

AS.389 (PROGRAM IN MUSEUMS AND SOCIETY)

Courses

AS.389.140. **Antiquity and Its Afterlives: Books, Art, and Culture from Ancient Greece and Rome to the Modern Era. 3 Credits.**

This course explores the surviving “objects” of the ancient Greco-Roman world, and the histories of their excavation, organization, and preservation in museum and library collections. From ancient objects and sculptures, ancient Greek papyri, scrolls, and late-antique and medieval books, to the revival of Greek and Roman traditions in the Renaissance and Enlightenment, we will learn how these objects help shape and transform our understanding of the ancient world over two millennia, up to the formation of the great antiquities museums of the modern era. This hands-on course will take advantage of ancient objects and texts in Baltimore, at the Walters Art Museum, the Baltimore Museum of Art, as well as the Archaeology Museum at JHU and the rare book and manuscript collections of the Sheridan Libraries at JHU.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
 AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)
 EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)
 Writing Intensive

AS.389.155. **The History of “Fake News” from The Flood to The Apocalypse. 3 Credits.**

A sweeping historical engagement with fakes, lies, and forgeries from the ancient world to the digital age, explored through JHU’s Bibliotheca Fictiva collection of rare books and manuscripts—the largest research collection on this subject in the world. Topics include ancient papyri, biblical apocrypha, medieval manuscript forgeries, archaeological and textual forgeries of the Renaissance, false travelogues of the Age of Exploration, pecuniary forgery in the 19th century, art forgery, and the advent of “fake news” in the digital era.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
 AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)
 EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)
 Writing Intensive

AS.389.165. **Hands on History: Material Cultures of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Digital Age. 3 Credits.**

This hands-on course deals entirely with JHU’s collections of rare books and manuscripts as a springboard to build skills in the close visual and physical examination of rare books and manuscripts. You will investigate the technological and aesthetic transformation of textual artifacts from ancient papyri to Gutenberg imprints to digital surrogates, and contribute to the accumulation of historical clues about their meaning and significance as material cultural objects. You will learn what goes into curating and conserving book and manuscript collections today, and how to evaluate the quality and significance of collections. Materials/topics will include ancient Babylonian cuneiform and Egyptian papyri; medieval illuminated manuscripts; incunabula; Renaissance illustrated books of the Scientific Revolution and Spanish Golden Age; cheap print and unique ephemera; early books by and about women; forgeries; and “digital humanities” initiatives at JHU. Students will make regular visits to the Special Collections Reading Room in the BLC throughout the semester.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
 AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3)
 EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)
 Writing Intensive

AS.389.201. **Introduction to the Museum: Past and Present. 3 Credits.**

This course surveys museums, from their origins to their most contemporary forms, in the context of broader historical, intellectual, and cultural trends including the social movements of the 20th century. Anthropology, art, history, and science museums are considered.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
 AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4)
 EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)
 Writing Intensive

AS.389.202. **Introduction to the Museum: Issues and Ideas. 3 Credits.**

American museums today face ongoing practical, political and ethical challenges, including economic difficulties, technology and globalization, ongoing debates over the ownership and interpretation of culture and pressure to demonstrate their social value. This course considers how museums are answering these challenges and projects into the future.

NOTE: Class usually meets 1:30- 4:00 PM, except for days with field trips (when class will meet 1:30- 5:00 PM instead).

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
 AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)
 EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.389.233. Exhibiting Cultures. 3 Credits.

This course critically examines the role of exhibitions in shaping cultural narratives and public understanding of people and places across the globe. Students will explore the history, theory, and practice of exhibiting cultures in museums, galleries, and digital platforms. Topics include curatorial ethics, representation and identity, postcolonial critiques, audience engagement, and the impact of emerging technologies on exhibition design. Through case studies and hands-on projects, students will analyze how cultural heritage is displayed and interpreted, considering issues of appropriation, authenticity, and inclusivity. The course culminates in a final project where students conceptualize and design their own cultural exhibition proposal.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

AS.389.250. Introduction to Conservation. 3 Credits.

This course will introduce you to the theoretical and practical underpinnings of the conservation profession: who gets to be a conservator, where we work and how. What are its origins and how has it evolved? At the end of the course you will be able to: outline the different roles and responsibilities of conservators working in museums, libraries/archives and in private practice, situate the field of conservation within the larger cultural heritage sector and articulate the ways conservators contribute to institutional goals of preservation, access, research and learning, evaluate the risks and vulnerabilities faced by conservators in today's society, and apply theoretical knowledge to document and stabilize items from JHU Special Collections.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Projects and Methods (FA6)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

AS.389.260. Cultural Heritage in Crisis. 3 Credits.

We explore the possible futures of cultural heritage and museums in times of accelerating climate change, pandemics, armed conflict and political and social turmoil by examining past and contemporary events.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.389.265. Hopkins History Through the Archives. 3 Credits.

Archives are where history is documented, and archives have tremendous power over whose stories get told. This course will critically examine the relationship between archival practice and public history by using John Hopkins University as a case study. We will work closely with archivists in the Special Collections Department and archives across Baltimore to get a firsthand look at how local archives shape public history, collective memory, and institutional silences. Students will learn how public historians, archivists, community activists, and students themselves can work together to do reparative research that advances social justice in their own communities.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.389.280. Of and For Everyone: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access in the Museum. 3 Credits.

How are museums responding to the pressures to be more equitable, inclusive, and accessible towards public audiences and their staff? Students go behind the scenes of the Smithsonian, Baltimore Museum of Industry and Baltimore Museum of Art to meet with working groups and staff charged with transforming their institutions. Includes site visits, hands-on experiences and research on best practices.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

AS.389.305. Oral History: Recording Voices Today for the Archives of Tomorrow. 3 Credits.

Oral Histories are a means by which history is both generated and preserved. Talking to and recording people in their own voices is immensely valuable, but also brings challenges. This course equips students with the ideas, theoretical framework and methods of making and interpreting oral histories and provides hands-on experience researching, designing and creating an archival record of our time to professional standards. Our project focuses on Baltimore's Confederate monuments. We will interview key stakeholders in debates that led to their removal and in ongoing conversations about what to do with them now.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.389.313. Data and the Digital in Museums. 3 Credits.

Digital media play an increasingly significant role in museums from how museums share and narrate their collections online to the use of AI to catalog things and create metadata about them. This class explores critically how digital tools work to tell stories and invites students to unpack the resulting museum narratives. Students will learn by doing, creating a digital exhibit of five museum objects using Omeka and later transforming their exhibits by creating data of their own design to tell a new story about their objects. This new narrative will apply critical perspectives considered in the course such as, but not limited to, repatriation, critical cataloging, and geo-politics.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Projects and Methods (FA6)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

Writing Intensive

AS.389.314. Researching the Africana Archive: Black Cemetery Stories. 3 Credits.

This course addresses the historic role of the African American cemetery as sacred and political space, with important links to other Black institutions. Operating in partnership with Mount Auburn Cemetery in Baltimore, owned and operated by the Sharp Street Memorial United Methodist Church, we will visit the cemetery and related locations in Baltimore throughout the semester. Our collective goal is to research and share stories that further the interests of these important and vulnerable sites.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.389.315. Ancient Color: The Technologies and Meanings of Color in Antiquity. 3 Credits.

What role did the colorful surfaces of sculptures, vessels and textiles play in the ancient world? We examine historical texts and recent scholarly and scientific publications on the technologies and meanings of color in antiquity, and use imaging and analytical techniques to study polychromed objects from the Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum
 Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
 AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)
 EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.389.322. Tigers to Teapots: Collecting, Cataloging, and Hoarding in America. 3 Credits.

This course examines material culture through the lens of personal collecting. Focusing on the United States, students will explore how collectors influenced the holdings of the nation's museums, including JHU's Evergreen and Homewood Museum, and contemplate how collecting, for public and private purposes, shapes status and taste in America. This course will also address how collections are organized, displayed, and conserved and will delve into psychological and environmental aspects of collecting and hoarding.
 Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
 AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Projects and Methods (FA6)
 EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.389.325. Women of the Book: Female Miracle Workers, Mystics, and Material Culture, 1450-1800. 3 Credits.

From psycho-spiritual autobiographers to mystical bi-locating nuns, convent crèche-keepers to choristers of sacred music, from rock-star-status mystics to the hidden careers of women printers, engravers, and miracle-makers, this course will explore the remarkable intellectual, cultural, and imaginative contributions of women who found refuge, agency, and power within alternative lives.
 Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
 AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3)
 EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)
 Writing Intensive

AS.389.326. Curating Gertrude Stein: Queer/Modernist/Celebrity. 3 Credits.

Gertrude Stein was a writer who was disparaged, yet wildly popular; a celebrity as well as an object of scorn; openly yet invisibly queer. Reading selections of Stein's writing and that of her friends, lovers, and enemies, we will study her networks, art collection, and cultural status, and work extensively with rare books and archival materials, to explore these dilemmas. Student research will be incorporated into a major exhibition at the George Peabody Library in spring 2024.
 Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
 AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Projects and Methods (FA6)
 EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)
 Writing Intensive

AS.389.341. Museum Education for Today's Audiences. 3 Credits.

Go behind the scenes of the Baltimore Museum of Art's Education Department and develop and implement programs for college students in conjunction with an exhibition about women and art in early modern Europe.
 Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
 AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Projects and Methods (FA6)
 EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)
 Writing Intensive

AS.389.344. Monuments and Memory in Washington DC. 3 Credits.

Traditionally defined as placeholders of memory, monuments and memorials supposedly help us remember and reflect. But who, what and how do they remember? Who decides how and where they are built? This course poses these and other questions about the politics of public commemoration amid the rich monumental landscape of the nation's capital. Site visits allow students to experience monuments as living, built ideas and ideals, and to participate in the conversation among memorials. For example, how does the Vietnam Veterans Memorial—which remains the most original and poignant built expression of remembrance—dialogue with the nearby Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial? And how is Lincoln's legacy recorded differently in the contested Emancipation Memorial in Lincoln Park? Onsite engagement with DC monuments will be paired with discussing scholarly works on the theory and history of monuments and reflecting on talks by members of the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission, the National Park Service, and the American Battle Monuments Commission. This integrative learning approach invites students to grapple with the complex and ever-evolving process of making and maintaining public memory while placing recent controversies in a broader historical perspective.
 Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
 AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1)
 EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.389.347. Landscaping Baltimore: Interpreting the City through its Parks, Campuses, and Neighborhoods. 3 Credits.

This course will explore the landscape history of Baltimore City, including JHU's Homewood campus, Evergreen Museum, and surrounding areas. Special attention will be paid to the role of the Frederick Law Olmsted, and the Olmsted design firm, who played an important role in the development of several Baltimore parks and neighborhoods. This class will culminate in either small student exhibition or creation of a public-facing tour.
 Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
 AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Projects and Methods (FA6)
 EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)
 Writing Intensive

AS.389.348. Queer Oral History. 3 Credits.

Students learn to conduct, analyze, and interpret their own oral histories as they contribute to a wide-ranging project documenting queer worldmaking in the Baltimore-Washington D.C. region. We engage with scholarship from performance studies, queer of color critique, LGBTQ history, and public humanities to consider the politics of storytelling and the promises of public-facing oral history projects. Students have the option of developing podcasts, multimedia projects, and public humanities proposals as their final assignment.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)
EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.389.350. Greening Museums in Times of Climate and Ecological Crisis. 3 Credits.

Museums across the globe are rewriting their infrastructure, energy use, waste management, and exhibitions and conservation policies and practices to respond to our ecological crises. Students will conduct field research and analyze data; investigate “next” practices, case studies, and the challenges particular to museums; and write a white paper; all with an eye towards contributing to the BMA’s Turn Again to the Earth initiative - an eco-challenge, sustainability planning, and suite of art exhibitions dedicated to environmental themes.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)
EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)
Writing Intensive

AS.389.405. Visualizing Africa. 3 Credits.

Examines the history of African art in the Euro-American world, focusing on the ways that Western institutions have used African artworks to construct narratives about Africa and its billion residents.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)
EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)
Writing Intensive

AS.389.407. What Goes Around Comes Around: Objects, Architecture, and Memory in America. 3 Credits.

Many of the buildings and objects that fill our daily lives deliberately invoke earlier styles. In the United States, one form that has been revisited over and over again is the “colonial” style, with “colonial” serving as a catch-all phrase for the material culture associated with the settlement of North America by Europeans and the societies that these settlers built in the 17th and 18th centuries. This course interrogates the history and motivations for the United States’ many colonial revivals and the role these played in shaping American museums and their collections. Students will contribute research, writing, and object selection toward the 2025 Homewood Museum exhibition “If Walls Could Talk” which will explore the many lives of Homewood House, a National Historic Landmark, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of JHU and the 250th anniversary of U.S. Independence.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Projects and Methods (FA6)
EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

AS.389.410. Public Humanities & Social Justice. 3 Credits.

Investigates collaborative humanities methods that foster democratic participation among publics more broadly conceived than the academy, including participatory action research, collaborative oral history, indigenous research methods, interactive theater, participatory archival practices, and cooperative models for connecting art, artists, and audiences. Course focuses on queer, trans, and Black histories in Baltimore, includes excursions to local cultural institutions, and is co-taught by prominent public humanists, artists, and activists from Baltimore and beyond.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)
EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.389.420. Curatorial Seminar: European Art. 3 Credits.

Working in collaboration with staff from the Baltimore Museum of Art, students assess the opportunities and challenges of the European collections; research select objects; contribute to the department’s collections development plan; and conceptualize new, more global and more inclusive approaches to the displays.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)
EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.389.430. D.C. Career Trek: Museums, Galleries, Archives. 1 Credit.

This experiential course introduces undergraduate and graduate students to careers in galleries, libraries, archives and museums. Students will discover the relevance of humanities skills and training to the “GLAM” sector and practice translating these into resumes and cover letters for a sector projected to grow 12% over the next decade. Students will apply design thinking to their professional plans and ideate and prototype career paths. Course includes a 5-day trek to D.C. to network with D.C. professionals; participate in workshops; and tour front and back of house operations at select D.C. institutions.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Projects and Methods (FA6)
EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

AS.389.502. Independent Study- Museum and Society. 1 - 3 Credits.

Independent research under a faculty mentor.

Prerequisite(s): You must request Customized Academic Learning using the Customized Academic Learning form found in Student Self-Service: Registration > Online Forms.

AS.389.801. Graduate Independent Research. 3 Credits.

Museums and Society independent research for graduate students.