

SAHC 61061: Museum Objects and Exhibitions

Core Course – Semester I (30 credits)

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Aim

The course is designed to equip AGMS students with a range of critical, theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of, and research in, the museum. It provides, also, an introduction to the theoretical issues involved in 'reading' and understanding the social life of 'things' and the different meanings that are constructed by the users of museum collections. This is combined with a study of the role of museum objects and exhibitions and an examination of good practice in core areas of museum operation. In particular, it examines the strategies and practices by which museums interpret, organise and display objects produced within diverse historical and cultural contexts. It also covers areas such as documentation, conservation, authenticity, exhibition planning and text writing.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Design and apply appropriate research methods to the analysis of the museum;
- Make appropriate and reflexive use of critical tools and theoretical approaches in their own academic work, using a nuanced critical vocabulary;
- Describe and analyse the relationship between theory and practice in the museum. Examine the purpose, role and effects of museum objects and exhibitions
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of all the key stages in the life cycle of museum objects (from the moment they become part of the collection to their function in exhibition displays and the different ways that they are viewed and interpreted)
- Examine and define key issues in relation to interpretation, documentation, conservation, exhibition planning and text writing in museum environments.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The course is taught in weekly blocks and with three preparation weeks. During teaching weeks, the lectures, seminars, fieldwork and presentations will take place on Mondays (10am-5pm), Tuesdays (10am-5pm) and Wednesday mornings (10am-1pm). Morning sessions will be divided into a lecture (10-11am), followed by a seminar (11am-1pm). The afternoons will usually consist of a piece of fieldwork or a workshop (2-4pm), followed by student presentations (4-5pm).

Illustrative Bibliography

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