DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY & ART CONSERVATION

Winter Term 2018

ARTH 434: Non-Western Art in Western Collections

ARTH 810: Museums, Collecting, and Culture I: Decolonizing the Museum - Cultural Heritage and First People

Instructor: Professor Norman Vorano
Time: TBA
Location: TBA
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Office Hours: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Given the colonial roots of western museums, the historical relationship between museums, art galleries and the Indigenous Peoples of North America has been fraught with conflict, disjuncture, and political interventions. Over the past several decades, new museum and curatorial practices have attempted to “decolonize” the institution. This has engendered new understandings of collections, insights into the core function of contemporary curatorial practice, new models of institutional partnerships, and broad inter-cultural collaborations. These encounters have called into question the role of museums, collections, and the disciplinary formations that are associated with them, principally anthropology and art history. But is it even possible to decolonize the western museum and art gallery? To what degree is power really shifted or shared in these new arrangements? Are community-based museums “Indigenizing,” or simply reproducing old colonial structures of knowledge and power? This course uses a case-study approach to track and critically appraise the evolving relationship between Museums and Indigenous peoples in North America in order to contextualize and understand the emerging issues in contemporary curatorial and museum practice concerning representation, repatriation, sacred materials, and the management of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
A detailed list of readings and requirements will be available during the first class. This course will be a seminar, with discussions. The requirements will include a minimum of two written assignments and one oral presentation.