

ANTH - 20 - Introduction to Museum Studies

Course Acronym:*

ANTH

Course Number: * 20

Descriptive Title:* Introduction to Museum Studies

Division: Behavioral and Social Sciences

Course Disciplines: Anthropology

Catalog Description:*

This course introduces students to the field of museum studies within an anthropological context. It examines the history of museums, museum careers, ethical issues facing museums, the function and meaning of museum exhibits and the evolving role of the museum in its quest to accurately represent the lives of people from diverse communities. The Anthropology Museum will be used as a model to teach students about museum curation and exhibit design, as well as provide opportunities for the critique and interpretation of anthropological material.

Note: No background in Anthropology is required.

Prerequisite:

Co-requisite:

Recommended Preparation: Anthropology 2

Enrollment Limitation:

Hours Lecture (per week): 3

Hours Laboratory (per week): 0

Outside Study Hours:* 6

Total Course Hours:* 54

Course Units:* 3

Grading Method: Letter Grade

Credit Status: Credit, degree applicable

Transfer CSU: Yes

Effective Date: Prior to July 1992

Transfer UC: No

Effective Date:

**General Education:
ECC**

Term:

Other:

CSU GE:

Term:

Other:

IGETC:

Term:

Other:

**Student Learning
Outcomes:**

SLO #1

In a written or objective question, describe or identify the responsibilities of the museum curator, registrar and conservator.

SLO #2

In a written or objective question, describe or identify how museums underwent significant changes beginning in the 18th century.

SLO #3

In a written or objective question, describe or identify some of the recent trends and efforts to decolonize museum exhibits.

Course Objectives:

1. Identify and describe the four fields of anthropology and the particular aspect of the human condition that each one addresses.
2. Identify and explain each of the major concepts that make up the anthropological perspective.
3. Describe the purpose and functions of museums, as well as the roles they play in local communities.
4. Compare and contrast the various roles and job duties of museum personnel.
5. Describe the historical development of museums from ancient prototypes to the modern day.
6. Analyze a museum exhibit using an anthropological critique or a Critical Museum Theory lens.
7. Evaluate a museum on the quality of its interpretation efforts, interactive exhibit spaces, outreach efforts and other methods to engage museum audiences.
8. Identify the environmental and physical factors which endanger an artifact and the safeguards and technology utilized in artifact conservation.
9. Compare and contrast traditional and modern anthropological exhibits with consideration of the extent to which source communities were consulted and cultural heritage exhibits are accurately represented.
10. Identify and describe future trends in museum studies, particularly those that focus on making exhibits and experiences more equitable, inclusive and

accessible to museum audiences.

Major Topics:

I. Introduction to Anthropology (6 hours, lecture)

- A. History of American Anthropology and the Four-field Approach
- B. Applied Anthropology
 - 1. Examples from the Four Fields
 - 2. Museum Anthropology
 - 3. Using Museum Collections in Ethnographic Research
- C. The Anthropological Perspective
 - 1. Holistic Approach
 - 2. Cross-Cultural Comparison
 - 3. Emic-Etic Perspectives
 - 4. Cultural Relativism
- D. Anthropology as Social Science, Humanities and Science

II. Introduction to the Discipline of Museum Studies (6 hours, lecture)

- A. Introduction to Museums
 - 1. Purpose, Functions and Roles in Communities
 - a. Acquisition
 - b. Exhibitions
 - c. Conservation
 - d. Interpretation and Engagement
 - e. Education
 - 2. Types of Museums
 - a. Anthropology, History and Natural History Museums
 - b. Art Museums
 - c. Science and Technology Museums
 - d. Children's Museums
- B. Museum Governance
 - 1. Mission Statements
 - 2. Acquisitions Policies
 - 3. Ethics

III. Careers for Museum Professionals (6 hours, lecture)

- A. The Organization of Museum Departments and Staff
- B. Roles of Museum Personnel
 - 1. Archivist
 - 2. Curator
 - 3. Exhibit Designer
 - 4. Preparator
 - 5. Registrar
 - 6. Conservator
 - 7. Outreach Coordinator
 - 8. Education Coordinator
- C. Academic Preparation and Training
 - 1. Social Sciences Degrees
 - a. Anthropology
 - b. History
 - c. Art History
 - 2. Museum Studies Degrees and Certificate Programs
 - 3. Fine Arts Degrees

D. Museum Careers Occupational Outlook

IV. The History of Museums (6 hours, lecture)

- A. Ancient Prototypes (Mesopotamia)
- B. Early Private Collections of Natural Objects, Artifacts and Antiquities
- C. Public Museums in the Renaissance
- D. Growth and Evolution of Museums in the 18th Century
- E. Earliest Anthropology Museums
 - 1. 1825: Museo Nacional De Antropología (Mexico City)
 - 2. 1866: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (Harvard University)
- F. Changing Definitions, Functions and Roles of Museums Over Time

V. Ethical Issues Facing Museums (6 hours, lecture)

- A. Title and Ownership Disputes
- B. Repatriation of Cultural Objects and Human Remains
- C. Exhibiting Dilemmas
 - 1. Proper Cultural and Historical Context
 - 2. Accurate Representation of Diversity
 - 3. Relevance to Local Communities
- D. The Anthropological Critique of Museums
 - 1. Museums as Tools of Imperialism and Colonialism
 - 2. Patriarchal, Homophobic and Xenophobic Representations
 - 3. Commercialism and Elitism
 - 4. Critical Museum Studies and Critical Museum Theory
 - a. Portraying Social Justice Issues
 - b. Decolonizing Museum Spaces
 - c. History and Cultural Identity
- E. Offers of Donated Objects from Unethical Sources

VI. Engaging Museum Audiences (6 hours, lecture)

- A. Interpretation
 - 1. Effective Communication of Cultural Objects, Artifacts, Fossils and Other Items
 - 2. The Role of Research in Museum Interpretation
 - 3. Issues in Exhibit Design and Implementation
 - a. Equity and Accessibility
 - b. Communication Barriers
 - 4. Alternative Modes of Dissemination
- B. Interactive Exhibition Spaces and Experiences
 - 1. Discovery Rooms
 - 2. Hands-on Activities and Displays
 - 3. Opportunities for Self-directed Exploration
- C. Public and Education Outreach Efforts
 - 1. Community and School Projects
 - 2. Incentives to Encourage Visitation and Membership

VII. Collections Management and Conservation (6 hours, lecture)

- A. Artifact and Object Packing Materials and Techniques
 - 1. The Accessioning and Deaccessioning of Objects
 - 2. Tracking Loaned Objects
- B. Object Photography and Management of Digital Images
- C. Object Computer Database Creation and Management
- D. Conservation Practices and Collection Preservation

1. Condition Reports
2. Lighting
3. Temperature and Humidity
4. Other Potential Sources of Damage

VIII. Exhibit Plans and Exhibit Design (6 hours, lecture)

- A. Exhibit Research
- B. Devising Exhibit Themes
- C. Proper Object Handling
- D. Essential Criteria for Exhibition Facilities
 1. Access, Placement and Adjacency
 2. Display Cases
 - a. Lighting
 - b. Labels and Signage
 - c. Audio-visual and Multimedia Hardware
- E. Permanent Versus Temporary Exhibits
- F. Traditional Versus Modern Anthropological Exhibits
 1. Working with Source Communities
 2. Challenges of Presenting Cultural Heritage Exhibits
 3. Approaches to Postcolonial Exhibition

IX. Future Trends in Museum Studies (6 hours, lecture)

- A. Improvements in Serving and Representing Communities
 1. Equitable and Inclusive Practices and Exhibits
 2. Accessibility in Museums
 3. Exhibits That Reflect Diversity of Local Communities
 4. Relationships between Native Communities and Museums
- B. Impacts of Changes on Museum's Mission, Operations and Interpretations
- C. New Analytical Methods and Technologies

Total Lecture Hours: 54

Total Laboratory Hours: 0

Total Hours: 54

Primary Method of Evaluation: 1) Substantial writing assignments

Typical Assignment Using Primary Method of Evaluation:

Select a cultural object or artifact from the EI Camino College Anthropology Museum's collection, conduct research about it and write a 500-word statement about the people or community related to it (e.g. country of origin, cultural history and other background details, time period in which the item was manufactured). Then create an exhibit label for it that succinctly describes the object in 25-50 words and is of professional quality. Carefully plan and select font style and size, color, paper, backing media and how the label is to be positioned in the display case.

Critical Thinking Assignment 1:

Consider what you've learned about the purpose and role of museum mission statements this semester, and draft a mission statement for the EI Camino College Anthropology Museum. Your statement must be brief and succinct (one-to-two double spaced pages), provide a clear definition of what distinguishes this particular museum and serve as a guide in establishing priorities for the museum. It must also take into account the general characteristics of the museum, as well as its unique features. Be prepared to provide justifications in class as to why you feel your mission statement is appropriate for the Anthropology Museum.

Critical Thinking Assignment 2:

Drawing on the knowledge you've gained so far this semester, visit an exhibit at any local museum and prepare a critique of no more than four double-spaced typed pages, plus a sketch of the exhibit layout that provides a visual component to your critique and highlights areas of the exhibit that could be improved. In your written critique, identify the audiences for the exhibit and specific decisions made in the exhibit to address those audiences. Consider issues such as whether the local community is appropriately represented in the exhibit, whether the information communicated is done in an equitable and inclusive manner and tone and/or whether the exhibit is accessible to all members of the museum's audiences. In addition, consider the quality of exhibit design: whether the exhibit clearly communicates ideas on its labels and signage, the lighting sources that were used and whether they're effective at displaying objects in the exhibit, whether the types of technology used is effective at communicating ideas and provides an engaging interactive experience for the audience, and any other design issues you observe. Finally, using a Critical Museum Theory lens, examine whether the exhibit portrays biased perspectives, marginalizes communities, reveals elitist views and/or inadequately portrays social justice issues. Your written critique should offer an explanation of ways the exhibit's deficits or inconsistencies could be improved.

Other Evaluation Methods:

Class Performance, Essay Exams, Other (label making, assist with exhibit planning and design), Written Homework, Term or Other Papers, Exams, Quizzes, Homework Problems, Class Discussion, Multiple Choice, Matching, True/False

Instructional Methods:

Discussion, Field trips, Guest Speakers, Lab, Lecture, Group Activities, Multimedia presentations, Demonstration

If other:

Work Outside of Class:*

6 hours - Study, Reading, Written Work, Observation of or participation in an activity related to course content (e.g. off campus museum visit)

If Other: Complete museum exhibits

**Up-To-Date
Representative
Textbooks:**

Edward R. Alexander, Mary Alexander and Juilee Decker, Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums, 3rd Edition, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2017.
(Discipline Standard)

**Alternative
Textbooks:**

**Required
Supplementary
Readings:**

**Other Required
Materials:**

Requisite:

Category:

**Requisite and
Matching skill(s):** **Bold**
the requisite skill.
List the
corresponding course
objective under each
skill(s).

Requisite Skill:

**Requisite Skill and
Matching Skill(s):**
**Bold the requisite
skill(s). If applicable**

Requisite course: Anthropology 2

Requisite and Matching skill(s): **Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).**

The EI Camino College Anthropology Museum most frequently mounts exhibits that reflect upon the varied dimensions of human culture and experience (both past and present), as well as content dealing with the biological evolutionary history of the human species.

A student who has previously completed ANTH 2 will be familiar with the basic terminology and concepts that are used by anthropologists to communicate their understandings.

Familiarity with these terms will enable students to better grasp material they may read while researching and interpreting artifacts and cultural objects, and to readily understand content in class lectures and discussions.

ANTH 2 - Identify and explain each of the major concepts that make up the anthropological perspective.

Requisite Skill:

Requisite Skill and Matching skill(s): **Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s). If applicable**

Enrollment Limitations and Category:

Enrollment Limitations Impact:

Course Created by: Walt Foster

Date: 01/01/1973

Original Board Approval Date:

Last Reviewed and/or Revised by: Marianne Waters

Date: 04/27/2022

Last Board Approval Date: 6/20/2022 for FALL 2023