

HISTORY 2886 G
Fakes, Frauds & Fairs: The History of Museums
Winter 2025

Instructor: Michelle Hamilton
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 in person
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Nigerian Benin Bronzes on Display

This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description: This course examines the history of museums and exhibitions and their changing role in society across the globe from the ancient world to the 21st century. Themes include the rise of anthropology and natural sciences; looting; professionalization; colonialism; representation of the ‘other’; museums as political and cultural tools; and repatriation.

Antirequisite(s): MCS 2610F/G

Learning Objectives: By the end of this course, students will:

- be familiar with thematic issues in the social, cultural, and political history of museums
- have conducted historical research
- have practised formulating and communicating an effective argument, and demonstrating good research and writing skills
- be able to evaluate objects through material culture theory
- be able to critically evaluate exhibitions as historical sources

Recommended expectations and outcomes for 2nd year courses:

https://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/expectations_outcomes.html

Course Materials: All readings are online through the library catalogue (LC) or through OWL, as noted below. There are additional podcasts, two museum visits (McIntosh Gallery; Medical Artifact Collection), and documentaries, all listed below. The main texts are:

Alexander, Edward P., Mary Alexander and Juilee Decker. *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*. 3rd Edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017. (**library catalogue**)

Macdonald, Sharon, ed. *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Malden, MA: Oxford, 2006 or 2011. (**library catalogue**)

Simmons, John E. *Museums: A History*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016. (**OWL**)

Methods of Evaluation:

Midterm Exam	25%	Due: February 14, 2025
2 Reflection Papers	2 x 20% = 40%	Due: March 12 and April 4, 2025
Final Exam	35%	Due: Final exam period



Black Lives Matter exhibit, Museum London

Exams: Students will write a midterm and final exam. Both exams will draw from lectures, readings, films, websites, podcasts, and museum visits. Questions will be two types: identification/significance questions, and essays. **The midterm will be written in class time February 14, 2025. The final exam will be written during the university’s final exam period.**

Use of Electronic Devices: Use of any electronic devices will not be allowed during the exams. Students must leave phones or other devices in an area in the classroom away from the desks.

Make-up tests, midterms, and exams can only be approved by Academic Counselling. Please see https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams.

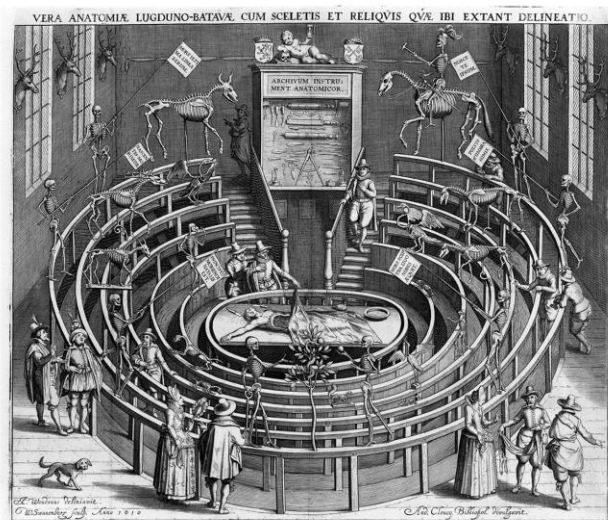
Reflection Papers: Students will write two 8 double-spaced page reflection papers that tie together class preparation, lectures, and out of class preparation including museum visits.

Papers need to use **specific** examples from **all** source material and include thoughtful analysis about the material. No extra research needs to be conducted. Footnotes are required. Questions to *begin* thinking about the papers are provided below. You should ask and answer other questions.

You may include photographs but you still must write 8 pages of text for each paper. Footnotes must follow *Chicago Manual of Style* format. See www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html.

Please use your last name as part of the file name. **Submit papers as an MS Word document via OWL on due date by 11:59pm.**

For more information, see the marking rubric document on OWL.



Theatrum Anatomicum, Leiden, 1594

You may not make any use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, for any assignments in this course. If plagiarism or AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes and paper drafts after the paper has been submitted; keep all notes and written paper drafts until the paper is returned to you.

Late Assignments: Assignments are due on the date specified above. Penalty for late assignments is 2% each day (including Saturdays and Sundays). There will be no exceptions unless students provide documentation. For medical and non-medical issues that might warrant accommodation, including all assignments, exams, tests, presentations, and class attendance, please go to academic counselling. Late papers cannot be accepted after the last day of class, April 4, 2025.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Notes
1	January 8/10	Introduction What is a Museum?	
2	January 15/17	The Ancient World, Greece, & Rome Medieval Collecting	
3	January 22/24	Renaissance Museums	

		Enlightenment Museums	
4	January 29/31	Medical & Anatomical Museums Collections & Colonialism	
5	February 5/7	World's Fairs & Wild West Shows Exam Review	
6	February 12/14	Race, Gender, & Exhibitions Midterm Exam	
7	READING WEEK		
8	February 26/28	Fakes, Frauds, & Popular Museums Museums & Environmental Issues	
9	March 5/7	Outdoor & Eco-Museums Social Justice & Museums	
10	March 12/14	War & Museums Looting & Destruction	
11	March 19/21	Representation & Appropriation Repatriation I	
12	March 26/28	Repatriation II Slavery, the Slave Trade & Museums	
13	April 2/4	Future of Museums Exam Review	



Hear, Here London sign, outdoor museum www.hearherelondon.org

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.