

Museum Studies 255-2: Museums in Film – January Term, 2027

Instructor: Professor Doug Kendall

Class Schedule: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Location: Yager Museum Classroom (YAG 115)

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Student Support Hours

- **Location:** Yager Museum Offices
- **Hours:** Tuesday & Thursday: 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM; Wednesday: 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM; and by appointment

Course Overview

Course Description

Museums have featured in film comedies, dramas, and documentaries in both starring roles and bit parts, from the dawn of cinema to the present. In this course, we will explore the way filmmakers have presented museums and the ways in which films both reflect and help define the place of museums in societies around the world. After completing this course, you will be able to recognize how museums, visitors, and staff are portrayed in cinema, and how films shape popular conceptions.

Learning Outcomes

1. Understand the role of museums in society as portrayed in films (GEO2, GEO 4).
2. Analyze visual and written presentations of museums in popular culture: identifying common themes, varied narratives, and political/cultural issues.
3. Analyze and synthesize primary and secondary source evidence.
4. Communicate effectively in written and spoken English.

Outcome Assessment

- **Quizzes:** Used to assess understanding of film portrayals and socio-cultural issues.
- **Film Reviews/Essays, Discussion, & Response Papers:** Used to assess communication abilities and the analysis of primary/secondary sources.

Grading & Evaluation

Success in this class depends on full, informed participation. Attendance and discussion are evaluated with the same consideration given to written work. Assigned readings must be completed prior to each class.

Grade Breakdown

- **Attendance:** 5%
- **Discussion:** 10%
- **Reading Responses:** 10%
- **Quizzes (Short Answer or Multiple-Choice, in class):** 25%
- **Movie Reviews:** 25%
- **Final Short Essay (in class):** 25%

Course Policies

- **Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory and recorded. Documented illness or a death in the family are acceptable reasons for absences, provided you email the instructor before class. You are responsible for all missed work.
- **Punctuality & Devices:** Please be in the classroom at the scheduled start time and turn off all cell phones. Electronic recording is strictly prohibited unless arranged through AccessAbility Services.
- **Late Work:** Written assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will be graded down one-half a grade point (e.g., an A becomes an A-) for each day they are late.
- **Food and Drink:** Restricted in the Museum. Covered beverage containers are allowed in the classroom, but completely prohibited during sessions held in museum galleries or storage areas.

Key Academic Deadlines (January 2027)

- **January 6, 2027:** Last Day to Drop without a "W"
- **January 7, 2027:** Instructor approval required for adding courses
- **January 11, 2027:** Last Day to Add
- **January 21, 2027:** Last Day to Withdraw

Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change)

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Assignments Due
Module 1	Introduction to the Course Lecture/Discussion: An Overview of Museums in Films & Television	None
Module 2	Natural History Museums / Working in Museums Lecture/Discussion: Controversies at the American Museum of Natural History	Read: Dorsey (1907); Liu (2022); Bishara (2022); Mangus (2022)
Module 3	Film: <i>Night at the Museum</i> , Dir. Shawn Levy (2006) Discussion: Levy, <i>Night at the Museum</i>	Prepare for film discussion
Module 4	Museums as Spaces for Social Interaction Lecture: Museums as Spaces for Social Interaction	Read: Andrews (2010); Deakin (Aug 2022); Carlson (2022); Deakin (Sep 2022); Simon (2010) Ch. 3
Module 5	Film: <i>Museum Hours</i> , Dir. Jem Cohen (2012)	DUE: Review of <i>Night at the Museum</i>
Module 6	Museums and the Holocaust Discussion: Cohen, <i>Museum Hours</i> In-Class Screenings: Excerpts from <i>The Rape of Europa</i> , <i>Plunderer</i> , and <i>The Monuments Men</i>	Read: Daly (<i>Vitalizing Memory</i>); Nicholas (<i>The Rape of Europa</i> Ch. I, V, VIII)

Module 7	Film: <i>The Woman in Gold</i> , Dir. Simon Curtis (2015)	IN CLASS: Quiz 1
Module 8	Museum Audiences - Then and Now Discussion: Curtis, <i>The Woman in Gold</i> Lecture: Museum Audiences	Read: Barbour (1912); Dawson (2015); Dunton (2022) DUE: Reading Response 1
Module 8	Museum Benefactors, Civic Purposes, and Ethics Film: <i>The Duke</i> , Dir. Roger Michell (2020) Discussion: Michell, <i>The Duke</i> Lecture: Benefactors and Ethics	Read: Keller (2010); Panero (2011) DUE: Review of <i>The Woman in Gold</i>
Module 9	Museum Theft - Depiction and Reality Film: <i>The Art of the Steal</i> , Dir. Don Argott (2009) Discussion: Argott, <i>The Art of the Steal</i> Lecture: Museum Theft	Read: Barelli (<i>Stealing the Show</i> pp. 75-99) IN CLASS: Quiz 2
Module 9	Film: <i>The Thomas Crown Affair</i> (1999)	IN CLASS: Final Short Essay

Campus Resources & Policies

AccessAbility Services: Hartwick College accommodates students encountering barriers due to a disability. Contact Lara Sanford, Director of AccessAbility Services and Academic Inclusivity, at sanfordl@hartwick.edu or AccessAbilityServices@hartwick.edu as early as possible to arrange modifications.

Inclement Weather Plan: If regular class cannot meet due to bad weather, class will be held virtually via Google Meet. The instructor will provide a link as early as possible.

The Charlotte Orr Hotaling Writing Center (Clark 230): Offers free one-on-one support for brainstorming, outlining, drafting, and revising. Appointments can be scheduled for 30 or 60 minutes through Penji for in-person, synchronous video, or asynchronous feedback. Open Monday–Friday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM; drop-ins welcome. Email: WritingCenter@Hartwick.edu.