

Museum Studies

Director, Division of Interdisciplinary Programs

- Cornelia C. Lang (Physics and Astronomy)

Museum Studies Coordinator

- Debra Trusty (Classics)

Undergraduate certificate: museum studies

Faculty: <https://museumstudies.sites.uiowa.edu/contacts>

Website: <https://museumstudies.sites.uiowa.edu/>

Museum studies has a long history at the University of Iowa, with courses offered continuously since 1910.

Museums embrace every aspect of human experience. Iowa's Museum Studies Program reflects this multiplicity and includes students from many fields, including American studies, anthropology and archaeology, art, biology, business, communication studies, earth, environment, and sustainability sciences, elementary and secondary education, English, world languages, history, and library and information science.

Instructors for museum studies courses reflect the program's interdisciplinary nature. They include faculty members from anthropology; art, art history, and design; business; classics; history; journalism and mass communication; library and information science; and other related fields.

The Museum Studies Program holds academic memberships with the American Association for State and Local History and the Iowa Museum Association. These connections offer museum studies students opportunities for internships, professional networking, and career development. In addition to offering a wide range of on-campus courses, the certificate can also be earned online with a growing number of online courses.

The Museum Studies Program is administered by the Division of Interdisciplinary Programs.

Programs

Undergraduate Program of Study Certificate

- Certificate in Museum Studies

Facilities

Museum studies students have access to a wide variety of museums and related resources, including the following University of Iowa museums: the Museum of Natural History, the Stanley Museum of Art, the Old Capitol Museum, the Medical Museum, and the Karro Athletic Hall of Fame.

The Museum Studies Program also maintains close connections with a number of local, community-based museums and organizations.

Courses

Museum Studies Courses

MUSM:2675 The Politics of Memory: Holocaust, Genocide, and 9/11 3-4 s.h.

How contested legacies of genocide, global violent conflict, and 9/11 continue to pose an urgent and generationally mediated challenge for critical politics of memory; various approaches to effective or failed coming-to-terms with injurious and difficult past (e.g., Holocaust, Armenian genocide); analysis of museums, sites of memory, and artwork. Taught in English. GE: Understanding Cultural Perspectives. Same as GRMN:2675.

MUSM:2850 Museums and Social Justice 3 s.h.

Exploration of museums as institutions that frame social justice, promote equity of access through social bridging, and at times, address and challenge social ills directly through exhibits and programs; case studies and dialogue.

MUSM:3001 Introduction to Museum Studies 3 s.h.

Overview of museum history, function, philosophy, collection, and curatorial practices; governance and funding issues; exhibition evaluation and audience studies; examples from Stanley Museum of Art, Museum of Natural History, Old Capitol Museum, and Medical Museum. GE: Social Sciences. Same as ANTH:3001, EDTL:3001, SIED:3001.

MUSM:3003 Natural History Research Collections 3 s.h.

Techniques, methods, and issues specific to natural history research collections; practice in preparing and cleaning specimens; role of natural history specimens in modern scientific research. Recommendations: basic understanding of the diversity of plants and animals and natural history museum collections, MUSM:3001 or MUSM:3200, and BIOL:1411 or BIOL:1412; or other experience. Same as SEES:3003.

MUSM:3004 Exhibition Planning 3 s.h.

Preliminary work for and process of developing museum exhibitions; history of exhibit design, evaluation, budgets, teams and team member roles, working with community and special interest groups, methods of production and display; students research a topic, choose artifacts and images, and create a narrative and exhibit script. Prerequisites: MUSM:3001.

MUSM:3010 Fakes, Frauds, and Forgeries: The Dark Side of Art History 3 s.h.

How fraudulent artworks have been accepted as genuine and incorporated into the art historical canon, from the famous gold and ivory Minoan snake goddess to paintings purportedly by Rembrandt; the danger frauds pose to our understanding of cultural heritage and historical past, how fakes have impacted the art market, and value of forgeries as indices of contemporary taste and preconceptions about art. Same as ARTH:3010.

MUSM:3078 Archiving Women's History 3 s.h.

Exploration of girls' and women's history in Iowa through collections at the Iowa Women's Archives; introduction to archival research, digital humanities, and Omeka (a digital collection and exhibit platform) with focus on sport-related collections; guided individualized research and exhibit development. Same as AMST:3078, GWSS:3078, SPST:3078.

- MUSM:3091 Topics in Museum Studies** 1 s.h.
Systematic and analytic methods used for research in physical collections; tutorials in collection building, curation, and preservation designed by UI Collections Coalition. Prerequisites: MUSM:3001.
- MUSM:3100 Historic House Management and Preservation** 3 s.h.
Historic house museums make up more than half of all museums in the United States; focus on management, preservation, and interpretation of historic houses as sites of historic memory and public engagement. Same as ANTH:3122.
- MUSM:3105 Engaging Museum Audiences** 3 s.h.
Effective audience engagement requires museums to meet visitors halfway; employing learning theories, knowledge of audience, and innovative examples from the field; students investigate a variety of approaches that are visitor-centered, interdisciplinary, and locally focused. Prerequisites: MUSM:3001.
- MUSM:3115 Museum Education and Interpretation** 3 s.h.
Examination of the educational role of museums; educational theory, audience development, teaching strategies, accessibility, and evaluation within museum context; community-engaged project and collaboration with museum to develop curriculum and educational resources. Same as EDTL:3115.
- MUSM:3120 Museum Origins** 3 s.h.
History of museums; origin, character, and evolution into content specific institutions; anecdotes and personalities; how museums influenced society and their continuing relevance to a technological world.
- MUSM:3125 Museums in a Digital World** 3 s.h.
Digital technologies streamline internal museum processes while exponentially increasing the capacity of individuals to engage with museum collections; explores the digitized strategies and systems that democratize access and enhance museum visitor experiences.
- MUSM:3130 Topics in Museum Administration and Management** 3 s.h.
Topics and scope vary but are centered around an examination of the complex leadership skills needed to manage and administer museums; operating daily business tasks, managing visitor needs, communicating between collection handling and restoration and museum educators, fundraising, grant writing, and budget management; leadership and management theory; discussions on museum governance, human resources, and project management while working with all museum stakeholders, including volunteers, employees, directors, and board members. Prerequisites: MUSM:3001.
- MUSM:3131 Museum Evaluation and Visitor Studies** 3 s.h.
Students explore evaluation theory, methodologies, and practical application through case studies and hands-on activities from all types of museum experiences (e.g., programs, exhibitions, wayfinding, interpretive technology) from both staff and visitor perspective. Prerequisites: MUSM:3001.
- MUSM:3145 Excavation to Exhibit: Making Artifacts Public** 3 s.h.
In-depth exploration of methodological, theoretical, and historical issues in the creation of archaeological museum exhibitions including hands-on learning involving the development of an exhibit for the Stanley Museum of Art. Same as ANTH:3145, NAIS:3145.
- MUSM:3200 Collection Care and Management** 3 s.h.
How a museum's management policy relates to its administrative, legal, and ethical obligations to its collections; acquisitions, deaccessions, collection use, data standards, storage environment, health, safety, documentation. Same as SEES:3200.
- MUSM:3237 Politics of the Archaeological Past** 3 s.h.
How control over management of material remains of the ancient past, and representations of that past, intersect with the identity of diverse groups, including archaeologists, Indigenous peoples, national governments, collectors, ethnic minorities and majorities, museum curators; struggles for control of the archaeological past at different scales (artifacts, skeletal remains, sites, imagery, narratives) and in different regions of the world. Same as ANTH:3237, HIST:3137.
- MUSM:3250 American Stuff: Discovering History in Things** 3 s.h.
Introduction to the historical study of material artifacts; how people have used objects to construct their memories, identities (e.g., class, race, sexuality, gender, nation), relationships, and status/power; how objects have inadvertently shaped us; finding artifacts in local collections; analyzing artifacts as historical sources; researching how objects were produced and sold and how they were used or misused; curating one's own exhibition; objects range from utilitarian (e.g., guns, farming tools, office gadgets, automobiles) to decorations, toys, souvenirs, and more. Same as HIST:3250.
- MUSM:3291 Museum Registration and Records Management** 3 s.h.
Processes and standards relating to the intellectual control of museum collections. Topics include the creation and maintenance of museum collections documentation; collections management systems (CMS); digital asset management; terminology control and linked data standards; and legal and ethical obligations for museum registration. Corequisites: MUSM:3001. Same as ANTH:3291.
- MUSM:3500 Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness I** 3 s.h.
Operational and financial aspects of nonprofit management; mission and governance of organization; strategic planning for effective management, including finance, budget, income generation, fund-raising. Same as ENTR:3595, MGMT:3500, NURS:3595, RELS:3700, SSW:3500.
- MUSM:3710 Fundraising Fundamentals** 3 s.h.
Nonprofit organization reliance on raised funds to survive and thrive; basic concepts of fundraising for successful nonprofit organization; work with a nonprofit organization to explore basic fundraising techniques that nonprofits typically use including donor research, annual fund campaigns (phone, mail, email), capital campaigns, events, cause-related marketing, grants, planned giving, and donor stewardship; when and how to use different fundraising strategies to meet an organization's goals. Same as JMC:3710.

MUSM:3720 Nonprofit Communications 3 s.h.

Practical experience planning and writing fundraising materials; how yearly fundraising helps approximately 1.5 million nonprofit organizations receive more than \$3 billion from individuals, foundations, and corporations to help people in need, advocate for causes, support research/arts/culture, and enhance opportunities for public and/or their members. Same as JMC:3720.

MUSM:4045 Art, Law, and Ethics 3 s.h.

How law and ethics apply to individuals and institutions concerned with visual arts. Same as LAW:8164.

MUSM:4081 The Art Museum: Theory and Practice 3 s.h.

Introduction to different aspects of art museums; emphasis on roles of art historians, especially curatorial practice; current and historical theories and practices of art exhibitions; varying debates of the politics of display; art museum professions; the many facets of art exhibition preparation; the University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art collections. Prerequisites: (MUSM:3001 or ARTH:1040) and (RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060). Same as ARTH:4081.

MUSM:4130 Museum Literacy and Historical Memory 3 s.h.

Concepts and methods for understanding the role of museums in shaping knowledge and collective memory of history; institutionally based exhibits and collections, historical markers and public monuments, public holidays and events, media and artistic works that interpret the past; how events, people, and civic ambitions are memorialized and how memories of them are shaped; appearance of museums and related practices in the non-Western world after 1850. Same as HIST:4130.

MUSM:4150 Introduction to Grant Writing 3 s.h.

Comprehensive training in grant proposal writing; basics of project development and management; core principles for writing small and large proposals to public and private funding sources; finer points of grant writing to increase competitiveness of future proposals and applications; for students with limited grant writing experience. Same as EALL:4130.

MUSM:4200 Museum Object Preservation 3 s.h.

Detailed study of specific types of museum objects, their materials, and care; topics include care, storage, and preservation of paper, books, photographs, works of art, electronic media, textiles, furniture, archaeological artifacts, and natural history specimens; students complete a curatorial project and gain hands-on practice in basic object cleaning and making enclosures and supports; for students planning museum careers or taking care of collections as part of their professional responsibilities. Same as SEES:4200.

MUSM:4310 Slavery Museums, Memorials, and Statues in the United States, Europe, and the Global South 3-4 s.h.

Comparative study of museums, memorials, statues, performances, and artistic works that encapsulate the entangled history and memory of transoceanic slave trades and slavery in the United States, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Europe (France and the United Kingdom); critical tools to analyze public debates over politically charged monuments; exploration of transnational and political predicaments of the contemporary world; approaches include trauma theories, memory studies, history, postcolonial ecocriticism, cultural anthropology, heritage studies and museology, and Francophone cultural critique. Taught in English. Requirements: for 4 s.h. option —prior enrollment in FREN:3060 and FREN:3300. Same as FREN:4210, WLLC:4210.

MUSM:4600 Nonprofit Ethics and Governance 3 s.h.

Tools to help identify, understand, and resolve ethical issues in nonprofit sectors; how individual beliefs and societal standards shape ethical decision-making; application of ethical frameworks to classic and contemporary ethical dilemmas; how various forms of governance shape ethical behavior in organizations; case studies, readings, lectures, and guest speakers. Same as MGMT:4600.