

MUSEUM STUDIES

Students may complete a minor in Museum Studies.

Museum Studies is a program that offers students a rich and dynamic education in both museum theory and practice. Students have the opportunities to learn about the history of museums and their roles in society as well as to engage with critical, theoretical museum scholarship. Through coursework and internships, students will also have the opportunity to gain practical hands-on experience in Bryn Mawr's Special Collections as well as in museums in Philadelphia and beyond. This dynamic and inter-disciplinary program intersects disciplines such as the History of Art, Anthropology, Archaeology, History, Education, Cities, Biology and Geology. The Bryn Mawr Museum Studies program aims to empower students to become significant contributors to various professions throughout museums, galleries and archives.

The Museum Studies program calls upon the College's extensive collection of art and artifacts, rare books and prints, photographs and manuscripts, which facilitates research and experiential learning for students. Through Bryn Mawr's Special Collections, students can draw upon the in-house expertise of a strong group of curators and other museum professionals working in the department. Bryn Mawr is in close proximity to the museum-rich Philadelphia region, and students have the opportunity to work with distinguished and diverse museum professionals across the city.

Museum Studies Minor Curriculum

The requirements for the minor are:

Code	Title	Units
Core Courses		
HART B275	Museum Studies: History, Theory, Practice	1
HART B420	Museum Studies Fieldwork (or a similar praxis internship course)	1
Elective Courses		
Select four elective courses related to museum studies ¹		4
Total Units		6

¹ These can be courses that are currently listed as official "Museum Studies" courses or any relevant courses that have museum studies content (with permission of the Director of Museum Studies).

AFST B204 #BlackLivesMatterEverywhere (1 Unit)

#BlackLivesMatterEverywhere: Ethnographies & Theories on the African Diaspora is a interdisciplinary course closely examines political, cultural, intellectual, and spiritual mobilizations for Black Lives on local, global and hemispheric levels. We will engage an array of materials ranging from literature, history, oral histories, folklore, dance, music, popular culture, social media, ethnography, and film/documentaries. By centering the political and intellectual labor of Black women and LGBTQ folks at the forefront of the movements for Black Lives, we unapologetically excavate how #BlackLivesMatterEverywhere has a long and rich genealogy in the African diaspora. Lastly, students will be immersed in Black queer feminist theorizations on diaspora, political movements, and the multiplicities of Blackness.

AFST B206 Black Latinx Americas: Movements, Politics, & Cultures (1 Unit)

This interdisciplinary course examines the extensive and diverse histories, social movements, political mobilization and cultures of Black people (Afrodescendientes) in Latin America and the Caribbean. While the course will begin in the slavery era, most of our scholarly-activist attention will focus on the histories of peoples of African descent in Latin America after emancipation to the present. Some topics we will explore include: the particularities of slavery in the Americas, the Haitian Revolution and its impact on articulations of race and nation in the region, debates on "racial democracy," the relationship between gender, class, race, and empire, and recent attempts to write Afro-Latin American histories from "transnational" and "diaspora" perspectives. We will engage the works of historians, activists, artists, anthropologists, sociologists, and political theorists who have been key contributors to the rich knowledge production on Black Latin America.

ARCH B101 Introduction to Egyptian and Near Eastern Archaeology (1 Unit)

A historical survey of the archaeology and art of the ancient Near East and Egypt.

ARCH B102 Introduction to Classical Archaeology (1 Unit)

A historical survey of the archaeology and art of Greece, Etruria, and Rome.

ARCH B203 Building the Polis: Ancient Greek Cities and Sanctuaries (1 Unit)

A study of the co-development of the Greek city-states and their sanctuaries. Archaeological evidence is surveyed in its historic context. The political formation of the city-state and the role of religion is presented, and the political, economic, and religious institutions of the city-states are explored with a focus on regional variations in timelines of development, building styles, and connectivity. The logistics of building construction, religious travel, and interregional influences will also be addressed.

ARCH B229 Visual Culture of the Ancient Near East (1 Unit)

This course examines the visual culture of the Ancient Near East based on an extensive body of architectural, sculptural, and pictorial evidence dating from prehistoric times through the fifth century BCE. We will explore how a variety of surviving art, artifacts, sculpture, monuments, and architecture deriving from geographically distinct areas of the ancient Near East, such as Mesopotamia, the Eastern Mediterranean, Anatolia, and Iran, may have been viewed and experienced in their historical contexts, including the contribution of ancient materials and technologies of production in shaping this viewing and experience. By focusing on selected examples of diverse evidence, we will also consider how past and current scholarly methods and approaches, many of them art-historical, archaeological, and architectural in aim, have affected the understanding and interpretation of this evidence. In doing so, we will pay special attention to critical terms such as aesthetics, style, narrative, representation, and agency.

ARCH B252 Pompeii (1 Unit)

Introduces students to a nearly intact archaeological site whose destruction by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 C.E. was recorded by contemporaries. The discovery of Pompeii in the mid-1700s had an enormous impact on 18th- and 19th-century views of the Roman past as well as styles and preferences of the modern era. Informs students in classical antiquity, urban life, city structure, residential architecture, home decoration and furnishing, wall painting, minor arts and craft and mercantile activities within a Roman city.

ARCH B256 Classical Myths in Art and in the Sky (1 Unit)

This course explores Greek and Roman mythology using an archaeological and art historical approach, focusing on the ways in which the traditional tales of the gods and heroes were depicted, developed and transmitted in the visual arts such as vase painting and architectural sculpture, as well as projected into the natural environment.

ARCH B317 Cultural Heritage and Endangered Archaeology (1 Unit)

This course will examine how and why archaeological sites are 'endangered'. Primarily focusing on the Near East and North Africa (the MENA region), we will examine the different types of archaeological and heritage sites found across this broad region, and some of the threats and disturbances affecting them. We will consider how different interest groups and stakeholders view, value and present historical and archaeological sites to the general public, as well as the success of modern initiatives and projects to safeguard the heritage of the MENA region. Our research will consider the ethics of cultural preservation, as well as the issues and problems encountered by heritage specialists working in areas of modern conflict. Whilst not all damage can be prevented, the course will consider how different threats and disturbances might be mitigated. Prerequisite: Upper level 300-level course. Students should have completed at least two 100 level/200 level courses in either classical or near eastern archaeology.

ARCH B347 Ancient Artifacts in the Bryn Mawr Special Collections (1 Unit)

Centered on the question, how we can learn from and through objects, this course explores a selected corpus of artifacts from the ancient Mediterranean in the Bryn Mawr Special Collections with the aim to uncover how these objects were made and used and what they might have meant to their ancient users. Students will handle, study, and interpret a variety of artifacts made of clay, metal, stone, and glass, ranging from vessels, mirrors, and statuettes to mosaics and frescoes used originally in a variety of contexts of ancient Mediterranean daily life and spanning now their second-life as constituents of the Bryn Mawr Special Collections. Through close observation and analysis of the procurement and trade of the raw materials of these objects and their manufacturing techniques and decoration, including its themes, which extend from daily scenes and mythological tales to colorful abstract motifs and intriguing inscriptions, students will examine the use and function of these artifacts as evidence of meaningful ancient Mediterranean cultural thought, behavior, and experience. Interpretation will be based on close observation and active and experiential learning, through tactile engagement with these objects, comparing and contrasting them, studying their conservation, and inquiring, through deep critical thinking, archival work, and reflexivity, about their provenience, collecting, and digital itineraries. Prerequisites: ARCH B101 and B102.

CHEM B208 Topics in Art Analysis (1 Unit)

This is a topics course and topics will vary. All courses will cover a variety of methods of analysis of works of art centered around a specific theme. Using both completed case studies and their own analysis of objects in the Bryn Mawr College collection, students will investigate a number of instrumental methods of obtaining both quantitative and qualitative information about the manufacture, use and history of the objects. This course counts towards the major in History of Art.

EDUC B300 Community-Engaged Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice (1 Unit)

As one of the foundations of education studies, community-engaged learning requires that students integrate academic and experiential learning, which depends on the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions to learn from field experience. By examining and enacting community-engaged learning from the perspectives of theory, research, and practice, advanced Education students in this course will extend and deepen prior experience in an educational organization with a blend of continued field work, associated research, and mentoring of Education students new to the setting. Through this approach, enrolled students will a) build an enriched relational, contextual (policy-based and geographic) and historical understanding of a specific educational organization; b) gain an understanding of how practitioners and learners in that site conceptualize their work and goals; and c) study and practice methods for initiating and supporting students of education in successful, imaginative working relationships that foster community-engaged learning towards equity and justice.

FREN B105 Directions de la France contemporaine (1 Unit)

Ce cours se donne pour but de vous faire goûter à la culture française actuelle, mais aussi de vous donner une idée claire de la société où elle naît. Nous en aborderons des aspects très variés en nous concentrant sur ces institutions dont le fonctionnement la distingue d'autres pays (école, hôpital, etc.). Les films que nous allons voir nous permettront d'analyser ces particularités françaises. Il s'agit également de vous encourager à vous exprimer aisément en français : les discussions seront privilégiées et nous réviserons régulièrement des points de grammaire afin d'améliorer votre expression tant écrite qu'orale. Au terme de ce cours, vous pourrez vivre en France sans vous sentir sur une planète étrangère. Prerequisite: FREN 005 or 101.

HART B120 History of Chinese Art (1 Unit)

This course is a survey of the arts of China from Neolithic to the contemporary period, focusing on bronze vessels of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, the Chinese appropriation of Buddhist art, and the evolution of landscape and figure painting traditions. This course was formerly numbered HART B274; students who previously completed HART B274 may not repeat this course.

HART B201 Critical Approaches to Visual Representation: Medieval/Modern (1 Unit)

This is a topics course. Course content varies. This course is writing intensive. This course examines intersections between the medieval and modern worlds through art and architecture. Students study medieval works of art and/or architecture as well as their afterlives in the modern era, as realized through revivals of style and form, museum exhibition excavation, alteration and adaptation for reuse, etc. There are no prerequisites for this course. Enrollment preference given to majors and minors in History of Art.

HART B268 Telling Bryn Mawr Histories: Topics, Sources, and Methods (1 Unit)

This course introduces students to archival and object-based research methods, using the College's built environment and curatorial and archival collections as our laboratory. Students will explore buildings, documents, objects, and themes in relation to the history of Bryn Mawr College. Students will frame an original group research project to which each student will contribute an individual component. Prerequisite: An interest in exploring and reinterpreting the institutional and architectural history of Bryn Mawr College and a willingness to work collaboratively on a shared project.

HART B275 Museum Studies: History, Theory, Practice (1 Unit)

Using the museums of Philadelphia as field sites, this course provides an introduction to the theoretical and practical aspects of museum studies and the important synergies between theory and practice. Students will learn: the history of museums as institutions of recreation, education and leisure; how the museum itself became a symbol of power, prestige and sometimes alienation; debates around the ethics and politics of collecting objects of art, culture and nature; and the qualities that make an exhibition effective (or not). By visiting exhibitions and meeting with a range of museum professionals in art, anthropology and science museums, this course offers a critical perspective on the inner workings of the museum as well as insights into the “new museology.” Not open to first-year students. Enrollment preference given to minors in Museum Studies. This course was formerly numbered HART B281; students who previously completed HART B281 may not repeat this course.

HART B276 Topics in Museum Studies (1 Unit)

This is a topics course. Course content varies. This course was formerly numbered HART B248.

HART B340 Topics in Material Culture (1 Unit)

This is a topics course. Course content varies. This course was formerly numbered HART B345.

HART B365 Exhibiting Africa: Art, Artifact and New Articulations (1 Unit)

At the turn of the 20th century, the Victorian natural history museum played an important role in constructing and disseminating images of Africa to the Western public. The history of museum representations of Africa and Africans reveals that exhibitions—both museum exhibitions and “living” World’s Fair exhibitions—has long been deeply embedded in politics, including the persistent “othering” of African people as savages or primitives. While paying attention to stereotypical exhibition tropes about Africa, we will also consider how art museums are creating new constructions of Africa and how contemporary curators and conceptual artists are creating complex, challenging new ways of understanding African identities. This course was formerly numbered HART B279; students who previously completed HART B279 may not repeat this course.

HIST B208 Monuments, Museums, and Memory (1 Unit)

In this course we will examine how U.S. history circulates in public, investigating the ways scholarly, curatorial, archival, and creative practices shape popular conceptions of the American past, in particular understandings of racial, gender, sexual, and class oppression and resistance. Students will build skills in historical interpretation and archival research and explore possibilities and challenges in preserving and presenting the past in a variety of public contexts—monuments, memorials, museums, historical sites, movies and television, genealogy, and community-based history projects.

HIST B237 Themes in Modern African History (1 Unit)

This is a topics course. Course content varies

HIST B349 Topics in Comparative History (1 Unit)

This is a topics course. Topics vary.

ITAL B240 Philadelphia the Global City: The Italian Legacy across Time (1 Unit)

This course investigates the history and evolution of Philadelphia as a globalized and multi-ethnic city, using as a case study for this analysis the impact and legacy of transnational Italian culture across the centuries. By adopting a cross-cultural, trans-historical, and interdisciplinary approach, the course explores the influence that — along with and in intersection with many other cultural inputs — also Italian arts and cultures have exerted on the city, making it become the cosmopolitan and transnational urban environment that it is today. Throughout the centuries and way before Italy even started existing as a state, Philadelphians traveled to the peninsula and brought back objects to display in emerging cultural institutions or studied the country’s art and architecture styles to shape the evolving aspect of the city. Simultaneously, incoming immigration formed new neighborhoods — such as South Philly, home to the Italian Market — and Italian figures came to prominence and became part of the social fabric of the city. Nowadays, many non-profit organizations work to preserve the traces that Italian migrants left within Philadelphia’s multi-ethnic urban environment as well as to extend the city’s global profile and celebrate its heritage and diversity. Through specific field trips, on-site experiential activities, and forms of civic engagement this course highlights both the enduring fascination of Philadelphians with Italy (or with the idea thereof) across the centuries and the role that the Italian Diaspora played in the development of the city. The course ultimately challenges geographical, chronological, and cultural boundaries by showing how places, arts, identities that today are perceived as ‘American’ have in most cases an intersectional, multi-ethnic, and cross-cultural history to tell. This course will be taught in Philadelphia as part of the Tri-Co Philly Program. All readings and class discussion will be in English, and no knowledge of Italian is required. Students seeking Italian credits will complete their assignments in the target language.

ITAL B315 A Gendered History of the Avant-Garde (1 Unit)

The very concept of ‘avant-garde’ is steeped in a masculine warlike imagery, and the founding manifesto of Futurism even glorifies ‘contempt for the woman’. Yet, feminine, queer, androgynous, and non-binary perspectives on sexual identity played a central role — from Rimbaud to current experimentalism — in the development of what has been called ‘the tradition of the new’. In this seminar we will explore such a paradoxical anti-traditional tradition through texts, images, sounds, and videos, adopting a historical perspective from early 20th century movements to the Neo-Avant-Garde. We will unearth the stories and works of great experimentalists who have been neglected because of their gender. We will deal with poems made up entirely of place names, of recorded noises, of typographical symbols. Taking advantage of the college’s collection and library, we will try to read texts with no words, surreal stories, performances, objects, and we will make our own avant-garde experiments. Course taught in English, no previous knowledge of Italian required.

PSYC B231 Health Psychology (1 Unit)

This course will provide an overview of the field of health psychology using lecture, exams, videos, assignments, and an article critique. We will examine the current definition of health psychology, as well as the theories and research behind many areas in health psychology (both historical and contemporary). The course will focus on specific health and social psychological theories, empirical research, and applying the theory and research to real world situations. Prerequisite: Introductory Psychology (PSYC B105) or Foundations of Psychology (PSYC H100). Students may take either this course or HLTH/PSYC H245 not both.

SPAN B312 Latin American and Latino Art and the Question of the Masses (1 Unit)

The course examines the ways in which Latin American and Latino texts (paintings, murals, sculptures, and some narratives) construct "minor," "featureless" and "anonymous" characters, thus demarcating how and which members of society can and cannot advance a plot, act independently and/or be agents of change. By focusing the attention on what is de-emphasized, we will explore how artistic works, through their form, are themselves political actors in the social life of Latin America, the US, and beyond. We will also consider the place of Latin American and Latino Art in the US imaginary and in institutions such as museums and galleries. Prerequisites: Course is taught in English. Students seeking Spanish credit must have taken at least one Spanish course at the 200-level, or received permission from instructor. Course does not meet an Approach. Counts toward Latin American, Iberian and Latina/o Studies. Counts toward Museum Studies. Counts toward History of Art.