
MUSEUM STUDIES

Museum Studies

ARH 6938 — Fall 2025

Professor:

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Office hours: Wednesday afternoons, or by appointment. Office hours will be held remotely via Zoom

This course is part of the core curriculum of Museum Studies. It aims to introduce and familiarize students with the current and emerging practices in museums and critical literature of museum studies.

Course description: Museums have played a powerful role in Western societies. Revered as authoritative, scientific, and ‘objective’ sites of collecting, preservation, and interpretation, these cultural institutions have shaped cultural knowledges, defined aesthetic tastes, and interpreted social values for generations of museumgoers. What do museum objects, for example, teach us about human experiences, past and present; what narratives of cultural history are being assembled, preserved, and displayed, and who or what determines what is “culturally significant”? To answer these and other important questions, this course will provide students with an understanding of the material and discursive practices of museums, memorials, and archives through the lens of Museum Studies.

Course objectives:

- (1) Help graduate students gain a general understanding of the Museum profession.
- (2) Critically explore the rise of museums and Museum Studies as an extension of modern nationalism
- (3) Develop and improve graduate students’ ability to think, evaluate, and write about the museum, galleries spaces, objects, and the narratives they help communicate to

visitors.

- (4) Engage students in interdisciplinary thinking and dialogue
- (5) Engage students in dialogue with local museums and/or museum professionals.

Course texts:

There is no assigned textbook for the class. Instead, students will be expected to read a series of journal articles, book chapters, or magazine and newspaper articles throughout the semester. All readings will be available electronically through Canvas on our course site under “Course Readings.” To access the course site, go to: elearning.ufl.edu

Course evaluation: ARH 6938 is designed to introduce you to conceptual frameworks that guide contemporary museum practices, theories, and criticisms, and to help you understand the historical formation of museum institutions. Course evaluation will reflect this focus and will include a mixture of weekly written responses, site visits to local heritage landscapes (in-person, as permitted, or online), and your participation in in-class discussions. A plus/minus grading system will be used. I will make every effort to grade and return all written assignments within two weeks.

Attendance & Class participation	20%
Discussion Leading	15%
Weekly Writing assignments	45%
Final Research Paper	20%
Position Paper & Presentation: Museum Futures:	

Grading Scale:

A	93.4 – 100	B+	86.7 – 89.9	C+	76.7 – 79.9	D+	66.7 – 69.9
A-	90 – 93.3	B	83.4 – 86.6	C	73.4 – 76.6	D	63.4 – 66.6
		B-	80.0 – 83.3	C-	70.0 – 73.3	D-	60.0 – 63.3

- an ‘**A**’ denotes work that is exceptional, as represented by thorough and detailed engagement with ideas from course readings and lectures; careful integration of materials or concepts across themes or topics; logical reasoning; sincere reflection; and precise writing.
- a ‘**B**’ denotes work that is above average in relationship to your peers’ work and in relationship to the expectations of the assignment.
- a ‘**C**’ denotes work that fulfills course requirements in every way, but only adequately.
- a ‘**D**’ denotes work that does not adequately fulfill course requirements but still deserves credit.
- an ‘**F**’ denotes work that does not deserve passing credit.
- a **ZERO** will be assigned to work not turned in. No late assignments, and, as stated previously, plagiarism will result in an “F” for the entire course, and you will be reported to the Academic Integrity office for violating university and course policy.

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points. This may be achieved by including [a link to the University grades and grading policies.](#)

For all UF-related syllabi policies, please visit: <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

Attendance, in-class participation, discussion leading, discussion questions (35%): Your participation grade will be based on the following criteria:

1. This course is a seminar, or discussion-based and attendance is **MANDATORY**. You will be expected to participate fully in classroom discussions. In a seminar course students do assigned reading and then, under your own guidance and direction—as well as the guidance of the Professor—we will grapple aloud with the ideas we've read, collectively. Our seminar will be a mixture of discussion, mini-lectures, large and small group activities, with an emphasis on understanding course readings. Lectures will not be posted, and discussions and activities completed in class will not be recreated, so attending class is the only place to learn key material on which you will be evaluated. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes from a classmate, including any assignments or announcements that were made. The course may also require mandatory attendance at local museum or public heritage sites, in-person when permitted, or online, if not permissible. All course handouts and materials are available on the course's eLearning page.

Only 1 absence will be excused over the course of the term unless you can provide documentation for a health emergency. However, more than four absences may result in failing the course in addition to lowering your overall course grade. Excessive tardiness will also impact final class averages. Attendance is worth 10 percent of your course grade.

2. **Participation in class.** Participation includes contributing to in-class discussions by *SPEAKING* and being intellectually present for each meeting of ARH 6938. When you are not speaking or asking a question, you should be actively *LISTENING*, which may even include note taking. Meaningful contributions to class discussion should reflect ***your engagement with the assigned course readings and in-class peer conversation.*** Not participating in classroom discussions will result in a lower course grade. Participation is worth 10 percent of the course grade.
3. **Performance on in-class Discussion Leading.** You will be asked to facilitate in-class discussion for one assigned class session (see Discussion Leading handout for more information). Your responsibilities will be to: 1.) meet with me at least once prior to class and come to that meeting having already read the materials in order to discuss your (nearly formed) ideas for facilitation, which will include: 2.) bringing **one** case study of a museum or heritage site, memorial, art installation, artwork, gallery show, or architectural example (via article, images, video clip, song, etc.) to help illuminate a critical examination of ideas presented in the assigned class readings): 3.) As a facilitator, you are also expected to bring **four** reading-informed, discussion questions that support discussion of the course readings. Discussion questions should not simply summarize the topic of the day, but rather support your selected museum or heritage site, memorial,

art installation, artwork, gallery show, or architectural example activity in generating nuanced classroom discussion of course ideas and reading themes. Remember, this assignment is NOT a lecture, it is a discussion facilitation, and I will always be participating. 4.) You are also responsible for emailing me your final list of discussion questions and facilitation outline by **11pm**, two days prior to class. Student preparedness and performance on this assignment is worth 15 percent of the course grade.

4. **General in-class preparedness.** Students are expected to bring the assigned readings to class and to complete all assigned readings prior to attending class. TV, cell phones, music, and other electronic distractions, are not permitted to be out during class time.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. [See UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies.](#)

Final Research Paper (20%): The final research paper will be an opportunity for students to research and weigh in on how heritage landscapes are handling and managing amidst 21st Century concerns.

Weekly Reading Response Papers (45%): Papers should have a clearly identifiable argument and demonstrate thoughtful and comprehensive engagement with the readings across the assigned unit. To begin, try considering a key passage from the readings and write a well-organized essay in which you explain its relevance to the overall theme of the week. Use examples from the readings to support your claim. Response papers are *not* reading summaries.

Ask yourself:

- What are the arguments being presented in the weekly readings?
- Can I identify the theme(s)?
- How do these readings speak to/connect to/diverge from each other?

Papers are due before the start of class. Please email me your paper prior to the start of class time, and please note that **ABSOLUTELY NO LATE READING RESPONSE PAPERS** will be accepted. Each assignment should be around 850 words, approximately 3 ½-4 pages, double-spaced with 12-point font, 1” margins. Please follow APA, MLA, or Chicago for citations. Full credit will not be given to papers that do not meet minimum length requirements or fail to properly cite. **It is expected that you will engage the vast majority of the readings in the assigned course unit in order to successfully complete the assignment.** Each paper is worth 5% of your total course grade.

In general about papers: Because improving your writing skills is an important goal of the course, your grades for these assignments will emphasize this objective. Papers must have a clear objective and thesis statement, supported throughout by source-specific evidence (in other words, engage directly with your assigned course readings), and a clearly organized order of discussion and paper flow. Please feel free to stop in for office hours, or make an appointment, to meet with me to discuss any problems or questions that you might have about the assignment or readings. I also encourage you to utilize the services of the <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>. For your own protection, please make certain that you continuously save your written work as you write and back up those documents on a flash drive or

external hard drive. You should also save all graded work until you receive your final grade in the course. In the event that work goes missing or a grade gets miscalculated, this will provide the *only acceptable* evidence that you turned in a particular assignment or received a particular grade.

Policy on late submissions: Unless you have provided substantial, documented evidence for need of an extension, and have discussed the situation with me well in advance of the impending deadline, late assignments will receive a 10% reduction in your grade for **each day** that exceeds the stated assignment deadline. Extensions will be given only under the most extraordinary circumstances, and I do not except late papers after one week past the original deadline. Malfunctioning computers, printers and so on are not reasonable grounds for an extension. Save your work regularly and in multiple locations and be prepared to print your work in a computer lab if necessary. Please note that I will be the sole judge of what constitutes an extraordinary circumstance, that in most cases my granting of an extension will require that you submit a note from a doctor or other appropriate official, and that extensions must be negotiated in advance. Please also note that sending me an email does not constitute negotiating an extension. Unless we have spoken and agreed on a new date, the original date stands.

Student Accommodations: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. [See the “Get Started With the DRC” webpage on the Disability Resource Center site.](#) It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty includes plagiarizing, cheating, turning in counterfeit papers, stealing academic materials, knowingly falsifying academic documents, accessing confidential academic records without authorization, disclosing confidential academic information without authorization, and turning in the same work to more than one class without the expressed permission of the instructors involved. An online plagiarism checker service may be used to screen papers. Please note that recording class discussions will not be permitted under any circumstances. Students are, however, allowed to record video or audio of class *lectures only*, but please note that the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are

prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.¹ In ARH 6930, all of the above are prohibited. Any student deemed to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary action from the University and will also receive a “no credit” (i.e., a zero) for the assignment.

Academic Honesty: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’” The Conduct Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask me. [See the UF Conduct Code website for more information.](#)

Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students at the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see: <http://registrar.ufl.edu/catalog0910/policies/regulationferpa.html>

Additional Academic Resources:

¹ A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and deliver by an instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentation such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless, of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at [352-392-4357](tel:352-392-4357) or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

[Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, [352-392-1601](tel:352-392-1601). Career assistance and counseling services.

[Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call [866-281-6309](tel:866-281-6309) or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.

[Academic Resources](#): 1317 Turlington Hall, Call [352-392-2010](tel:352-392-2010), or to make a private appointment: [352- 392-6420](tel:352-392-6420). Email contact: teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio](#): Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, [352-846-1138](tel:352-846-1138) | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; [Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.](#)

Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): [View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.](#)

UF Student Success Initiative: Visit <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/> for resources that support your success as a UF student.

Health and Wellness:

UF Whole Gator Resources: Visit <https://one.ufl.edu/whole-gator/discover> for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or (352) 392-1575 or visit the U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern, and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

Basic Security Needs: Any student who is facing challenges securing food or housing is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly for

additional assistance in the event that these external stressors are also affecting your performance in the course.

Course Outline (*subject to revision*)

Date	Lecture	Discussion
Week 1 Wed. 8/27	<p style="text-align: center;">Introduction to Course: Understanding Museum Studies</p>	(1)
Week 2 Wed. 9/3	<p style="text-align: center;">Museum Histories, Historical Educations</p>	(2)
Week 3 Wed. 9/10	<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching Museums:</p>	(3)
Week 4 Wed. 9/17	<p style="text-align: center;">Ways of Seeing: Exhibitionary Power and Museum Authority</p>	(4)

<p>Week 5</p> <p>Wed. 9/24</p>	<p>Objects as Witness:</p>	<p>(5)</p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>Wed. 10/1</p>	<p>Museum Environments: Architecture as Theatre</p>	<p>(6)</p>
<p>Week 7</p> <p>Wed. 10/8</p>	<p>Memorial Museums</p>	<p>(7)</p>

Week 8 Wed. 10/15	Outdoor 'Museums'? Exploring Memorial Landscapes	(8)
Week 9 Wed. 10/22	Museum Identities:	(9)
Week 10 Wed. 10/29	Missing Museums	(10)
Week 11 Wed. 11/5		(11)
Week 12 Wed. 11/12	Museum Action	(12)

Week 13 Wed. 11/19	Archive This!	(13)
Week 14 Wed. 12/3	Conclusions: Museums Unbound	(14)
Week 15 12/10	Final Papers	(15)