

# Museum Studies Program

## Museum Studies Graduate Program

These are exciting and challenging times for museums, with many established practices being reconsidered. Museum professionals today work in a dynamic and rapidly changing environment. Exhibitions and public programs are evolving; more than ever, educators, curators, and designers are seeking ways to engage visitors in complex issues of broad concern. Behind the scenes, collection stewardship is being reevaluated in response to practical, political, and ethical concerns. Emerging technologies allow museums to bring their collections and their programs to audiences well beyond the confines of museum buildings. With this expanded reach, museums are experiencing dramatic changes in the age, ethnicity, education, and economic status of their audiences. Additionally, unprecedented scholarly and public attention is being directed toward how museums have acquired their collections, represented their subjects, and engaged with the public. Amidst this transformation, long-standing assumptions about museums' public value have been called into question, requiring museum professionals to craft new collaborations and community partnerships in order to survive.

To advance and thrive in this dynamic environment, twenty-first century museum professionals require theoretical knowledge informed by practice, imagination tempered by rigor, and leadership stimulated by collaboration. The Museum Studies Program at the University of Kansas offers the training and experience necessary to lead museums into the future. Students take advantage of the superb facilities at KU, including the Dole Institute of Politics, Biodiversity Institute & Natural History Museum, Spencer Museum of Art, Spencer Research Library, and Wilcox Classical Museum, as well as nearby museums, archives, historical agencies, and specialized libraries.

Our flexible, interdisciplinary M.A. degree provides the foundations of the field plus hands-on skills and experience in specific areas of museum work. We also offer a unique dual master's program with African & African-American Studies that awards two master's degrees in three years, as well as a 15-credit graduate certificate program for graduate students in other fields or professionals looking to develop new skills.

## Courses

### **MUSE 177. First Year Seminar: \_\_\_\_\_. 3 Credits. GE11 GLBC**

A limited-enrollment, seminar course for first-time freshmen, addressing current issues in Museum Studies. First-Year Seminar topics are coordinated and approved by the Office of First-Year Experience. Prerequisite: First-time freshman status.

### **MUSE 301. Museums and Society: Past, Present, Future. 3 Credits.**

An introduction to museums and the field of museum studies. Using short lectures, discussion, laboratory exercises, field trips, and guest speakers, students will explore the history, role, and function of museums including types, dimensions, creation and management of collections, exhibition development, administration, and visitor experiences. Includes instruction and practice in writing for a variety of museum contexts and audiences. Designed for students interested in museums and curious about museum careers.

### **MUSE 380. Introduction to Public History. 3 Credits.**

This course will introduce students to the methodological and theoretical practice of public history. The course aims to guide students to think about history beyond the book and acquaint them with examples of public histories such as museums, memorials, monuments, power of the archive, preservation through oral histories, and democratizing history through digital tools. Through class lectures and assignments, students will develop an understanding of how being a steward of historical knowledge can have a more significant effect once it reaches the broader public. The class will wrestle with topics such as: memory and historical preservation; democratizing history through digital tools; exhibits and monuments; power of archival collection; and funding institutions of public history. This course will guide students to build a deeper understanding of historical practice but also to communicate effectively with the public. (Same as HIST 380.)

### **MUSE 480. Special Topics in Museum Studies: \_\_\_\_\_. 1-3 Credits.**

Courses on special topics in museum studies, given as need arises. Lectures, discussions of readings, and guest speakers. Topic for semester to be announced. Instructor permission usually required. Prerequisite: Varies by section and instructor.

### **MUSE 580. Special Topics in Museum Studies: \_\_\_\_\_. 1-3 Credits.**

Courses on special topics in museum studies, given as need arises. Lectures, discussions of readings, and guest speakers. Topic for semester to be announced. Instructor permission may be required. Prerequisite: Successful completion of a History, Art History, Anthropology or Museum Studies course numbered below 500, or permission of instructor.

### **MUSE 699. Anthropology in Museums. 3 Credits.**

The course reviews the history of archeological, ethnographic, physical anthropological and other types of collections. It also considers current issues facing anthropologists, such as: contested rights to collections and the stories that accompany them; representation and interpretation of cultures; art and artifact; conceptualization, design and building of exhibitions; and anthropological research and education in the museum. (Same as ANTH 699.) Prerequisite: ANTH 150 or ANTH 108 or consent of instructor.

### **MUSE 701. Museum Management. 3 Credits.**

Lecture, discussion, and laboratory exercises on the nature of museums as organizations; accounting, budget cycles, personnel management, and related topics will be presented using, as appropriate, case studies and a simulated museum organization model. (Same as AMS 731, BIOL 785, GEOL 783, and HIST 728.) Prerequisite: Museum Studies student or consent of instructor.

### **MUSE 703. Introduction to Museum Exhibits. 3 Credits.**

Presentation of principles and practices of exhibit management, design, and production. Topics will include developing a master plan for museum exhibits; concept development; design, installation, and maintenance of exhibits; design theory; design process; label writing and editing; selection of materials architectural requirements and building codes; cost estimating; publicity; security; and exhibit evaluation. Consideration will be given to exhibition problems in public and private museums in the areas of anthropology, art, history, natural history, and technology. (Same as AMS 700, BIOL 787, GEOL 781, and HIST 723.) Prerequisite: Museum Studies student or consent of instructor.

### **MUSE 704. Introduction to Collections Management and Utilization. 3 Credits.**

This course examines the roles collections play in fulfilling a museum's mission; the obligations ownership/preservation of collections materials create for a museum; and the policies, practices, and professional

standards that museums are required to put in place. The course will cover utilization of collections for research, education, and public engagement; address how that utilization informs the need for and structure of collections policies, and introduce the basic practices of professional collections management. (Same as ANTH 798, AMS 730, ANTH 798, BIOL 798, GEOL 785, and HIST 725.) Prerequisite: Museum Studies student or consent of instructor.

**MUSE 705. Introduction to Museum Public Education. 3 Credits.** Consideration of the goals of an institution's public education services, developing programs, identifying potential audiences, developing audiences, and funding. Workshops and demonstrations are designed for students to gain practical experience working with various programs and developing model programs. (Same as AMS 797, BIOL 784, GEOL 784, and HIST 721.) Prerequisite: Museum Studies student or consent of instructor.

**MUSE 706. Conservation Principles and Practices. 3 Credits.** This course will acquaint the future museum professional with problems in conserving all types of collections. Philosophical and ethical approaches will be discussed, as well as the changing practices regarding conservation techniques. Emphasis will be placed on detection and identification of causes of deterioration in objects made of organic and inorganic materials, and how these problems can be remedied. Storage and care of objects will also be considered. (Same as AMS 714, BIOL 700, GEOL 780, and HIST 722.) Prerequisite: Museum Studies student or consent of instructor.

**MUSE 707. Practical Archival Principles. 3 Credits.** Study of the principles and practices applicable to the preservation, care, and administration of archives and manuscripts. Practical experience will be an integral part of this course. (Same as HIST 727.)

**MUSE 710. Natural Sciences Curation and Collections Management. 3 Credits.** This course explores collections in the KU Museum of Natural History through the eyes of their curators and collection managers. It addresses aspects of collecting, cataloguing, preserving, storing, managing, and digitally archiving different types of natural science collections. The course format consists of lectures, readings, workshops, and guided tours of the museum's paleontological, biological (flora and fauna) and archaeological division collections, as well as the Spencer Museum of Art's ethnographic collections. Student projects will involve one of the museum's collections with the opportunity for hands-on experience. (Same as BIOL 706.)

**MUSE 780. Special Topics: \_\_\_\_\_. 1-3 Credits.** Advanced courses on special topics in museum studies, given as need arises. Lectures, discussions of readings, and guest speakers. Topic for semester to be announced. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Museum Studies Program or permission of instructor.

**MUSE 790. Advanced Study. 1-3 Credits.** Individual research in a specialized topic not ordinarily treated in a Museum Studies core course for which there is a member of the graduate faculty competent and willing to direct a research project. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

**MUSE 792. Directed Readings. 1-3 Credits.** Directed reading in an area of Museum Studies in which there is no particular course in the Museum Studies program or in cooperating departments but in which there is a member of the graduate faculty competent and willing to direct a program study. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

**MUSE 798. Capstone. 3 Credits.** Research, writing, and defense of the MUSE capstone for certificate students. Graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. Prerequisite:

Enrollment in the Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies and consent of Museum Studies Director.

**MUSE 799. Museum Internship. 1-6 Credits.** Provides directed, practical experience in research, collection, care, and management, public education, and exhibits with emphasis to suit the particular requirements of each student. Graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. (Same as AMS 799, ANTH 799, and GEOL 723.)

**MUSE 801. The Modern Museum: Institutions, Knowledge and Audiences. 3 Credits.** This course provides students with an overview of the historical development of museums as institutions, bodies of knowledge, and communicators with a public audience. Students will become familiar with museological theory and methods through reading and discussion of canonical and contemporary texts. Course readings and discussions will examine the purpose and functions of museums in diverse historical, geographical, cultural, and disciplinary contexts, allowing students to identify shared and distinct practices across varied museums. Site visits will familiarize students with museum practices in realms including administration, collections, curation, education, exhibits, and research. (Same as HIST 720.) Prerequisite: Museum Studies student or consent of instructor.

**MUSE 802. The Museum Profession: Ethics, Standards and Cultural Awareness. 3 Credits.** This course builds upon the foundational theoretical and disciplinary knowledge developed in MUSE 801 to interrogate the ethics and standards that govern museums as institutions, affect their operations and functions, and underlie relationships with various audiences. Students will continue their engagement with museological theory and methods to deepen their understanding of the politics and epistemologies that shape museum practice and produce ideas of authenticity and authority. Students will consider the role of museums in creating perceptions of scientific and historical truth, identity, and belonging. These considerations develop the critical faculties that will allow students to recognize opportunities to reframe museum practice along more ethical, equitable, and inclusive lines. Prerequisite: MUSE 801 or approval of instructor.

**MUSE 803. The Contemporary Museum in Practice: Debates and Research Methodologies. 3 Credits.** This course synthesizes and builds upon the institutional, ethical, and professional knowledge developed in MUSE 801 and MUSE 802 to engage with contemporary challenges, debates, and issues confronting museums, their staff, and their audiences. Engagement with current issues will allow students to situate their own professional and disciplinary interests in the context of the wider field of museum studies as they begin to formulate their final product topics and methodologies. Students will hone research skills, identify sources, construct bibliographies, and begin literature review for their final product, culminating in a complete final product proposal to be submitted to the instructor and the student's committee. Prerequisite: MUSE 801 and MUSE 802.