

MSL 2100 F - THE MUSEUM ENVIRONMENT
Course Syllabus, Winter, 2017

Instructor: Susan Maltby (susan.maltby@utoronto.ca)

Class Time: Friday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Class Location: BL 313

Office Hours: by appointment, (416) 921-2877

Marking Scheme:	Attendance and Participation	10%
	Presentation I	15%
	Condition Report & handling guidelines	15%
	Conservation Memorandum	15%
	Presentation II	15%
	Final Report	30%

Required Text & Weekly Readings:

Bachman, Konstanze (ed.). *Conservation Concerns, A Guide for Collectors and Curators*.
Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992.

Weekly readings will be available in a course binder in the Inforum.

Course Outline:

- 1) January 27
 - Introduction
 - Course objectives & requirements
 - Defining conservation, restoration & preventative conservation
 - Role of the conservator
 - Conservation resources
 - Terms used in conservation
 - The museum environment & how it affects collections

- 2) February 3
 - Class presentations
 - Environmental Monitoring
 - Controlling the museum environment
 - Handling
 - Condition reporting

- 3) February 10
 - Introduction to materials
 - Metals, stone, ceramics, glass
 - Organic materials, wood, textiles
 - Paintings and works of art on paper

- 4) February 17
 - Photography - guest lecture
 - Archival-quality materials
 - Pollution, internal & external
 - Choosing stable materials for exhibit & storage
 - Materials testing (e.g., Oddy Test)

- Coatings, sealants and barriers for wood
Storage systems
Labelling
- 5) February 24 No Class – Reading Week
- 6) March 3 Exhibit Cases
Exhibit Mounts - Dos & Don'ts
Conservators as part of the design team
Security, Vandalism
Packing & shipping - guest lecture
Moving collections
Planning for Preservation - Collections surveys
Establishing priorities
Conservation & Museum Policies
Mould
- 7) March 10 No class – Student Conference
- 8) March 17 Integrated Pest Management
Disaster planning
Class Presentations

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to preventive conservation. As such, it focuses on: identifying and quantifying the environmental factors that affect collections; developing strategies that mitigate those factors; understanding the materials that make up a museum collection - how they degrade, react to their environment and the artifacts around them; and evaluating the conservation requirements for the safe exhibition and storage of museum collections.

Course Objectives & Outcomes:

Upon completing this course, students will:

- Understand what conservation is and a conservator's role within an institution and/or with collections
- Understand that collections care is a partnership between museum professionals (e.g., conservators, curators, collections managers)
- Understand the ethics of conservation and its basic tenets
- Be able to assess the condition of a museum object
- Have a basic understanding of the materials that make up a museum collection and how they degrade, react to their environment and the artifacts around them
- Be able to evaluate the conservation requirements (for exhibit, storage, handling and travel) for artifacts in their care
- Take a risk management approach to long and short term preservation planning
- Be able to provide basic collections care
- Know when to call a professional (i.e., know their limitations)

Relationship between Course Learning Outcomes and Programme Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will understand and be able to apply best practice in their future museum careers. They will understand the ethical issues facing cultural institutions and how collections care is integral to those institutions. The major course assignments require the student to identify and clearly communicate conservation concerns and needs. The final paper requires a strategic -- i.e., short, middle & long term -- approach to implementation of the report's recommendations. As a result, students understand the resources needed to plan and implement collections care related projects.

General Notes:

Grading:

Please consult the iSchool's Grade Interpretation Guidelines and the University's policy on Graduate Grading and Evaluation Practices. These documents will form the basis for grading in this course.

Writing Support:

As stated in the iSchool's Grade Interpretation Guidelines, "work that is not well written and grammatically correct will not generally be considered eligible for a grade in the A range, regardless of its quality in other respects". With this in mind, please make use of the writing support provided to graduate students by the SGS Office of English Language and Writing Support. The services are designed to target the needs of both native and non-native speakers and all programs are free. Please consult the winter 2015 workshop schedule for more information.

Academic integrity:

Please consult the University's site on Academic Integrity. The iSchool has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism as defined in section B.I.1. (d) of the University's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. You should acquaint yourself with the *Code* and Appendix "A" Section 2. Please review the material in Cite it Right and if you require further clarification, consult the site How Not to Plagiarize.

Accommodations for students with disabilities:

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or a health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services Office as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services staff are available by appointment to assess needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let them and I know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Extensions:

Extensions are at the discretion of the instructor. Requests for extensions must be submitted to the instructor before the due date. Requests for extensions must be supported by appropriate documentation.

Late submission of assignments:

If no extension has been granted, the late submission of an assignment carries a penalty of one grade point (e.g., from A to A-) for each week to a maximum of two weeks. After the two weeks, any passing assignment receives a B- or below grade.