
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<td>1 Apr</td>
<td><strong>Audience and Community</strong></td>
<td>Jackson Britny</td>
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<td>Everyone:</td>
<td>Samis Meghan</td>
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<td>Calcagno Jillian</td>
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<td>Bautista Megan</td>
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<td>Golding Brittany</td>
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<td>Silverman Rebecca</td>
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<td>8 Apr</td>
<td><strong>Inside/Outside</strong></td>
<td>Spiegel Meg</td>
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<td>Everyone:</td>
<td>Wood &amp; Latham Suzi</td>
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<td>Leahy Jillian</td>
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<td>Pitman Jamie (E2)</td>
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<td>15 Apr</td>
<td><strong>Agents of Change</strong></td>
<td>Yelvington Liz (E2)</td>
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<td>Everyone:</td>
<td>Modlin Jamie (E2)</td>
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<td>Grenier Rebecca</td>
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<td>Seminar Leaders:</td>
<td>Sandell Rachel</td>
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<td>Message Suzi</td>
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<td>Lonetree Brecken</td>
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<td>22 Apr</td>
<td><strong>Centers and Edges</strong></td>
<td>Munro Suzi</td>
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<td>Everyone:</td>
<td>Violi Brecken</td>
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<td>Seminar Leaders:</td>
<td>Silverman Kayle</td>
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Readings

21 January  Overview/Introduction

Everyone


28 January  Materiality 1 – Theories of Things

Everyone


Seminar Presentations


4 February  Materiality 2 – Objects In Motion

Everyone


### Seminar Presentations

**11 February  Materiality 3 – Objects as Agents/Actors**

**Everyone**


### Seminar Presentations


### 18 February  Materiality 4 – Assembledges/Collections

**Everyone**


### Seminar Presentations


### 25 February  Representation 1 – Theories of Representation

**Everyone**


**Seminar Presentations**


**4 March**  
**Representation 2 – Voice and Authority**

Everyone


**Seminar Presentations**


**11 March**  
**Representation 3 – Self-Representation**

Everyone


**Seminar Presentations**


**18 March**  SPRING BREAK

**25 March**  Representation 4 – Death of the Curator?

Everyone


Seminar Presentations


**1 April**  Engagement 1 – Audience and Community  Paper Topics Approved

Everyone


Seminar Presentations


**8 April**  Engagement 2 – Inside/Outside

Everyone


### Seminar Presentations


### 15 April Engagement 3 – Agents of Change

**Everyone**


### Seminar Presentations


### 22 April Engagement 4 – Centers and Edges

**Everyone**


### Seminar Presentations


29 April  American Alliance of Museums Meeting – NO CLASS

6 May  Museums’ Futures

Everyone

Seminar Presentations
