



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORICAL STUDIES

AE2026 Critical Curating and Museum Practice: Decolonizing Archeological and Anthropological Collections, 30 credits

Kritisk museipraktik: Avkolonisering av arkeologiska och antropologiska samlingar, 30 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle

Confirmation

This course syllabus was confirmed by Department of Historical Studies on 2023-04-19 to be valid from 2023-08-28, autumn semester of 2023.

Field of education: Science 50% and Arts 50%

Department: Department of Historical Studies

Position in the educational system

Main field of studies

Archaeology

Specialization

A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Entry requirements

At least 60 credits (or equivalent) in first-cycle courses in Archaeology, Anthropology, Cultural Heritage Studies, History, Classical Studies, Museum Studies, Culture Analysis, Conservation, or equivalent.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- develop a historical awareness of exhibitions, curatorial, collecting and conservation practices
- critically discuss most current theoretical approaches on curatorial and museum

practices

- independently problematize the public presentation of archaeological and anthropological collections, both online and in exhibitions
- make a critical and systematic account of the fields' core research topics, theories, and concepts

Competence and skills

- motivate the selection and application of relevant theories and methods
- make an informed selection of data for analysis
- contextualise a selected museum collection with existing cultural and geo-specific anthropological and archaeological literature, as well as motivate the selection
- demonstrate command of the research field by writing and defending a scientific essay
- develop a range of vocational skills relevant to the work in museums

Judgement and approach

- independently formulate relevant detailed research questions and constructively relate them to the current state of the international research field
- critically discuss the application of decolonising agendas on curatorial and museum practices
- independently reflect over the limitations and the ethical issues that different kinds of historiographies, theoretical and practical approaches to curatorial and museum practices present

Course content

The course is a collaboration between the University of Gothenburg and the Museum of World Culture with the aim of introducing the next generation of researchers and museum professionals to critical theories and practices in a museum context and in close dialogue with indigenous communities.

The course offers opportunities for second-cycle students to engage in research training activities and to gain vocational experience within the museum sector. Working closely with the collections, database and archives at the Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg, the course addresses critical topics for contemporary museums of archaeology and ethnography, including digital and physical repatriation or restitution, decolonisation or indigenisation of museums, provenance research, regimes of visibility, biocultural and intellectual property, engagement with indigenous communities and distribution of curatorial authority. These topics are discussed through in-depth historical and critical reviews of curatorial and museum practices and in connection with real case studies.

The course has two sub-courses: (1) Theory and method and (2) Curatorial and museum

practice.

Sub-courses

1. Theory and method (*Teori och metod*), 15 credits

Grading scale: Excellent (A), Very good (B), Good (C), Satisfactory (D), Sufficient (E) and Fail (F)

The first sub-course is conceived as a series of lectures and seminars focusing on different critical approaches to curatorial and museum studies.

2. Curatorial and museum practice (*Museipraktik*), 15 credits

Grading scale: Excellent (A), Very good (B), Good (C), Satisfactory (D), Sufficient (E) and Fail (F)

The second sub-course focuses on practical engagement with different aspects of critical curatorial museum work, mainly at the collections storage facilities of the Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg.

Form of teaching

The course takes place at the University of Gothenburg and at the Museum of World Culture, in particular at its collections storage facilities. Instruction and forms of teaching include lectures, group discussions, seminars, hands-on workshops and individual assignments, and are focused on independent and individual study of course literature and collection samples.

Language of instruction: English

Teaching materials, assignments, and all other elements of the class can also be offered in Spanish and Portuguese.

Assessment

Course examination includes active participation in compulsory seminars and workshops, and written or oral assignments for the course. Students unable to participate in seminar or workshop exercises will be given a supplementary assignment.

A student who has taken two exams in a course or part of a course without obtaining a pass grade is entitled to the nomination of another examiner. The student needs to contact the department for a new examiner, preferably in writing, and this should be approved by the department unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Chapter 6 Section 22 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

If a student has received a recommendation from the University of Gothenburg for special educational support, where it is compatible with the learning outcomes of the course and provided that no unreasonable resources are required, the examiner may decide to allow the student to sit an adjusted exam.

In the event that a course has ceased or undergone major changes, students are to be guaranteed at least three examination sessions (including the ordinary examination session) over a period of at least one year, but no more than two years, after the course has ceased/been changed. The same applies to placements and professional placements (VFU), although this is restricted to just one additional examination session.

Grades

The grading scale comprises: Excellent (A), Very good (B), Good (C), Satisfactory (D), Sufficient (E) and Fail (F).

Course evaluation

The course manager is responsible for systematically collecting students' written evaluations of the course at its conclusion. The results of and possible changes to the course will be shared with students who participated in the evaluation and students who are starting the course.