

## **ARTHIST 295A**

**Towards the Modern Museum (Episodes in the History of Collecting & Display)**

**Prof. Graham Larkin <BGL@stanford.edu>**

**Spring 2004**

**Scholtz Seminar Room**

**Cantor Art Center**

**Mondays 1:15-3:05**

### **REQUIREMENTS**

#### Short Assignment before each meeting (25%)

The evening before the seminar, each student will e-mail me short responses to each of the readings. These can be sent either as a Word document or in the body of the e-mail. Before each class, I will hand each student a copy of his or her responses for the week, complete with my own annotations. While it has many advantages, this feedback loop is mainly a chance for me to flag observations which I feel are especially well-formulated or original, in the hope that you will raise them in class.

Please preface each weekly response with the following information in the format shown:

**[Your Name]**

**Week [#] Responses**

**[date submitted]**

The response should address each reading in turn, prefaced or followed by a more synthetic paragraph discussing common themes or questions. The purpose of the exercise is to directly address, and draw together, points raised in the various readings in order to improve the quality of class discussion. In your response, please include page references to passages that you quote or discuss.

The format of your written response is flexible, as long as it consists of full paragraphs and goes beyond a mere summary. It should ideally combine analyses, disagreements, musings, and questions in an integrated way. You are encouraged to make connections with texts read earlier in the class, and, when appropriate, to draw on knowledge and experience beyond the class. As a rule, though, try to keep the discussion focused on the readings at hand.

If you find any part of a reading confusing or in need of further clarification, please mention it. A thoughtful call for clarification is a great service to yourself, your fellow students, and your instructor.

#### Class Participation (35%)

Each class will consist of a guided discussion of the readings. Students will be encouraged to raise questions already sent by e-mail.

### Final Assignment (40%)

Half of your mark will be based on a final paper of approximately 12-15 double-spaced pages, due on June 8 (no exceptions). This will treat a subject in the history of collecting and display, which you will determine in consultation with the instructor. You are required to submit a proposal, with bibliography, by May 18. The proposal should include a list of bibliographical sources, followed by a sentence or two describing how each reading pertains to your project. The final paper should deal with the themes discussed in the seminar, and it should include a careful 'reading' of at least one display space. This will go beyond a mere description of a space or an experience of a space; it is, rather, an analysis of how and why that space or experience works the way it does. The display space in question may be one that you have visited (e.g. the Cantor Center facade and vestibule, or the art deco exhibition at the Legion), or it may be one that you know only from visual and verbal descriptions (e.g. the 1874 Paris Salon, or the Milwaukee Art Museum). Please try to select historically significant examples, and feel free to use multiple examples as you see fit.

*For more detailed information, see the guidelines to "Grading" and "How to get a good grade in this class" at the end of this syllabus.*

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### ***Initial Handouts (to consult throughout the course):***

Christopher Rowell, "Display of Art," *Grove Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, 1996.

Jeffrey Abt and Helen Searing, "Museum," *Grove Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, 1996.

David Carrier, "The Display of Art: an Historical Perspective," *Leonardo*, vol. 20, no 1, 1987, pp. 83-86.

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### **Week 1: (April 5) Introduction [*discussion of syllabus*]**

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### **Week 2: (April 12) The Poetics of Collecting**

#### ***Required Reading***

Theodor Adorno, "Valéry Proust Museum", *Prisms* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967), pages 173-186.

Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Book Collecting", trans. Zohn, *Selected Writings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1999), vol. 2., pp. 486-493. Originally published 1931.

Walter Benjamin, "The Collector," section of *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1999), pp. 203-211.

James Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture," *The Predicament of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1988), pp. 215-251.

Susan Stewart, "The Collection: Paradise of Consumption," *On Longing. Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, (Durham and London, 1993), pp. 151-169.

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**Week 3: (April 19) Objects in and Out of Circulation**

***Required Reading***

Jean Baudrillard "A Marginal System: Collecting," *The System of Objects*, trans. Benedict (London: Verso, 1996), pp. 85-106.

James G. Carrier, "Gifts and commodities, people and things," *Gifts and Commodities* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp 18-38.

Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret," in *Capital*, vol I, trans Fowkes (Vintage Books, 1977, New York, pp 163-178.

Krzysztof Pomian, "The Collection: Between the Visible and the Invisible" (1978), *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500-1800*, trans. Wiles-Portier, pp. 7-44. [276-278]

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**Week 4: (April 26) Cabinets**

***Required Reading***

Horst Bredekamp, "The Historical Chain" and "Research and Vision," *The Lure of Antiquity and the Cult of the Machine : The Kunstkammer and the Evolution of Nature, Art and Technology*, trans. Brown. (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1995), pp. 11-62.

Peter Burke, "Classifying Knowledge: Curricula, Libraries and Encyclopedias," *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2000), pp. 81-115.

Barbara Stafford, "Exhibitionism," *Artful Science: Enlightenment Entertainment and the Eclipse of Visual Education* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), pp. 217-338.

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**Week 5: (May 3) Emergence of the Modern Museum**

Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," *Art History* 3, no. 4 (December 1980), pp. 448-469.

Andrew McClellan, "The Musée Central des Arts," *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 91-154.

***Supplementary Reading:***

Nikolaus Pevsner, "Museums," *A History of Building Types* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 111-138.

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**Week 6: (May 10) Paintings for the Public**

Thomas Crow, "Introduction: The Salon Exhibition in the Eighteenth Century and the Problem of its Public," in *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 1-22.

David H. Solkin et al., *Art on The Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780-1836* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 1-53, pp.1-53; [255-258].

***Supplementary Reading:***

Christopher Rowell, "Exhibition," *Grove Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, 1996.

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**Week 7: (May 17) The Fate of Sculptures and Monuments**

Andrew McClellan, "Alexandre Lenoir and the Museum of French Monuments," *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 155-197.

Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, "Museums in Rome" and "The Proliferation of Casts and Copeys," *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture. 1500-1900* (New Haven and London: 1981), pp. 62-73; 79-91.

Rémy G. Saisselin, "Imitation," in *The Rule of Reason and the Ruses of the Heart; A Philosophical Dictionary of Classical French Criticism, Critics, and Aesthetic Issues* (Cleveland, Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1970), pp. 110-113.

Alan Wallach. "The American Cast Museum" *Exhibiting Contradiction: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States*. (Boston: U. Of Massachusetts, 1998): 38-56; 135-139.

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**Week 8: (May 24) Goods on Display**

Peter Trippi, "Industrial Arts and the Exhibition Ideal," *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, ed. Malcolm Baker and Brenda Richardson, (London: V&A Publications, 1997), pp. 79-84.

Neil Harris, "Museums, Merchandising, and Popular Taste: The Struggle for Influence," *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 56-81. [First published 1978.].

Mary Anne Staniszewski, "Installations for Good Design and Good Taste," *The Power of Display. A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 142-194.

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**Week 9: (Week of Memorial Day—date TBA) Twentieth-Century Challenges**

James Cuno, review of *Towards a New Museum* by Victoria Newhouse. *Harvard Design Magazine*, Winter/Spring 200, pp. 92-93.

Joseph Hudnut, "The Last of the Romans: Comments of the Building of the National Gallery," *Magazine of Art*, vol. 34 (1941), pp. 169-73.

Neil Levine, selections from "The Guggenheim Museum's Logic of Inversion," in *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 1995). Read sections on pp. 299-301; 310-316; 327-336; 347-361; skim the photos in other sections.

Brian O'Doherty, "Notes on the Gallery Space," in *Inside the White Cube. The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Santa Monica, California: Lapis Press, 1976), pp.13-34.

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**Grading**

**Benchmark Description (B+)**

The paper fulfills the assignment as it was presented. It does so in a clear and effective way. The writing, both at the sentence and the paragraph level, is unmarred by errors or infelicities; the vocabulary usage is strong and varied. Citations, evidence, and bibliographical material (if it was required) appear accurately and in support of the student's arguments. It is clear, overall, that the student took the assignment seriously and completed it with care.

**Above the Benchmark**

Work that goes beyond this—i.e., that is imaginative in focus, deft or eloquent in style, creatively researched, argued in a manner or to a point that genuinely surprises or impresses me— will merit an A- or an A.

**Below the Benchmark**

Work that does not reach the benchmark—i.e., that has errors of grammar, spelling, usage, or idiom; that has inaccuracies of citation or thinness of support; that offers an argument too general or banal; that shows that the student did not exercise care in completing the assignment —will get a lower grade. The greater the aggregate set of these features, the lower the grade you will receive.

**Further Down the Scale**

Work that is truly sloppy, incoherent, and derivative of other work or things presented in class, or that demonstrates that the student more than did not care (i.e., that the student is out to affront) will either receive a low grade (we're talking C range here), or, by contrast, will not

be accepted. On such occasions, the student may be asked to redo and resubmit the assignment.

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**How to get a good grade in this class:**

1. Take responsibility for your own education. If you're not sure about how to do an assignment, or are confused by something in the reading, *please ask*.
2. Come to class, and do so *on time*, even if you haven't done the reading.
3. Do the reading. Start early and get through as much as you can. Take notes as you read.
4. Come prepared with things to say. Try to anticipate the questions I might ask, and come in with questions of your own.
5. In class discussion, take responsibility for your own participation and for that of others. If you find it easy to talk in class, pay attention to the quality of your participation. If you find it difficult, set goals for yourself. Talk to me about it.
6. Read *and write* with a dictionary at hand. Look up words you don't know. Proofread your papers carefully to avoid spelling and grammar errors.
7. Be organized. Start writing papers with enough lead time that you can go through at least 2 drafts.
8. Write out any oral presentations (either in outline form or in more detail, whatever's most comfortable for you) and practice them.
9. Learn how to use the library and other research tools as soon as possible.
10. Tell me sooner rather than later if you have a real crisis that requires an extension.
11. Clear your final paper topic with me, *and submit a proposal*, in advance.