



The University of Western Ontario
HISTORY 9807A
Introduction to Museology
Fall 2025

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Office Hours: TBA

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Course Description:

This course is intended for the student who may be considering a career in the museum field and is interested in exploring some of the theoretical as well as practical aspects involved in operating a museum, and the role of the museum as collector, guardian and interpreter of public history. The course will provide a general introduction to the history and development of various types of museums; to the cultural, legal, ethical and other issues facing museums today; and to some of the practical aspects relating to the basic museum functions of acquisition, preservation, exhibition, and education.

Graduate Course Level Learning Outcomes/Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will:

- Have achieved a basic familiarity with museums that combines historical, theoretical and practical knowledge
- Be familiar with different types of museums and structures of museum organization
- Understand the purpose and principles of effective institutional governance and museum management
- Be familiar with the practicalities and issues involved in operating a museum, including: legal and ethical considerations; policy and procedure; funding and financial planning; strategic planning and project management; and marketing and public relations
- Have a general, introductory knowledge of specific museum practices, including: the physical care and handling of museum artifacts; accessioning and collections records management; proper techniques of artifact storage and display; exhibit planning and design; and interpretation and educational programs
- Be familiar with the various types of roles available in the museum field, the type of training required, and typical job duties and position descriptions
- Have an awareness of the current trends, challenges, policies, and issues affecting contemporary museums
- Be a more informed, critical and discerning museum visitor
- Have practiced non-traditional historical skills such as project management, team work, budgeting, promotion, and working with community stakeholders;
- Had opportunities for reflective, collaborative, service-based, and experiential learning;
- Have contacts with practicing public historians.

Course Timeline and Format:

We meet weekly in person to discuss readings, listen to guest speakers, and participate in workshops. Some classes will be or include meetings with project partners which will not necessarily take place in the classroom. Some PD seminars may be slotted on other days when speakers' schedules conflict with ours or we need more time for a site visit. Group work is a significant component of this course, and students will need to find times to meet together.

Enrollment Restrictions:

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in History, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program. Please contact Kara Brown, the graduate program coordinator (kbrow@uwo.ca) if you are in a department other than History and would like to enroll in the course.

Course Syllabus:

This course has been designed to meet the improve the skills of Public History students to enter a museum career. It covers collections management, curatorship, education, interpretation, volunteer management, social media, community engagement, and research and exhibit development. We take a wide definition of "museum" to include pioneer villages, outdoor exhibits, historic sites, and digital projects. We will be working with a range of community partners, potentially including Indwell, Museum London, the Medical Artifact Collection at Western, McIntosh Gallery, Fanshawe Pioneer Village, and the Slave Dwelling Project.

Course Materials:

All readings will be online and/or available in Weldon Library. There is no cost for these readings.

Methods of Evaluation:

Participation: 25%

Collections Management Reflection Paper: 20%

Exhibit: 25%

Educational/Interpretation Project: 15%

Social Media Project: 15%

Participation

Students are expected to have read and digested the assigned readings before class and participate fully in class seminars. Students must actively participate in all workshops, PD, and in group project work that occurs outside of class which may be partly assessed through peer review.

Seminar Participation Rubric

Seminar participation will be marked weekly and then averaged at the end of each term. You may come and see your weekly marks at any time.

Preparation: Evident preparation for the seminar.

Initiative: Questions asked focus, clarify and summarize discussion.

Response: Quality of response reflects knowledge, comprehension and application of readings.

Discussion: Quality of response extends discussion, and reflects analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Any AI use must be cleared IN ADVANCE with instructor in order to assess its use in any project.

Additional Statements

Health/Wellness Services:

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health Support at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html

Accessibility Options:

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program. Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

Request for Accommodations/Medical Issues:

Students are entitled to their privacy and consequently they do not need to disclose personal information to their course professors. In the event that students feel the need to discuss personal information, they should see the graduate chair. Unlike undergraduate students, graduate students cannot be referred to Social Science Academic Counselling to have their medical or non-medical circumstances evaluated and to receive a recommendation for accommodation. Those facilities are for undergraduates only, and there is no process beyond the department to secure recommendations for accommodation. Our process is that faculty should deal with routine requests for extensions. However, a student's request for accommodation (on medical, non-medical, compassionate grounds) should go to the graduate chair, Prof. Francine McKenzie (historygradchair@uwo.ca) who will consult and communicate with faculty. Additionally, faculty and students should communicate with the grad chair about any case in which work is not submitted before grades are due. In the event that the graduate chair is also the course professor, then a request for accommodation can be taken to the department chair.

Academic Offences:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence:

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca

NOTE: See Policies and Statements on the Graduate section of the History Department Website, https://history.uwo.ca/graduate/program_information/graduate_policies_and_statements.html. This includes additional information on academic support services for health and wellness and on other academic policies, including copyright, plagiarism, and accessibility.