

New Docent Training Course

Wexner Center for the Arts

ArtEd 4740/7740

3 Credit Hours

Autumn Semester 2012

Fridays, 9:35-10:55 AM

Wexner Center for the Arts

Description

This course introduces students to theory and techniques of teaching in the galleries of the Wexner Center for the Arts. Students will be trained to lead gallery experiences by studying contemporary art, strategies for leading tours, and techniques for encouraging interactive exchanges. Students who complete the course will be considered for acceptance into the active docent corps of the Wexner Center. This course meets in various locations at the Wexner Center, located at the intersection of 15th Avenue and High Street. Beginning in autumn of 2013, Wexner Center docents will have the opportunity to guide the public through exhibitions at the Billy Ireland Cartoon Museum and Library. This course will introduce techniques and information that will be useful in conducting tours of the Billy Ireland galleries, as well as the Wexner Center's exhibitions.

Contact information

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Office Hours:

We are in and out of our offices all day. You are free to stop by anytime (we can't guarantee that we'll be here) or contact us to arrange an appointment.

Credit & Advancement in the Program

Credit is available to all enrolled graduate and undergraduate students at The Ohio State University. Students will earn three hours of credit for autumn semester and two hours for spring semester through the Department of Art Education. You are not required to participate in this program for credit.

The fall and spring semester sessions of student docent training are considered separate courses. Spring semester requirements will be made available to you once you have successfully completed the fall semester. Spring semester credit will be independent study credit (graded as pass/fail), earned by working with experienced docents and preparing and presenting a public tour for evaluation by Wexner Center education staff.

If a student successfully completes the autumn semester with a minimum grade of A or B (for OSU students) and the Wexner Center education staff feels it appropriate, the student will be invited to participate in the second phase of training during spring semester. Students who successfully complete the spring semester phase of training will be invited to join the corps of docents who actively lead tours at the Wexner Center. Each student's advancement into the

docent program is entirely at the discretion of the Wexner Center education staff and is not solely based on the physical completion of course assignments and tours.

Requirements for Successful Completion of Autumn Semester Course

- Attend all required sessions and be on time (active docents at the Wexner Center are not late for their tours—please demonstrate your reliability on this front by showing up on time for the course). One absence will be excused with a good reason, advance notice to the instructor, and makeup of any required work.
- Complete all required reading.
- Participate in group discussions during class
Your participation includes being prepared and offering thoughtful comments throughout the course. Participation also means that you give your full attention during the class discussion, individual and group presentations and guest lectures, and asking questions and provide feedback afterward.

In this course, you are expected to demonstrate integrity, be responsive to the welfare of others, foster a positive classroom climate based on trust and mutual responsibility, and exhibit sensitivity to and respect for multiple socio-cultural realities, diversity and difference including, but not limited to, sexual identity, ability, class, race, gender, ethnicity, and age. This includes using suitable language, mannerisms and interpersonal skills.

Descriptions of and requirements for each of these assignments can be found on page 7 of this syllabus.

- Observe and record brief reflections on six tours during autumn semester. These reflections will be due throughout the semester. All reflections must be in before your tour shadowing experience paper is due.
- Complete three assignments:
 - Active Looking exercises
 - Audience strategy paper
 - Tour shadowing experience paper
- Present a successful “tour stop” final presentation to the group
- Maintain a positive attitude and the ability to communicate and respond to constructive criticism in a productive manner.
The processes and skills that you learn in this course are ones that take practice and experience. As you progress you will be given advice and critiqued on your performance. These suggestions are intended to help you grow as a gallery educator. Responding to criticism in a productive manner means that advice and suggestions are welcomed and reflected upon.
- Communicate effectively:
We have a large group of active docents and docents-in-training. We rely on our active and training docents to maintain professional communication standards in order to help us keep the program and schedule organized so that we can focus our efforts on good gallery teaching practices. All docents communicate via e-mail/blog in order to schedule all of their tours (whether they be shadowed, partnered, or independent). This means we must be able to rely on docents to 1) maintain an active e-mail account, 2) commit to actively checking this account (and the blog if appropriate) at least once a week (this also means responding promptly to inquiries), and 3) proactively communicate with us if you suspect you are having email account problems (e.g., not receiving e-mails, messages are bounced back, etc.) to foresee problems in case you have missed important information.

Autumn requirement weight:

Final presentation **20%**

Assignments x 4 @ 10% each = **40%**

Individual tour reflections (Due throughout the semester)

Active looking exercises (Due Sept 7)

Audience strategy paper (Due Nov 9)

Tour shadowing experience paper (Due Nov 30)

Attendance: **20%**

Discussion/participation: **10%**

Communication/professional conduct: **10%**

Fall Grading Scale

A 93 percent and above

A- 90–92 percent

B+ 87–89 percent

B 83–86 percent

B- 80–82 percent

C+ 77–79 percent

C 73–76 percent

C- 70–72 percent

D+ 67–69 percent

D 60–66 percent

F 59 percent and below

Students with Special Needs/Disabilities: If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact us to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs, and explore potential accommodations. We rely on the Office of Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services (292-3307), we encourage you to do so.

Academic Misconduct: Ohio State professors are expected to report suspected cases of academic misconduct to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. (Find the university's rules on academic misconduct here: <http://acs.ohio-state.edu/offices/oaap/procedures.1.0.html>.) The most common form of misconduct is plagiarism. Remember that any time you use the ideas or the statements of someone else, you must acknowledge that source in a citation. This includes material you have found on the web. The university provides guidelines for research on the web at <http://gateway.lib.ohio-state.edu/tutor>.

Topical Outline

Course schedule and readings are subject to change. Readings can be found on the blog. You will each be given access to the active docent resources for the fall/spring series of exhibitions. These exhibition essays and articles are not considered required, but it is strongly recommended that you read through them, as they will assist you in understanding the context of your shadowed tours.

Friday, August 24

Course overview

Public speaking and audience engagement refresher with Professor Mandy Fox

Friday, August 31

What does a docent do? What is our role?

Teaching with questions, fostering visual literacy, and exploring diverse perspectives in looking at art

Reading Due:

- Rice, Danielle & Yenawine, Philip, "A Conversation on Object-Centered Learning in Art Museums," *Curator: The Museum Journal*, November, 2002.
- Perkins, David, "The Challenge of the Invisible," *The Intelligent Eye*, pp 17-24.
- Perkins, David, "Knowledge Gaps and Intelligence Traps," *The Intelligent Eye*, pp 25-35

Friday, September 7

Cartoons! We'll get acquainted with the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum with Caitlin McGurk

- **Active looking exercise due**

Reading Due:

Please check out the Milton Caniff and Billy Ireland digital exhibits on the Cartoon L&M's website. Please also check out the "history of the Billy Ireland" blog posts on their site. All links are available on the course blog.

Friday, September 14

Wexner Center architecture.

Digging into the details: didactic versus deeper, open-ended questions.

Reading Due:

- Weaver, Leah, "Gardens of Glass," *Ohio State Quest*, Autumn 1993.
- Grindler, Alison L. & E. Sue McCoy, "Questioning Strategies," *The Good Guide: A Sourcebook for Interpreters, Docents and Tour Guides*, pp 72-77.

Friday, September 21

Perception versus context based gallery experiences...knowing when to be quiet and knowing when to give out information.

- "Introduction to Visual Thinking Strategies," *Visual Understanding in Education*, 2000
- Check out the Aesthetic Education link on the blog.
- Burnham, Rika, "If You Don't Stop, You Don't See Anything," *Teachers College Record*, Vol 95, Number 4, Summer 1994.

Friday, September 28

Forming a theme/goal for your gallery learning experience: What does that mean and what doesn't it mean? The importance of the introduction

- Burnham, Rika & Kai-Kee, Elliott, "The Art of Teaching in the Museum" *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 39, No. 1, Spring 2005.
- Tishman, Shari, "The Object of Their Attention" *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 65, No. 5, Feb. 2008.

Friday, October 5

Moving beyond static visual art

More on hidden context versus perception based interpretation

We will be joined by Sara Mitchell Sherman

- Barrett, Terry, "Principles for Interpreting," *Art Education*, September 1994.

Friday, October 12

Working with adults and walk-in tours. Tackling provocative issues in contemporary art

Know your audience

The beginning, body, and conclusion of an adult tour.

Reading Due:

- Cross, John, "Adult Learning and Museums," paper presented at Why Learning? Seminar, Australian Museum/University of Technology Sydney, 2002.
- Ali Faruki, Mustafa, "The Line of Inquiry: Questions for Adult Audiences," *NYCMER Interpreter*, 2003.

Friday, October 19

Working with kids. Object safety with Doug McGrew

Reading Due:

- Shoemaker, Marla K. "Watching Children Grow: A Guide to Childhood Development," *The Docent Educator*, Autumn 1992.
- Jeffers, Carol, "When Children Take the Lead in Exploring Art Museums with their Adult Partners," *Art Education*, November 1999.

Wednesday, October 26

Working with teens. Curate a tour.

- Gough-DiJulio, Betsy, "A Method to the Madness: What Teens Need and Want from Us," *The Docent Educator*, Summer 1996.

Friday, November 2

More on cartoons!

Friday, November 9

Question strategy practicum—what works and what doesn't?

- ✓ **Audience Strategy paper due.**

Friday, November 16

Course review and presentation prep!

Friday, November 23

NO CLASS: HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Friday, November 30

Final Presentations

- ✓ **Shadowing Paper paper due**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Additional reading resources are available for you concerning all of the subjects that we will cover in class. Feel free to inquire about these resources if you are interested in studying them.

- Ali Faruki, Mustafa, "The Line of Inquiry: Questions for Adult Audiences," *NYCMER Interpreter*, 2003.
- Barrett, Terry, "Principles for Interpreting," *Art Education*, September 1994.
- Burnham, Rika & Kai-Kee, Elliott, "The Art of Teaching in the Museum" *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 39, No. 1, Spring 2005.
- Burnham, Rika, "If You Don't Stop, You Don't See Anything," *Teachers College Record*, Vol 95, Number 4, Summer 1994.
- Cross, John, "Adult Learning and Museums," paper presented at Why Learning? Seminar, Australian Museum/University of Technology Sydney, 2002.
- Gough-DiJulio, Betsy, "A Method to the Madness: What Teens Need and Want from Us," *The Docent Educator*, Summer 1996.
- Grinder, Alison L. & E. Sue McCoy, "Questioning Strategies," *The Good Guide: A Sourcebook for Interpreters, Docents and Tour Guides*, pp 72-77.
- "Introduction to Visual Thinking Strategies," *Visual Understanding in Education*, 2000
www.vue.org
- Jeffers, Carol, "When Children Take the Lead in Exploring Art Museums with their Adult Partners," *Art Education*, November 1999.
- Perkins, David, "The Challenge of the Invisible," *The Intelligent Eye*, pp 17-24.
- Perkins, David, "Knowledge Gaps and Intelligence Traps," *The Intelligent Eye*, pp 25-35
- Rice, Danielle & Yenawine, Philip, "A Conversation on Object-Centered Learning in Art Museums," *Curator: The Museum Journal*, November, 2002.
- Shoemaker, Marla K. "Watching Children Grow: A Guide to Childhood Development," *The Docent Educator*, Autumn 1992.
- Tishman, Shari, "The Object of Their Attention" *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 65, No. 5, Feb. 2008.
- Weaver, Leah, "Gardens of Glass," *Ohio State Quest*, Autumn 1993.

Assignment Requirements

Assignments may be handed in through Carmen drop box, email attachment, or hard copy. Assignments will be docked one percent each day that they are late. Looking Log and Tour Reflection templates are available in this packet and on Carmen.

Active Looking Exercise (Due Sept 7)

In this packet, you will find three worksheets labeled: Looking Log #1, 2, and 3. Choose a work of art that you have not previously studied. It may or may not be on display at the Wexner Center. Follow the directions on the looking log worksheets to complete this assignment. This activity is not intended to test how much you know about any given piece of art. Do not research the piece that you choose for this assignment. It is intended to help you to slow down and simply but actively look at an object. These logs will take you step by step through the kind of looking process that you will eventually lead groups through. There is no length requirement for this activity. Your logs may be hand written, but please use clear handwriting.

Individual Tour Reflections:

After you shadow each tour, take time to write down your thoughts using the template found in this packet. What went well? What would you have done differently? What surprised you? Please hand in these reflections throughout the semester soon after each shadowed tour. There is no length requirement for this assignment. You may turn in hand written copies of these reflections, but please use clear handwriting (and complete sentences). Remember to keep a copy of each reflection for your files. They will help you with your final paper due on Nov. 30.

Audience Strategy Paper (Due Nov 9):

In this assignment, we ask you to imagine that you must give an hour long tour to a group visiting the Wexner Center. Using what you've learned during the semester about working with various audiences, plan your tour! How will you begin your tour? What works of art will you choose? Why? What types of 'big ideas' do you want your visitors to think about at each stop—are those ideas appropriate for your audience? What questions might you ask to make the tour interactive? How might you conclude the tour? Etc. This paper should be approx. 4 pages long, min. and must be typed. You get to choose your audience.

Tour Shadowing Experience Paper (Due Nov 30):

Let your individual tour reflections jog your memory as you reflect on the entire semester and think about what you learned as you observed the active docents giving tours. This paper should sum up your thoughts about touring in general: What did you learn? What, in your opinion, is good touring practice? What types of things should be avoided? How, if at all, did your perceptions change over the semester? What types of techniques do you plan on using when you begin touring? Etc. Please site specific examples. This paper should be 3 pages, min. and must be typed.

Final Presentations (Nov 30):

As a culmination of all that you've learned about teaching in the galleries this fall, we ask that you prepare an experience that centers around a piece either on display in the Wexner Center's galleries or the Center's architecture. If you wish, your work on your Audience Strategy Paper may inform your presentation.

Here are some things to think about as you prepare:

- Each presentation should be brief—we'll say that 7 minutes is the magic number. Each individual will be asked to stop their presentation at the 7 minute mark, so plan ahead!
- Think of this interaction as a stop on a tour. Remember—this isn't going to be an exam to determine how much in depth research you've done on the artist or particular work of art (although knowing the context of a piece is logical and expected and will help you to form discussion ideas and questions.)
- These presentations should be interactive with a specific audience in mind. As your audience, we will need to know what kind of perspective to take in order to ask you appropriate questions. It will be the responsibility of the audience to ask age appropriate questions. Don't forget to tell us how old we are before you begin your presentation.
- Have topics and questions prepared, but be flexible! If the discussion about the piece veers away from where you expected, don't get flustered or irritated—just go with it! Usually, the best discussions are directed by the group. Do feel that you can rein things in if someone gets completely off topic, however.

What will we be looking for?

Are your questions and your vocabulary age appropriate?

Is any factual information that you present accurate?

Are you using good communication skills when addressing the group? (Volume, eye contact, etc.)

Are you engaging the group rather than lecturing the group?

Are you going somewhere with your questions? What's your 'big idea'?

Are you using some of the tools and tips that have been offered to you this fall?

Let us know if you have any questions about any of these assignments!

Looking Log #1: Give it time

Let your brain find meaning as your eyes roam

Find a work of art that you have either never seen before or have never taken the time to really 'see' before. Don't look at extended wall text yet! Take a seat at a comfortable distance from the piece and mentally prepare yourself to spend at least 3-5 minutes looking at this one work of art. During your reflection, write down the observations that pop into your head. You do not have to use complete sentences and you may sketch if it will help you to record your thoughts.

Helpful hints:

- Let your eyes work for you. Your brain will automatically work to translate familiar images into experiential knowledge. Let your eyes roam so your brain can create meaning.
- Let questions emerge. Don't make assumptions and rest on them. If you don't have an immediate answer, write it down and come back to it. It's possible that you may not find the answer you're looking for.
- Let what you already know inform your looking. Recognize that you might not know everything.
- Make a note of interesting details that you can return to later.
- Look away for a few seconds if the flow of thought starts to stagnate
- It's ok to revisit or resee details. You might see them in a new light.

There is no completely right or wrong way to reflect upon art. These are hints that may help you in this process, but they are not intended to be the definitive steps that you must take during this activity.

The format and procession of this looking log activity are from *The Intelligent Eye*, by David Perkins.
Perkins, David, "The Intelligent Eye," (The Getty Education Institute for the Arts Occasional Paper 4) 1994.

Looking Log #2: Broaden

Using the same work of art that you looked at in Looking Log #1, encourage your brain to find meaning as your eyes roam. As we begin to broaden our way of looking at the work, we begin to discover messages that the artist has left for us. This is information that is awaiting our discovery.

Helpful Hints:

- Ask yourself: What's going on here?
- Look for surprises.
- Look for mood or personality in the work.
- Look for symbolism or meaning. What's the piece trying to say to you?
- Look for motion.
- Look for time or place.
- Look for cultural connections.

There is no completely right or wrong way to reflect upon art. These are hints that may help you in this process, but they are not intended to be the definitive steps that you must take during this activity.

Looking Log #3: Deepen

Using the same piece of art as in the first two looking logs, deliberately look for deeper meaning. Seek out puzzles or mysteries in the work and explore methods that could reveal the answers to you.

Helpful Hints:

- Why did the artist do that?
- How did the artist get that effect?
- How does that element relate to or affect the rest of the work?
- How would the work be different if _____ were different?
- How does the line, color, composition, etc. affect my thinking about the work?

There is no completely right or wrong way to reflect upon art. These are hints that may help you in this process, but they are not intended to be the definitive steps that you must take during this activity.

Shadowed Tour Reflection

Name: _____ Shadowed tour # _____

Date of tour: _____

Observed Docent: _____

Age of Observed Group: _____

What are some of your thoughts about this tour? What seemed to go well? What would you have done differently? What did you learn?