

History 570 Collections Management

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Office Hours: T/Th 11am-12:30pm / Wed., 9-11am

Department: History

Class meeting place and time: F-477; Tuesday, 6-8:30 pm

Course Description

The course is an introduction to the broad fields of museum and archival work from the history of both areas to issues of theory, practice, development, care, and the use of collections. Staffing and management concerns, educational development, and the social, economic, and political trends that shape collections will also be covered.

Course Objectives

This course will introduce students to the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities required to successfully conduct the management of archival or museum collections. Students will read short essays, extended monographs, and technical briefs as they become familiar with the processes, critical issues, and standard terminology and practices of collections management. The assignments will include individual and group projects, written summaries and reports, and in-class discussion. The “hands-on” emphasis of this course will provide “real world” experiences to complement the traditional reading and discussion phases of a graduate-level course.

Program Learning Outcomes

The SFA History Department has identified the following Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for all SFA students earning an M.A. degree in History:

1. The student will be able to explain the key issues and developments in at least two historical periods (one per course).
2. The student will be able to identify the main historical works and interpretive debates associated with an event or period.
3. The student will be able to locate, identify, and critically analyze primary sources.
4. The student will be able to research and analyze effectively an issue or topic in writing.
5. The student will be able to present written work in an appropriate academic style, including the proper citation of sources using Chicago Manual of Style (most recent edition).

This section of this course will focus on PLOs 3, 4, and 5.

Student Learning Outcomes

- The student will demonstrate in writing and discussion an understanding of the three phases of collections management: acquisition; holding; and utilization.
- The student will demonstrate an ability to complete specific individual collections management projects on time and evaluate the experience within the theoretical context.
- Functioning as a member of a team, the student will create an exhibit to highlight a specific collection.
- Individually, the student will create collections management policies to showcase mastery of actual policies and best practices, and issues and problems.
- The student will verbally and visually present information to the class.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Kenneth L. Ames, Barbara Franco, and L. Thomas Frye, *Ideas and Images: Developing Interpretive History Exhibits* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira, 1999).
2. Frank Boles, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005).
3. James G. Bradsher, *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).
4. G. Ellis Burcaw, *Introduction to Museum Work* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira, 1997).
5. Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch, eds., *A Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 2004).
6. James O. Horton and Lois E. Horton, eds., *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).
7. David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010).
8. Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord, *The Manual of Museum Exhibitions* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira, 2002).
9. Kathleen Roe, *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2008).
10. Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford, eds., *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory*
11. Barry Serrell, *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira, 1996).
12. John E. Simmons, *Things Great and Small: Collections Management Policies* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2006).

ADDITIONAL READING MATERIAL (PROVIDED BY PROFESSOR):

In the “Course Schedule” section you will see additional reading material has been assigned throughout the semester. All additional reading materials will be made available on D2L.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Participation: 25 points

Five Review and Response Papers: 50 points

Twenty Hours in Museum: 100 points

Twenty Hours in Archive: 100 points

Museum Mission Statements/Exhibit Labels: 25 points

African American History Assignment/Presentation: 50 points

Individual Project: 100 points

Group Project: 100 points

Total: 550 points

GRADING SCALE (IN %):

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69%

F: 59% and below

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend all classes.

PARTICIPATION (OUT OF 25 POINTS):

Much of this class revolves around discussion. So attendance is critical as you cannot participate if you are out at the movies. Still, you must be able to participate. That means you are required to have read everything assigned, preferably more than once. Note: Reading is just one part of participating. The other is, in fact, to talk.

FIVE REVIEW AND RESPONSE PAPERS (OUT OF 10 POINTS EACH FOR A TOTAL OF 50 POINTS):

You are required to turn in five Review and Response papers. Excluding weeks one, ten, and thirteen through sixteen, we have ten other weeks in which we will cover various reading assignments. You are hence only required to turn in Review and Response Papers for five of those ten weeks. In about four pages (excluding title page, footnotes / endnotes, and bibliography) define the thesis or theses, give a content summary and analysis, and share your personal reaction. To define a thesis you are trying to give a brief explanation of what the author's or authors' purpose was, i.e., the overall point. A content summary is a summary of the entire work or works. Be concise, no need to give a chapter-by-chapter replay. I know what was written, I am seeing if you do. Analysis is flushing out essential features and their relations with material covered in class. Let me be clear: content summary and analysis should be the bulk of your paper and should blend in the text of your paper (so do not use subheadings as replacements for good topic sentences). Be sure to relate the material in question to what we discuss in earlier classes and with other materials we have read. Specifically, then, incorporate class discussion and other readings into your analysis to show you have a command of the material at hand (do not just simply footnote it). [Obviously, this will be more nuanced as both the class progresses and your understanding of collections management deepens.] Finally, give me a summary of your (intelligent) reaction to the assigned reading(s).

PLEASE NOTE: All written assignments must follow *Chicago Manual of Style* and formatting requirements. It is assumed you know how to do this by now. If you do not, please see me.

TWENTY HOURS IN A MUSEUM (OUT OF 100 POINTS):

Each student will work a minimum of twenty hours in the Texas Forestry Museum (TFM). The TFM's hours are Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Director Kendall Gay will provide detailed instructions for your project. Please email her (kgay@treetexas.com) at the start of your session so he can arrange one or two large orientation & training sessions rather than several time consuming individual ones. Gay will assign you tasks related to museum work as he determines best but will likely include dealing with accession, provenance and/or artifact research, data entry into a filing system, and other related tasks. Half of the class will work in the TFM between 2/1 and 3/11. The second half will work in the TFM between 3/21 and 4/29. You will need to keep track of your hours on the tracking form I provide you. Gay or her designee may sign off on hours. Students will submit three items: (1) their tracking forms; (2) a copy of any materials produced or a summary list of work accomplished; and (3) a three-page comparison of your activities and theoretical collections management.

Due Date for First Half (2/1-3/11): in class on March 22

Due Date for Second Half: (3/21-4/29): in class on May 3

TWENTY HOURS IN AN ARCHIVE (OUT OF 100 POINTS):

Each student will work a minimum of twenty hours in the East Texas Research Center (ETRC), Steen Library. The ETRC's hours are 8:00-5:00 M-F. Director Linda Reynolds will assign you to a specific collection. The activities may include rehousing documents and photographs, creating or expanding finding aids, cleaning and repairing, and digitizing materials. Half of the class will work in the ETRC between 2/1 and 3/11. The second half will work in the ETRC between 3/21 and 4/29. You will need to keep track of your hours on the form I provide. Linda Reynolds or Kyle Ainsworth may sign off on hours. Students will submit three items: (1) their tracking form; (2) a copy of any materials produced or a summary list of work accomplished; and (3) a three-page comparison of your activities and theoretical collections management.

Due Date for First Half (2/1-3/11): in class on March 22

Due Date for Second Half: (3/21-4/29): in class on May 3

MUSEUM MISSION STATEMENTS/EXHIBIT LABELS ASSIGNMENT (25 POINTS):

Half the class will do the Museum Mission Statements assignment and half the class will do the Exhibit Labels assignment (you will be assigned which one on the first or second week of class).

For the Museum Mission Statements: Collect as many mission statements and other supporting documents (e.g., risk plan, ethics policy, collections policy, etc) that you can find from any museum, local or otherwise. You can visit local museums in person or you can search the internet. Whether you bring in something from a museum or if you print it up yourself from an online source, do be sure to bring the documents to class (and, if possible, scan the documents and send them to the entire class). On Feb. 16, we will be discussing mission statements and supporting documents as they relate to museums. Students doing this assignment will thus present their findings and relate with the class their opinions on the quality (or lack thereof) of the documents. Please turn in a hardcopy of the documents you collected with a cover page (stapled).

For the Exhibit Labels: Document (photograph or write down) at least five, and no more than ten, exhibit labels from exhibits in any local museum you can visit (online exhibits are acceptable too but cannot make up the entirety of the labels you analyze). Whether photos or something you type up, do be sure to bring copies of the labels to class (and, if possible, scan the documents and send them to the entire class). On Mar. 1, we will be discussing exhibit labels as they relate to museums. Students doing this assignment will thus present their findings and relate with the class their opinions on the quality (or lack thereof) of the labels. Please turn in a hardcopy of the labels you collected with a cover page (stapled).

African American History Assignment and Presentation (out of 50 points):

Our final project will be an exhibition about three African Americans in Nacogdoches: Birdie Wade, Arthur Weaver, and E. J. Campbell (more on that later). To better complete what will undoubtedly be an assemblage of brilliant and beautiful exhibits, we need to first learn a little bit more about the local African American community and the people to whom we will build exhibits about. Therefore, the objective of this assignment is to familiarize yourselves and each other with the life and times of African Americans in Nacogdoches. We are, collectively, going to approach this understanding from five angles: (1-3) Bios of the three; (4) Civil Rights in Nacogdoches; and (5) Nacogdoches History.

You will be divided into five groups in which each group (A, B, C, D, E) will be responsible for one angle (1, 2, 3, 4, 5):

- Group A – Angle 1: Birdie Wade Bio.
- Group B – Angle 2: Arthur Weaver Bio.
- Group C – Angle 3: E. J. Campbell Bio.
- Group D – Angle 4: Civil Rights in Nacogdoches.
- Group E – Angle 5: Nacogdoches History.

What you are doing, exactly? You are writing a five-page essay regarding your group's angle. Only one essay needs to be turned in to me with everyone's name on it. You will, however, be making enough copies for everyone in class so they can benefit from your splendid work. By dividing the various aspects and histories that are crucial in painting a full(er) picture of our exhibit subjects, we will get the best of the best in each case. The goal is therefore to provide everyone with a great deal of good information that will be most useful to them in the construction of a final project.

Presentation: Not only will you be turning in your group essay, but you will also be presenting it to the class. That is, you will teach everyone about your angle. Again, the purpose is for us to share and learn from and with each other. In the end, once all the pieces are put together, we will likely have a good understanding of Wilson and why he is deemed worthy of memorialization.

The papers and presentations are due 3/22

Remember: You are not alone. This is a group project, so work together. Also, keep in mind that the archives here at SFA houses an African American Heritage Collection and

there are many local history books/works that you **MUST** consult (Stephen Delear's thesis "March!: The Fight for Civil Rights in a Land of Fear" is good for this). In addition, we hopefully will have relatives of our exhibit subjects come in and talk with us as well.

Group Project (100 points)

Rough Draft of Materials & Presentation due April 26

We will finalize the exhibits in class together on May 3

Overall Purpose of the Project:

This project centers on creating an exhibit about Birdie Wade, Arthur Weaver, and E. J. Campbell. Based on discussions, lectures, and readings throughout the course, you and a partner(s) will produce a final project that will be exhibited. My reason for creating these projects are twofold: (1) to give you experience creating a history-related product that can be accessed by a public audience (i.e., becoming a practicing public historian); and, (2) to create a useful product to bolster the public education of African American history locally Project.

What to do?/What to Produce?

- Select a minimum of 3 objects and/or images from a relevant ETRC and create an exhibit.
- There are several strategies for accomplishing your exhibit.
- You can pick one theme/topic and pick all your images and/or objects to fit that theme; or you can pick one or more images and/or objects that fit multiple themes/topics.
 - This will be negotiated in class.
- At minimum, your exhibit(s) need to:
 - Utilize objects (which you will photograph and turn into images for placement on exhibition paper) and/or images from the ETRC concerning our three individuals/African American History.
 - Presents a general theme or topic relevant to and about one of our three individuals/African American History.
 - You will need to provide a short contextual statement for the entire exhibit of your group.
 - You will need to identify the objects/images, including date (era), description, and, well, what the heck it is and why you are using it.
 - A 500-word caption for each image/object explaining it and an answer to some type of enduring question.
 - Variations:
 - Create three separate 500-word exhibits on one poster.
 - Create one exhibit with a contextual 500-word informational text with multiple images with brief descriptions and links to oral histories.
 - Use your imagination but make sure it conforms to what we discuss in class (check with me for approval).

How to create your exhibit?

- We will assemble the final products in class on May 3. Prior to that, you can print low-quality material on your own. Essentially, I will be providing each group with quality exhibit materials for the final products.

Class Presentation on April 26

We will examine and analyze rough drafts of your projects in class on April 26 to offer humble suggestions and critiques (and praise!). By presenting your work to the class, you will be able to get feedback and improve the quality of the project before its final due date. Please submit an electronic copy, if possible, to the entire class prior to the meeting. During class each team will give a 20 minute or so (actual time will depend on the number of teams) presentation on their project. After all this is completed, revise your rough draft materials appropriately and get them to me by May 3. I will then have them printed out and we can assemble/look at in wonder the final exhibits on May 10.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT: 100 POINTS:

Create an imaginary museum and/or archive! Your project should be 15-20 pages long. You will need to provide the following:

- Title Page
- Table of Illustrations (maps, photos, tables, charts, etc.)
- Preface (review of the need for the institution; includes mission statement and statement of purpose)
- A collections policy (provide context of existing collection)
- An acquisitions policy
- An appraisal policy
- Ethics Statement
- Deed of Gift
- Any institutional affiliation (if any)
- Staff policy (job descriptions; minimum educational requirements)
- If a museum: an interpretive exhibit or interpretive program
 - 1) Nature of exhibit / program; 2) Justification / rationale; 3) Interpretive thrust
- If archive: create policies for accessioning and de-accessioning collections; provide an example of a collections finding guide.

Feel free to let your imagination take over but keep it logically consistent. You can create other policies or include other material as long as they too are logical. You will present your project to the class on April 19 and turn in a rough draft. You should also provide at least an outline of your report for all other seminar members. The final report is due May 3 in class.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

- Week 1 (Jan. 19): Introduction to course.
- Week 2 (Jan. 26): Read and discuss *Nearby History*.
- Week 3 (Feb. 2): Read and discuss *Slavery and Public History*.
- Week 4 (Feb. 9): Read and discuss Burcaw, *Introduction to Museum Work*.
- Week 5 (Feb. 16): Read and discuss *Things Great and Small*
 - **Due: Museum Mission Statements Assignment.**
- Week 6 (Feb. 23): Read and discuss *The Manual of Museum Exhibitions*, pps. 1-38; 143-66; 317-24; 345-56; 393-420; and *Ideas and Images*, pps. 1-103; 137-209.
- Week 7 (Mar. 1): *Exhibit Labels*.
 - **Due: Exhibit Labels Assignment.**
- Week 8 (Mar. 8): Read and Discuss Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford, eds., *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory*.
- **No class on March 15 for spring break**
- Week 10 (Mar. 22): African American History Presentations.
- Week 11 (March 29): Read and discuss selections from *A Modern Archives Reader* (pp. 3-37, 57-70, 80-99, 124-38, 149-80, 264-96, 326-35); and *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions* (chs. 1 & 2).
- Week 12 (April 5): *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* and *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts*. Guest discussant leaders: Linda Reynolds and Kyle Ainsworth. **Class will be held at the ETRC.**
- Week 13 (April 12): Work day in class (no readings). With final projects due the following three weeks, I thought it best to give you some time in class with me to work on your projects. **Please bring in rough drafts of potential exhibit text/ideas for the exhibits.**
- Week 14 (April 19): Individual Projects Presented and Rough Drafts Due.
- Week 15 (April 26): Rough Drafts of Group Projects Due and Presented.
- Week 16 (May 3): Group Projects Finalized/ Final Drafts of Individual Projects Due
- Finals Week (May 10): Glory in Final Exhibition (or install it somewhere).

NOTE: The Bradsher book is really not assigned much for class discussion. It is required so as to help you with your individual project (as will the other readings).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (A-9.1):

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

- **Definition of Academic Dishonesty:**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp.

WITHHELD GRADES (SEMESTER GRADES POLICY, A-54):

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to <http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/>.