

## Materials contributed by Jason Baird Jackson

Mathers Museum of World Cultures  
Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology  
Department of Anthropology  
Indiana University

These materials are from an Indiana University graduate course titled Curatorship (FOLK F731). While the majority of course participants come from the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, a significant number of students from the Department of Anthropology, the Arts Administration program in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs, and the Information and Library Science program in the School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering also take the course. The Departments of History, History of Art, and American Studies have also been represented by enrollees. The course typically includes 8-12 MA and PhD students drawn from these programs. Both folklorists and ethnomusicologists are represented among those from the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology. The course has been taken by students who are now working as curators and as other kinds of museum professionals, by graduates now working in other kinds of public humanities (especially public folklore) positions, and by university-based scholars, some of whom maintain a museum focus in their work. These kinds of outcomes are those that the course is intended to serve.

In the ecology of coursework offered at Indiana University, this course is most closely aligned with a neighboring course called Museums and Material Culture (FOLK F730). As that course has a particular focus on issues of display—both in everyday life and in museums—the exhibition side of curatorship is downplayed in Curatorship. This course combines aspects of a brief, intense, graduate level introduction to general museum work, with a SIMA-like focus on collections research, and the seminar-like exploration of themes of special concerns to MA and PhD level curators. This later aspect of the course connects most directly to the kinds of general training that Indiana students in the disciplines (folklore studies, anthropology, history, etc.) are getting and helps connect general training to curatorial practice as scholarly practice. The course is also designed with awareness of other relevant and neighboring courses beyond Museums and Material Culture. These include Public Practice in Folklore and Ethnomusicology (FOLK F532), Theories of Material Culture (FOLK F540), Folk Art (FOLK F540), Laboratory in Public Folklore (FOLK F805), Heritage and Cultural Property (F804), and Museum Practicum in Folklore (FOLK F806) in Folklore and Ethnomusicology and Introduction to Museum Studies (ANTH A403) and Graduate Museum Practicum (ANTH-A576) in Anthropology. Curatorship students will sometimes have taken one or more of these courses and many go on to take them afterwards. Most Indiana University SIMA participants (at least, in or before, 2017) also participated in Curatorship.

Curatorship is taught in the Mathers Museum of World Cultures and group collections projects focus on selected collections from the museum's holdings. Final papers are added to relevant collections files and collections are often selected in relation to larger museum priorities and

projects, to which students thereby contribute. Sometimes these group projects continue on into practicum projects, museum exhibitions, MA theses, MA projects, etc.

#### Materials Posted (Spring 2018 Versions)

- 1 Flyer
- 2 Syllabus
- 3 Bibliography
- 4 Blog Review Assignment
- 5 Catalogue Review Assignment
- 6 Article Annotations Assignment
- 7 Database Review Assignment
- 8 Digital Exhibition Assignment
- 9 Exhibition Review Assignment
- 10 Book Review Assignment
- 11 Group Project Notes
- 12 "Curating the Ostrom Collection: IU Students Practice Hands-On Curatorship at Mathers" (2013)

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# Curatorship

*A multidisciplinary graduate course for Spring 2017 utilizing the collections of the Mathers Museum of World Cultures.*

**Thursdays**

**8:30–11 a.m.**

FOLK F731 (31215)

**Professor Jason Baird Jackson**

[www.indiana.edu/~folklore/graduate/](http://www.indiana.edu/~folklore/graduate/)



**INDIANA UNIVERSITY**  
FULFILLING *the* PROMISE



<b>Course</b>	<b>Curatorship</b>  Folklore F731 (31215) Indiana University Spring 2018
<b>Instructor</b>	Jason Baird Jackson Director, Mathers Museum of World Cultures (MMWC) Professor, Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology Professor, Department of Anthropology  Office in Mathers Museum Administrative Annex (812) 856-1868 jbj@indiana.edu
<b>Class Meetings</b>	Mathers Museum of World Cultures Thursdays, 8:30-11:00 a.m.
<b>Office Hours</b>	Wednesdays 8:30-10:00 and by appointment.
<b>Course Description</b>	What do curators do? What hands-on skills should a graduate student acquire in order to prepare for a career working in museums or similar cultural heritage archives? How do the theoretical debates within various humanities and social science disciplines connect to the practical work that curators and other museum or archives professionals pursue? Complementing other Indiana University—Bloomington courses concerned with (1) museum history and theory, (2) museum exhibitions, (3) non-profit administration, and (4) informal education, Curatorship is a graduate seminar aimed at concurrently teaching fundamental skills basic to curatorial work and exploring the ways that theoretical, ethical, and methodological problems are worked out in the day-to-day work of museums of art, ethnography, archaeology, and history, as well as in the kinds of archives and media repositories that serve a range of humanities and social science disciplines. The course will include hands-on activities, seminar discussion, and original research opportunities. While exhibitions will come up in the course of seminar meetings, the foci of the class are all of the other areas relevant to professional curatorial work in museums, particularly those domains related to the larger place of systematic collections in museum practice. These span a range of topics from donation and purchase to collections care, research, and deaccession. Such matters as the problem of authenticity and the role of museums in art markets will be taken up in the context of the practical challenges (and pleasures) of curatorial work.

Along with practical curatorial skills of wide relevance, the course will explore issues of common concern not only for museums, but also for related kinds of heritage archives, including ethnographic sound archives, archaeological repositories, and folklore collections.

### Text and Readings (Required)

- Timothy Ambrose and Crispin Paine (2012) *Museum Basics*. Third Edition. New York: Routledge. [The cheaper second edition will serve just as well.]
- Richard Price and Sally Price (1995) *Enigma Variations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

### (Optional)

- Rebecca A. Buck and Jean Allman Gilmore, eds. (1998) *The New Museum Registration Methods*. Washington, DC: American Association of Museums.
- C. Kurt Dewhurst, Patricia Hall, and Charlie Seeman, eds. *Folklife and Museums: Twenty-First Century Perspectives*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- John M. A. Thompson, ed. (1992) *Manual of Curatorship: A Guide to Museum Practice*. London: Routledge.

As shown below, article-length readings have been assigned for some weeks of the semester. Compared to other graduate course in the College of Arts and Sciences, the class is an activity-heavy course rather than a reading assignment-heavy one. The course assignments will call upon students to do a considerable amount of independent reading and research. As will be discussed in class (and below), students will, at some points in the course, search out, read, annotate, and share with the class, readings and resources relevant to the topics under discussion.

A bibliography of key sources for the theory and practice of curatorship will be distributed separately, as will individual sets of guidelines for each of the course assignments.

### Reading Guide

This note connects the section on readings just given to the week-by-week notes that follow. For reading *Museum Basics*, I note the following scheme. During weeks 1 and 2 of the course, you should read sections 1 and 2 (in the 2nd or 3rd editions).

During weeks 3 and 4, you would read sections 3 and 4 in the 2nd edition or sections 4 and 5 in the 3rd edition. You should then complete the remainder of *Museum Basics* on your own schedule. Through week 6, but particularly during weeks 5 and 6, you will focus on the article/resource annotations. We will discuss this undertaking in class and on Canvas. For week 7, you should read *Enigma Variations* (prior to our class meeting). Although some assigned readings are given below, during weeks 8-11, your reading activities will focus primarily and extensively on your personal contribution to your group collection research project.

## Class Schedule

### 1 January 11. **Introduction**

In the first course meeting, we will discuss the scope and purpose of the course. We will examine the readings, assignments, and class projects. Most centrally we will open up the major issues in museum work as these relate to the work of curators in the disciplines of folklore, ethnomusicology, anthropology, art history, history, and neighboring disciplines. We will also discuss student interests and backgrounds in order to best calibrate the course to student aspirations.

- Candace S. Greene (2015) “Museum Anthropology.” *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences: An Interdisciplinary, Searchable, and Linkable Resource*. 1–15. (Canvas)
- C. Kurt Dewhurst (2017) “Folklife and Museum Practice: An Intertwined History and Emerging Convergences.” In *Folklife and Museums: Twenty-First Century Perspectives*. C. Kurt Dewhurst, Patricia Hall, and Charlie Seeman, eds. Pp. 1-26. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. (Canvas)

### 2 January 18. **(Working) In Museums**

In the second meeting we will use the experience of physically moving through museum facilities as a means of beginning our project of exploring the work of being a curator. We will also identify useful resources on campus and elsewhere that will facilitate our work. (For *Museum Basics*, see “Reading Guide” above)

### 3 January 25. **Collections and their Care**

In this week we will focus on collections management issues for museum collections. This will entail considering environmental controls, pest management approaches, storage systems and materials, and the special conservation issues raised by the exhibition of cultural materials. (For *Museum Basics*, see “Reading Guide” above)

#### 4 February 1. **Museum Objects**

During this meeting, we will focus on objects and their movements into and within museum collections. This will entail considering object storage and preservation, object handling and transportation techniques, museum materials and supplies, accessioning, registration, cataloging, inventory, and location control systems. Also in this week will be discussions of conservation assessments and object condition reports. All of these issues and processes will raise the key issues of metadata and metadata standards in their various forms. Crime associated with museum collections will appear as a secondary topic. (For *Museum Basics*, see “Reading Guide” above)

#### 5 February 8. **Museum Objects, Continued**

The issues from week 4, which are central to the day-to-day work of all curators and special collections archivists will spill over into week 5. We will pick up where we left off and touch on, in addition, the nature of provenience and provenance, object identification, appraisal and insurance valuation, the organization and classification of collections, and electronic databases (on and off-line). (For *Museum Basics*, see “Reading Guide” above)

#### 6 February 15. **Collecting Cultural Objects and Documents**

In this week we will explore the ways that objects and cultural information moves from the world outside the museum into the museum. In what ways does the curator shape/guide/lead this process?: How (and why?) does one go about building a collection?: What is special about field collections? In contrast to the practices of ethnographic, archaeological, and natural history museums, how do history museums and art museums collect?

- William C. Sturtevant (1977) *Guide to Field Collecting of Ethnographic Specimens*. Second Edition. Smithsonian Information Leaflet 503. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press. (Canvas)

- Candace S. Greene (2016) “Material Connections: “The Smithsonian Effect” in Anthropological Cataloguing.” *Museum Anthropology*. 39(2): 147-162.  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/muan.12121/abstract> (Wiley Online Library via IU Library)
- Bruce Altshuler (2007) “Collecting the New: A Historical Introduction.” In *Collecting the New: Museums and Contemporary Art*. Bruce Altshuler, ed. Pp. 1-13. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Project Muse via IU Libraries) <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/30694>

## 7 February 22. **The Problem of Authenticity**

In this week we will use a reading of Richard and Sally Price’s *Enigma Variations* as a route to a seminar-style discussion of authenticity as a theoretical problem that appears constantly in the day-to-day work of curators. The place of museums and curators in the world of art (and collectables) markets will also be explored.

- Richard Price and Sally Price (1995) *Enigma Variations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- James Clifford (1988) “The Art-Culture System: A Machine for Making Authenticity.” [Flowchart] In *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. P. 224. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Will be a handout distributed at this class meeting.)

## 8 March 1. **Accessing and Using Collections**

Meeting in the MMWC Collections Workroom, this week we will focus on the techniques and skills central to conducting research with museum collections. This will include discussion of finding and accessing relevant collections as well as methods used in actually studying objects and associated documentation in museum (and archival) contexts. This meeting is a crucial bridge to the working sessions and to the group projects.

- Alexander Fenton (1992) “Collections Research: Local, National, and International Perspectives.” In *Manual of Curatorship: A Guide to Museum Practice*. Second Edition. John M. A. Thompson, ed. Pp. 493-499. London: Routledge. (Canvas)



- Dennis Farr (1992) “Research: Fine Art Collections.” In *Manual of Curatorship: A Guide to Museum Practice*. Second Edition. John M. A. Thompson, ed. Pp. 542-546. London: Routledge. (Canvas)
- Susan M. Pearce (1992) “Appendix: Models for Object Study.” In *Museums, Objects, and Collections*. Pp. 265-273. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press. (Canvas)
- Candace Greene (1992) “Documentation, Attribution, and the Ideal Type.” In *Art and Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture and Museum Studies in Honor of Jane Powell Dwyer*. Research Papers in Anthropology, 5. Harold David Juli, ed. Pp. 9-18. Providence, RI: Brown University. (Canvas)
- Candance Green (2016) “Key Terms and Concepts.” [Slides from the Summer Institute in Museum Anthropology.] (Canvas)
- Adrian Van Allen (2015) “Photo Workshop: Visual Note Taking in the Collections.” [A Handout from the Summer Institute in Museum Anthropology] <http://www.adrianv.com/sima2015-photo-workshop.html> (also Canvas)

9 March 8. **Working Session #1**

In three late semester meetings, we will work, gloved hands-on, as a group on the collections research projects.

10 March 22. **Working Session #2**

11 March 29. **Working Session #3**

12 April 5. **Digital Projects and Preservation**

We will focus in this class meeting on the special opportunities and challenges that are being raised by digital media and networks.

- Marsha MacDowell and Jason Baird Jackson (2017) “Museums and Ethnography in the Digital Age.” In *Folklife and Museums: Twenty-First Century Perspectives*. C. Kurt Dewhurst, Patricia Hall, and Charlie Seeman, eds. Pp. 305-318. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. (Canvas)

- Marsha MacDowell, Justine Richardson, Mary Worrall, Amanda Sikarskie, and Steve Cohen (2013) “Quilted Together: Material Culture Pedagogy and the Quilt Index, a Digital Repository of Thematic Collections.” *Winterthur Portfolio* 47(2-3): 139-160. (IU Libraries Subscription) <https://doi.org/10.1086/671567>
- Susan Rowley (2014) “The Reciprocal Research Network: The Development Process.” *Museum Anthropology Review*. 7(1-2): 22-43. (Open Access) <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/mar/article/view/2172>

13 April 12. **Forms of Outreach, Consultation and Collaboration**

In this week, we will examine the many ways that curators, collections and communities interact. While “source communities” will figure prominently in these discussions, we will also focus on various other kinds of “audiences.”: Many different kinds of media, projects, and outreach goals will be considered.

- Carrie Hertz (2017) “Public Folklore Curatorship: Collaborating with Emerging Refugee Communities.” In *Folklife and Museums: Twenty-First Century Perspectives*. C. Kurt Dewhurst, Patricia Hall, and Charlie Seeman, eds. Pp. 319-348. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. (Canvas)
- Daniel C. Swan and Michael Paul Jordan (2015) “Contingent Collaborations: Patterns of Reciprocity in Museum-Community Partnerships.” *Journal of Folklore Research*. 52(1)39-84. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/jfolkrese.52.1.39>
- C. Kurt Dewhurst and Marsha MacDowell (2015) “Strategies for Creating and Sustaining Museum-Based International Collaborative Partnerships.” *Practicing Anthropology*. 37(3):54-55. (IU Libraries Subscription) <https://doi.org/10.17730/0888-4552-37.3.54>

14 April 19. **Cultural Property/Heritage**

In this meeting we will explore the present centrality of source community-museum relations in the current moment, focusing on both obligations and opportunities. We will examine the legal and ethical issues that curators and collections confront. Central will

be repatriation, intellectual property issues, intangible cultural heritage policy, and the effects of the changing digital environment.

- Richard Handler (2015) “Cultural Heritage, Patrimony, and Repatriation.” *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences: An Interdisciplinary, Searchable, and Linkable Resource*. 1–16. (Canvas)
- Heidi Bohaker, Alan Ojiig Corbiere and Ruth B. Phillips (2015). “Wampum Unites Us: Digital Access, Interdisciplinarity, and Indigenous Knowledge—Situating the GRASAC Knowledge Sharing Database.” In *Museum as Process: Translating Local and Global Knowledges*. Raymond Silverman, ed. Pp. 45-66. New York: Routledge. (Canvas)
- Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004) “Intangible Heritage as Metacultural Production.” *Museum International*. 56(1-2): 52-65. (Wiley Online Library via IU Libraries)  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1350-0775.2004.00458.x/abstract>
- Jane Anderson and Kimberly Christen (2013) “‘Chuck a Copyright on it’: Dilemmas of Digital Return and the Possibilities for Traditional Knowledge Licenses and Labels.” *Museum Anthropology Review* 7(1-2): 105-126. (Open Access)  
<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/mar/article/view/2169>

15 April 26.

### **Museum Work, Now**

In the final meeting, we will review student projects, discuss the larger state of museums and museum-based work in our fields, and situate the place of curators and curatorial work in the wider disciplinary and interdisciplinary contexts characterizing our current moment. We will also discuss the practical steps one can take toward a career working in museums.

- Nicholas Thomas (2016) “We Need Ethnographic Museums Today—Whatever You Think of their History.” *Apollo: The International Art Magazine*. <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/we-need-ethnographic-museums-today-whatever-you-think-of-their-past/>

- Anthony Shelton (2013) “Critical Museology: A Manifesto.” *Museum Worlds: Advances in Research*. 1(1): 7-23. (Canvas)
- Ruth B. Phillips (2011) “Fielding Culture: Dialogues between Art History and Anthropology.” In *Museum Pieces: Towards and Indigenization of Canadian Museums*. Pp. 102-110. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press.
- Jennifer Kirker Priest (2015) Beyond Objects: How Activist Anthropology is Transforming a University Museum. *Practicing Anthropology*. 37(3): 42-43. (IU Libraries Subscription) <http://sfaajournals.net/doi/pdf/10.17730/0888-4552-37.3.42>
- C. Kurt Dewhurst, Diana Baird N'Diaye, and Marsha MacDowell (2014) “Cultivating Connectivity: Folklife and Inclusive Excellence in Museums.” *Curator* 57(4): 455–472. (Wiley Online Library via IU Libraries) <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cura.12085/full>

## Assignments

In lieu of the single large project that is typical of many graduate seminars, the assignments for this course will take the form of six review essays (in the style of those published in *Museum Anthropology* and *Museum Anthropology Review*), a small article/resource annotation project, and a large group project focused on the study of materials held in the collections of the MMWC. The weight of these assignments, along with due dates, are as follows.

<u>Project (Points)</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Weblog Review (100)	1/25 (Week 3)
Catalogue Review (100)	2/8 (Week 5)
Article/Resource Annotations (100)	2/15 (Week 6)
Collections Database Review (100)	2/22 (Week 7)
Digital Exhibition Review (100)	3/8 (Week 9)
Exhibition Review (100)	3/29 (Week 11)
Book Review (100)	4/12 (Week 13)

Collections Research Project (300) 5/3 (10 a.m. Exam Day)

Total Points (1000)

Students are also expected to complete all assigned readings and to participate in all in-class discussions and activities.

## IU Policies

**Bias-Based Incident Reporting.** Bias-based incident reports can be made by students, faculty and staff. Any act of discrimination or harassment based on race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability can be reported through any of the options: (1) email [biasincident@indiana.edu](mailto:biasincident@indiana.edu) or [incident@indiana.edu](mailto:incident@indiana.edu); (2) call the Dean of Students Office at (812) 855-8188 or (3) use the IU mobile App (m.iu.edu). Reports can be made anonymously if desired.

**Sexual Misconduct and Title IX** As your instructor, one of my responsibilities is to create a positive learning environment for all students. Title IX and IU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibit sexual misconduct in any form, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and dating and domestic violence. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help. If you are seeking help and would like to speak to someone confidentially, you can make an appointment with:

- The Sexual Assault Crisis Services (SACS) at (812) 855-8900 (counseling services)
- Confidential Victim Advocates (CVA) at (812) 856-2469 (advocacy and advice services)
- IU Health Center at (812) 855-4011 (health and medical services)

It is also important that you know that Title IX and University policy require me to share any information brought to my attention about potential sexual misconduct, with the campus Deputy Title IX Coordinator or IU's Title IX Coordinator. In that event, those individuals will work to ensure that appropriate measures are taken and resources are made available. Protecting student privacy is of utmost concern, and information will only be shared with those that need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist. I encourage you to visit <http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu> to learn more.

**Religious Observance** For Indiana University policy on religious observances, suggestions for its implementation, forms to be used by students requesting accommodations and a five-year calendar of religious holidays:

<http://vpfaa.indiana.edu/forms/index.shtml> (scroll down to Religious Observances).

**Other** For other university policies, please consult the “Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct” and other relevant university websites and publications

## Some Sources Related to Curatorship

Version A, January 2, 2017

This Bibliography was produced quickly with help from Zotero. It has not yet been completely edited for consistency of format. It began with works that I think are canonical, prominent, and/or useful in the kind of curatorial work that I do (museum ethnography). It then expanded with the addition of some works that I have not yet consulted in the area of curatorial practice in contemporary (particularly international) art worlds. This is the world of the entrepreneurial, freelance curator and of the artist-curator; the world of the elite international art biennial and its associated markets, publishing projects, and cultural surround. To signal their (to me) tentative status as untested source on the Curatorship reading list, they are marked here in gray. Similarly, treated here are two new works, not yet consulted, on natural history curatorship. These are marked, similarly, as untested in olive green. A few works here relate specifically to history curatorship, but this is now the main area where the list needs to grow. A number of works here relate to more conventional curatorship in art museum contexts, but I hope to expand this part of the list. The list needs to grow too in archaeological curatorship and in the various non-anthropological portions of natural history museum curatorship. Bhaskar (2017), marked in pink as unread, relates to the wide spread (one heavily influenced by contemporary tech culture) of the generalized concept of curation (as educated choice) in popular usage. The museum work literature is staggering in scale. This bibliography has been intentionally created so avoid all but a few titles from the core museum work literature. Most curators, need, for example to know a wide range of exhibition techniques, to understand registration practices, to appreciate how museum education practices are changing, to be able to contribute to (perhaps lead) development activities, to understand how museums are funded and governed, etc. With a few extremely prominent exceptions (ex: Buck and Gilmore, eds. 2010), this list does not take in this literature, instead focusing mostly on the most distinctive aspects of curatorship.

Adair, Bill, Benjamin Filene, and Laura Koloski, eds. *Letting Go?: Sharing Historical Authority in a User-Generated World*. Philadelphia, PA: Pew Center for Arts and Heritage, 2011.

Alexander, Edward P. *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*. 2nd ed. American Association for State and Local History Book Series. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2008.

Ames, Michael M. *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums*. 2nd ed. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995.

Balzer, David. *Curationism: How Curating Took Over the Art World and Everything Else*. Toronto: Coach House Books, 2014.

Bauman, Richard, Patricia Sawin, and Inta Gale Carpenter. *Reflections on the Folklife Festival: An Ethnography of Participant Experience*. Bloomington: Folklore Institute, Indiana University, 1992.

Bell, Joshua A., and Erin L. Hasinoff, eds. *The Anthropology of Expeditions: Travel, Visualities, Afterlives*. Cultural Histories of the Material World. New York: Bard Graduate Center, 2015.

Bennett, Tony. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Bennett, Tony, Fiona Cameron, Nelia Dias, Ben Dibley, Rodney Harrison, Ira Jacknis, and Conal McCarthy. *Collecting, Ordering, Governing: Anthropology, Museums, and Liberal Government*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

Bhaskar, Michael. *Curation: The Power of Selection in a World of Excess*. Boston: Little, Brown Book Group, 2017.

Buck, Rebecca A., and Jean Allman Gilmore, eds. *Collection Conundrums: Solving Collections Management Mysteries*. Washington: American Alliance of Museums, 2007.

Buck, Rebecca A., and Jean Allman Gilmore, eds. *Museum Registration Methods*. 5th ed. Washington: American Association of Museums, 2010.

Bouquet, Mary, ed. *Academic Anthropology and the Museum: Back to the Future*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2001.

Bouquet, Mary. *Museums: A Visual Anthropology*. New York: Berg Publishers, 2012.

Burcaw, George Ellis. *Introduction to Museum Work*. 3rd ed. American Association for State and Local History Book Series. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 1997.

Cadaval, Olivia, Sojin Kim, and Diana Baird N'Diaye, eds. *Curatorial Conversations: Cultural Representation and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016.

Carbonell, Bettina Messias, ed. *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.

Clifford, James. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. 1st U.S. Edition, 1st Printing edition. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Clifford, James. *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Clifford, James. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997.



- Colwell, Chip. *Plundered Skulls and Stolen Spirits: Inside the Fight to Reclaim Native America's Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.
- Conn, Steven. *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.
- Conn, Steven. *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Cruikshank, Julie. "Imperfect Translations: Rethinking Objects of Ethnographic Collection." *Museum Anthropology* 19, no. 1 (1995): 25–38.
- Dudley, Sandra H., ed. *Museum Objects: Experiencing the Properties of Things*. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Edwards, Elizabeth, Chris Gosden, and Ruth B. Phillips, eds. *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums, and Material Culture*. Wenner-Gren International Symposium Series. New York: Berg, 2006.
- Fine-Dare, Kathleen S. *Grave Injustice: The American Indian Repatriation Movement and NAGPRA*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.
- Fortey, Richard. *Dry Storeroom No. 1: The Secret Life of the Natural History Museum*. New York: Vintage, 2009.
- Freed, Stanley A. "Everyone Is Breathing on Our Vitrines: Problems and Prospects of Museum Anthropology." *Curator* 34, no. 1 (1991): 58–79.
- George, Adrian. *The Curator's Handbook*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2015.
- Golding, Viv, and Wayne Modest, eds. *Museums and Communities: Curators, Collections and Collaboration*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
- Grande, Lance. *Curators: Behind the Scenes of Natural History Museums*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.
- Handler, Richard, and Eric Gable. *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 1997.
- Harrison, Rodney, Sarah Byrne, and Anne Clarke, eds. *Reassembling the Collection: Ethnographic Museums and Indigenous Agency*. Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press, 2013.
- Henare, Amiria. *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

- Henderson, Amy, and Adrienne Lois Kaeppler, eds. *Exhibiting Dilemmas: Issues of Representation at the Smithsonian*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997.
- Hoffmann, Jens, ed. *Ten Fundamental Questions of Curating*. Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2013.
- Karp, Ivan, and Steven Lavine, eds. *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991.
- Karp, Ivan, Corinne A. Kratz, Lynn Szwaja, and Tomas Ybarra-Frausto, eds. *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Karp, Ivan, Christine Mullen Kreamer, and Steven Lavine, eds. *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Knell, Simon J, ed. *Museums in the Material World*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Krech, Shepard, and Barbara A. Hail, eds. *Collecting Native America, 1870-1960*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999.
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#### Selected Journals (A Running List with a Current Emphasis on Museum Ethnography)

- Curator
- Gradhiva: Revue d'Anthropologie et d'Histoire Des Arts
- Heritage and Society
- International Journal of Heritage Studies
- Journal of Community Archaeology and Heritage
- Journal of the History of Collections
- Journal of Museum Ethnography
- Museum Anthropology
- Museum Anthropology Review
- Museum History Journal
- Museum International
- Museum Management and Curatorship
- Museums and Social Issues
- RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics
- The Public Historian

Curatorship  
**Blog Review Assignment**

If you do not already understand what a weblog (blog) is, do some research online. The CommonCraft video titled “Blogs in Plain English” is probably a good beginning. (While old now by internet standards, all their videos are very effective.)<sup>1</sup> The English Wikipedia entry for “blog” seems detailed and reliable enough.

Locate and select a blog of relevance to our museum studies/museum collections interests. This could be, for instance, a blog-based site chronicling the life and work of a particular museum, a blog devoted to exploring a theme in museum work or the study of museum collections, a blog by a scholar involved in such work, a group site presenting the work and reflections of a community of scholars, a blog site related to research project or research group, or something unanticipated but demonstrably relevant to our inquires.

As a review focused on blogs, it is important to differentiate the topic from more static websites, such as those common for museums and museum-related organizations. Those kinds of sites, while often very valuable, are not our focus here.

Using the style found in *Museum Anthropology Review*, author a scholarly review of between 500 and 1000 words that focuses on understanding, explaining, interpreting, and evaluating the site that you have focused on. It may be necessary for you to study some relevant related/similar sites in order for you to gain sufficient perspective to properly review the blog that is your focus. You can do scanning of the general background without noting this in your review, but if you draw specifically on any source other than the site under review, then you need to make these sources explicit through standard citational practices.

Please submit your review to me electronically in the form of a very tidy word processing document saved in .rtf (“Rich Text”) format and submitted via Canvas.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.commoncraft.com/blogs>, accessed December 29, 2017.

## Curatorship

### **Catalogue Review Assignment**

Select a catalogue (or similar publication) that was produced in conjunction with a major exhibition of museum collections and complete a review of about 500-1000 words in length. The style and process guidelines used in the blog review are in place in this and future reviews as well.

Be certain to address the following:

1. Summarize the central objectives of the exhibition as presented and discussed in the catalogue introduction. Make some mention of the manner in which the catalogue and its contents are organized. How are the objects contextualized? Does this schema support the central theme(s) and objectives of the study?
2. Comment on the visual content of the catalogue. Include some discussion of the design, selection and individual presentation of objects. What information regarding the core objects of the exhibition/catalogue are you provided? What additional information/perspectives would be useful?
3. Identify what you perceive to be the strengths (if appropriate, also the weaknesses) of the catalogue. What issues might future works on the topic address?
4. Assess the scholarship that is presented in the catalogue. You will need to review the bibliography of sources cited and consult at least two articles/books that are central to the topic/subject of the catalog. Compare the bibliographies in the articles/books to that in the catalogue. Are there discrepancies or omissions?

## Curatorship

### **Article Annotations Assignment**

For this assignment prepare 100-125 word summaries and assessments of five scholarly articles and/or book chapters in the fields of museum studies and/or museum-based folklore studies or anthropology (or another museum-based discipline). One of the five should relate to the intersection of your personal scholarly interests and museums and one should be as far afield from your normal interests as you can manage, the others should fall in between and should address matters that you perceive to be of broad relevance to our field of inquiry/activity.

As a headnote, you should provide a full citation for each item and this reference should not be included in your word counts. Your five items can be placed back to back in a string, as in the example that begins on the next page. In the brief compass of each of your entries, you should provide both a summary of what the article or chapter is about and a thoughtful response to it. For your own purposes, you will, of course, take detailed notes. Here you are aiming to boil your account down into a bite-sized, but well-stated, response.



## **Article Annotations Assignment**

Jason Baird Jackson

### **Christina Kreps (2003) Curatorship as Social Practice. Curator. 46(3):311-323.**

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### **John Terrell (1991) Disneyland and the Future of Museum Anthropology.**

**American Anthropologist. 93(1):149-152.**

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**Hans Furst (1991) Material Culture Research and the Curation Process. *In* Museum Studies in Material Culture. Susan Pierce, ed. Pp. 97-110. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.**

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**Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991) Objects of Ethnography. In Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display. Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine, eds. Pp. 386-443. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.**

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**Ann McMullen (2008) The Currency of Consultation and Collaboration. Museum Anthropology Review. 2(2):55-87.**

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## Curatorship

### **Database Review Assignment**

Using an approach similar to that which was required for the previous weblog and catalog review assignment, prepare a scholarly review of a museum collections database that is accessible to the general public online. The quality of the data found in such systems varies greatly as does the range of collections metadata categories that are made public. User interfaces and search capabilities also vary greatly. In reviewing a database of interest to you (and one that is hopefully also relevant to your own studies) be mindful of the following questions.

- What seems to be the nature of the underlying collection?
- What audiences is the database seeking to serve?
- What curatorial choices are reflected in the database you are consulting?
- What are its technical strengths and weaknesses?
- How well does it succeed in response to a range of reasonable search requests? (In other words, how useful is it to a range of likely users?)
- What next steps could be taken to improve its use for scholarly and general audience users?

Be sure to include a full citation to the URL at which your database is located. Also cite any other works that you consult in completion of your review.

Curatorship

## Digital Exhibition Review Assignment

Using an approach similar to that which was required for the previous blog, catalogue, and database review assignment, prepare a scholarly review of a digital exhibition that has been organized and made available online *by a **museum** that also exists offline.*

If you are interested in seeing a large aggregation of virtual exhibitions, I recommend looking at the Virtual Museum of Canada ( <http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/home/> ). (Keep in mind through, that the VMC includes projects organized by archives, libraries and other not-quite-museums organizations.)

As in past reviews, attend to (1) technical and implementation questions, (2) substantive and interpretive questions, and (3) general issues of relevance to the museum field as a whole. A number of reviews of digital exhibitions have appeared in *Museum Anthropology* and *Museum Anthropology Review* during my editorships and are available as illustrations of the genre.

Curatorship

## **Exhibition Review Assignment**

Using an approach similar to that which was required for the previous assignments, prepare a scholarly review of a (physical, gallery) exhibition that is accessible to you. The focus of the exhibition can be any topic as long as it is presented in a not-for-profit institution that considers itself a museum. As in past reviews, attend to (1) technical and implementation questions, (2) substantive and interpretive questions, (3) general issues of relevance to the museum field as a whole, (4) issues of relevance to the discipline involved in the project and (5) issues of relevance to the exhibition's audience or the community in which it is available. Many exhibition reviews have appeared in *Museum Anthropology*, *Museum Anthropology Review*, and the *Journal of American Folklore* over the years and are available as inspiration.

You are aiming for a review of between 700 and 1000 words.

Curatorship

## **Book Review Assignment**

For the book review assignment you should select a book of interest to you and of relevance to the class. Ideally it will be a book (an edited collection or a monograph but not a catalogue) published in the past three years. It should related to museums or/and museum-based scholarship in some demonstrable fashion. You should proceed as if you are writing the review for a scholarly journal such as *Museum Anthropology*, *Museum Anthropology Review*, the *Journal of American Folklore* or a journal in your own field. You should address the kinds of questions central to the book review genre.

Much reasonable general guidance is available. Here is an example:

<http://web.bvu.edu/faculty/feis/GUIDE%20FOR%20WRITING%20SCHOLARLY%20BOOK%20REVIEWS.htm>

You are aiming for a review of between 700 and 1000 words.



## **Curatorship Group Project Notes 2018**

Our work sessions with the three group project collections have already been held and we have had several conversations about the scope and nature of the group projects. Good questions have been asked and, hopefully, discussed and answered. This note does not repeat those discussions, but it does codify a few of the most mechanical points that we have discussed.

There is not a fixed length for the group reports, but it is hard to imagine them accomplishing their goals at less than 10-12 double-spaced pages not including references cited, photographs, and appendixes.

It is extremely likely that you will include one or more appendixes with your project. These provide a way to systematically gather and share with future collection researchers the most valuable and unique of the documentation that you have gathered while pursuing your project. As you have worked in the relevant accession files, you have a firsthand understanding of the kinds of resources you can leave behind for those who come behind you. The range of research materials (notes, diagrams, photographs, archival sources, secondary sources, links to media, etc.) that can be gathered in your appendixes is vast and no project team will have pursued every possible option.

As I have discussed with the groups, different group projects will be balanced differently for a host of reasons, but there are some features that they should all share. While differently emphasized and weighted, every project paper should show some level of engagement with (1) learning from the collections objects themselves, as physical things in the world, (2) engagement with the question of how the collection came to be in the world and to come to rest at the MMWC, and (3) the cultural and social contexts in which the objects were made, circulated, and/or used. You can think of this in terms of texts (the objects) and contexts (their places in various lifeworlds and in the museum).

While it is normal and appropriate for there to be a division of labor in the work of the teams, every team member should have spent some time learning from the at least a portion of the collections objects. The division of labor used should be made transparent in the text of the report. Who did what and to what effect? While writing duties will likely be distributed, everyone should have at least some minimal role in commenting on and improving all of the text. It is not desirable for different sections to have been written autonomously by individuals or sub-groups without the awareness or editorial participation of other group members. It is a team effort. This does not mean that disagreements need to be suppressed. If important, they need to be displayed and narrated.

After reviewing the submissions, I will give thought to finalizing them for deposit in the accession files. Ideally, each team will nominate a group member willing to confer with me after the semester to finalize a "file version." Please identify this participant as the "corresponding author" (the term used in journal publishing). When submitting your materials, it may be useful to submit to total compiled document as a PDF files (to preserve layout and formatting, etc.) but please also submit a word document for your core text. This will make making simple changes (spelling fixes, for instance) easier.



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### Weekly Features

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## Curating the Ostrom collection: IU students practice hands-on curatorship at Mathers

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Apr. 11, 2013

by Bethany Nolan

Full of packing paper and boxes, the basement of the [Mathers Museum of World Cultures](#) resembled a holiday morning after a frenzy of gift unwrapping.



Students in Jason Jackson's curatorship class are gaining hands-on experience curating the Ostrom collection of Native American art. Jackson is director of the Mathers Museum of World Cultures.

But the students in museum director Jason Jackson's curatorship class were much more careful than the average gift recipient -- the group is among the first to handle some items from a vast Native American art collection donated to Indiana University by the late Elinor and Vincent Ostrom.

In one corner, classmates unwrapped Native American baskets, the discovery of an informative postcard tucked inside one drawing excited "oooohs." Others pored over tiny birch bark boxes intricately decorated with dyed porcupine quills, quietly discussing the depiction of a particular animal. Nearby, another group studied a collection of paintings from the Ojibwe peoples in the Great Lakes, while others gently unrolled a large rug, marveling at its unique woven pattern.

Known to many simply as "Lin," Ostrom was Distinguished Professor and the Arthur F. Bentley Professor of Political Science at IU. The only woman to receive the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, she died June 12, 2012. Her husband, Vincent, the Arthur F. Bentley Professor Emeritus of Political Science, died just two weeks later.

Ellen Sieber, the museum's curator of collections, was one of a handful of IU staffers who walked through the Ostroms' Bloomington home after their deaths, when the university learned the couple had donated their entire household to the university. Those items, many from Canada's Manitoulin Island where the Ostroms had a vacation home, were split between the Mathers, the IU Art Museum and the university's campus-wide collection.



Students inspect an art piece that the Ostroms used in their home -- as a wastebasket. "They truly lived with these items," said Ellen Sieber, the Mathers Museum's curator of collections.

“The Ostroms had a very comfortable home, and it was so clear they inhabited it fully, that it wasn’t a showpiece despite their extensive art collection,” Sieber said, pointing out a nearby woven basket. “For example, this was used as a wastebasket in Vincent’s study. They truly lived with these items.”

Jackson, who became the museum’s director in January, saw the Ostroms’ gift as a perfect opportunity to create a teachable moment for his students -- something he believes would have appealed to the couple who spent their lives on research that changed the way people think about the relationship between individuals and institutions.

“The Ostroms’ collection extends and complements what has been here at the Mathers for many years, and I can’t help but think the Ostroms would approve of IU students gaining experience by working with these items,” Jackson said. “Museums like ours would be hard pressed to collect the way they did, so we’re very fortunate to receive these items.”

And Jackson’s students have clearly responded to the opportunity to use the Ostrom collection for hands-on study. Their work will be incorporated into an exhibit and other activities, partially funded through one of the first grants given by the Ostrom Grants Program of the College of Arts and Sciences.

“It’s really fascinating to see the behind-the-scenes processes,” said Dorothy Berry, a dual masters student in ethnomusicology and library science. “Anyone can go look at an exhibit, but to be in here, in the basement, and to really see the organization that goes into cataloguing and organizing items, it’s pretty interesting.”

Alex Betts is the lone undergraduate in Jackson’s course, a senior majoring in anthropology and history who plans to attend graduate school for museum studies.



“The Ostroms’ collection extends and complements what has been here at the Mathers for many years, and I can’t help but think the Ostroms would approve of IU students gaining experience by working with these items,” said Jason Jackson, seen here with students from his curatorship class.

“As an anthropology student, I’m interested in the context and culture behind these items,” he said. “The Ostroms’ collection includes a mixture of tourist items -- which have an importance of their own -- and more ethnographic objects, which definitely shows their varied interests and how well-traveled they were.”

For graduate student Sara Clark, who’s studying in the School of Education’s Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, it’s a chance to do hands-on work.

“I really like to learn by doing,” she said, gesturing to the Navajo rug rolled out on the table before her.

“And this is a chance to really work with items and not just look at images on a screen or discuss things. You really gain a sense of the pieces, and get to spend time with them.”

Fellow graduate student Miriam Woods, who is studying folklore and Central Eurasian studies, agreed, saying, “These are real life skills we’re developing.”

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