

Draft Syllabus – Subject to Change
HR2010: Introduction to Museum Studies
Semester 1 AY2025-26

Course Code: HR2010
Course Title: Introduction to Museum Studies
Pre-requisites: Nil
No. of Aus: 3
Contact Hours: 39

Course Co-ordinator: Sushma Griffin, PhD
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Office Location: HSS (SHHK) 03-30
Office Hours: In-person and Zoom appointments by email.

Course Aims

This course is designed for students who have previously taken foundational Art History. It provides an introduction to key historical and theoretical developments in museums and museum studies. We will consider case studies that investigate diverse museum contexts across different locations and cultural environments. We will explore museums from a range of interdisciplinary perspectives, examining them as social and cultural institutions, collections, and sites for social justice and equity. We will learn about the management of museum collections; museum documentation; and the handling and examination of objects. The course incorporates the expertise of museum staff in the form of on-site lectures, guest lectures by museum professionals, and/or organised site visits to museums. This course will expose students to ideas around museums as complex organisations and systems that have served as secular temples of culture, forums for public discussion, research institutions, and educational environments, allowing them to engage with the past, present, and possible futures for museums.

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Describe the historical context of the origins of museums, citing specific case studies and scholarly writings.
2. Provide specific examples relating to developments in the history of museum practice, including contemporary museum practices.
3. Apply key Museum Studies theories and concepts, tracing their developments in a short written review of an exhibition and in-class presentations.
4. Conduct research into new ideas around Museum Studies by developing an exhibition proposal for a specific named museum or gallery.
5. Articulate constructive discussions with peers where museums and related issues are debated in a logical, well-informed, and creative manner.

Course Requirements and Expectations

- Students are expected to attend the weekly seminars and participate fully in class discussion and other activities.
- Students are expected to read the assigned prescribed readings prior to class in preparation for the weekly topic.
- The use of generative AI software such as ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot and any other such generative software will be penalised and may result in failure in the course, including the use of automated writing tools such as “Grammarly”.
- Plagiarism of any material will be penalised and will result in failure in the course. Plagiarism includes self-plagiarism. Assignments plagiarising other assignments that you may have written or prepared as class presentations for other courses are not acceptable and will be penalised and may result in failure in the course.
- Please email me to arrange a consultation. I welcome consultations in person and over Zoom.

Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

(1) General

You are expected to take all scheduled assignments and tests by due dates. You are expected to take responsibility to follow up with course notes, assignments and course related announcements for seminar sessions they have missed.

(2) Absenteeism

Absence from class without a valid reason will affect your overall course grade. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by a medical certificate and participation in NTU’s approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies.

If you miss a lecture, you must inform the course instructor via email prior to the start of the class.

Course Content

Textbooks and References:

Gennifer Barrett, *Museum and the public sphere*, Willey-Blackwell. 2011

Graham Black, *The engaging museum: developing museums for visitor involvement*. Routledge, 2005

Gerard Corsane, *Heritage, museums and galleries: an introductory reader*. Routledge, 2005
https://ntu-sp.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/65NTU_INST/12u36pr/alma991005509649705146.

Edouwaye Flora, Kaplan S., *Museums and the making of "ourselves": the role of objects in national identity* (2005).

Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in*

Early Modern Italy (1994).

Geoffrey Lewis, *The History of Museums*. Encyclopedia Britannica

Sharon Macdonald, ed. *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Malden, MA ;: Blackwell Pub., 2006.

https://ntu-sp.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/65NTU_INST/12u36pr/alma991014441729705146

Selected additional readings to be added at the discretion of the instructor

Weekly Schedule of Learning Activities

Week 1: Course Introduction ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

Going over the course outline including requirements and expectations, timeline and assessment. Time for Q&A

Lecture: Museums in the Age of Globalisation

During this introductory week we will explore the histories of the idea of a Museum, relating them to practices of collecting, caring for, and exhibiting objects and works of art.

Week 2: Lecture: The Anatomy of a Museum and Foundations of Museums and Museum Studies ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

Case Studies: the Peale Museum; the Kensington and Victoria and Albert Museums in London; and the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi among others.

Week 3: Lecture: Collections Development, Collections and Space ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

Week 4: Lecture: Museums Experience Design ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

In-Class Case Studies

Week 5: Lecture: Exhibition design, installation, and the management of collections (Spaces and visitors: temporary, permanent, conservation of artefacts) ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

In-Class Case Studies

Week 6: Field Visit to the National Gallery of Singapore (tbc, transport provided) ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

Week 7: Guest Lecture: Curator Angelica Ong from the Singapore Art Museum (tbc) ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

Curating, Research and Exhibition Planning

Hear Angelica speak about her academic journey and curatorial role at the Singapore Art Museum

****RECESS WEEK NO CLASS****

Week 8: Writing Workshop: Developing an Exhibition Proposal ILO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Learn how to develop an exhibition proposal based on a named museum or gallery's collection in preparation for your final assessment. Please bring a laptop to the class to participate in the workshop.

Week 9 Site Visit to the ADM Galleries or The Art Gallery at NIE, NTU

We will reflect on the curatorial rationale, exhibition design, and didactics.

Week 10 Lecture: Exhibition Texts and Audiences, Museum Education, Outreach, and "Edutainment" ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

In-Class Case Studies

Week 11- STUDENT PRESENTATIONS AND INSTRUCTOR/PEER FEEDBACK

Week 12 - STUDENT PRESENTATIONS AND INSTRUCTOR/PEER FEEDBACK

Week 13 - STUDENT PRESENTATIONS AND INSTRUCTOR/PEER FEEDBACK

Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)

Participation (20%):

Students will be reading about major case studies, critical writings, and engage in class activities and discussions with peers and instructor.

Class Presentation (20%):

10-15 minutes (approximately 1500 words presented by the group) on a weekly topic.

Students will introduce and explain their chosen topic and research question to the rest of the class. They will also be expected to prepare verbal responses to topical issues in the fields of museum and curating after going through written materials.

Exhibition Review 20% Weighting

Write an 800-word critical review of a current or recent exhibition of visual art held at one of the following museums or galleries: Singapore Art Museum; NTU's Centre for Contemporary Art at the Gilman Barracks; Sundaram Tagore Gallery at the Gilman Barracks; National Gallery of Singapore; The Art Gallery at NIE, NTU; Asian Civilisations Museum; the National University of Singapore Museum; as well as other museums and galleries.

If you find an exhibition that is NOT at one of these galleries that you wish to write about, please check with the Course Coordinator first.

Exhibition Proposal 40% Weighting

Submit a proposal for a National Gallery of Singapore or another named Gallery / Museum collection-based exhibition that would be suitable for display in **ONE of the gallery spaces**. Your proposal should include: (i) an 800 word exhibition rationale describing the exhibition concept and objectives (ii) a list of 8-10 works with full media including images (iii) a simple outline of a mock-up floor plan indicating potential layout in the space (iii) artist bios for all participating artists and (iv) bullet points 3-4 ideas for possible public engagement programs that might accompany the exhibition. All works must be sourced from the collection of that particular museum. Artists' bios and floor plan are not included in the word count.

These assessment tasks have been designed to be challenging, authentic and complex. Successful completion of assessment in this course will require students to critically engage in specific contexts and tasks for which artificial intelligence will only be able to provide the most basic and generic forms of support and guidance. To pass this assessment, students will be required to demonstrate detailed comprehension of their written submission independent of AI and MT tools.

Provisional