What is a museum? Where did they come from? Whom do they serve? How do they work? How have museums changed in the modern period? This course offers an introduction to museum practices through historical and contemporary literature, and engagement with local institutions and professionals. We will visit a number of Salt Lake City museums, including the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, the Natural History Museum of Utah, the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, and others. Our exploration of these institutions will take into consideration the formation of collections, curatorial practices, the function of architecture and display, and community engagement.

This class will include a number of field trips, and because we will be meeting with guest speakers, it is essential that everyone show up on time. I encourage you to plan ahead, setting up car-pools and investigating public transit options.

Readings will be available as PDFs in Files, as links to on-line texts, or as excerpts in books available to read digitally through the UofU library.

**Evaluation Methods and Criteria**

Your grades will be based on two substantial writing assignments and class participation.

**Compare and Contrast Assignment** (40% of total grade): This is an assignment divided into four sections. The first three sections are worksheets that you will fill out based on visits to selected local institutions. The final part of this assignment is an essay that compares the institutions you have selected to one another, and draws conclusions about their similarities and differences based on their histories, audiences, and purposes. This assignment is meant to

- familiarize you with local institutions
- help you to think clearly and critically about what museums are, and how they work.
- help you to think clearly and historically about the relationships between museums and other types of cultural, social, and political institutions in which practices of display play an essential role.
- develop your skills of observation and description.
- develop your skills of comparative argumentation.

**Final Project** (35% of final grade): Your final project may take the form of a research paper, or a virtual exhibition. You have a great deal of freedom in choosing your topic, but should discuss it with me as your ideas develop. You will submit a proposal and annotated bibliography, which will go through a process of peer review. This assignment is meant to:
• allow you to develop your knowledge of the field independent of course materials.
• allow you to explore a topic of personal interest.
• develop your research skills.
• develop your writing skills, particularly well-researched thesis-driven writing.

Participation (25% of total grade): Your participation grade will be based on your attendance and participation in class meetings, and your responses to a variety of prompts about the readings. Attendance and participation means showing up and engaging respectfully and productively with your peers, with me, and with our guest speakers. You will receive a preliminary participation grade based on your engagement in class at midterm to give you a sense of how you are doing. The reading prompts will come in the form of short-answer questions about assigned readings, or requests for you to submit questions about the assigned readings before class. Because these are meant to facilitate your engagement in class, they will not be accepted late, nor will you receive points for submissions on days when you do not attend class. The participation expectations are meant to

• encourage you to read carefully and with intention.
• help you to make connections between the assigned readings and our classroom discussions, lectures, and field trips.
• help you to develop your verbal communication skills.
• help you to use questions to further your own understanding and enrich group discussion.
• develop your ability to engage with and communicate with a variety of different people.

Workload: Students should expect to spend approximately 3 hours a week on course readings, and 3 hours a week on written assignments and museum visits. The balance of these two sets of responsibilities will vary week to week. For instance, you have two weeks to complete each of the Museum Worksheets, which means that you have three hours for your visit, and three hours to write. I expect your assignments to show this kind of time investment. If you are concerned about spreading your workload out evenly I suggest that you make your visit and notes one week, and write up your worksheet the next. Alternatively, you could do it all in the same week, and have a lighter homework load the following week.

Student and Faculty Responsibilities: Students and faculty are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting and in all course-related interactions with faculty and fellow-students. The Student Code specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. I take this very seriously. Students who hand in material that they did not write, or containing passages written by anyone other than the student without appropriate citation will receive a failing grade on the assignment, without the possibility of a rewrite, and may receive a failing grade in the class. Additionally, academic dishonesty such as plagiarism must be reported to the Chair of the department and will go on your permanent record. If you don't know the rules, you need to familiarize yourself with them. You can get help with this from me or from the writing center. I am responsible for enforcing responsible classroom behaviors, beginning with
verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee. The faculty member will strive to maintain an environment in the classroom conducive to thinking and learning. **Students are not permitted to share any course materials online or through other means. The uploading of any materials taken from this canvas site, recordings of lectures, or any other sharing of material I provide in class constitutes copyright infringement, and a breach of academic honesty.**

**Americans with Disabilities Act Statement:** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with us to make arrangements for accommodations.

**Accommodations Policy:** Some of the readings, lectures, films, or presentations in this course include material that may conflict with the core beliefs of some students. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is one that you are committed to taking. The University of Utah’s complete accommodations policy may be found at: [http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.html](http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.html).

I am happy to work with students to make the course accessible whenever possible, however, if you think you might require accommodations, you must meet with me in the first two weeks of class. I am very unlikely to negotiate content accommodations at any point after September 7.

**If you need more support than I am able to offer, or than you are comfortable asking for, please review the resources available on campus to help you succeed.**

For a detailed schedule of due dates, field trips, and assigned readings, please see the course page on Canvas.