New Docent Training Course
Wexner Center for the Arts

ArtEd 4740/7740
3 Credit Hours
Autumn Semester 2014
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. Wexner Center docents have the opportunity to guide the public through exhibitions at the Billy Ireland Cartoon Museum and Library, as well. 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
Verónica Betancourt
GAA for Docent and Teacher Programs
vbetancourt@wexarts.org
(614) 247-6835
Wexner Center room #38

Tracie McCambridge
Educator for Docent and Teacher Programs
tmccambridge@wexarts.org
(614) 292-6982
Wexner Center room #38

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 through the Department of Art Education. The docent course sequence has a fall semester course, worth 3 credits, and a spring semester course, worth 2 credits. The fall and spring semester sessions of student docent training are considered separate courses. You are not required to participate in this program for credit.

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. 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.

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:
  o Active Looking exercises
  o Audience strategy paper
  o 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 12)
  Audience strategy paper (Due Nov 7)
  Tour shadowing experience paper (Due Nov 28)

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/oaa/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 29**
Course overview. What does a docent do? What is our role?

**Friday, September 5**
Teaching with questions, fostering visual literacy, and exploring diverse perspectives in looking at art

**Reading Due:**

**Friday, September 12**
Active looking exercise due by class time
Public speaking and audience engagement refresher with Professor Mandy Fox

**Friday, September 19**
Wexner Center architecture.
Digging into the details: didactic versus deeper, open-ended questions.

**Reading Due:**

**Friday, September 26**
Forming a theme/goal for your gallery learning experience: What does that mean and what doesn’t it mean? The importance of the introduction

**Friday, October 3**
Exploring questions in the galleries
- Check out the Aesthetic Education link on the blog.

**Friday, October 10**
Moving beyond static visual art
More on hidden context versus perception based interpretation
We will be joined by Sarah Hixon from Hixon Dance

**Friday, October 17**
Cartoons and Comics with Caitlin McGurk

**Reading Due: TBD**
Friday, October 24
Cartoons and Comics with Caitlin McGurk
Reading Due: TBD

Wednesday, October 31
Working with adults and teens. Tackling provocative issues in contemporary art
Reading Due:

Friday, November 7
Audience Strategy paper due by class time.
Working with kids. Object safety with Doug McGrew
Reading Due:

Friday, November 14
Question strategy practicum—what works and what doesn’t?

Friday, November 21
Course review and presentation prep!

Friday, November 28
Shadowing Paper paper due by midnight, Nov 28
NO CLASS: HAPPY HOLIDAY

Friday, December 5
Final Presentations
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.

Burnham, Rika, “If You Don’t Stop, You Don’t See Anything,” Teachers College Record, Vol 95, Number 4, Summer 1994.
www.vue.org
Perkins, David, “Knowledge Gaps and Intelligence Traps,” The Intelligent Eye, pp 25-35
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 12)
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 handwritten, 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 7):
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 at least 4 pages long, and must be typed. You get to choose your audience.

Tour Shadowing Experience Paper (Due Nov 28):
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 provide specific examples. This paper should be at least 3 pages, and must be typed.
**Final Presentations (Dec 5):**
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.

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?