



Centre for Museology
School of Arts, Histories and Cultures

biodiversity biomedicine Body Worlds dinosaurs
controversy DNA Enola Gay learning interactives
museums racism MOSI natural history pickling
research science centres Sci-art space specimens
taxidermy technology vivaria

Science, Nature, Museums

2nd Semester 30 credit option course

MA Art Gallery and Museum Studies

www.manchester.ac.uk/museology

Course Aims

The aim of the course is to develop students' understanding of the history, theory and politics of, and also practice in, science museums and heritage sites, both in general terms and also specifically within the North West through a typological study of distinct collections. By examining the formation, function and effects of the creation of sites for the public experience of science and nature, the course will

provide students with in-depth knowledge and understanding of key institutions, events and issues, as well as of the broader institutional, cultural and political contexts in which to locate them. In each section, the display practices, collecting policies, audiences and history of a specific case study institutions will be analysed to provide in-depth knowledge of a broad cross-section of the science museum sector. No previous scientific training is necessary to undertake this course.

**Learning Outcomes** *On completion of this unit successful students will be able to:*

- Demonstrate a critical knowledge and understanding of the roles of museums of science, technology, medicine and nature within the museum sector and in the cultural economies the UK at the start of the 21st century, including the contributions which they are expected to make towards the promotion the public experience of scientific research;
- Describe, analyse and evaluate, on the basis of first-hand study, the collecting, display, interpretative and educational strategies of a range of collections of science and nature, in the North West and elsewhere;
- Be cognisant of the distinct practical and policy issues raised by these forms of collection.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Weekly two-hour seminars with directed reading and presentations to be prepared from week to week, including presentations by guest lecturers, store tours and site visits. The course is assessed by a 5,000 word essay [80%] and a group project [20%].

Illustrative Bibliography

- Alberti, Samuel J.M.M., ed. 2008. 'Constructing nature behind glass', *Museum and Society* 6/2, special issue.
- Chittenden, David, Graham Farmelo, and Bruce V. Lewenstein, eds. 2004. *Creating connections: Museums and the public understanding of current research*. Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press.
- Davis, Peter. 1996. *Museums and the Natural Environment: The Role of Natural History Museums in Biological Conservation*. London: Leicester University Press.
- Farmelo, Graham, and Janet Carding, eds. 1997. *Here and Now: Contemporary Science and Technology in Museums and Science Centres*. London: Science Museum.
- Filippopoliti, Anastasia, ed. 2010. *Science Exhibitions: Curation and Design*. Edinburgh: MuseumsEtc.
- Fortey, Richard. 2008. *Dry store room no. 1: the secret life of the natural history museum*. Harper.
- Ghiselin, M. T., and Alan E. Leviton, eds. 2000. *Cultures and institutions of natural history*. San Francisco, Calif.
- Leviton, Alan E., and Michele L. Aldrich, eds. 2004. *Museums and Other Institutions of Natural History, Past, Present, and Future*, Proceedings of the California Academy of Sciences 55. San Francisco.
- Gregory, Jane, and Steve Miller. 2000. *Science in Public*: Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus.
- Lindqvist, Svante, ed. 2000. *Museums of modern science*. Canton, MA: Science History Publications.
- Macdonald, S. ed. 1998. *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.
- McLean, Kathleen, and Catherine McEver, eds. 2004. *Are We There Yet? Conversations about Best Practices in Science Museum Exhibits*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast.
- Pearce, Susan M., ed. 1996. *Exploring Science in Museums*. New Research in Museum Studies 6. London: Athlone.
- Rainbow, Phil, and Roger J. Lincoln. 2003. *Specimens: the spirit of zoology*. London: Natural History Museum.
- Slézec, Anne-Marie, ed. 2003. *Museums and Collections of Natural History*. ICOM Study Series 7. Paris.
- Vackimes, Sophia. 2008. *Science Museums, Magic or Ideology?* Mexico: Albedrio.
- Yanni, Carla. 1999. *Nature's Museums: Victorian Science and the Architecture of Display*. London: Athlone.