

SAHC70101: The Museum and its Contexts

Core Course – Semester I

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Aim

To provide all students studying AGMS with a knowledge and understanding of the history, theory and operation of the museum as a social, cultural and political institution.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the core course, students will have acquired a range of investigative tools and approaches with which to study the purpose and effects of the museum, as both a historical and contemporary institution. Investigation of the origins and philosophy of the idea of the museum, and its subsequent historical development, will lead to consideration of the role of the museum in society today. The course will address the contexts – theoretical, legal, ethical, political, social and professional – in which the museum operates and will explore the connections between them. It is an objective of the core course to equip all Art Gallery & Museum Studies students with a foundation of knowledge and understanding which will underpin both their study of their courses in semester 2 and also their choice of a dissertation topic. The concept of the “museum” in the course title and content does not refer to a specific museum discipline: it therefore embraces the art gallery and also museums of archaeology, ethnography, natural sciences, history, science and medicine. Indeed, the common and also the distinct issues that are raised by the collection, display and interpretation of different categories of artefacts will be explored during the course.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The course consists of weekly lectures by AGMS Lecturers, the themes of which will be developed in small group seminars, which are led students by in the group.

Illustrative Bibliography:

Tony Bennett *The Birth of the Museum*, 1986

Carol Duncan, *Civilizing rituals: inside public art museums*, 1995

Gary Edson *Museum Ethics*, 1997

Eileen Hooper-Greenhill *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, 1992

Ivan Karp and Steve Lavine *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, 1991

Gaynor Kavanagh, G. (ed.) *Museum Provision and Professionalism*, 1994

Sharon MacDonald and Gordon Fyfe (eds) *Theorizing Museums*, 1996

Sandy Nairne, Bruce Ferguson, Reesa Greenberg (eds) *Thinking About Exhibitions*, 1996

Victoria Newhouse *Towards a New Museum*, 1998

Marcia Pointon (ed) *Art Apart: Museums in North America and Britain since 1800*, 1994

Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff (eds) *Museum culture: histories, discourses, spectacles*, 1994

Peter Vergo (ed) *The New Museology*, 1989