

## **Sample Syllabus: “Collecting and Provenance in an International Context: Questions and Answers for the Museum” (Glasgow, Scotland)**

### Course Description

“Collecting and Provenance in an International Context: Questions and Answers for the Museum” will provide an interdisciplinary study of provenance from a global perspective combining art historical, anthropological and legal perspectives. The course will cover the following themes: cultures of collecting, provenance, restitution, antiquities trafficking, and art crime. The themes, each of which will be covered in two days of intensive study in Glasgow with experts in the field, will examine the trajectory of artefacts through time and space and their historical legacy. In addition to developing students’ knowledge of core issues in collecting, instruction will interweave legal and methodological approaches relating to provenance and restitution and the present concerns around the illegal trafficking of cultural objects. A crucial part of this course will be close study of works of art and material culture using the University of Glasgow collections to address issues around provenance, trafficking, and restitution, both historically and in a contemporary, global context.

### Learning objectives

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and interpret the cultural and legal frameworks which surround collecting practices and the formation and circulation of collections;
- Apply relevant theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of collections and collecting practices;
- Produce, in written form, independent research on topics relating to a collection or collecting practice;
- Describe, interpret and evaluate approaches to the study of collecting practices and collections from a range of different critical perspectives;
- Discuss in an informed and articulate manner current issues in and around collecting, provenance and restitution.
- Engage in independent provenance research

### Schedule

WEEK ONE: May 22-May 26

For the first week of class, students will meet at locations in Washington, DC to be introduced to the topics we will be covering in Glasgow, and to learn the United States context for these topics. As important as the global context is to the movement of objects around the world, US laws and US history are also integral to the practice of museum work in this country, where most of the students will end up working.

Class will meet M-F from 1:00-4:00. 2

**Monday, May 22 Introduction to Cultures of Collecting**

This will introduce aspects of the histories of collecting art and artefacts as a global phenomenon in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. It is designed to provide an historical framework which looks at the interplay of 'demand' and 'source' countries in the formation of collections and the role of imperial projects in the history of collecting.

**Tuesday, May 23 Provenance research at the Smithsonian Institution**

Class will meet at the Smithsonian Provenance Research Initiative (SPRI). The SPRI advances and enhances the institution's commitment to provenance research and the preservation of cultural property and heritage as an integral part of the Smithsonian's mission. Initiative staff members work with Smithsonian museums and archives to develop strategies and methods to facilitate provenance research with a focus, most recently, on the decorative arts and Asian art, with projects at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, and the National Museum of American Art.

**Wednesday, May 24 Introduction to Provenance Research**

A hands-on session at the Archives of American Art

**Thursday, May 25 Repatriation Law in the United States**

One of the most urgent forces for provenance research in the United States is US repatriation law related to Native American human remains and sacred objects – the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the NMAI Act. We will meet with representatives from the National NAGPRA office and museum staff members charged with overseeing compliance with repatriation law, and discuss challenges and successes related to NAGPRA/NMAI.

**Friday, May 26 Getting ready to head to Glasgow! Orientation for travel abroad.**

What you need to know for next week, including safety procedures.

**No class on Monday, May 29 MEMORIAL DAY**

WEEKS TWO and THREE: May 30-June 9: University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland

**Tuesday, May 30: Fly to Glasgow** (likely arrival on Wednesday morning)

**Wednesday, May 31 (1/2 day) and Thursday, June 1                      Antiquities Trafficking**

The looting of archaeological sites and the transnational illicit trafficking of cultural property is closely tied to such pressing issues as conflict, post conflict, globalisation, development, social justice, politics, and identity. Criminologically, antiquities trafficking is associated with transnational criminal networks, organised crime, white collar crime, and crimes of the powerful. Structured around the three basic links on the antiquities trafficking chain (source, transit, and market), the discussion will step beyond the simple narrative of antiquities protection and return, and delve into these pertinent issues combining archaeological and criminological methods and theories to come to a better understanding of this illicit trade.

Instructor: Donna Yates, Ph.D. (Anthropology)

Donna Yates is a Lecturer in Antiquities Trafficking and Art Crime at the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research at the University of Glasgow. Her research explores the relationship between communities, governments, the law, and the operation of transnational criminal markets and to help develop regulatory mechanisms for controlling the illicit antiquities trade. She conducts field-based research to better understand the implementation of regulation and the behaviours, norms, and values of the stakeholder communities that are governed by it.

Most recently Dr. Yates has been studying the theft, trafficking, and security of sacred art. This includes art from Latin American churches and she has expanded this focus to include temple and shrine sites in South Asia, particularly Nepal and India. Information about sacred art theft can be found on her website [StolenGods.org](http://StolenGods.org).

*Welcome Dinner*

### **Friday, June 2 and Saturday, June 3                      Provenance**

This section will highlight the importance of verifying provenance prior to trading in art and cultural objects. It explores the links between provenance research (the tracing the ownership history of collections or individual items that form part of collections), the aspiration of society to guard against the illicit trade and trafficking of culture, and the highest standard of due diligence in the trade.

Instructor: Christa Roodt, Ph.D. (Legal Philosophy)

Christa Roodt manages the Art, Law and Business concentration in School of Culture & Creative Arts. She collaborates with Christie's Education in London, legal practitioners, and partners in industry. Her research focuses on aspects of restitution, material heritage and provenance. She is the author of *Private International Law, Art and Cultural Objects* (2015) which analyzes the international dimension of civil claims related to portable objects of artistic and cultural value.

Her new research is entitled 'Fake Provenance: Protecting the Art Market and the Art Historical Record against Misleading Narrative' together with leading partners in industry.

Sunday, June 4 FREE DAY TO TRAVEL TO LOCAL MUSEUM

**Monday, June 5 and Tuesday, June 6 (1/2 day) Art Crime**

Because art is treasured, it attracts a host of criminal activity. Beyond the fictionalized art heists made famous in film and literature, the monetary and social value of art inspires many types of art crime. Students will learn the difference between the fictional ideal of art crime and the gritty reality. We will explore types of art crime: theft/heists, financial art crime, fakes and forgeries, and political art crimes and will learn the financial motivations for such crimes, what factors make them possible, how they relate to other types of crime (e.g. organized crime, white collar crime, financial crime), and how art crime is prevented.

Instructor: Donna Yates, PhD (see above)

**Tuesday, June 6 (1/2 day) and Wednesday, June 7 Restitution**

This section will explore the fundamental issue of return or non-return of cultural objects that have been removed from the ownership of individuals, businesses, museums, states or non-state entities through theft, societal displacement, looting, and colonial appropriation or illicit trade and trafficking of culture. It considers the diversity prevailing among different market states in respect of the grounds, mechanisms and processes for restitution, as well as the most pertinent obstacles that affect these decisions.

Instructor: Christa Roodt, PhD (see above)

**Thursday, June 8 Local Travel**

We will travel as a group to National Trust for Scotland sites Pollok House and Holmwood, reachable by bus, train, or rented bike from downtown Glasgow.

*Closing Dinner*

**Friday, June 9. Return flight to DC**

WEEK 4 Independent provenance research projects in Washington

**Monday, June 12 through Friday, June 16**

We will meet on Monday to get students started on their independent research projects. Each student will be assigned an object in a local museum and we will talk about archives, repositories, and on-line resources for their research. We will then meet virtually once a day

during the week, with one in-person meeting on Wednesday, while students pursue independent research.

We will get together on June 16 for a last day of class celebration and presentation of research findings.