

Materials Contributed by Catherine Nichols

Advanced Lecturer in Cultural Anthropology and Museum Studies, Loyola University Chicago (LUC)
Director, May Weber Ethnographic Study Collection, LUC

These materials were developed for a LUC anthropology course called “Museum and Material Culture Research” (ANTH 348), an upper-division undergraduate anthropology course. The students in the course have typically never taken a course on museums, and many have not taken a research or lab methods course. Some students are not anthropology majors.

This course is usually taught in the research/processing area of the May Weber Ethnographic Study Collection (MWESC), located on LUC’s residential campus. The MWESC is a collection of about 2600 objects of cultural art from Central America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania collected in the mid to late 20th century. The instructional space is adjacent to collections storage so access to collections (bringing collections and archives into the classroom) is easy. Since I am both the course instructor and director of the collection, I am not required to work with other staff (there are no other personnel). The first iteration of this course was taught in Spring 2018, and again in Spring 2019. This course is considered “writing intensive.”

The course was taught online in Fall 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students were provided with traveling trunks/loans of four pre-selected objects from the MWESC. Though not ideal, this decision was made in order to balance educational/instructional needs with preservation requirements. All loans were returned with objects in good condition.

MATERIALS POSTED:

- Syllabus (abridged)
- Day-by-day course information from the LMS, which contains:
 - Reading Guides/Questions
 - In-class assignments/exercises
 - 5 object exercise instructions

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ANTH 348-01W: Museum and Material Culture Research

Loyola University Chicago
Department of Anthropology
MWF 12:10-1:00pm

Dr. Catherine Nichols
FALL 2020
ONLINE

This course offers training in the use of material culture for anthropological research and interpretation. Using Loyola's May Weber Ethnographic Study Collection, students will gain experience in anthropological research methodologies and analysis using objects and associated documentation. Museums are often characterized as storehouses of knowledge. Practically, they collect and preserve objects of cultural, historical, and scientific importance. Researchers transform these data into anthropological knowledge and interpretations for public audiences. Students will learn how to conduct research in a museum environment. They will learn the limits of material culture as an anthropological data source, and how to access objects and materials housed in institutional archives. They will engage with theoretical and methodological frameworks for working with material culture. Students will work with one object to research over the course of the semester (for Fall 2020 students will work with a textile). Students will examine the object through: close looking, drawing, and sequencing the production operations. They will find and use scholarly resources to contextualize the object within its production and use context(s), and attempt to date the object. Students will generate catalogue data for the online collections database and create an interpretation using text and/or media to be presented to public audiences via the web. As this is a writing intensive course, students will dedicate time to learning and practicing writing strategies.

Course Objectives:

- Gain practical experience with and knowledge of how to access and navigate museums and archives for research.
- Contribute to the development of the May Weber Ethnographic Study Collection by researching an object(s). Research will yield information that is necessary for cataloging.
- Gain experience rehousing object(s) using archival conservation methods and materials.
- Contribute to public understanding and access to the May Weber Collection by producing a web-based interpretation of the object(s) to eventually be placed on the CollectiveAccess online database.

GRADING (100 points)

Accessing Data Exercise	10
Object Description & Drawing	15
Object Sequence	15
Digital Interpretation	10
Object Research Paper (includes draft)	30
Reading Questions	20

Assignments

Reading Guide & Questions: You will use the Reading Guide & Questions as a companion to the majority of the readings for the class. The guide will direct your attention to the most relevant portions of the readings and provide questions for you to prepare written responses to in advance of class. Please turn in your responses on Forums prior to the start of class that will be discussing the reading, and have your responses at hand for class discussions.

Accessing Data Exercise: Based on your consultation of online research databases, plan a 3-day research trip to Washington, D.C. You will structure this assignment as a written itinerary demonstrating that you have researched and planned 1) travel logistics, 2) which repositories you will visit and what you will request to access at each, and 3) at least one email message that you will send to a museum professional to arrange your visit. You will then write a rationale for why you chose to structure your time this way, with respect to the goal of the research trip. Your itinerary should be no less than 2 single spaced pages, and your rationale should be at least ½ single spaced page in length.

Object Description & Drawing Overview: You will prepare a detailed, written description about the formal qualities of your object that reflects close-looking and raises questions for further study that you will address in your research report. You will prepare written responses to each of the 10 categories of description and a short reflection. You will also draw your object, or a portion of your object. Your written description must be at least 2 single spaced pages in length. You will receive feedback from me, which you will incorporate into your research report.

Object Sequence: You will investigate the processes by which your object was constructed or made. You will create a diagram that shows the sequence of these processes. You will then write at least 1 single spaced page where you reflect upon what about your object was revealed through the application of this technique, what questions were opened up but remain unanswered, and your best guess as to the possible resources that have the potential to help you answer those remaining questions. You will receive feedback from me, which you will incorporate into your research report.

Digital Interpretation: You will write an interpretive label for your object that communicates a point of interest to a particular audience, based on your research. Each word (and its spatial placement) must be carefully crafted in order to achieve your interpretive objective. You will present your draft in class for peer critique, and make edits. You will then submit a final version.

Object Research Paper: Based on your research, you will suggest a cultural, geographic, and/or temporal attribution for your object. Attributions are based on comparison and function as a thesis or argument does, in which you make claims (attribution), support those claims with external and internal evidence, and offer a discussion of how the evidence warrants the claims. You are expected to incorporate relevant portions of your object description and sequence in your report as part of your evidence. In addition, you should analyze your object in context, commenting on various domains of meaning and significance. A bibliography of external sources (primary and secondary) you have consulted is required. This paper should be at least 6 single spaced pages in length, exclusive of photographs or visual comparisons. You will receive feedback from me on the first draft of your report, and will be expected to make edits. Your final report will be filed in perpetuity in the May Weber Collection archives.

Online: Synchronous & Asynchronous Sessions

Because this class is held in an online format but emphasizes discussion and engagement with objects, we will prioritize synchronous meetings to hold class discussion. I will provide the majority of lecture content via asynchronous recordings. There will be times in the course when I use our regularly scheduled class time to meet with you individually, to discuss your writing and object research.

Object Loan

Because we are unable to meet in person, we will have limited access to the May Weber Collection. At the start of the semester, you will receive a box containing four objects. These objects are a LOAN, and must be returned at the request of the Instructor. **Failure to return objects will result in an Incomplete or grade of F for the course.** Objects need to be kept in their box, wrapped in muslin or ethafoam when not in use. Please keep the box and the objects away from excessive light, heat, and moisture, and keep them secure. An excellent place to keep the box is in a closet, on the floor or slightly elevated, with nothing set on top. One of the most common ways that objects can be damaged is from having a drink (liquid) near you when you are working with them. Under normal circumstances I would not allow students to keep objects in their personal possession and am making an exception based on weighing the risks to the objects in relation to your need for access to facilitate learning. Please treat the objects carefully and respectfully.

Course Schedule

	DATE	TOPIC/ACTIVITY
M	Aug 24	ZOOM: Introductions & Syllabus Expectations for Reading/Reading Questions & Discussion
W	Aug 26	ZOOM: Looking at Objects What is this Object? Watch: https://theatry.org/research/blog/what-object-episode-1 Unbox Your Object (OBJECT 1)

		Read/Reading Questions: Prown 'Mind in Matter'
F	Aug 28	ZOOM: Looking at Objects Online Watch: https://theautry.org/research/blog/what-object-episode-2 Special Guest Zoom – What is this Object? With Dr. Josh Bell Read/Reading Questions: Pearce 'Museum Objects'
M	Aug 31	ZOOM: Exploring <i>East Asian Textiles</i> http://eastasiantextiles.ctsdh.org Complete worksheet on <i>EAT</i> Introduction to the May Weber Collection Read/Readings: How to Read an Academic Article
W	Sept 2	Prior to Class: watch Panopto Lectures Accessing Museum Data: Overview & Catalogues (28:11) Accessing Museum Data: Collections, Archives & Databases (26:00) Accessing Museum Data: Says Who & May Weber Collection Examples (26:27) ZOOM: Q&A on Registration & Cataloguing
F	Sept 4	ZOOM: Read/Reading Questions: Turner 'Decolonizing Ethnographic Documentation'. Dr Turner will join our discussion.
M	Sept 7	<i>LABOR DAY – no class meeting</i>
W	Sept 9	Prior to class: Panopto Recording: Accessing Data Assignment Instructions ZOOM: Answer questions on Assignment Instructions, get help with online resources; Writing Spotlight: How to write a professional email and analyze sample research emails
F	Sept 11	ZOOM Get help with online resources for assignment Read/Reading Questions: Gill 'The Cheeseman-Giglioli Correspondence'
M	Sept 14	Prior to class: watch Panopto Lectures Collecting – 1 (23:18) Collecting – 2 (27:17) ZOOM Special Guest Zoom – What is this Object? – Collector Edition with Dr. John Lukavic Begin to Look at "African Art" Catalogue (May Weber) (OBJECT 2)
W	Sept 16	ZOOM Read/Reading Questions: Förster 'New Markets, New Patrons' & Steiner 'The Secret of the Masks' (OBJECT 2) Accessing Data Assignment Due 11:55pm
F	Sept 18	No Class Meeting – Writing Spotlight Small Group/Individual Writing Meetings – Scheduled separately Please fill out and submit writing self-assessment in Assignments
M	Sept 21	On your own, review the Weber-Segy Correspondence
W	Sept 23	ZOOM Weber-Segy Correspondence Discussion
F	Sept 25	ZOOM Your object! (OBJECT 4) Writing Spotlight: Object Research Paper – conventions and approaches, proper citation and use of sources for comparative research
M	Sept 28	Prior to class: Panopto Lecture: Approaching Objects ZOOM Read/Readings: Cagle 'Investigating Objects' What is this Object? Special Guest Zoom with Dr. Kristin Otto
W	Sept 30	Prior to class: Panopto Lecture: Ideal Types ZOOM & Greene 'Ideal Type Method'

F	Oct 2	Read/Readings: Causey 'Drawn to See' ZOOM Drawing Exercises (OBJECT 3)
M	Oct 5	Prior to class: Panopto Recording: Object Description Assignment Instructions Draw/Describe your object Optional ZOOM (for questions)
W	Oct 7	ZOOM: Make a Pinch Pot Object Description & Drawing due 11:55pm
F	Oct 9	ZOOM: Read/Readings: Ingold 'Making Culture and Weaving the World'
M	Oct 12	Panopto Lecture: Textile Techniques Read: Emery 'Primary Structures of Fabrics' Watch: "World Weaving" https://luc.kanopy.com/video/world-weaving-traditions-0 Watch: Looms, Warps, Weft Faced Weaving, Warp faced Weaving, Ikat Designs
W	Oct 14	ZOOM Close Looking at Your Textile
F	Oct 16	ZOOM: Read/Reading Questions/Discussion: Gordon 'Textiles: The Whole Story'
M	Oct 19	Prior to class: Panopto Recording: Object Sequence Assignment Instructions ZOOM: Questions on Assignment
W	Oct 21	Work on Object Sequence Optional: Watch Exploding Objects Webinar with Dr. Josh Bell
F	Oct 23	ZOOM: Read/Reading Questions/Discussion: Martinon-Torres 'Chaîne-Opératoire: The Concept and Its Applications Within the Study of Technology'; Coupaye 'Ways of Enchanting'
M	Oct 26	ZOOM: Read/Reading Questions/Discussion: Foster 'Notes for a Networked Biography' Operational Sequence Assignment due 11:55pm
W	Oct 28	Individual Meeting about Object (use time to work on object research)
F	Oct 30	Individual Meeting about Object (use time to work on object research)
M	Nov 2	Individual Meeting about Object (use time to work on object research)
W	Nov 4	Panopto Lecture: Tourist Art
F	Nov 6	ZOOM: Read/Reading Questions/Discussion: Silverman 'Tourist Art as the Crafting of Identity in the Sepik River'
M	Nov 9	ZOOM: Read/Reading Questions/Discussion: Bouttiaux 'Challenging the Dead Hand'
W	Nov 11	ZOOM Read/Reading Questions/Discussion: Strong 'Exclusive Labels'
F	Nov 13	Prior to class: Panopto Lecture: Exhibit Labels/Interpretation & Assignment Instructions on Object Labels Read/Reading Questions/Discussion: Serrell Exhibit Labels ZOOM: Discussion of AAM Excellence in Label Writing Competition
M	Nov 16	ZOOM: Writing Spotlight – Q&A on label writing & practice
W	Nov 18	Individual Meeting about Object (use time to work on object research)
F	Nov 20	Individual Meeting about Object (use time to work on object research)
M	Nov 23	Individual Meeting about Object (use time to work on object research) Object Research Paper DRAFT due Tuesday Nov 24 at 11:55pm
W	Nov 25	<i>Thanksgiving Break – no class meeting</i>
F	Nov 27	<i>Thanksgiving Break – no class meeting</i>
M	Nov 30	ZOOM: Label presentation & Peer Critique
W	Dec 2	ZOOM: Label presentation & Peer Critique
F	Dec 4	ZOOM: Final label presentation Digital Interpretation Assignment due 11:55pm
	Final	Object Research Paper due, Tuesday Dec 8, 3pm

Reading List

- 01 Prown, Jules David. 1994. "Mind in Matter: an introduction to material culture theory and method." In *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed S. Pearce. 133-138. Routledge.
- 02 Pearce, Susan. 1994. "Museum Objects." In *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed S. Pearce. 9-10. Routledge.
- 03 Turner, Hannah. 2015. "Decolonizing Ethnographic Documentation: A Critical History of the Early Museum Catalogs at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History" *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 53 (5-6): 658-76.
- 04 Gill, Brian. 2011. "The Cheeseman-Giglioli correspondence, museum exchanges between Auckland and Florence, 1877-1904." *Archives of Natural History* 37(1): 131-149.
- 05 Förster, Till. 2015. "New Markets, New Patrons: Work-Trade Relationships in A West African Market," in *Africa in the Market: Twentieth-Century Art from the Amrad Art Collection*. Toronto: ROM Press. Pp 75-97
- 06 Steiner, Christopher. 2015. "The Secret of the Masks: On the Social Construction of Power and Desire in the African Art Market," in *Africa in the Market: Twentieth-Century Art from the Amrad Art Collection*. Toronto: ROM Press. Pp 147-163
- 07 Caple, Chris. 2006. *Objects: Reluctant Witnesses to the Past*. London: Routledge. Chapter One: Investigating Objects: Theories and Approaches pp 1-32
- 08 Greene, Candace. 1992. "Documentation, Attribution, and the Ideal Type" In *Art and Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture and Museum Studies in Honor of Jane Powell Dwyer*. Brown University Research Papers in Anthropology Number 5. (9-17)
- 09 Causey, Andrew. 2017. *Drawn to See: Drawing as an Ethnographic Method*. North York: Univ of Toronto Press. Chapters 2 & 3 (25-71)
- 10 Ingold, Tim. 2000. "Making Culture and Weaving the World" in *Matter, Materiality and Modern Culture*. Pp 50 – 71. London: Routledge.
- 11 Emery, Irene. 2009. *The Primary Structures of Fabrics: An Illustrated Classification*. New York: Thames and Hudson. Read: "D. Two or more sets of elements" (73-90)
- 12 Gordon, Beverly. 2011. *Textiles: The Whole Story*. NY: Thames & Hudson.
- 13 Martín-Torres, Marcos. 2002. "Chaîne-Opératoire: The Concept and Its Applications Within the Study of Technology" *Gallaecia* 21: 29-43.
- 14 Coupaye, Ludovic. 2009. "Ways of Enchanting: Chaîne-Opératoires and Yam Cultivation in Nyamikum Village, Maprik, Papua New Guinea" *Journal of Material Culture* 14(4): 433-458.
- 15 Foster, Robert J. 2012. "Notes for a Networked Biography: The P.G.T. Black Collection of Oceanic Things." *Museum Anthropology* 35(2): 149-169.
- 16 Silverman, Eric Kline. 1999. "Tourist Art as the Crafting of Identity in the Sepik River (Papua New Guinea)." In *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, ed. Phillips and Steiner, 51-66. UCalifornia Press.

- 17 Bouttiaux, Anne-Marie. 2012. "Challenging the Dead Hand of the Museum Display." *Museum Anthropology* 35(1): 35-48.
- 18 Strong, Pauline Turner. 1997. "Exclusive Labels: Indexing the National 'We' in Commemorative and Oppositional Exhibits." *Museum Anthropology* 21(1): 42-56.
- 19 Serrell, Beverly. 1996. *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press. Chps 1, 7

Instructional Information & Course Schedule from LMS

W Aug 26: Looking at Objects

Reading: Prown, Jules David. 1994. "Mind in Matter: an introduction to material culture theory and method." In *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed S. Pearce. 133-138. Routledge.

Reading Guide Questions:

- Read the first few sentences. What does this tell you about the relationship between "culture" and objects?
- Take short notes on this piece that would allow you to apply Prown's method to a "mystery object" in 30 minutes, with a partner.

Class Activities:

Watch: ["What is this Object? Episode 1"](#)

Unbox your object (Object 1)

Mystery Object Activity

1. Description: What do you observe about each of these categories?

Function

Material

Patterns, Symmetry, Counting

Technique/Material Behavior

Context

2. Deduction: How could you engage the object?

Sensory Engagement

Do you know anything about this object?

Emotional response

3. Speculation: How would you figure out the function? Or who made it? Where would you start?

F Aug 28: Looking at Objects Online

Reading: Pearce, Susan. 1994. "Museum Objects." In *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed S. Pearce. 9-10. Routledge.

Reading Guide Questions:

- Based on the reading, define each of these terms:
- Object:
- Thing:
- Specimen:
- Artefact:
- Good:

- Material Culture:
- What is a museum object?

Zoom Class:

Watch "[What is this Object? Episode 2](#)"

Play "What is this Object" with special guest [Dr. Josh Bell, Smithsonian Institution](#)

The script is based on Joe Horse Capture's performance in the linked videos.

What is this Object?

Hello and Welcome to What is this Object!

I'm Catherine Nichols, Anthropology faculty at Loyola University Chicago, and your professor!

Today we'll be looking at one object from the National Museum of Natural History in Washington DC

Let's get started!

- (show object) – CLAP
- How OLD do you think it is?
- How BIG do you think it is?
- How HEAVY do you think it is?
- What is it MADE out of? (Anything else?)
- What this HARD to make, or EASY to make?
- What does it SMELL like?
- Does it make any kind of SOUND?
- How many lemons long do you think this is?
- What was this USED for?
- What do you THINK IT IS?

Let's bring in Dr Joshua Bell, Curator Extraordinaire of Globalization at the Smithsonian Institution.

JOSH, what is this object?

M Aug 31: Exploring *East Asian Textiles*

Reading: [How To Read an Academic Article by Amanda Graham](#)

This piece is not only informative in terms of how to approach reading an academic article, but I think also is helpful in getting you think about how to write an academic paper/article. Read with both in mind.

Zoom Class:

Watch a visual slideshow of the May Weber Collection

Visit the site [East Asian Textiles](#) and complete the activity.

Activity Instructions: Exploring East Asian Textiles

Go to: <http://eastasiantextiles.ctsdh.org/>

Take a look around the site.

Pay attention to:

- Digital images of objects
- Documentation (information about objects)
- Contextual information

Digital Images (Search and 360 Models)

- Compare to an object from your box that you can see in person. Does this site allow to see the object in a similar way?
- Consider:
 - seeing individual objects vs objects as an assemblage (in relation to one another)
 - different views of an object (front, back, sides, interior, etc)

- close/microscopic views
- flat view vs mannequin view

Documentation (Search, Mapping)

- Documentation refers to the information about the object, in standardized textual/numerical format ('catalogue' information or metadata).
- What kinds of information is available?
- Does the site allow you to search for different objects based on particular descriptors?
- What formats are used to convey documentation information?
- Anything else you notice about the documentation?

Contextual Information (Search, 360 Models, About)

- What can you learn about the textiles from sources that are not digital images and documentation?
- Where did this information come from?

Discussion

- Was the site easy to use?
- What was your ONE favorite feature of the site?
- What are the drawbacks of viewing objects online?
- What are the benefits of viewing objects online?
- What lessons can you take from this exercise as you research your own (museum) objects?

W Sept 2: What is Registration & Cataloguing?

Prior to Class: Watch 3 lectures on accessing museum data

- Accessing Museum Data: Overview & Catalogues (28:11)
- Accessing Museum Data: Collections, Archives & Databases (26:00)
- Accessing Museum Data: Says Who & May Weber Collection Examples (26:27)

Zoom Class:

Test your knowledge about the in's and out's of registration & cataloguing. Hint: vocabulary is key.

Time for questions.

F Sept 4: Decolonizing the Catalogue

Reading: Turner, Hannah. 2015. "Decolonizing Ethnographic Documentation: A Critical History of the Early Museum Catalogs at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History" *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 53 (5-6): 658-76.

Reading Guide Questions:

- What does Turner seek to address in this article?
- What is meant by: 'museum standards of description being normalized in museum practice'?
- What does Turner suggest is at the beginning of documentation practices in anthropology at the Smithsonian?
- Where did the Smithsonian staff get the information from, that they put into catalog ledger books?
- What makes a good museum specimen?
- According to Gibbs's collecting instructions, how should Indigenous knowledge be handled by collectors?
- What does it tell you that the "People"(tribal affiliation) field was only added to the catalog/collecting instructions in 1902, after about 50 years of Smithsonian collecting?
- What does Turner mean when she writes, "Observations could then be systematically organized in the ledger books, a way to standardize the field notes into mutable records of knowledge, without input from

any originating community. These ledgers became the ultimate record of the object and the first source of information about it.” (p 667)

- How does this article contribute to your understanding of a museum specimen?
- What is the relationship between naming and power? In terms of creating knowledge? In terms of the mobility of objects?

Zoom Class:

[Dr. Hannah Turner \(University of British Columbia\)](#) will join for our discussion. Each person should prepare ONE question to ask about her work/article.

W Sept 9: Accessing Data and Writing

Zoom Class: Ask and answer questions about the assignment instructions.

Go through some of the institutional websites relevant to the assignment.

Discuss how to write a professional email.

Accessing Data Exercise (10 points)

Accessing Date Exercise Overview: Based on your consultation of online research databases and finding aids, plan a 3-day research trip to Washington, D.C. (not inclusive of travel days). You will structure this assignment as a written itinerary demonstrating that you have researched and planned 1) travel logistics, 2) which repositories you will visit and what you will request to access at each, and 3) at least one email message that you will send to a museum professional to arrange your visit. You will then write a rationale for why you chose to structure your time this way, with respect to the goal of the research trip. See below for minimum page length (Writing Intensive requirement).

Assignment Instructions

The Research Topic: You read Brian Gill’s article “The Cheeseman-Giglioli correspondence, and museum exchanges between Auckland and Florence, 1877-1904” published in *Archives of Natural History* (2010, volume 31, issue 1, pages 131-149). Gill portrays Giglioli as an intrepid collector, scientist, and negotiator of museum exchanges. You are going to be in Washington DC for **three full days** and you want to use some of your time to investigate if Giglioli performed any exchanges with the Smithsonian Institution, and what you can learn about the timing, extent, details, and context of any exchanges he made have undertaken with the Smithsonian Institution.

You can also check Wikipedia for some basics. Other scholars have written about Giglioli’s exchanges and scientific work so you can also search for other publications (you might try the LUC Libraries website).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enrico_Hillyer_Giglioli

The collections of the Smithsonian Institution are vast, but you think that you may have the most luck with the collections of:

- Smithsonian Institution Archives
- National Museum of Natural History

There are a few different ways to begin. You can search here:

Across Smithsonian collections: <https://collections.si.edu/search/>

The Smithsonian Institution Archives website: <https://siarchives.si.edu/>

The Department of Anthropology (scroll down to Search the Collections)

<https://naturalhistory.si.edu/research/anthropology>

You can also try other Departments..... Invertebrate Zoology, Vertebrate Zoology....

<https://naturalhistory.si.edu/research>

You want to maximize your time in collections because Washington is a very expensive city. For this assignment, I want you to do as much preparatory research as you can for these organizations that demonstrates your new abilities to make use of online and/or published archival finding aids, and object collections. Remember, these are complex and large organizations and their research and archival holdings are VAST. Especially at the Smithsonian

Institution Archives you will want to think about how to find exchanges, and then how to find both incoming (from Giglioli) and outgoing (from the Smithsonian) correspondence.

1. Itinerary & Work Plan : *Minimum 2 single-spaced pages*

Your itinerary and work plan should contain:

- which repositories you will visit,
- which archival record units and/or objects you want to see,
- how you will get there (transport, times, access),
- who you will work with to gain access,
- what you will bring, and
- what you want to see.

I’m looking for **SPECIFICS**, as you need to be as specific as possible in your requests in order to maximize your research time and get everything you can.

2. Email to Museum Professional : *1 paragraph minimum*

You need to draft an email to a museum/archival professional asking questions and/or requesting access to specific resources. Demonstrate your knowledge of museum organizational systems and show that you have “done your homework”. *Please do not actually send any emails to these repositories, as this is a teaching exercise and you are not actually going to do this research project.*

3. Rationale : *1/2 single spaced page*

Why did you make these choices? In your rationale, you should comment on the relationship between the resource (archival record unit, object, knowledgeable person, etc) and the research goal. The best rationales will articulate why you prioritized particular resources over others.

Grading Rubric

Criteria	Points Available	Points Earned
Travel Plans/Itinerary – transportation, logistics, etc.	2	
Work Plan: Repositories and Resources – specific record units and objects	3	
Access and Questions – specific names or roles, quality of email draft	2	
Rationale	3	

Zoom Class:

Analyze research request emails. Consider, and find examples of, the following:

- How does the researcher introduce herself and communicate her background/credentials/interests?
- How does the researcher demonstrate she has 'done her homework'?
- How does the researcher negotiate asking for specific information while not overly circumscribing the request?
- What is one take-away from these that will help you write your own email?

Sample Emails:

1. **Nichols to Cameron Wood (Cranbrook Institute), concerning Hopi collections made by missionary Henry Voth**

From: Nichols, Catherine [<mailto:cnichols@luc.edu>]

Sent: Thursday, April 09, 2015 3:28 PM

To: Cameron Wood
Subject: RE: Hopi Materials

Dear Cameron,

Many thanks for your email and apologies for taking so long to write.

I do research on the exchange of museum collections between institutions and in the course my research at the Field Museum ran across some correspondence regarding the disposition of some Hopi altars. I am particularly interested in these altars because they were assembled by Henry Voth, a Mennonite missionary, whose collecting practices are the subject of research by my colleague Nancy Parezo.

According to Field Museum records, in 1932, 12 altars from Hopi (sometimes attributed to Voth, sometimes to the Stanley-McCormick Expedition) were sold to Sir Henry Wellcome (of the Wellcome Trust in the UK). Wellcome had the Field Museum pack the altars and send them to New York to his agent, Thomas Nevin. They were received by Nevin but did not get shipped to London, instead they sat in New York until 1946 -- after Wellcome's death -- at which time the Wellcome trustee SW Fraser made an effort to sell the altars.

Fraser offered them to the Field Museum to buy back, but the Field Museum passed. They recommended that Fraser offer the altars to the following institutions (for purchase, I believe): Cranbrook Institute of Science (Bloomfield Hills, Michigan), American Museum of Natural History (New York City), Buffalo Museum of Science (Buffalo, NY), Rochester Museum (Rochester, NY), and the Heye Foundation of the American Indian (NY).

I believe one of the altars was indeed sold to the Heye Foundation, now NMAI. I am trying to track down the others and thought I would begin at the top of the list.

The altars are described as follows:

1. Singer Altar
2. Drab Flute Altar
3. Agave Altar
4. Lagón Altar
5. New Year Making Altar
6. Horn Altar
7. Katchina Initiation Altar
8. Blue Flute Altar
9. Marau Altar
10. Powalamu Altar
11. Snake Altar
12. Water Serpent House

If it would be possible to check your accession records, I'd be grateful to know if perchance Cranbrook purchased one, even if you don't have it now.

Many thanks,
Catherine

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Catherine A. Nichols, Ph.D.
Lecturer in Cultural Anthropology and Museum Studies
Department of Anthropology, BVM Tower 706
Loyola University Chicago
1032 W. Sheridan Road
Chicago, Illinois 60660

Tel: (773) 508-3469

Email: cnichols@luc.edu

Website: <http://www.luc.edu/anthropology/faculty/drcatherineanichols/>

2. Nichols to Hamill (British Museum), concerning exchange activities of Henry Giglioli

From: Nichols, Catherine [<mailto:cnichols@luc.edu>]

Sent: 23 April 2015 17:52

To: AOA

Subject: Research Request - Smithsonian/British Museum Exchanges

Dear Jim,

Pleasure speaking with you last week.

I wrote earlier about my interest in doing research on an exchange of collections between the Smithsonian Institution and the British Museum.

From my research at the Smithsonian, there appears to be three transmissions of material from SI to BM:

1. 19 Sept 1890 (date sent by SI)

I am unsure of content, I think it is about 25 objects. I think these might be Am1891C2.4927 through Am1891C2.4952

2. 5 March 1891 (date sent by SI): 75 specimens, most ethnology.

I have the inventory list from the SI. I think the BM accession number is Am1891,0612. So, for individual objects the catalogue numbers are, for example, Am1891,0612.53 (which is a Hopi dance wand).

From your online database under Curator's comments (for the above object) it reads: For handlist, see Christy Correspondence: Smithsonian Institution (O.T.Morton) to A.W.Franks, 25/2/1891.

This is familiar to me, but should read O.T. Mason instead of Morton. Otis Tufton Mason was the Curator of Ethnology at the US National Museum/Smithsonian Institution during the time of these exchanges.

3. 31 March 1892 (date sent by SI): 6 throwing sticks, about 63 "palaeoliths". I think the throwing sticks might be catalogued as Am1892C2.8521 and onwards.

I've searched the British Museum research database and when I enter in "Bureau of Ethnology/Smithsonian Institution" and "Smithsonian Institution" into the "People and Organizations" field, I get 403 returns. Would it be possible to run an in-house report for this query to generate a document that I could more easily work with? Otherwise, I must manually copy the information from each entry into my own database (as I've done with the Hopi objects attached).

If the information I've provided thus far is helpful, I'd like to arrange a research visit for myself and Dr. Nancy Parezo, who is Professor of American Indian Studies at the University of Arizona and holds Research Associate positions at the Smithsonian Institution and Field Museum (as do I). We will be in London and would like to conduct research at the British Museum May 20, 21, and 22.

From these 3 collections, we would like to view and photograph the Hopi pieces, which when I enter "Hopi" into the search, this returns 35 objects. I am preparing an article on these exchanges so it would be very helpful to review accession files for each collection and see related correspondence (might this be the Christy Correspondence

mentioned in the object record above?). Nancy and I are working with the Hopi Tribal Preservation Office to document Hopi objects in museum collections.

I will also attach as an Excel document. Here are the following numbers from the online database for Hopi objects from Smithsonian exchanges:

Am1891,0612.16	Dance Wand
Am1891,0612.40	Mountain Lion Figure
Am1891,0612.1.a	Sacred Plume Box
Am1891,0612.1.b	Lid made of wood
Am1891,0612.41	Horse Figure
Am1891,0612.37	Lion Figure
Am1891,0612.42	Ferret Figure
Am1891,0612.18	Dance Wand
Am1891,0612.22	Bullroarer
Am1891,0612.20	Dance Ornament
Am1891,0612.5	Headdress
Am1891,0612.53	Dance Wand
Am,+ .4936	Dish
Am,+ .4934	Dish
Am1891,0612.49	Bear Figure
Am1891,0612.48	Lion Figure
Am1891,0612.21	Bullroarer
Am1891,0612.8.b	Musical Instrument Part
Am1891,0612.8.a	Musical Instrument
Am1891,0612.6	Apron
Am1891,0612.25	Kachina Doll
Am1891,0612.24	Kachina Doll
Am1891,0612.12.a	Artefact
Am1891,0612.9	Ceremonial Equipment
Am,+ .4946	Rabbit Club
Am,+ .4945	Rabbit Club
Am1891,0612.17	Dance Wand
Am1891,0612.4.a-b	Wristlet
Am1891,0612.3.a-b	Armlet
Am1891,0612.2	Rattle
Am1891,0612.12.b-d	Dance Equipment
Am1891,0612.19	Dance Stick
Am1891,0612.15	Dance Wand
Am1891,0612.14	Dance Wand

Please let me know if this is possible to view and photograph these objects, and to study the correspondence and accession files.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Catherine

3. Nichols to Scichilone (JFRC), concerning exchange activities of Henry Giglioli

Dear Professor Scichilone,

I wanted to introduce myself and communicate my thanks for your interest in my research on Enrico Giglioli. My doctoral research examined the exchange of anthropological objects between museums, scholars, and collectors in the late nineteenth and into the twentieth century by the Smithsonian Institution. In the course of research, I discovered a robust correspondence between Giglioli and early administrators of the Smithsonian (Secretaries and Directors of the U.S. National Museum -- Joseph Henry, Spencer Baird, and especially George Brown Goode). Giglioli vigorously pursued the exchange of anthropological objects and while his dealings with the Smithsonian are a fascinating case, I am planning to expand my research on his exchange practices. I'll be at the American Museum of Natural History in New York in July to examine his correspondence on exchanges there. Most likely next summer I will come to Europe and I sincerely hope to make it to Rome. My colleague has a grant to conduct research in London, Oxford, Berlin, and Hamburg and I will accompany her. I hope to be able to make my way to Rome if schedules can be coordinated to access Giglioli's collection. It would be my pleasure to meet you as well as find out about your museum studies courses for the Loyola Rome Center. Emily shared your syllabus with me. I have been in contact with the administration at the Pigorini, as last spring I did a European trip, but because of scheduling I was only able to make it to Paris and Oxford. Also, while I do speak some French, I don't speak Italian. However, the Pigorini did say I was welcome to come and research there. I think it would be helpful when I get in touch in preparation for a trip next summer if I might mention our connection. I appreciate your email and my apologies for taking so long to get back to you. I hope to meet you next summer.

Best,
Catherine

4. Nichols to Lattanzi (Pigorini Museum) concerning exchange activities of Henry Giglioli

Dear Dr. Lattanzi,

Mi scuso, non parlo italiano.

I am an anthropologist from the US studying museum history and the exchange of museum collections in the nineteenth century. My dissertation research looked at exchanges between the Smithsonian Institution and other museums. The Smithsonian exchanged many objects with Enrico Giglioli, the zoology professor and curator at the Royal Zoological Museum in Florence, who was also part of the anthropological society in Italy. He exchanged objects with the Smithsonian, but also many other museums and collectors. I would like to visit the Pigorini museum to possibly examine any of his correspondence (letters, documents) and if possible, view the collections, especially those from North America.

Would it be possible to visit June 1-5, 2015? I am not sure because I am trying to make appointments with other museums in Europe, but I might also be able to come June 8-12, 2015.

Grazie,
Catherine

Sono un antropologo dagli Stati Uniti a studiare la storia del museo. Io studio lo scambio delle collezioni museali nel XIX secolo. La mia tesi di ricerca ha esaminato gli scambi tra la Smithsonian Institution e altri musei. Lo Smithsonian scambiato molti oggetti con Enrico Giglioli, il professore di zoologia e curatore al Royal Museo Zoologico di Firenze. Ha stato membro della società antropologica in Italia. Ha scambiato oggetti con la Smithsonian e molti altri musei e collezionisti. Vorrei visitare il museo Pigorini di esaminare eventualmente la sua corrispondenza (lettere, documenti) e, se possibile, visualizzare le collezioni, in particolare quelli del Nord America.

Sarebbe possibile visitare 01-05 giugno 2015? Non so perché sto cercando di fissare appuntamenti con altri musei in Europa, ma potrei anche essere in grado di venire 8-12 giugno 2015.

Another Italian version.... Can you spot the differences?

14 Aprile 2015

Director of Polo Museale del Lazio
Piazza San Marco, 46
00153 Roma

Egregio Direttore,

Sono un'antropologa Americana che sta studiando la storia relazionata ai musei e lo scambio delle collezioni esposte durante il diciannovesimo secolo. La mia tesi esamina il contraccambio di manufatti tra Smithsonian Institution e diversi musei Europei. Smithsonian Institution ha scambiato molti oggetti con Enrico Giglioli, un professore e curatore al Museo Zoologico di Firenze, il quale faceva parte anche della società di antropologi italiani. Giglioli è riuscito a costruire la sua collezione grazie allo scambio di materiale con l'istituto sopra citato e molti altri in giro per il mondo.

Chiedo il vostro permesso per visitare il Museo Pigorini, in modo da poter meglio esaminare le collezioni di Giglioli, specialmente quelle derivanti dall'America del Nord. Il mio obiettivo è quello di completare un manoscritto che parli degli scambi eseguiti da Giglioli con musei ed altri curatori, prendendo in considerazione soprattutto quelli fatti con i Smithsonian. Mi sono tenuta in contatto con il Professor Lattanzi, il quale mi assisterà con le date di ricerca, se Voi confermate il vostro appoggio. Mi piacerebbe venire a visitare il luogo a cominciare dal 1° Giugno, 2015.

Grazie molte per la vostra considerazione.

Cordiali saluti,
Catherine Nichols

F Sept 11: Exchanging Duplicates

Reading: Gill, Brian. 2011. "The Cheeseman-Giglioli correspondence, museum exchanges between Auckland and Florence, 1877-1904." *Archives of Natural History* 37(1): 131-149.

Reading Guide:

- What are "museum exchanges"?
- What are "duplicates"?
- Why would a researcher look at the correspondence related to exchanges?
- As best you can tell, where did Gill get his information from? Be specific.
- List possibilities that you would try to look into at a museum (object collections, archives) that would give you information about museum exchanges.

Zoom Class:

Discuss reading & answer questions about Accessing Data assignment.

M Sept 14: Introduction to Collecting

Prior to Class: Watch 2 lectures on collecting

Collecting - 1 (23:18)

Collecting - 2 (27:17)

Zoom Class:

What is this Object? Collector Edition, Special Zoom Guest [Dr. John Lukavic, Denver Art Museum](#)

Have out Object 2

Examine May Weber Catalogue 'African Art' (a museum catalogue from the May Weber Museum of Cultural Arts)

W Sept 16: Collecting African Art

Reading: Förster, Till. 2015. "New Markets, New Patrons: Work-Trade Relationships in A West African Market," in *Africa in the Market: Twentieth-Century Art from the Amrad Art Collection*. Toronto: ROM Press. Pp 75-97

Reading Guide:

- In short, what does Förster argue is the model for the production of artistic objects in Senegoland prior to colonization? Is it important to distinguish between utilitarian objects and those made for ritual purposes (eg. *poro*) – what should be kept in mind here?
- In colonial times, how did carvers and the *kulibele* shift production to meet market demand? What does this tell you about the agency of carvers?
- How do you make sense of the role and prominence of painted cloths during the "Golden Years"?
- What has been the role of traders in the development of art styles?
- In general, how the art/object production connected to larger global flows/events/contexts?

Reading: 06 Steiner, Christopher. 2015. "The Secret of the Masks: On the Social Construction of Power and Desire in the African Art Market," in *Africa in the Market: Twentieth-Century Art from the Amrad Art Collection*. Toronto: ROM Press. Pp 147-163

Reading Guide:

- How do traders and runners exercise power in exchanges?
- What other meanings, excepting the 'traditional use' one, are attached to African art?
- Research can raise ethical problems on the basis of its extractive nature. Does the 'personal' approach of collectors raise the same issues? Do any ethical issues really stand out in Steiner's essay?
- What is the role of museum collections and publications in contemporary African art (re)production?
- What are your thoughts about Steiner's suggestion that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible to know the production contexts for a good many African art objects?
- How do museums contribute to notions of 'secrecy' about African objects?

Zoom Class:

Discuss readings and examine Object 2 (African art object)

F Sept 18: Writing Practice

Exercise: Writing Self-Assessment

In order to work with you on your writing practice, I'd like to learn more about what you think of your own writing, and how you approach the writing process. Please answer these questions as honestly as possible.

Non-exhaustive list of considerations for writers:

- Grammar
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Style (syntax, word choice, tone)
- Outlining
- Thesis/Argument
- Supporting Evidence
- Ability to communicate complex ideas (your own, others')
- Citation
- Avoiding plagiarism
- Procrastination
- Understanding the prompt/responsiveness to prompt
- Persuasion
- Writing for an academic audience/publication
- Word counts

What do you think you do well, as a writer?
What do you think you struggle with, as a writer?
When was a time you were proud of something you had written? Why?
Why is writing important for you?
What is keeping you from continuing to progress in your writing practice?
Do you have a favorite author/writer? Tell me what you enjoy about the writing.

Notes on Writing:

Really good writing is HARD to do (it takes skill, and to become skilled you have to practice), and it is EASY to read.

<https://mobile.twitter.com/RottenTomatoes/status/1280619707893071872>

“LMM is illustrating intention and choice. The writer intends to have a specific effect on the audience and then makes choices to try to achieve that effect. Writing is thinking. And the way writers express their thinking is by making choices.” (Warner 2020)

As you write, be able to answer the questions: What do you mean here? Why did you use this word or phrase? Why structure it this way?

<http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/2.1/features/brent/burke.htm>

M Sept 21: Collecting Correspondence

No class meeting. Please prepare for the next class meeting by reading and analyzing the digitized correspondence between collector May Weber and dealer Ladislav Segy from the Weber Collection Archives.

There are 99 pages of correspondence/papers, which has been digitized and provided to you. I have divided the files by year. As you read, consider the following questions:

- How would you describe the relationship between Segy and Weber?
- How does Segy establish the authenticity of the objects he is selling?
- How does Segy establish the value of the objects he is selling?
- How does 'expertise' show up in this corpus (texts and visuals that make up the correspondence)?
- What does attention to chronology and time tell you?
- What connections can you make between this corpus and our readings/discussions?
- What further questions does this corpus raise? As in, after reading this, what LARGER questions could you ask about collecting?

W Sept 23: Collecting Correspondence

Zoom Class: We'll discuss your thoughts about the questions pertinent to the Weber-Segy Correspondence. Please come prepared to speak to each question. Please have access to the original correspondence and any notes you have taken.

F Sept 25: Approaching Objects

Zoom Class: Explore our objects that we'll conduct research with.

Please have out Object 4 (textile)

Discuss the 'Preparing the Object Report' document

Look at a sample research paper

Preparing the Object Report

This document has been designed to support you in gathering evidence and developing understandings of your object. It is not something that can be filled out quickly. I want you to take the information you generate for each assignment and use that to fill in the blanks here. You will need to do further research to fill in many of the other blanks.

You have some latitude on how you approach the object report. Some of you may want to structure your report in a way that mirrors the categories below. Some of these categories may receive an uneven treatment – you might be

able to say much about one, and less about another. Some you may be unable or uninterested in addressing. That's fine. Some of you may want to construct more of a research article style of paper, in which case you would likely privilege the contextualization (put it up front). I still want to see you present the evidence that you gather, likely in more of an appendix format.

What I am very interested in seeing is your efforts to gather and evaluate evidence. Once you have done this, at a minimum I would like to see you argue (claim, evidence, warrant) for an attribution. If you would like to further contextualize within a theoretical or conceptual arena (argue), do that. But the information that you place in this document are the bones of your work. Ultimately, I want all of this information, but you have latitude in the formatting and approach of the research paper or report that you turn in.

A note on evidence: You will use internal evidence (what you can see from your object) and external evidence to fill in this document. A note on external/supporting evidence: please refer to external sources – publications, websites, museum databases, comparable objects, diagrams, personal communication, museum exhibits, etc. Please consider/note the veracity of the source: author, scope, date, theoretical framework, transparency regarding attribution vs documentation.

I. Observation

1. Size: (cm)
2. Marks/labels: description or transcription of anything physically attached to the object, mount, etc.
3. What materials compose the object?
 - *General* (metal, wood, hair, beads)
 - *Specific* (tin, ironwood, deerhide, seed beads) What evidence do you have to support this?
4. What techniques were used to make this object? What evidence do you have to support this?
 - Raw materials (cotton, etc)
 - Dyeing (batik, etc)
 - Weave (plain weave, etc)
 - Decoration (embroidery, etc)
5. Ornamentation/decoration
 - What do you OBSERVE in terms of patterns, symmetry, iconography, and motif (a recurring fragment, theme or pattern)? I recommend you count, and you define what constitutes a pattern or motif, describe the iconography, and describe the type of symmetry.
 - Are there meanings attached to any of these? What evidence do you have to support this?
6. Overall form
 - Does this object bear any relation, in overall form, to other objects, or groups of objects? What are those, and how is it similar or different?

II. Documentation

How is this object described in the May Weber PastPerfect catalogue?

Is there any other May Weber-specific documentation? Summarize and/or create an Appendix.

Your comments on this evidence:

III. Attribution

Function:

- What do you think the function is?
- Why do you think this? What evidence do you have to support this?

Cultural Attribution - General:

- What you think the broad geographic area is (continent/world region):
- Why do you think this? What evidence do you have to support this?

Cultural Attribution – More specific:

- What you think the more specific geographic area is (country, or region within country):
- Why do you think this? What evidence do you have to support this?

Cultural Attribution – Very specific:

- Attribution to a cultural, ethnic, or racial group:
- Why do you think this? What evidence do you have to support this?

Date:

- When was this object made?
- Why do you think this? What evidence do you have to support this?

IV. Biography

What does the physical evidence from the object itself tell you about the object's biography?

What else can you find or suggest about the object's biography?

V. Context

What are the various contexts through which you would want to further contextualize your object?

For example: labor, commodification, colonialism, fashion, collecting, knowledge, gender, the lifecourse, kinship, aesthetics, technology, globalization, representation, ritual, class..... and on.

Of these, which one or two seems most compelling? Why?

Note here what you already know about these (or this) context. I'd like to see notes on what you think you know, and more direct notes from secondary sources.

VI. Bibliography

Here I would like you to keep a record of all the sources you have consulted that bear ANY relevant to your object. You may not use all of these.

VII. Works Cited

A selection of those references from your bibliography that you are citing.

F Sept 28: Approaching Objects, Generally

Prior to Class: Watch lecture "Approaching Objects" (31:38)

Reading: Caple, Chris. 2006. *Objects: Reluctant Witnesses to the Past*. London: Routledge. Chapter One: Investigating Objects: Theories and Approaches pp 1-32

Reading Guide:

Compare 1.2 and 1.3. What is missing from 1.3 compared to 1.2?

1.4 Theoretical approaches to objects

Section on Marx. How would you measure/discover (what would you need to know):

- use value:
- exchange value:
- value of labor:

Object as instrument: Can objects perform functions for which they have not been designed?

Object as symbols: Think of an object with multiple (perhaps contested) meanings. (Note objects and meanings here)

Object as symbols: spirit containers: Does this idea change how you think about or behave in collections?

Objects as symbolic things of value: How is value realized through exchange? How is value realized through resistance to exchange?

Objects as historic documents: Write down a specific example of:

- Object as proof:
- Object as typology:
- Object as industrial history:

Context: What/who/where do you think of as "the museum context"?

1.5 Design theory: Choose an object around you. Work backwards to explain why certain designs (formal qualities) or material choices were made.

1.6 Object biographies – skim this, we'll see it again later

1.7 Factors affecting the study of objects

Can you think of an example of objects you have seen in a museum that fit into these categories. Name the object and the museum.

- Bespoke
- Crafted
- mass-produced

Bias of objects: How are museums "biased" toward objects?

Bias of interpreter: What are your limitations as an object interpreter?

1.8 You don't need to continue reading past this point. It's highly technical, but of interest in a reference-type of way.

Zoom Class:

What is this Object? Special Guest Zoom with [Dr. Kristin Otto, New Mexico State University](#)

Discuss Caple

Have out Objects 2 (African art) & 4 (Textile)

W Sept 30: Ideal Types

Prior to Class: Watch lecture "Ideal Type Method" (38:06)

Reading: Greene, Candace. 1992. "Documentation, Attribution, and the Ideal Type" In *Art and Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture and Museum Studies in Honor of Jane Powell Dwyer*. Brown University Research Papers in Anthropology Number 5. (9-17)

Reading Guide:

- What is documentation? What is involved? What are the major issues here?
- What is attribution? What is involved? What are the major issues here?
- Why don't 'experts' record the basis on which they make identifications in museum or publication records?
- Within the life history of an object, what does attribution focus on?
- Within the life history of an object, what does documentation focus on?
- Ideal Type Method – In your own words, what is this?
- When evaluating sources, which sources are the most reliable? Why are publications unreliable?
- What other sources are there?
- There are four characteristics that make up the ideal type method. Take notes on how to approach each.
 1. Materials
 2. Techniques
 3. Overall form
 4. Elaboration
- Why is elimination in terms of deciphering cultural origin problematic?
- What is a limitation of the ideal type method?
- Where can you find well-documented comparable objects?

Zoom Class:

Discuss Greene

Have out Objects 2 (African art) & 4 (Textile)

F Oct 2: Drawing as Method

Reading: Causey, Andrew. 2017. *Drawn to See: Drawing as an Ethnographic Method*. North York: Univ of Toronto Press. Chapters 2 & 3 (25-71)

Zoom Class:

We will do modified versions of Causey's drawing etudes in class.

You will need 1) the printed out copy of a Zuni water vase (found in your object box) [a black and white photograph or drawing of an object], 2) the printed letters & numbers sheet [from the Causey reading], 3) Object 3 (object for drawing), and 4) the paper (regular, tracing, sketching) in your object box.

Drawing Exercises

ONE: Upside-Down Drawing (5 minutes) – Zuni Water Vase (turned upside down) - regular paper

Draw exactly what you see, line for line. Don't turn the image "right-side" up. Start anywhere and copy (but do not trace).

TWO: Simple Tracing (3 minutes) – Zuni Water Vase - tracing paper

Place a blank sheet over the Zuni Water Vase. Trace what you consider to be the **basic outlines of the main subjects**. What separates one entity from another?

THREE: Letters and Numbers (5 minutes) – Letters and Numbers Sheet - regular paper

With broad, certain strokes, draw the elements you see on the sheet. Try to replicate just the shapes you see rather than writing the “letters and numbers” because then you’ll see that these familiar forms (forms you have vast experience making) are simple and direct. Don’t take too long to copy each.

FOUR: Finding Numbers and Letters (6 minutes) – Object 3 - regular or drawing paper

Draw the essential structure of Object 3 with your pencil using the form of letters and numbers. Look for the edges and draw the shapes that you see.

FIVE: Drawing from Memory (3 minutes) – Object 3 - drawing paper or flip over drawing paper

Study your object for 1 minute. Draw a part (or whole) of your object from memory.

M Oct 5: Describe & Draw Your Object

Zoom Class: Answer any questions about the assignment & approach.

Object Description and Drawing Assignment (15 points)

This assignment was originally developed by Professors Jennifer Roberts and David Odo of Harvard University. It was further adapted by Professor Bill Wood of University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. See: Wood, W. Warner and Nancy Lurie. "Advanced Seminar in Museological Problems" University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; Smithsonian Institute in Museum Anthropology. <https://hdl.handle.net/10088/99472>

Object Description & Drawing Overview: You will prepare a detailed, written description about the formal qualities of your object that reflects close-looking and raises questions for further study that you will address in your research report. You will prepare written responses to each of the 10 categories of description and a short reflection. You will also draw your object, or a portion of your object. Your written description must be at least 2 single spaced pages in length. You will receive feedback from me, which you will incorporate into your research report.

Assignment Instructions:

Close, careful looking (and a thoughtful response to what you observe) is central to all visual and material culture inquiry. It requires a form of close, intentionally focused attention that is not part of everyday visual experience but that offers immense intellectual rewards. It also requires you to engage in prolonged reflection on an object and your own changing store of knowledge and experience about it—the process of “objectification” as described by Daniel Miller.

This assignment asks that you make *detailed* observations of your object. These can be in multiple formats (text, drawing, photography, video, sound), but for this assignment you must include both text and drawing. At this point, you are getting to know your object and I don't expect you to bring any contextual knowledge about its cultural production and use. Assume nothing, or at least note your assumptions. Approach your object as if you were a visitor from another planet with no prior knowledge of its configuration or content. If you are not surprised by your object in some way during this assignment, you haven't looked hard enough.

As you examine your object, consider each of the following categories of description and make notes about them. Your notes need not be extensively edited but they should demonstrate you have looked closely and carefully at the object. What this means is that I do not require formal writing, but I do expect what you have written to be highly informative. Feel free to pepper your notes with speculations and questions, so long as these are distinguished from your direct observations (italics work well). I expect your notes to use terminology that we have encountered in class.

At the end of your notes, write a paragraph speculating about possible research avenues that have been suggested through this technique of analysis. What kinds of larger questions have been raised in the process of applying it?

As for the drawing, it is up to you how to proceed. You may want to focus on overall form, or draw a design element or motif. Approach drawing as a way of seeing, as a way to appreciate the knowledge involved in making.

Optional Reading: Why bother with such prolonged “deep” looking? See the following article by Harvard University Professor Jennifer Roberts: “The Power of Patience: Teaching Students the Value of Deceleration and Immersive Attention” (*Harvard Magazine*, November-December 2013) <https://harvardmagazine.com/2013/11/the-power-of-patience>

Categories of Description:

1) Proportion: what are the overall dimensions of the object (in both two- and three- dimensions)? What proportional relationships define the object, both in its overall form and among major internal elements?

2) Materials used: identify, if possible, all materials used to create the object. If you cannot identify them describe them as fully as you can. Note their patterns of distribution.

3) Line: Identify and describe all linear elements, actual or implied, in the object. Are lines emphasized or deemphasized? How do you think the weaving technique affects lines? Are there prominent horizontal lines? Vertical lines? Diagonals? Are there lines (actual or implied) that connect different parts of the object or different objects represented?

4) Geometries and formal echoes: Look for an emphasis or deemphasis on basic geometrical units like circles, triangles, cones, squares, etc. Look for patterns: repeating shapes, nesting shapes, symmetrical arrangements, etc. Identify relationships of scale and number among similar forms.

5) Organization of forms in 3D space: For an object: how are forms arranged in actual 3-D space? For a 2D representation: how is 3D space implied, if at all? What about "negative space" (spaces that recede from the viewer)?

6) Color: Identify (with as much precision as you are able) the different colors used. Then examine saturation and brightness. Examine patterning, distribution, and echoes much as you did with geometrical elements in step 4. Look for where the lightest light is. Where is the darkest dark? Is there high contrast between the colors? Are they complementary?

7) Representational and textual content: Produce an inventory of everything represented "in" the object. Note/transcribe any text. (For completely abstract objects, this step can be skipped).

8) Mobility and manipulability: How easy is it to move or manipulate your object? What leads you to these conclusions?

9) Function: Based on your observations so far, speculate as to the intended function of the object.

10) User profile or implied viewer: Based on your observations so far, speculate as to the status and characteristics of the implied user or viewer. (How does the object *create* its viewer or user?) Is the viewer a man or a woman? An individual or a group? Where is the viewer? What kind of a body does he/she/they have?

Grading Rubric

Criteria	Points Available	Points Earned
Drawing – grade based on effort	5	
Descriptive Notes	8	

Reflection	2	
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W Oct 7: Making?

Zoom Class:

Make a pinch pot.

You'll find clay in your object box. [provide students with air-dry clay]

FIRST!: on a piece of paper, DRAW the pot you intend to make.

Watch these 2 instructional videos: [here](#) and [here](#).

Start pinching!

F Oct 9: Objects that have grown

Reading: Ingold, Tim. 2000. "Making Culture and Weaving the World" in *Matter, Materiality and Modern Culture*. Pp 50 – 71. London: Routledge.

Reading Guide:

Look at your object. Describe how it grows, and why is it not 'made'. In order to do this, you should have an understanding of the argument Ingold is making. The piece reads as a kind of thought-experiment, as if Ingold is leading you through his line of reasoning.

Zoom Class:

Discuss Ingold

Have your pinch pot out

M Oct 12: Weaving

Prior to class: watch lecture on "Textile Techniques" (26:55)

Watch: "[World Weaving](#)". Please watch: Looms; Warps; Weft Facing Weaving; Warp Facing Weaving; Ikat Designs

Reading: Emery, Irene. 2009. *The Primary Structures of Fabrics: An Illustrated Classification*. New York: Thames and Hudson. Read: "D. Two or more sets of elements" (73-90)

Reading Guide: This is an extremely technical reading. In preparation for class/Zoom, you should read pages 74-78, stopping at 'Variant Use: tapestry weave'. You should come to Zoom with some familiarity with the technical terms and processes. At the least, you should know that warp and weft are different things, and that these elements interlock to form a woven fabric.

After watching the lecture on textile techniques, you will look closely at your object, attempting to identify the woven structure(s) that are used. You need to have access to the reading pdf so you can use it as a reference text to help you in your identification.

You do not need to post anything on Forums, but you can post questions or notes, photos of your object, etc.

W Oct 14: Close Looking

Zoom Class: I will be on in case you have questions. I want you to try and characterize your textile -- weft-facing? Warp-facing? Balanced? What is the count? Do your best with this! Use the hand lens/counter in your box.

Reference Materials for Textile Techniques

Phipps, Elena. 2011. *Looking at Textiles: A Guide to Technical Terms*. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum.

Hodges, Henry. 1989. *Artifacts: An introduction to early materials and technology*. Kingston: Frye & Company. (Chp 10 on Textiles and Baskets)

Kadolph, Sara. 1993. *Textiles*. [Pearson](#).

F Oct 16: Textiles in Context

Reading: Gordon, Beverly. 2011. *Textiles: The Whole Story*. NY: Thames & Hudson.

Reading Guide:

“Social Meaning of Textiles”

**Included in PDF is “Cloth as Communication” – you may peruse

This chapter is divided by section headings, including:

- ‘Family’
 - Are there textiles that you are familiar with (perhaps personally so) that connect you to your family? Are there textiles that are exchanged to mark familial relationships?
- ‘Love, Sex, Friendship’
 - How are textiles used to emphasize human sexuality? Is this culturally constructed?
- ‘Creating Community’
 - Can you provide some examples of how textiles are used to create connections between social groups, and within social groups?
- ‘Sharing work, forging bonds’
 - Can you provide some examples of how textile production, exchange, and use processes/contexts are separated based on gender or age divisions?
- ‘Leisure & Play’
 - How do you define leisure and play? What assumptions or experiences are you bringing to this definition? Consider non-Western cultural ‘performances’ (put on for outsiders). What is problematic about treating this as leisure and play?
- Rallying to the Flag
 - Imagine the following: watching someone rip up a piece of paper depicting the American Flag, versus watching someone tear apart a flag made of fabric. Is there a difference in your response? Explain.
- Textile-making, charity, community
 - Why are textiles used for charitable acts?
- You don’t know very much about your object at this point, but please note some questions or ideas this reading raises for you on what kinds of questions you could ask.

Zoom Class:

Discuss Gordon reading

M Oct 19: Object Sequences

Zoom Class:

Answer any questions about object sequence assignment.

Object Sequence (15 points)

This assignment was developed by Dr. Joshua Bell (Curator of Globalization, Smithsonian Institution Department of Anthropology, shared at the SI SIMA). It was further adapted by Professor Bill Wood of University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. See: Wood, W. Warner and Nancy Lurie. "Advanced Seminar in Museological Problems" University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; Smithsonian Institute in Museum Anthropology. <https://hdl.handle.net/10088/99472>

Object Sequence: You will investigate the processes by which your object was constructed or made. You will create a diagram that shows the sequence of these processes. You will then write at least 1 single spaced page where you reflect upon what about your object was revealed through the application of this technique, what questions were opened up but remain unanswered, and your best guess as to the possible resources that have the potential to help you answer those remaining questions. You will receive feedback from me, which you will incorporate into your research report.

Assignment Instructions:

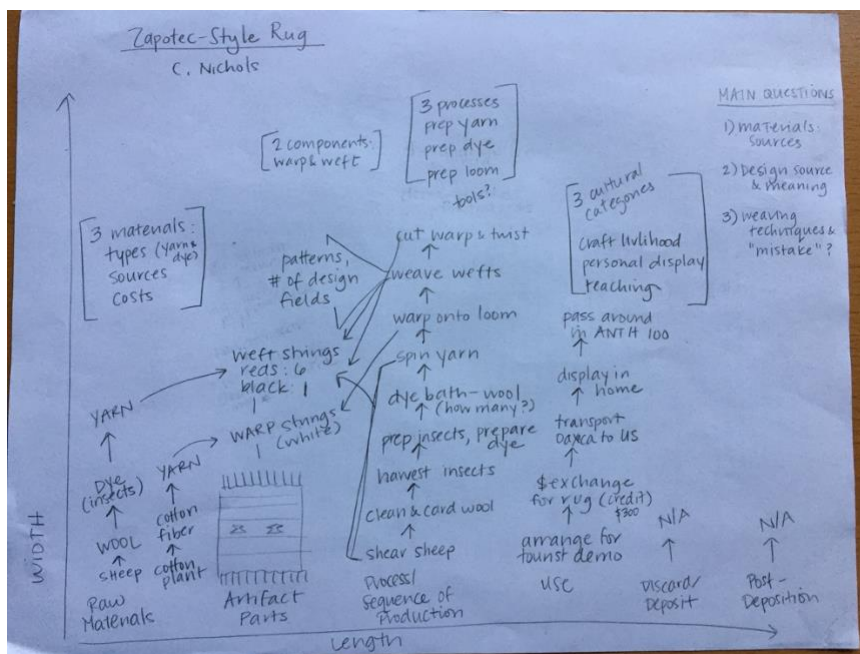
Chaîne Opératoire: Careful examination of the materials from and processes/techniques by which objects/artifacts are made is central to material culture inquiry. This technique requires close attention to how material objects are put together as well as to their potential uses (based on the material evidence “on hand” in the object). This way of experiencing an object is not how most people experience objects but offers immense insights into their “social lives”.

As described by Martínón-Torres and Coupaye in the pieces you read, chaîne-opératoire (“operational sequences”) is an “ensemble of approaches” to objects that focuses on gleaning clues as to the socio-political context of their production and consumption/use from the actual objects themselves.

For this assignment you need to apply the chaîne-opératoire to your object. You will create an object “explosion” diagram as you examine your object to illustrate the chaîne-opératoire. You then need to write a response where you reflect upon what about your object was revealed through the application of this technique, what questions were opened up but remain unanswered, and your best guess as to the possible resources that have the potential to help you answer those remaining questions. This should be at a minimum, 1 single spaced page in length.

Grading Rubric

Criteria	Points Available	Points Earned
Diagram	10	
Written Response	5	



W Oct 21: 'Exploding Objects'

Watch: ['Exploding Objects' Webinar](#) with Dr. Joshua Bell

Use class time to work on your object sequence. Dr. Bell's webinar may raise further questions/considerations you can incorporate into your diagram and reflection.

W Oct 21: Operational Sequences

Reading: Martínón-Torres, Marcos. 2002. “Chaîne-Opératoire: The Concept and Its Applications Within the Study of Technology” *Gallaecia* 21: 29-43.

Reading Guide:

- How does he define chaîne-opératoire? What is this?

- What is the relationship between the production sequence and the larger social/cultural context?
- Consider how you would approach your object in terms of looking for evidence of: raw materials, tools, energy, techniques, sequence of gestures.

Reading: Coupaye, Ludovic. 2009. "Ways of Enchanting: Chaîne-Opératoires and Yam Cultivation in Nyamikum Village, Maprik, Papua New Guinea" *Journal of Material Culture* 14(4): 433-458.

Reading Guide:

- Do not get bogged down in pages 433 through 436. Focus on the case study, which begins at the bottom of 436.
- After reading Martín-Torres, you might get a sense that reconstructing the production sequence is a relatively straightforward activity. How does Coupaye's case study complicate this idea?
- You may have very little information (documentation) about the specific social context of your object's production. From the literature you may be able to get at some information about the social contexts of objects like yours. How do these limitations affect the usefulness of the operational sequence method?

Zoom Class:

Discuss articles.

M Oct 26: Networked Biographies

Reading: Foster, Robert J. 2012. "Notes for a Networked Biography: The P.G.T. Black Collection of Oceanic Things." *Museum Anthropology* 35(2): 149-169.

Reading Guide:

- Quoting from the paper: "Objects have "biographies" over the course of which meanings accumulate and shift in ways that engage and inflect larger social forces...Kopytoff states that a "culturally informed economic biography" would understand a thing or set of things "as a culturally constructed entity, endowed with culturally specific meanings and classified and reclassified into culturally constituted categories."
- How might you use internal evidence and external evidence to construct a biography of your object?
- Quoting from the paper: "networked biography, a term that despite its inelegance serves to suggest that a biographical approach to things entails tracing the network of social relations in which things are caught up or entangled at any given moment."
- How is this different? What does it add or shift in terms of constructing an object biography?
- Museums may be, but really aren't, "warehouses of inert objects." I want you to very playfully and experimentally connect your object to another museum object – be specific or general (but be specific 😊) and use the Weber Collection or another museum... What is the nature of the connection?
- Sometimes collecting is portrayed as forced or coerced removal, or stealing. How does Foster highlight the agency and interests (perhaps the complex subjectivities) of BOTH (or all) agents in the moment of exchange/collection?
- Why are anthropological collections (let's say from an ethnic minority, minority, or other nationality) claimed as national patrimony?

Zoom Class:

Discuss article.

Oct 28 – Nov 2; Nov 18 - 20: Object Research

Object Research Paper: Based on your research, you will suggest a cultural, geographic, and/or temporal attribution for your object. Attributions are based on comparison and function as a thesis or argument does, in which you make claims (attribution), support those claims with external and internal evidence, and offer a discussion of how the evidence warrants the claims. You are expected to incorporate relevant portions of your object description and sequence in your report as part of your evidence. In addition, you should analyze your object in context, commenting on various domains of meaning and significance. A bibliography of external sources (primary and

secondary) you have consulted is required. This paper should be at least 6 single spaced pages in length, exclusive of photographs or visual comparisons. You will receive feedback from me on the first draft of your report, and will be expected to make edits. Your final report will be filed in perpetuity in the May Weber Collection archives. Make sure you are using the object report preparation worksheet.

In order to complete your object research paper, you will need to do research on your object in particular. By this point, you should have a good sense of how to proceed -- what avenues you want to pursue and the kinds of resources that might be available to you. I will be meeting with you individually in these two weeks to make suggestions and to answer your questions about your research.

In terms of accessing resources, COVID-19 has imposed some limits on what you can physically access. The University Libraries will not allow you to request entire books through Interlibrary Loan, but you will be able to request scans of particular chapters, as well as articles from periodicals. You should also scour museum databases in your search for comparable objects. I will do my best to share published resources from the Weber Collection library with you, but this depends on my ability to access them, and transmit them to you. The following are some textile-specific journals that may help you. You should search for keywords within these journals to identify particular articles.

Collections research is not a competition. I am asking you to please share information with your peers, and with me. I'm more than happy to add to the below list. If you run across something that looks similar to something someone else is working on, please email them or me! Major research karma!

[Textile: Cloth and Culture](#)

[Hali](#)

[Dress: The Journal of the Costume Society of America](#)

[Textile Museum Journal](#)

[Oxford Asian Textile Group Blog](#)

[Hearst Museum Online Textile Exhibit](#)

[Bead Research](#)

Searchable Museum Collection Databases

[Cornell Fashion & Textile Collection](#)

[National Museum of Natural History - Anthropology](#)

[British Museum](#)

[Art Institute of Chicago](#)

[American Museum of Natural History - Anthropology](#)

[Fashion & Race Database](#)

[GWU Museum/Textile Museum Database](#)

[V&A Collections Database](#)

[The Metropolitan Museum of Art \(NY\) Collections Database](#)

[Fowler Museum \(UCLA\)](#)

[Kyoto Costume Institute Digital Archive](#)

[Royal Ontario Museum Collections Online](#)

[Kent State University Museum Collections Online](#)

[Mingei International Museum](#)

Facebook/Social Media Groups

**These are social media groups so please use them as a resource and not the definitive word. Also, like any social media group, always a good idea to follow and WATCH/READ until you get a sense of group norms/conventions, prior to posting anything.

[Ethnic Textiles Community \(FB\)](#)

[Natural Dyes \(FB\)](#)

[Heritage Textiles \(FB\)](#)

[Oxford Asian Textiles Group \(FB\)](#)

W Nov 4: What is Tourist Art?

Watch prior to class: lecture on Tourist Art (21:34)

F Nov 6: Exploring Tourist Art in PNG

Reading: Silverman, Eric Kline. 1999. "Tourist Art as the Crafting of Identity in the Sepik River (Papua New Guinea)." In *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, ed. Phillips and Steiner, 51-66. UCalifornia Press.

Reading Guide:

- Before you read, what immediate associations do you have with the term/concept "tourist art"?
- How does Silverman's article change those associations? (Or if it doesn't, why not?)
- HOPEFULLY on Zoom, I'm going to show you some examples of objects that **might be** tourist art from East Iatmul. Take notes from the article that will help you identify the relevant characteristics of these objects **as tourist art**.

Zoom Class:

Discuss Silverman

Look at possible PNG tourist art from the Weber Collection

Here's an [exhibit on Middle Sepik art](#)

M Nov 9: Discussing Exhibits

Reading: Bouttiaux, Anne-Marie. 2012. "Challenging the Dead Hand of the Museum Display." *Museum Anthropology* 35(1): 35-48.

Reading Guide:

- Do you agree with Bouttiaux's suggestion of the deadening effect of museums? Can you provide some examples where you think you've experienced this?
- What do you think she means when she talk about the excessive use of the term 'tradition' in museum discourse? Have you encountered this in a museum, your research, or some other representational format? Could you write a sentence/paragraph that you think exemplifies the problematic use of this term?
- What does Bouttiaux do (in the exhibitions she curates) to address the problem of exhibiting masks in the absence of their wearers? She notes, "This absence is particularly crippling because the really powerful and dynamic part—the wearing of a mask—is lost." (36)
- How do the requirements of the object itself (its use in originating context) complicate exhibitionary approaches? That is to say, do you think how the mask is "traditionally" used plays a role in how it can or should be exhibited? She talks about two kinds of Guro masks – does she exhibit them the same way?
- Has this article raised any considerations for you, in terms of how you will approach the digital interpretation (digital exhibition) of your object? Any thoughts about the role of 'supplementary' media (or not so supplementary....)?

Zoom Class:

Discuss Bouttiaux

M Nov 11: Discussing Exhibit Labels

Reading: Strong, Pauline Turner. 1997. "Exclusive Labels: Indexing the National 'We' in Commemorative and Oppositional Exhibits." *Museum Anthropology* 21(1): 42-56.

Reading Guide:

- Note here some of your initial thoughts on 'museum labels' – before reading the article. Do you read them? Do you read them critically? What function do they serve? Have you thought about them before?
- When Strong discusses museum labels as indexical, what does she want us to think of them doing?

- Could you think of an example of an unconventional label? (See her discussion of metapragmatic function). Write one with your object in mind?
- How are labels used in celebratory (here she discusses Quincentenary) exhibits?
- How are labels used in oppositional exhibits?

Zoom Class:

Strong

Look at photographs of labels from the May Weber Museum of Cultural Arts

F Nov 13: Interpretive Writing

Prior to class: watch lecture on Exhibit Labels/Interpretation (16:40)

Reading: Serrell, Beverly. 1996. *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press. Chps 1, 7

Zoom Class:

Discuss the AAM Excellence in Label Writing Competition

We'll look at the [2020 winners](#) (though feel free to look through past winners on your own)

Digital Interpretation (10 points)

Digital Interpretation Overview: You will write an interpretive label for your object that communicates a point of interest to a particular audience, based on your research. Each word (and its spatial placement) must be carefully crafted in order to achieve your interpretive objective. You will present your draft in class for peer critique, and make edits.

Assignment Instructions:

One of the key functions of museums that hold collections of material culture is to present those objects to visitors. 'Visitors' is sometimes a nebulous term and can include a range of individuals (very young to old, different educational levels, variations in language ability, different political orientations, etc). Online exhibitions may allow a museum to extend access to more audiences, but in some cases the experience of being in close physical proximity of 'the real thing' is lost.

Because the May Weber Collection has no permanent and/or dedicated exhibition space, students through the public history and digital humanities masters programs are developing an online public-facing database that allows virtual visitors access to the collection. One of the tools available through the database program (CollectiveAccess) is to create a 'gallery' or 'collection' of objects, functioning somewhat like an online exhibit.

For this assignment, I'm asking you to consider how you would present your object to 'visitors'. Though online exhibits allow for a different (multifaceted) experience with objects (as opposed to in-person exhibits), this tool is not highly developed so there are technical limitations. What I would like for you to do is develop (at the least) an interpretive text for your object, written with 'visitors' in mind. You may include a limited amount of multi-media that we could display on the site (as in it needs to be in the public domain so we don't run into copyright issues – check out Creative Commons).

Your text should be between 100-250 words. I encourage you to think creatively here – you could do 'nested' texts, or develop different texts for different audiences (children vs adults, English-speakers vs non-English speakers, etc). This interpretive text should reflect what you have found in your research, but presents a more creative opportunity for you to engage with your object. Unfortunately, at this point, I don't think we can facilitate getting your objects and texts online as we are working through university channels to resolve site hosting issues. Also, please include recommendations for how you might want your object presented visually (how you would request it be photographed).

You must turn in a draft (emailed to me) for peer critique (in class). Final text uploaded in a word doc, and you should also be able to upload images into the LMS.

Grading Rubric

Criteria	Points Available	Points Earned
Draft Label (emailed to me for peer critique)	5	
Final Label (edits made based on peer critique)	5	

M Nov 16: Writing Your Label

Zoom Class:

Complete some short exercises on label-writing for your object

Label writing prompts:

- What would viewer notice when looking at a photograph of your textile? Write to direct your viewer to what they can see: size, shape, color, content, position
- Objects are about PEOPLE. Write to highlight people, their actions, the affect of your object
- Translating research into label text – identify 2-3 ideas that you want to communicate. Write no more than 35 words on each.
- Write about technique using Ingold’s ideas
- Write a haiku about your object (haiku is more than 7-5-7, but for this exercise, do 7-5-7), or write any kind of poem
- Write a question about your object that would engage the viewer
- Write about your object in the first person (I...)
- Write about your object from the perspective of your object? (I, pants)

Nov 30 – Dec 4: Label Presentations

Zoom Class:

Please have your label text ready to present as PPT slide. Everyone should be prepared to offer critical feedback (peer review).

Final Label Presentation & 'People's Choice' Award

Everyone should be prepared to present the final version of the label as a PPT slide. Everyone will vote for their favorite label and that person will win a small prize