Final Paper Guidelines

The academic requirement of your internship will compel you to critically self-reflect upon the kinds of museum theoretical approaches, departments, and professional practices you are most interested in. Museum practice is broadly divided into three areas and then subdivided into museum departments and more specific kinds of professional practice. Choose one of the categories to address in a critical essay and informed by your internship experience this fall.

You are to produce a critical essay **5 pages in length (for 3-cr. hrs.)** or **10 pages in length (for 6-cr. hrs.**) in which you analyze an aspect of museum practice based on your experiences as an intern this fall and in relation to one of the following categories. The essay should be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font with standard margins, and include bibliography and endnotes.

Once you decide which category of museum practice that you would like to address, then consult the relevant sources as listed below. You must have **at least six sources in your bibliography and endnotes**. Furthermore, you must actively engage these sources, attempting to situate your experience of museum practice within the larger, academic discourse about museums.

Categories:

1. **OBJECT:** Museum practice that focuses on collecting, curating, researching, and designing exhibitions could be considered an "object"-based approach to museums. This type of museum practice both requires an in-depth knowledge of materials and their proper care as well as the use of data management software to organize collections and their research.
- Collections care and management (Registrar, Conservation)
- Curatorial research and practice (Curatorial)
- Exhibition-making: development, design, and installation (Preparator)
- Conservation and preservation

2. **PUBLIC:** Museum practice encompasses much more than acquiring, researching, and arranging objects. In this second category, we consider wide field of public engagement including the interpretive material, museum education and public programming. Increasingly, a museum's educative function involves a virtual dissemination of knowledge. This type of museum practice involves research on objects and exhibitions to develop tours and informational literature for the public. Further, educational philosophies are often employed to properly develop guided tours and engagement activities that are age and group appropriate. This aspect of museology emphasizes the dissemination of knowledge through engagement with the public.

- Interpretation and public engagement (Curatorial, Education and Visitor Services)
- Public programming (Event planning, education, community engagement)
- Promotional activities (Event planning, social media, print materials for PR)
- Museum Education (educational activities at all ages, on-site family events/activities, curriculum guides, guided gallery tours)

3. **INSTITUTION:** For a museum to efficiently operate, an effective administrative infrastructure is needed. Administrative staff positions attend to public relations, grant writing, program development, and general directorship. This practice relies heavily on corporate frameworks to advocate for the continued financial and social support of the institution.

- Directorship
- Development
- Marketing

- Finance
- Legal
- Other administration (Public Relations)
- Grounds
- Non-profit arts organizations (groups such as COCA that disseminate funding for the arts and promote cultural programming)

Bibliographic Guide

The following is designed to provide you with a guide to the most relevant sources for your project. First, you will find a list of general sources that are relevant to all potential museum projects. Secondly, sources are list as required readings for particular subcategories. At the end of this list are the websites of museum professional organizations which have helpful current information regarding best practices and current issues in the field.

GENERAL

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Resources:

American Alliance of Museums
https://www.aam-us.org

American Institute for Conservation
https://www.culturalheritage.org

The Association of Art Museum Curators
https://www.artcurators.org

Association of Art Museum Directors
https://aamd.org

Association of Critical Heritage Studies
https://www.criticalheritagestudies.org

Center for the Future of Museums Blog
https://www.aam-us.org/category/future-of-museums/

Council on Museum Anthropology
https://museumanthropology.org

Florida Association of Museums
https://www.flamuseums.org

Florida Division of Historical Resources
https://dos.myflorida.com/historical/

International Council on Museums
https://icom.museum/en/