

## Queen Mary Summer School

SUM504G: Cultural Treasures of London: A Journey Through Time

*School of History*

### Course outline

Level: 5

Credits: 15 (Queen Mary credits)

Module organiser: Dr Chloe Ward

Assessment: Presentation: 10 min (20%) and Exhibition Proposal 1500 words (80%)

### Course description:

Through visits to ten of London's most important institutions, this module will examine the development of how institutions curate culture from Renaissance 'cabinets of curiosities' to the modern 'white cube' gallery space. The module will equip students with the historical, theoretical, and practical knowledge necessary for studying culture through institutional collections. The class will analyse the techniques and practices museums use to collect, organise, and display their objects; we will consider the messages these institutions send through their architecture, patronage, and methods of display; and we will delve into some of the most important issues affecting cultural institutions today like decolonisation, repatriation, and social impact. Aside from the introductory class, the module will take place off campus, with seminar groups visiting a different institution in each meeting.

### Module Aims:

- To introduce students to London's museum collections.
- To present a critical overview of the key theories, approaches, and debates relevant to museums, their collections, and their displays.
- To provide opportunities for students to apply and examine these theories, approaches, and debates during class sessions in a variety of museum spaces.

### Learning outcomes:

On completion of the module, students can expect to have acquired:

- Identify the role played by museums as institutional and educational bodies, both historically and in the present.
- Discuss primary and secondary source material related to the study of museums.
- Critically evaluate the methods and theories used to analyse museums, their objects, and their displays.
- Carry out in-depth independent research on a chosen topic in museology or museum history and apply key concepts to the critical analysis of displays.
- Evaluate, critique, and debate the way museums present themselves and their collections.
- Demonstrate how discipline-specific theories or approaches may be applied in broader cultural contexts.

### Approximate cost:

All reading material is provided digitally so you are not required to purchase any books. Students must pay their own travel costs to and from visits.

### Assessments:

The course assessments are not compulsory, however, if you wish to transfer credit for this course to your home university it is essential to complete the assignments.

**Presentation:** 10 min. (20%) and **Exhibition Proposal:** 1,500-word (80%)

**Preparation:**

Before you arrive on campus, it is advised that you familiarise yourself with the course content before it begins. You will be given instructions for accessing our Virtual Learning Environment (QMplus) before you arrive on campus.

**Teaching:**

The course is taught in two two-hour sessions per day (10.00 - 12.00 and 13.00 - 15.00), held Monday to Thursday each week.

**Indicative Reading List****General museum texts:**

- Timothy Ambrose and Crispin Paine (eds.), *Museum Basics* (London: Routledge, 1993).
- Graham Black, *Transforming Museums in The Twenty-First Century* (London: Routledge, 2012).
- Bettina Messias Carbonell (ed.), *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).
- Christina Kreps, 'Non-Western Models of Museums and Curation in Cross-cultural Perspective,' in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 457–472.
- Caroline Lang et al., *The Responsive Museum: Working with Audiences in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Routledge, 2007).
- Sharon MacDonald and Helen Rees Leahy, *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies*, 4 volumes, (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2015).

**Museum history:**

- Germain Bazin, *The Museum Age* (New York: Universe Books, 1967).
- Marjorie Caygill et al, *Enlightening the British: Knowledge, Discovery and the Museum in the Eighteenth Century*(London: British Museum Press, 2004).
- J. Mordaunt Crook, *The British Museum* (London: Allen Lane, 1972).
- Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007).
- Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 2008).
- Impey Oliver and MacGregor Arthur (eds), *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985, rev 2001).
- Nikolaus Pevsner, *Academies of Art, Past and Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940).
- Karsten Schubert, *The Curator's Egg. The Evolution of the Museum Concept from the French Revolution to the Present Day* (London: One Off Press, 2000).
- David M. Wilson, *The British Museum, A History* (London: British Museum, London, 2002).

**Museum theory:**

- Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995).
- Carol Duncan, *Civilising Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1995).
- Ferguson Greenberg and Sandy Nairne (eds.), *Thinking about Exhibitions* (London: Routledge, 1996).
- Janet Marstine (ed.), *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).
- Andrea Witcomb and Kylie Message, *Museum Theory* (Oxford: Wiley, 2015).

Please note that the information provided may be subject to change.