Understanding Art Museums, Section .001
Remote via Zoom and on Canvas
Wednesday 5:00-7:50

Dr. Shabout
Office hours: Tuesday 2:20-3:20 pm and Wednesday 4-5pm, or e-mail me
E-mail: nada.shabout@unt.edu

Teaching Assistant: Emma Ahmad (emmaahmad@my.unt.edu)

Course Description:
This course aims to study of art museums and alternative institutions: their people, their purpose, and their place in society in a changing world, with a focus on the curatorial aspects and representation of cultures. Increasingly in the 21st century, calls to decolonize and globalize museums as well as the study of art history. What does that mean and what are the methodologies deployed to achieve it? Then the pandemic of 2020 forced new challenges to museums. We will explore a variety of curatorial issues in relation to exhibitions, collections, conservation, and repatriation. Museums, collections and initiatives will be examined in the selection, display and interpretation of cultural objects and concepts in exhibitions. Students will be introduced to the problems, possibilities and choices that inform the cultural practices of museums. The course employs history and critical theory to understand practice through assigned readings, virtual trips, and guest speakers. Some of the themes addressed in the seminar include the politics of display and representations, the internationalization of the art market, museum interventions and institutional critique, rituals of spectatorship, provenance and repatriation, and community engagement.

Course Requirements:
All required readings are on Canvas. Given that this course is taught remotely, you do need to have access to a computer with internet access. You will need to upload and download text and images on Canvas for asynchronous meetings. At times you will need a digital camera--your smartphone camera is fine. You will also need Zoom for synchronous meetings. You are required to be seen as part of zoom discussion sessions. For that You’ll need a webcam.

A Note on Remote Learning
I understand that each of you is living in a very different situation under the pandemic restrictions, and this may very well include more responsibilities and distractions than before. I am also aware that the current situation is emotionally draining and that you may have friends and family that depend on you for emotional and/or physical support. It is my goal for this course to provide some relief, not to cause you further stress or anxiety. Don’t hesitate to reach out if you feel overwhelmed because we can adjust this course and its requirements in ways that are beneficial to you, as an individual and as a class community.
Because the situation we face is changing daily- within both our communities and our individual lives- I will adjust the syllabus if necessary to account for unexpected changes. To the best of your ability, I ask that you keep me posted if you are no longer able to participate in the course for a period of time, for whatever reason, so that together we can make this semester successful for you academically. I am here to make sure that happens for all of you.

As with any group technology effort, there will be kinks. Don’t panic if something simply doesn’t work and you miss an entire class or can’t upload an assignment. This is going to happen, so relax and know that it’s going to take time to sort out all the inevitable kinks of remote learning. I am here to catch you up on anything you miss.

**Course Objectives:**

The following are the objectives and outcomes of this course:

- Students will investigate the nature of art museums and alternative spaces, examine the philosophical, historical, and ethical dilemmas of the art museum.
- Develop skills in using research and reference materials, synthesizing and organizing research, and presenting materials in both written and oral forms.
- To develop and practice the skills needed to think critically about exhibitions and the interface between objects and visual materials, concepts and content, and visitor experience.
- Examine and discuss current trends used by museums for the production of knowledge.
- Identify the cultural practices that define exhibitions.
- Assess conceptual frameworks and exhibit narratives.

**Requirements and Grading System:**

The course is divided into lectures, assignments and discussions. You will be evaluated on your preparedness for each class. You will also be evaluated on the organization, thoughtfulness, and resourcefulness of your writing assignments. Every student is expected to fully participate in the preparation and execution of group presentations and any accompanying written materials.

Check Canvas regularly for announcements and syllabus updates. If I or Emma email you, please reply within 3 days and we will do the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>15 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>15 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Forums</td>
<td>30 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>40 points</td>
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**Course Structure:**

This class is scheduled to meet once every week during the semester on Wednesday. In our current alternative universe, we will have synchronous live zoom meetings and asynchronous exercises (assignments and discussion board forums) on Canvas. All readings (you will have essays to read, videos to watch and PowerPoint lectures) assignments and discussion board forums are due on the date assigned in the course schedule below. Discussions (both live and on
Canvas) are important as they provide opportunities for each of you to pose questions and to compare responses and observations.

The class might be divided into groups for discussions and projects as needed.

**Zoom Classes:**
- We will hold a zoom class for 1:30-2 hr on Wednesdays.
- Class time might include short lectures, student presentations, and discussions. On certain days we will have guest speakers. The material to be covered in the zoom class are noted in throughout the course schedule so that students can “come to class” prepared and ready to discuss and ask questions.
- If you are unable to attend the zoom class, please email me to work on an alternative solution.

**Discussion Threads**
For each discussion thread, there will be a guiding topic and/or question. You are required to submit 2 entries (100-250 words/per response) for each-one in response to the prompt and second that engages with another student. You are meant to read the other posts and form opinions accordingly. The course discussion thread will be open till Wednesday 11:59 pm. The goal is to have your response available for our discussion during class but allowing you to revise or add after class. The goal is to have your response available for our discussion during class. Your responses will be collectively graded based on their thoughtfulness, thoroughness, and ability to make connections across course material.

**Criteria:**
- Read the postings submitted by other students. Threaded discussions provide the opportunity for interaction and learning from one another. This requires you to follow the posts of other students in your discussion group.
- Make reference to the relevant material from the assigned readings.
- Make reference to information or ideas expressed by your classmates in their posts.

**Islamic Galleries Assignment**
Each group will choose one of the collections/museums listed in the Global Guide to Islamic Art or another of their choice in consultation with me. Do your own research and Present a review of your choice in class with appropriate images. Discuss the mission, vision, policies and ideologies used and the message they convey. This of this as an exercise in preparation for the final project. Present in class on March 10.

**Final Project: Museum Project**
In this group project, you will select a museum in consultation with me (from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_art_museums](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_art_museums)) and will develop a plan for your museum. Your project will have 6 parts. You can decide, as a group, how you want to approach this. Do you work on all parts together, like you might at a small museum? Do you break into smaller groups, like you would at a big museum, and come together as a big group to vote on things?

The 6 parts of your final project are:
Mission Statement

- Revise or develop a mission statement based on the ICOM debates around the new definition of a museum

COVID Plan and inclusion Response

- Develop a COVID plan and a response to the spirit of Black Lives Matter movement. What is your museum’s stance on COVID and Black Lives Matter? Write a press release of at least 2 paragraphs that addresses these questions: When or will you reopen? How does your museum feel about Black Lives Matter? What will change for visitors? For staff? Why will you make these changes?

Social Media Campaign

- Develop a “during the pandemic” social media campaign for the Fall semester. Must have a unifying theme and include at least 3 posts for the social media platform of your choice. Include the posts you would develop and the reasons for why (in 1 paragraph) you developed this campaign.

Educational Program

- Develop one educational program for the Fall semester. Develop the who, what, when, where, why and how of the program (Who is it for? What is it about? When would it take place? Where would it take place? Why is this important right now? And how would it happen?)

Exhibition

- Develop one post-pandemic exhibition. It needs to include the exhibition title, description of exhibition (1 paragraph), list of objects (From your own collection? Other museums’ collection?), a floor plan of the exhibition’s layout and an example of an exhibition label for one object

Development Plan

- Develop a plan to raise money ($1 million) for your museum (A wealthy donor (if so, identify 2 people who have interests related to your museum)? Raising ticket prices? Laying off staff? Some other way?) and a press release (at least 2 paragraphs) for how you would use that money for the museum (Will you use the money for your staff affected by C-19? For educational programs? To acquire new objects? To update the building? Something else?)

Your project (all segments need to be submitted together with every group member’s name on it) will be submitted to Canvas by midnight on April 30th. Your group will present a summary in class on April 21st.

Policy on Quality of Written Work: Translating visual signs into verbal language is not an easy task. Thus, in the visual and subjective realm of art history, clarity of presented ideas is vital. Therefore, your written work will be evaluated in terms of proper grammar, syntax, and spelling, as well as the clear and logical presentation of ideas and argument. If you make errors in any of these areas consistently, your grade will be lowered.
**Cheating and Plagiarism Policy:**

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and violate UNT’s Code of Student Conduct. Any suspected act of dishonesty will result in a grade of “F” in the course. Further, the professor will write a letter to the Dean of the School of Visual Arts and the Dean of Students, who will pursue disciplinary actions at their discretion. Cheating in this class includes not participating in your group assignments. Each group will have a group leader to ensure participation. It will be the group’s leader responsibility to inform the professor of unproductive members.

You cannot use a paper or project from another class or from this class in another without consulting both professors.

According to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, plagiarism is defined as “the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words or statements of another person as one’s own without acknowledgement” (www.unt.edu/csrr). Copying material from any source without providing a citation (footnote or endnote) is a form of plagiarism. Likewise, if you paraphrase another author’s words or ideas, you must credit that person with a citation. While most incidents of plagiarism at the graduate level are unintentional, it is your responsibility to ensure that you accurately indicate which words and ideas are those of others.

**Acceptable Student Behavior:**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).

**Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, Assault:**

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

**American Disabilities Act:**

The College of Visual Arts and Design is committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. In keeping with this commitment and in order to facilitate equality of educational access, faculty members in the College will make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with a disability, such as appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methodologies when doing so does not fundamentally alter the course.
If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to obtain verifying information from the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) and to inform me of your need for an accommodation. Requests for accommodation must be given to me no later than the first week of classes for students registered with the ODA as of the beginning of the current semester. If you register with the ODA after the first week of classes, your accommodation requests will be considered after this deadline.

Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed. Information about how to obtain academic accommodations can be found in UNT Policy 18.1.14, at www.unt.edu/oda, and by visiting the ODA in Room 321 of the University Union. You also may call the ODA at 940.565.4323.

Course Risk Factor:

According to University Policy, this course is classified as a category one course. Students enrolled in this course will not be exposed to any significant hazards and are not likely to suffer any bodily injury. Students will be informed of any potential health hazards or potential bodily injury connected with the use of any materials and/or processes and will be instructed how to proceed without danger to themselves and others.

Center for Students Rights and Responsibilities:

Each student at UNT is entitled to certain rights associated with higher education institutions. See www.unt.edu/csrr for further information.

Online Resources:

Aramco World: We produce AramcoWorld to increase cross-cultural understanding by broadening knowledge of the histories, cultures and geography of the Arab and Muslim worlds and their global interconnections, past and present. In print, AramcoWorld is distributed six times a year, without charge, to a limited number of interested readers; online, it is published on this site and available in tablet and mobile editions using the AramcoWorld app. Back issues from 1960 are searchable, and texts are available in full; photographs from archival articles are online from 2004 to the present.

Artsy: features the world’s leading galleries, museum collections, foundations, artist estates, art fairs, and benefit auctions, all in one place. Our growing database of 800,000 images of art, architecture, and design by 70,000 artists spans historical, modern, and contemporary works, and includes the largest online database of contemporary art. Artsy is used by art lovers, museum-goers, patrons, collectors, students, and educators to discover, learn about, and collect art. https://www.artsy.net/artists.

CULTURUNNERS: an independent arts organisation which supports artists journeys and production across physical and ideological borders: http://culturunners.com/#


Hyperallergic: a daily online art publication on art and the art world: http://hyperallergic.com
Ibraaz: Initiated by the Kamel Lazaar Foundation in 2011, Ibraaz is the leading critical forum on visual culture in North Africa and the Middle East. We publish an annual online platform – consisting of essays, interviews, artists’ projects, and platform responses – that focuses on research questions conceived through a network of editorial contributors based in the Middle East and beyond. Our key editorial aim is to publish, alongside work by internationally renowned writers, academics, curators, activists, and filmmakers, emerging writers and artists: https://www.ibraaz.org.

The Mathaf Encyclopedia of Modernism and the Arab World: The bilingual Mathaf Encyclopedia is a free online scholarly resource providing basic facts and in depth information on modern art of the Arab world: http://www.encyclopedia.mathaf.org.qa/en/Pages/default.aspx

Nafas Art Magazine: Nafas was developed by Universes in Universe - Worlds of Art (UiU) commissioned by the ifa, and published since March 2003 as one of the first online magazines for contemporary art from the Maghreb to the Middle East, from Central to Southeast Asia: http://u-in-u.com/nafas/.

Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism: An accessible and intuitive online platform, Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism brings together a wealth of interdisciplinary content about the Modernist period, and is the ideal starting point for any research in modernism. Access through UNT Library: https://libproxy.library.unt.edu:4199

Selections: a bi-monthly magazine with high quality content on all subjects related to Art, Culture, Design, and Style: http://www.selectionsarts.com/category/art/

Disclaimers

Content in the arts can sometimes include works, situations, actions, and language that can be personally challenging or offensive to some students on the grounds, for example, of sexual explicitness, violence, or blasphemy. The College of Visual Arts and Design is devoted to the principle of freedom of expression, artistic and otherwise, and it is not the college’s practice to censor these works or ideas on any of these grounds. Students who might feel unduly distressed or made uncomfortable by such expressions should withdraw at the start of the term and seek another course.

The professors reserve the right to alter this syllabus if and when necessary

Course Outline
Week 1: January 13

Introduction and syllabus
Read in class: A New Definition of "Museum" Sparks International Debate:
https://hyperallergic.com/513858/icom-museum-definition/?fbclid=IwAR17jbuFXv4NLY5p03z4BykIF1KrmvX0ngw8pbXMNLxm_QJPMBMMDHr50Sw

Is it a museum or not? The question is worth asking:
https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/is-it-a-museum-or-not-the-question-is-worth-asking/2018/10/12/54eded68-c5c1-11e8-9b1c-a90f1daae309_story.html


Week 2: January 20

Cultural Destruction

Read in class: Museums must work together to combat cultural destruction: https://www.apollomagazine.com/museums-must-work-together-to-combat-cultural-destruction/

Read

Rebecca Anne Proctor, "Huge explosion in Beirut decimates city and leaves art scene in disarray," August 5, 2020, https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/beirut-explosion?fbclid=IwAR1Aae8x2WOxAvvRAY-bgnqANfA9_0ZfD1els-1npFxUul7y8YygCc0pdI (Links to an external site.)

Naomi Rea, 'I Doubt It Is Worth Reopening': Art Spaces in Beirut Are Decimated by the City's Deadly Explosions: https://news.artnet.com/market/beirut-explosion-galleries-1899782?fbclid=IwAR3WJlcWyuq4tsPoQBhi6GuzIN2kmElmdLU65ZEpmu2D8j5nhFwxHXP34


Watch

"Webinar: A Conversation about Iraq's Cultural Heritage"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MucbPjFtfs8

Discussion Board Forum

Week 3: January 27

Orientalism and Representation

Guest Speakers: Drs. Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, founders of Art Reoriented, a multidisciplinary curatorial platform launched in New York and Munich in
2009. They also chair the Montblanc Cultural Foundation in Hamburg and are affiliate curators at Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin. They will curate the sixteenth edition of the Biennale de Lyon, which will take place from September 2021 to January 2022.

In class read: Restitution, Repatriation, and Decolonization: What’s Next For “Brutish Museums”?: https://glasstire.com/2020/12/28/restitution-repatriation-and-decolonization-whats-next-for-brutish-museums/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Sunday%201-3-21&utm_content=Sunday%201-3-21+CID_92d61b609d82f61b9a4bdc14c00806c9&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=Restitution%20Repatriation%20and%20Decolonization%20Whats%20Next%20For%20Brutish%20Museums

Read


Watch

Once upon a Time in Iraq, Frontline,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2L4jcVqo8s

Discussion Board Forum

Week 4: February 3


Read


Watch
Discussion Board Forum

Week 5: February 10

Watch

Reframing Museums: A Louvre Abu Dhabi and NYU Abu Dhabi Symposium, 16 – 18 November 2020:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUx_x8ALpnIZh7d9w8SZlqg

Opening remarks | Reflection session
Allocation 2 | Repenser le "musée imaginaire"
Roundtable 3 | Modelling the future: new business models for the museums
Roundtable 4 | The Museum as a re-imagined public space
Case studies 2 | Museums and Empathy: towards new forms of engagement
Roundtable 5 | Voices of authority: expertise, participation and inclusion in the museum of tomorrow
Roundtable 6 | Museums & Archaeological Sites Activating the ancient through contemporary in museums
Roundtable 7 | The future of curators

Discussion Board Forum

Week 6: February 17

Optional: Tuesday February 16: Guest Artist Samia Halaby

In class: Case Study: The Louvre Abu Dhabi: https://www.louvreabudhabi.ae

Read

Future of museums: Abu Dhabi’s Louvre, NYU to host prestigious meeting on challenges,


Discussion Board Forum

Week 7: February 24

Exhibiting Islam

Guest Speaker: Dr. Heather Ecker, Marguerite S. Hoffman and Thomas W. Lentz Curator of Islamic and Medieval Art, Dallas Museum of Art

Read


The National-Islamic Art Display: http://www.thenational.ae/arts-life/the-review/the-long-read-the-politics-of-displaying-islamic-art-are-up-for-discussion-at-abu-dhabi-event#full


Discussion Board Forum

Declare choice of Islamic galleries assignment

Week 8: March 3

Exhibiting Contemporary Islam

Guest Speaker Dr. Venetia Porter, Curator of Islamic and Contemporary Middle East art at the British Museum

Read


Modern art from the Middle East on view in gallery exhibition:
https://news.yale.edu/2017/03/03/modern-art-middle-east-view-gallery-exhibition

Discussion Board Forum

Week 9: March 10  New Islamic Galleries

Read
A Global Guide to Islamic Art:
http://archive.aramcoworld.com/issue/200901/a.global.guide.to.islamic.art.htm

Select
Museum With No Frontiers: http://www.discoverislamicart.org/index.php
Displaying Islamic Art at the Metropolitan: A Retrospective Look:
http://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/now-at-the-met/features/2012/displaying-islamic-art-at-the-metropolitan
The long read: the politics of displaying Islamic art are up for discussion at Abu Dhabi event:
http://www.thenational.ae/arts-life/the-review/the-long-read-the-politics-of-displaying-islamic-art-are-up-for-discussion-at-abu-dhabi-event#full
Victoria & Albert: http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/galleries/level-1/room-42-islamic-art/
British Museum Announces New Islamic Art Gallery:
Department of Islamic Art at the Louvre: http://www.louvre.fr/en/opening-new-department-islamic-art

Group Assignment: Each group will choose one of the collections/museums listed in the Global Guide to Islamic Art or another of their choice. Declare in class on February 24th. Do your own research and Present a review of your choice in class with appropriate images. Discuss the mission, vision, policies and ideologies used and the message they convey. Present in class.

Week 10: March 17  Alternative Spaces

Guest Speaker Dr. Pamela Karimi, Curator and Associate Professor of Art History, College of Visual and Performing Arts, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
Click to preview and download PDF

Read
Lindsay Howard, “The Way We Share: Transparency in Curatorial Practice:”

Explore
Abu Dhabi Art Galleries: https://www.abudhabiart.ae/en/Galleries/Afriart-Gallery

Discussion Board Forum

Week 11: March 24
Exhibiting the Global Contemporary

Read
Curatorial Practice and Cultural Production,

Discussion Board Forum

Week 12: March 31
Decolonizing the Museum

Read
Mukoma Wa Ngugi, “What Decolonizing the Mind Means Today,” 2018,
Angie Jaime, “The ‘Art World’ Can’t Exist in a Decolonized Future: “If you take away imperial plunder, what else do you have to offer?”
https://www.teenvogue.com/story/decolonize-art-photography?fbclid=IwAR27XSIYF3wuEQuMGFLJsDTV2RLj641BpzLgu3lyBNs8Hmq9FZe0FIMnPCQ

Discussion Board Forum
Do you believe decolonizing museums is possible? Give examples from the reading to support your argument.

Declare your Museum Project Choice in class.

Week 13: April 7
Exhibiting Conflict

Date Change: Tuesday April 6, 7-8 pm: Zoom Meeting-Symposium Canton III with Wafaa Bilal

Read


Discussion Board

Week 14: April 14
Exhibiting Conflict

Guest Speaker Curator, Ruba Katrib, MoMA PS1

Read

Ruba Katrib Curator, MoMA PS1: https://www.moma.org/magazine/authors/92

TBA

Week 15: April 21 Final Presentations

Week 16: April 28 No Class