Professor Howard Besser

H72.3049: The Culture of Archives, Museums, and Libraries (4 points)

Syllabus is at www.nyu.edu/tisch/preservation/program/16spring/CAML16-syllabus.doc

Class meets in 721 Broadway, Room 611, Thursdays, 12:30-4:30 pm.

- Besser office hours: 665 Broadway, Rm. 612, Thurs 4:30-6:00 and by appointment. Tel 212-992-9399, howard@nyu.edu

Course Description:

This course studies the different kinds of institutions that collect and manage cultural material: museums of art, natural history, and motion pictures; libraries, archives, and historical societies; corporate institutions. It compares and contrasts these types of institution to reveal how they differ from one another, paying particular attention to how different institutional missions affect internal metadata and information systems. It also looks at how the various institution types may handle similar material in significantly different ways (from what they acquire, to how they describe it, to how they display or preserve it). It examines theories of collecting, the history and ethics of cultural heritage institutions, the organizational structures of institutions that house collections (including trends in staffing and the roles of individual departments), and their respective missions and operational ethics. The class will visit a variety of local cultural organizations, and will have working professionals talk about their organizations and duties. The course is required for students in the MA Program in Moving Image Archiving and Preservation, but we welcome students from other Programs.

**Student requirements:**

- an observational study of two cultural institutions for in-class presentation (for details, see last 2 pages of syllabus) (20%);
- a term project on a subject you must negotiate with the instructor, to be presented in class at the end of the semester—both as an oral presentation and written up (for details, see last 2 pages of syllabus) (40%)
- At least 3 times during the semester you must bring in to class a current news article related to cultural institutions, and orally explain this to the rest of the class. Topics might include private collectors, contested objects, hirings/firings, cultural institution expansions, etc. You should aim to present 2 of these before midterm, and the other 1 by the end of the semester (10%).
- class attendance, keeping up with the readings, presenting readings, participation in class discussion, including during field trips (25%).
- MIAP students who go to the National Audiovisual Conservation Center in Culpeper will need to report back from their visit. (5%).

No incompletes are accepted for this class.

NB: The readings and topics on this syllabus may be added to, and change during the semester. Students are responsible for following such changes. In addition, due to variations in the lengths of discussion, questions, and visual materials, we may not actually discuss all the readings listed in the syllabus. However, they are important and their content supports the class assignments.
Readings: Selected readings will be posted on NYU Classes. Articles from 2003 on from The Moving Image are available in electronic form through Project Muse (enter via NYU Libraries from NYU Home http://library.nyu.edu/collections/ejournals.html). Electronic versions of other journals may be available there as well.

Main text (core excerpted readings on NYU Classes):

Recommended Texts:
3) Paolo Cherchi Usai, David Francis, Alexander Horwath, Michael Loebenstein (Eds.), Film Curatorship: Archives, Museums, and the Digital Marketplace (London: Wallflower Press, 2008). (a copy will also be available in the Film Study Center)
4) Penelope Houston, Keepers of the Frame: the Film Archives (British Film Institute: London, 1994) (frontal matter until page 77)
6) Film History 18:3 (2006), Special Issue on Film Museums (available online as an NYU Libraries resource—through NYU Home)
8) Roger Smither and Catherine A. Surowiec, eds This Film is Dangerous: A Celebration of Nitrate Film (FIAF: Brussels, 2002)

Plagiarism:
Plagiarism is the presentation of somebody else’s work as your own. This is a very serious fault, and against NYU rules, whether it is unintended (e.g. occurs through poor citations and confusion about how to reference somebody else’s scholarship), or derives from out and out copying (such as downloading essays from the internet). Plagiarism includes using portions of a previously published work in a paper without citing the source, submitting a paper written for another course, submitting a paper written by someone else, and using the ideas of someone else without attribution. Plagiarism is unacceptable in this class and is punished severely. Please ask for help, by email or in person, if you are unclear as to how to cite others’ work. Anybody who is caught plagiarizing will fail the course and be subject to disciplinary action through the university.
Class 1) Th 28 Jan. **Memory Organizations**

- Introductions to Course and to individuals
- Current News articles
  - We'll Probably Never Free Mickey, But That's Beside the Point, Electronic Frontier Foundation, Jan 19, 2016 (https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2016/01/well-probably-never-free-mickey-thats-beside-point)
  - Copyright Week 2016: Making Copyright Work For The Public, Electronic Frontier Foundation, Jan 19, 2016 (https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2016/01/copyright-week-2016-making-copyright-work-public)

**Topics**

- reports from the Midwinter conference of the American Library Association earlier this month
- Comparative analysis of different types of institution.
- What institutions collect moving images?
- What is the history of cultural institutions?
- How are their histories similar and different?
- How do their histories shape what an institution collects, how they organize their collection, and how they provide access to it?
- Western civilization has relied heavily on surviving written accounts to interpret the past. How has that affected how we see various groups that didn't have the capability to create written accounts, or to make sure that those accounts persist over time? Can we do more justice to those groups by studying artifacts rather than written accounts? Or to those who rely on oral traditions to tell their stories?
• Is history objective?
• Museums and Libraries assert systematic organizations upon their works, and to some degree, all knowledge. What effects does this have outside the walls of these institutions? Are there both positive and negative effects?
• Suzanne Briet's “What is a Document?”
• Archives
• Museums
• Libraries

--Assignment of user studies (due Mar 3)

Films/Video/DVDs:
• Alain Resnais, Toute la mémoire du monde (1956, 21 minutes, black and white, VHS)
• DVD on Library of Congress
• Franju’s Hotel des Invalides (1952, 22 minutes)
• Kartemquin Films’ documentary about The Hamilton Wood Type Museum—Typeface (2010) trailer (6.5 min) (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAHQ2AGtZr8)

Class 2) Th 4 Feb. Organizational Structures of Institutions, Jobs and Duties. Ethics and Values, Importance of Professional Organizations

Read (more general topic):
• Walker Art Center. Wunderkammern, Cabinets of Curiosity, and Memory Palaces (http://www.walkerart.org/archive/5/BC7391D3F138BDA0616C.htm)


•


  o pp. 9-25  "The Historical Dimension: From Print to Script."
  o pp. 26-35  "Mass Media and New Technology."
  o pp. 35-60  "The Information Marketplace."

**Recommended** (Functions within Libraries/Museum/Archives)


The Culture of Archives, Museums, and Libraries, Besser, Spring 2016), v 3.2


**Ethics Readings**

- FIAF Code of Ethics (http://www.fiafnet.org/uk/members/ethics.cfm)
- ALA Code of Ethics NOT RIGHT (http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/codeofethics/codeethics.htm)
- SAA Code of Ethics for Archivists (http://www.archivists.org/governance/handbook/app_ethics.asp#code)
- AMIA Advocacy Task Force 13 November 2008 minutes (on NYU Classes site) | draft ethics guidelines (http://www.amianet.org/groups/committees/elections/2009/referendum.htm) as approved January 2010
- **Recommended** (ethics readings)
Topics

- Discussion of syllabus versions, NYU Classes issues, …
- News topics:
  - Student presentation of news articles
  - UC Berkeley students file lawsuit against Google alleging illegal scanning of emails, Daily Californian, Jan 31, 2016 (http://www.dailycal.org/2016/01/31/uc-berkeley-students-file-lawsuit-google-alleging-illegal-scanning-emails/)
  - EFF’s Copyright Week 2016 (https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2016/01/copyright-week-2016-making-copyright-work-public)

- Film: The Librarian (1947) downloaded from Prelinger Archive (http://www.archive.org/details/Libraria1947)
- Librarian stereotype on YouTube 2008 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACowklAcKl0)
- University of Washington iSchool (2010) shows that librarians can be hip (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_uzUh1VT98)
• **Interview:** Veronda Pitchford on why it is important to attend a professional conference like ALA (June 30, 2008) (http://www.libraryjournal.com/flashVideo/element_id/2140235889/taxid/33552.html)

• National Institutions

• Who invented Hypertext?

• Suzanne Brie (1951) What is documentation? http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~buckland/briet.html

• Types of Museums, Libraries, Archives, Historical Societies, etc.

• Job titles & Departments & Responsibilities
  o Museum (Registrar, Curator, Exhibition, Education, Conservation, Installation, Development, …)
  o Library (Cataloger, Reference, Systems, Conservation…)
  o Archives (Curator, Archivist, Processor, …)

• What are the different departments within any type of cultural institution, and how do they relate to one another?

• How does the type of library (research, public, school) or type of museum (history, science, art) affect its policies on collection development, organizing, providing access, and preservation?

• Following Suzanne Briet's assertions (as cited by Buckland), does an object have documental properties merely by moving it into a collecting institution? Does everything collected by an institution automatically have documental properties? Do objects outside collecting institutions have documental properties before they enter that institution?

• Archives

• Museums

• Libraries

Class 3) Th 11 Feb **Commonality & Differences btwn Archives, Museums, & Libraries; Information Systems**

**Read:**
  o History, Mission, Membership of the ALA-SAA-AAM Joint Committee - CALM (Committee on Archives, Libraries and Museums) (http://www.ala.org/groups/committees/joint/int-saa_al)
  o Read over the minutes from at least one recent CALM meeting--accessible from above URL or (http://connect.ala.org/node/64937) (January 2016 Minutes are on NYU Classes in week for Importance of Professional Organizations)
  o Look over goals and background of “Europeana: think culture” (http://www.europeana.eu/portal/about.html), then do some searches
The Culture of Archives, Museums, and Libraries, Besser, Spring 2016), v 3.2


- Read at least 2 of the papers from the Jan 2010 ALA/ALCTS meeting on “Our Future from Outside of the Box” ([http://www.ala.org/alcts/events/mw/2010/future](http://www.ala.org/alcts/events/mw/2010/future))

**Topics**

- Student presentations of news articles
- Discussion of final project ideas
- Authority Control (AAT, Nomenclature, TGN, ULAN, …)
- Classification (LCSH, Dewey)
- Information Systems (Collection Management, ILS/OPAC, Finding Aids, Databases, …)
- Silos and attempts to join information systems of cultural institutions


- Making cultural heritage material available online

**Media**

- Libraries of the Future, JISC documentary, 2009 ([http://www.jisc.ac.uk/librariesofthefuture](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/librariesofthefuture))

**News items**

- Black History Month

**Assignments**

- Culpeper assignment
- As soon as you can, discuss final project with Howard (Paragraph on final project topic due March 31)
- For Observational Study, read ahead (Gyllenhaal, Falk, & Korn readings from User Studies week)

Class 4) Th 18 Feb **The Birth & Growth of Repositories of the Moving Image**

**Read:**
• MIAP Weblinks for Professional Organizations of interest to Moving Image Professionals (http://www.nyu.edu/tisch/preservation/program/resources/orgs-list.html)
• MIAP Moving Image Archivists in Libraries (MISL) Resources page (http://www.nyu.edu/tisch/preservation/research/libraries/resources.html)
• Barry/Abbott, “An outline of a project for the founding of the Film Library of the Museum of Modern Art”
• browse through Film History special issue on Film Preservation and Film Scholarship 7:3, 1995, 274-287 (http://www.jstor.org/stable/i291373)
• Houston, Keepers of the Frame: 1-77.
  o History of Television Archives (http://besser.tsoa.nyu.edu/howard/Papers/tv_archive.pdf)
  o Look over the website for the completed EU PrestoSpace Project (http://prestospace.org/)
  o Look over the website for the completed 4-year EU PrestoPrime Project (http://www.prestoprime.org/)

Recommended
• *Rotha, “A Museum for the Cinema” [1930]
• *Sargeant, “wanted—A Museum” [1916]
• *Myrent, Glen. Henri Langlois: First Citizen of Cinema, Ch.1-3.

Topics
  o Student presentations of news articles
  o Review: Professions, Ethics, Privacy, different types of collections
  o Apple vs FBI over encryption
o Apple Letter on iPhone Security Draws Muted Tech Industry Response,
NY Times, Feb 18, 2016
o Culpeper history
o FIAF, FIAT, CCAAA, IASA, AMIIA, SEAPAVA
o What activities do media archives engage in?

Th 25 Feb, Culpeper Trip—No Class

Class 5) Th 3 Mar National A/V Conservation Center &
Starting a large collection from scratch
- Guest: Walter Forsberg, Digital Archivist, Smithsonian National Museum of
African American History and Culture
- Discussion of final class session and due date for final project
- Culpeper oral reports due
- Student presentations of news articles
- Cinema Studies GoPro video
  (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ob6T3PMljSQ&feature=youtu.be)
- Library of Congress: Lack of leadership, keeping up with the times, Copyright
Office, etc.
o Prognosticating about the new LoC
  (http://blogs.library.duke.edu/scholcomm/2016/02/29/prognosticating-about-the-new-loc/)
March 16 is Freedom of Information Day
(http://www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/federallegislation/govinfo/opengov/freedomofinfo)

Class 6) Th 10 Mar, Site visit to Museum of the Moving Image
-- We are due at MMI Café by 1:15PM. Use the R or V to Steinway subway stop in
Queens. There is an R station opposite TSOA. Allow at least 40 minutes travel
time from TSOA.
-- You must review MMI website before this trip
Times 8 January 2006
-- “Presentation and Performance,” Chapter 5 in Paolo Cherchi Usai, David
Francis, Alexander Horwath, Michael Loebenstein (Eds.), Film Curatorship:
Archives, Museums, and the Digital Marketplace (London: Wallflower Press,
2008)
Th 17 Mar, **Spring Break—No Class**

**Class 7)** Th 24 Mar **User Studies, Student presentations**

- Observational Study due

**Read:**


**Recommended:**


Topics
- Student presentations of news articles
- News articles
- User studies
- Student presentations of Observational Studies
- Hannah Culpeper report

Assignments
- Paragraph on final project topic due March 31

Class 8) Th 31 March. **Initiatives for 21st Century Libraries, Museums, & Archives**

Read
- Council on Library & Information Resources project on Hidden Collections (http://www.clir.org/hiddencollections/about-the-program)
• Read the entire IMLS publication The Future of Libraries and Museums: A Discussion Guide, 2009
  (https://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/publications/documents/discussionguide_0.pdf)
• Listen to at least one of the sessions from Webwise 2012
  (http://www.tvworldwide.com/events/webwise/120229/default.cfm) and look at at least one of the papers or websites
  (https://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/publications/documents/ww09proceedings_0.pdf) from Webwise 2009
• look over website for Coalition to Advance Learning in Archives, Libraries and Museums
  (http://www.coalitiontoadvancelearning.org/)
• skim National Digital Platform | Institute of Museum and Library Services
• skim Audience 2.0: How Technology Influences Arts Participation, National Endowment for the Arts, June 2010
  (https://www.arts.gov/publications/audience-20-how-technology-influences-arts-participation)
• read “Spanning Our Field Boundaries: Mindfully Managing LAM Collaborations”, Educopia Institute, 2015

Topics
• Catch-up from last week
  (https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2016/03/tell-congress-its-time-move-fastr)
• Student presentations of news articles
• Initiatives the cross library/museum/archive boundaries
• Major funding agencies and Memory Institutions
• California Audiovisual Preservation Project
  (http://calpreservation.org/projects/audiovisual-preservation/), California Light & Sound
  (https://archive.org/details/californialightandsound)
  o “Digging for Gold: Discovering and Digitizing California’s Community Memories”—Proposal to Knight Foundation on behalf of Library consortium

Class 9) Th 7 Apr Social/Ethical Values, Privacy
Review these Codes of Ethics
  o AMIA proposed Code of Ethics (see readings for week #2)
o ALA Code of Ethics
  (http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics/codeofethics/codeethics)

o SAA Core Values and Code of Ethics for Archivists
  (http://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics)

o AIC Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (American Institute for the

o SAA's list of links to "External Ethics, Values, and Legal Affairs Standards"
  (http://www2.archivists.org/standards/external/93)

o SAA Orphan Works: Statement of Best Practices
  (http://www2.archivists.org/groups/intellectual-property-working-group/orphan-works-statement-of-best-practices)

Ethics & Values

o Brooks, Connie, "Videotape Preservation: Ethical Considerations", Playback: A
  Preservation Primer for Video, p. 18-24. In Bobst Library and study center.

o *Why Ethics?" in Marie Malaro, Museum Governance: Mission, Ethics, Policy,
  pages 16-21

o Edmondson, Ray. "You Only Live Once: On Being a Troublemaking Professional",
  The Moving Image 2:1 (Spring 2002), pp 175-183

o *Kurin, Richard. "Brokering Culture" in Reflections of a Culture Broker: A View
  12-26

o *Kurin, Richard. "Exhibiting the Enola Gaye" in Reflections of a Culture Broker:
  A View From the Smithsonian. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press,
  1997, pp 71-82

o Krug, Judith ((2002). "Censorship and Controversial Materials in Museums,
  Libraries, and Archives" in Lipinski, Tomas (ed.) Libraries, Museums, and
  Archives: Legal Issues and Ethical Challenges in the New Information Era,
  Lantham, MD: Scarecrow, pp 59-68

o *Lipinski, Tomas A.. ((2002). "Legal Issues Involved in the Privacy Rights of
  Patrons in 'Public' Libraries and Archives" in Lipinski, Tomas (ed.) Libraries,
  Museums, and Archives: Legal Issues and Ethical Challenges in the New
  Information Era, Lantham, MD: Scarcrow, pp 95-112

o Shuman, Bruce A. (2001) “Issues for libraries and information science in the
  internet age”, pp 77-114; you can read this online at
  http://books.google.com/books?id=n4GJooRzlswC and the first half of this is on
  NYU Classes

  • In San Jose, Poor Find Doors to Library Closed, NY Times, Mar 30, 2016
Privacy
- The state of privacy in America, Pew Research Center, Jan 20, 2016 (http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/20/the-state-of-privacy-in-america/)

Jeopardization of Library Financing
- In Age of Google, Librarians Get Shelved, Wall Street Journal, Jan 11, 2016 (ProQuest)

IP Issues

National Library Week (April 10-16)—Libraries Transform (http://www.ala.org/conferenceevents/celebrationweeks/natlibraryweek)

Topics
- Student News articles
- Howard’s reports from Southeast Asia
- Howard’s reports from Coalition for Networked Information (https://www.cni.org/events/membership-meetings/past-meetings/spring-2016)
  - Collecting Social Protest born-digital material at UCLA (https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzQBPFRTCHpQMVNDaklPQmVPRGM/view?usp=sharing)
- Ethics & Values
- Privacy
- Do Libraries have value?
- IP Issues
- News articles

Don’t forget Orphans Film Symposium starting today

Class 10) Th 14 Apr. **Theories of Collecting**

Read:
- Choose one chapter from Susan Pearce’s *Interpreting Objects & Collections* (in “Pearce-selections” on NYU Classes) and give a short oral summary of that chapter to the class
  - Pearce, Susan M. “Objects as meaning; or narrating the past” in Susan Pearce’s *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, London: Routledge, 1994
  - Sturken, Marita. Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering (Berkeley: UC Press, 1997)


Benjamin, “Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Book Collecting” [1931]


Shulz, Eva. Notes on the History of Collecting and of Museums in Susan Pearce’s *Interpreting Objects & Collections*


Review ideas and events for National Library Week ([http://www.ala.org/conferencesevents/celebrationweeks/natlibraryweek](http://www.ala.org/conferencesevents/celebrationweeks/natlibraryweek))

**Recommended**


**Topics**

Student presentations of news articles

Student presentations of Readings

Theories of Collecting

EBay by "Weird Al" Yankovic ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8j8wPp_bnRA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8j8wPp_bnRA))


A Vault of Color: Protecting the World's Rarest Pigments, April 12, 2016 ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8aVfqDKx1U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8aVfqDKx1U))
Class 11) Th 21 April. Collectors; Artifacts in Times of War; Presentation of Social Conflict/Justice; Indigenous Rights/Traditional Knowledge

Read:
Collectors
  o *Francis, “Challenges of Film Archiving in the 21st Century.”
  o *Brownlow, Kevin. “Magnificent Obsession: A Collector and the Archives.”
  o **“What’s the Problem?” Chapter 3 in Paolo Cherchi Usai, David Francis, Alexander Horwath, Michael Loebenstein (Eds.), Film Curatorship: Archives, Museums, and the Digital Marketplace (London: Wallflower Press, 2008)

Artifacts in Times of War (and related international issues)
  o Wafaa Bilal exhibit on violence against cultural institutions (https://www.agw.ca/exhibitions/upcoming/434)
  o Help Rebuild the University of Baghdad’s Destroyed Art Library, One Book at a Time, Hyperallergic, Jan 14, 2016 (http://hyperallergic.com/267869/help-rebuild-the-university-of-baghdads-destroyed-art-library-one-book-at-a-time/)
  o 70 years on, the search continues for artwork looted by the Nazis, PBS NewsHour, April 30, 2016 (http://www.pbs.org/newshour/videos/#179298)

Social Conflicts, Justice, Controversy
Indigenous Rights/Traditional Knowledge (TK), Traditional Cultural Expression (TCE)

- Traditional Knowledge and Intellectual Property, WIPO Background Brief #1 (http://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo_pub_tk_1.pdf)
- The great protection racket: imposing IPRs on traditional knowledge, GRAIN, 2004 (https://www.grain.org/es/article(entries/394-the-great-protection-racket-imposing-iprs-on-traditional-knowledge)
- Guiding Principles for IFLA’s position concerning international treaties relating to Traditional Cultural Expressions 2012 (http://www.ifla.org/publications/guiding-principles-for-ifla-s-position-concerning-international-treaties-relating-to-tr)

Topics
- Student presentations of news articles
- Student presentations of Readings (continued)
- Howard’s tour of Capital Building with Curator of the Senate
- Report from Mediating the Archive: A Conference on Moving Images & Social Histories, April 15, 2016 (http://opencuny.org/csg/conference/) Ina
- Archives/Museums/Libraries and conflicts over handling TK/TCE April 24-30 is Preservation Week (http://www.al.org/alcts/preservationweek)

Class 12) Th 28 April. Funding, Collectors (& their Privacy), and other things we didn’t get to

Read:
- *Pearce, “Body and Soul,” Ch. 7 in Collecting in Contemporary Culture
- Fundraising


Optional:

o *Torgovnick, “Entering Freud’s Study”

o *Davies, “The Secret Collection of Dr. Barnes”

o *Nieves, Evelyn, “Archaeologist of Himself.”

o *Armstrong, R. H. A Compulsion for Antiquity Freud and the Ancient World

o *Armstrong, R. H, The Archeology of Freud’s Archeology (http://www.hfac.uh.edu/mcl/faculty/armstrong/home/marinelli.html)

o *Bright, “Warhol’s Collecting”


Screening:

o A Higher Standard, American Assn of Museums, (as part of their Accreditation Resource Kit) 10 minutes

Topics

o Student presentations of news articles

o Re-cap of cultural institutions in times of war

o Privacy of the Collector; donor agreements, embargoes

o Choose Privacy Week is May 1-7 (https://chooseprivacyweek.org/)

o Privacy and the “Right to Be Forgotten”, and its meaning for cultural institutions

o Fundraising


Media

o Privacy @ Your Library (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwdVEsRUMCQ)

o ALA’s Choose Privacy Week

  ▪ Barbara Jones’ explanation (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Xw_ykxIp-4)
  ▪ Hal Niedzviecki on Privacy (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ts2oH7hmPpU&feature=channel)
o ALA’s Banned Books Week: I'd Like To Find *BLEEP*
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xa1aUmjf2ns&feature=channel)

No Class Thursday 5 May. (see replacement class below)

Class 13) **Tuesday 10 May, 1:00-5:00 PM, room 652. Final student presentations** (note: room and date change)
10 minutes for presentation; 3-4 minutes for discussion

Final paper due electronically before the final class session (noon May 10).
Observational Study

Guidelines:

Choose two or more contrasting cultural institutions, eg. a public library and an art museum, or a science museum and a local historical society.

Visit these institutions for at least 45 minutes each.

In each institution, observe what people do there: what they look at, what they consult or read, who they talk with, how much time they spend with artifacts, how long they stay in one place, etc.. Note if/how digital technologies/moving images are being used in the public areas of the institution you are observing.

Consider how precise you are able to be in making your observations. Will you use a stopwatch? Categorize the visitors? By socio-economic bracket? Nationality? Age? Gender? Approximate mean age? You might consider positioning yourself in a similar type of room, in the two settings.

Note the time of day and day of week you visit, and, if possible, hypothesize how things might be different at different times.

Compare as clearly as you can what happens in each of the places you visit, and write a 2-5 page paper, comparing and summarizing your observations. The paper should be turned in when you present your observations to the class, on \textbf{24 March}.

Details you might to pay attention to:

1) Methodology--How did you make your observations? Were you seated, did you write on the spot? Did you interact with visitors? Did you use a stopwatch?
2) Do visitors read labels first, or look at objects first? How long do they read for? Look for?
3) Moving image displays: is seating given? Are running times displayed? How is the illumination?
4) Are there guards? How many? Are they trained in the art on display (as they are at the Met)?
5) If an exhibition, is there a pre-determined pathway through it? Is there a central object of the exhibition? A central room?
6) Audio tours. Are visitors listening to curated information using headphones? Cell phones?
7) Are there any interactive displays? Are they being used?
8) Are visitors part of larger groups, families, or visiting in couples, singly?
9) Are there leaflets, flyers, to take away?
10) Is there a cell-phone policy? If so, how is this communicated?
11) Is there a café. A gift shop? How are these positioned in relation to the room you have been observing?
Term Project

More than 1/3 of your grade (35%) will come from a term project. This project will have a written component, which is due just before the last class session (noon May 10) and an oral/visual presentation, which you will present during the last class session. The topic and scope of this project must be negotiated with the instructor. Please talk with or email with Howard to make sure that your project is the right size (and before your written paragraph describing your final project topic is due on March 31. The possible subjects for your Term Project are widespread – almost anything we touch on in class this semester is likely to be fair game for an area of inquiry. Some examples of possible topics:

- a detailed study of a non-US institution of the moving image (a museum, archive, or cinémathèque), including a comparative focus in which you discuss a particular challenge, issue, or part of the history of your chosen archive in relation to another institution with which you are familiar.
- a case-study comparison of one type of collection at at least 2 separate types of organizations (such as documentary films at a research library and at science museum, or botanical prints at an art museum and a library, or home movies at a conventional archive and at film archive).
- a history of a cultural professional organization for which a history has not yet been written (ALA’s Video RoundTable, SAA’s Performing Arts Section, …). You might compile a history from interviews, and might scan and index all the old newsletters of the organization and make those publicly available.