

MUSM 5150—Collections Management SPRING--2008

Professor: Deane Bowers

E-mail: deane.bowers@colorado.edu

Office: Ramaley N295

Phone: 492-5530 (Ramaley), 492-6270 (MCOL), 485-6313 (home)

Class Meetings: Tuesday, Thursday, 9:30 – 10:45, Henderson 212

Office Hours: Thursdays, 1 - 3, Ramaley N295

By appointment (you can always set up an appointment with me at a time that works for both of us!)

What is this course about?

Collections management is an area of specialization within the museum profession that encompasses a wide range of activities. It includes conservation, registration, collecting and acquiring material, project management, administration, development of policy and procedure, fundraising, and compliance with local, state, national and international laws, treaties, and regulations. Collection managers and registrars work with directors, curators, educators, students and volunteers to manage collections and integrate collections management with other museum operations.

This course will cover a variety of topics related to collections and the management of collections. We will cover collecting and collection policies, processing of incoming and outgoing material, organization and storage, environment and security, regulations related to collecting, and databasing of collections.

Collections Management—Schedule

Week	Date	Topic
1	Jan. 15 Jan. 17	Introduction, Organization Mission Statements
2	Jan. 22 Jan. 24	Types of collections, Collection Management Policies Why collect? Lecture and discussion
3	Jan. 29 Jan. 31	Acquiring and accessioning specimens I Acquiring and accessioning specimens II
4	Feb. 5 Feb. 7	Evaluation of collection management policy due. Presentations Presentations
5	Feb. 12 Feb. 14	Acquiring and accessioning specimens III: discussion Processing outgoing material I (loans, exchanges, deaccessions)

6	Feb. 19 Feb. 21	Processing outgoing material II (loans, exchanges, deaccessions) Processing outgoing material III: discussion
7	Feb. 26 Feb. 28	Databasing and Technology I—Guest lecture: Rob Guralnick Databasing and Technology II—Guest lecture: Rob Guralnick
8	Mar. 4 Mar. 6	Organization and Storage I Organization and Storage II
9	Mar. 11 Mar. 13	Interview paper due. Presentations on interviews Presentations
10	Mar. 18 Mar. 20	Pest Control Regulations about collecting: NAGPRA. Guest lecturers—Steve Lekson and Debbie Confer
11	Mar. 25 Mar. 27	SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS
12	Apr. 1 Apr. 3	Regulations about collecting: others Grant proposals due. Presentations on proposals
13	Apr. 8 Apr. 10	Presentations on proposals Grant panel. Reviews due.
14	Apr. 15 Apr. 17	Grant panel Environment and security
15	Apr. 22 Apr. 24	Conservation of collections Moving and disaster planning
16	Apr. 29 May 1	Field trip: AAM in Denver Catch-up and wrap-up

There is no final exam for this course.

Reading:

There are two required textbooks for the class. These books will stand you in good stead whatever your future in the museum world! In addition, we will have a variety of readings from other books and journals that will be assigned over the course of the semester.

1. Buck, R.A. and J. A Gilmore (eds.). 1998. The New Museum Registration Methods. American Association of Museums. Washington, D.C.
2. Malaro, M. 1998. A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C. 2nd edition.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE

There will be 3 major projects over the course of the semester. For each of the three projects, you will give an oral presentation (7 - 8 minutes) and turn in a written paper. Your grade for each project will be based 1/3 on your presentation and 2/3 on your paper.

1. Collection Management Policy evaluation. Choose a collection management policy either from one of the CU Museum's sections or from a museum of your choice. You can go on-line to get these as well. Compose a 5 - 8 page (double-spaced) written evaluation of the policy. (20% of grade)

2. Interviewing project. Shadow or interview a curator, collection manager or registrar. Write a 5 – 8 page paper on the results of the interview. (25% of grade).

3. Grant proposal.

- a. Write a grant proposal for a collection—8 – 10 pages. (25% of grade)
- b. Review 3 of the proposals written by others in the class. (15% of grade)

4. Class participation. The rest of your grade (15%) will be based on class participation and contributing at least 3 “Museum collections in the news” items over the course of the semester.

Use of CULearn

CULearn is an online course organizer that can be used to post assignments, provide reading material, and even allow for discussions. I have registered this course with CULearn, so there is a course page. I have posted the syllabus and will periodically post assignments, readings, announcements, etc. To access the course page do the following:

- 1) Log on to CUConnect
- 2) Click on CULearn
- 3) Click on the course
- 4) You will need to turn off the Pop-up blockers (or so the IT person told me)

PROJECTS, PAPERS AND ORAL PRESENTATIONS

*****Each paper is due on the first day of the oral presentations*****

- For each of these projects, you may want to talk with me about what you are planning to do so that we can be sure that a variety of different museums and collections are represented.
- Please use these projects as opportunities to learn about a variety of different kinds of museums/collections. For example, if your main interest is in history museums, please do at least 1 project on a completely different kind of museum/collection.
- You will need to contact people at various museums or collections to make the arrangements for these projects. In addition to using your own expertise and contacts, please tap into the resources available through other members of the class and the faculty

and staff of the Museum. We all have a variety of contacts in local museums.

- Please respect the fact that other people are as busy as you. Be as flexible as possible when trying to arrange meetings with registrars, collection managers, and curators.
- These contacts are important for future jobs or internships, as well as for the experience that they afford you. Take advantage of these opportunities.

1. Collection Management Policy evaluation.

Evaluate the collection management policy that you have chosen based on the criteria set forth in the various readings assigned on this topic. Of course you may use other resources as well. For example, does the policy have all of the sections outlined by Malero in her description of collection policies? For your particular collection, are all of them necessary? Is the policy clearly written? Are there other kinds of information that are not in the policy that you think should be there?

2. Interviewing or shadowing a collection manager or registrar.

You will need to initiate this project as soon as possible.

The goal is to have you bring back to the class information about as many different kinds of collection manager or registrar positions as possible. Your goal will be to find out what these people do all day: how do they spend their time, with whom do they interact (other staff, faculty, students, visitors), how do they manage their collection, is databasing important, etc.

We do not want to inconvenience any one person too much, so if more than one of you wants to interview a particular person, please coordinate your efforts. You may interview the person together, but you must give separate oral and written presentations. [I prefer that you do not do this.] Ideally, across the class, we will have representation from both large and small museums, as well as from different kinds of collections.

3. Grant proposal.

Part 1. Write a grant proposal for a project designed to improve some aspect of the management and curation of a collection. For example, the collection may need more storage cabinets, may need databasing, or there may be a large backlog of unaccessioned/uncataloged material, etc. To accomplish your proposed project, you may need to ask for funds to support additional personnel, equipment, computers, and/or space renovation/addition. The project description should include background, information about the collection, the need for the project, a plan for implementation, a budget, and a budget justification. More details about the parts of a grant proposal will be provided.

Part 2. The next part of this project will be a peer evaluation conducted by the whole class of all of the proposals written. Each person will anonymously review three proposals and write a short review of that proposal. I will decide who is reviewing what. The written reviews will be made available to the entire class, including the author of the proposal (the Principal Investigator or “PI”). The class will then act as a panel by discussing each proposal in turn and deciding if each

proposal should be funded.

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to me from Disability Services within 2 weeks of the start of the semester so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, or www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices

Religious observance

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Because one of your exam grades can be dropped, this should not be a problem if there is an exam conflict. If there is a problem, see me immediately.

See policy details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

Honor Code

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

Discrimination

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado Policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>