Welcome to the fascinating and sometimes frustrating world of museum education and interpretation. For many years, museums put a premium on physical space and objects as the focus of their messages. These physical things, however, need interpretation or placing in context in order to tell their story. This becomes the job of museum curators and educators (who go by many designations). They are charged with guiding museums and historic sites in the choosing of objects, crafting the stories the objects can tell, and determining the best means of communicating these stories and engaging the public. In the 21st century museums have been called to reach beyond their objects and even their walls, to become community sites and resources. Educators (and curators) play a crucial role in helping museums meet this call.

Instructor Introduction (who the heck am I?)
I began my professional life as a professor of European History. I then saw the light and turned my attention to museums. I did graduate coursework in Public History/Museum Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and then held positions at the Staten Island Historical Society (Director of Research and Interpretation) and Roanoke Island Festival Park on the Outer Banks of N.C. (Manager of Education and Interpretation), after which I taught Museum Studies at the University of Mary Washington in Virginia. Most recently I served as Education Curator for the El Paso Museum of Art. I have also done work for the Thomas Wolfe State Historic Site in N.C., the Asheville Art Museum, Historic Kenmore, and the Fredericksburg Area Museum and Cultural Center. I hold a BA in History from UNC-Greensboro and a PhD in European History from the University of Virginia. Okay, that’s more than enough about me.

Course Goals
This course serves as an overview of the role of education and interpretation in the museum, with a focus on developing and implementing experiences for a variety of audiences, including school groups, families, and adult learners. The ability to develop effective experiences is based in an understanding of how people learn and make meaning. As you will notice (if you’re paying attention, which I trust you are), the syllabus is divided into a series of themes to help identify the particular topics the class will cover, including both theoretical issues/approaches and practical knowledge. In order to ensure an understanding of the relationship between theory and practice (not to mention beefing up your resume, always a good thing) you will have the stimulating task of developing your very own museum education program.

Class Expectations
You will be expected to **engage with the readings and participate in class discussions**. You should arrive in class with a **written list** (with pages noted) of the points/ideas you believe most significant from the readings assigned for that day. **I reserve the right to collect these without prior notice.**

Discussions will be supplemented by **two short (4-5 page) papers** and a **semester long project**. For this project you will put theory into practice by developing your own museum education program for a real live museum. This **must** be a museum with which you are physically familiar, or with which you can become familiar. Along the way you will be required to give **progress reports** on the days specified in the syllabus. These reports are not optional. If you find yourself in trouble, let me know **ASAP** so we can fix the problem.

**Reading Assignments**
The following book is available in the bookstore, and on the internet:

Various articles on **Blackboard** from:
- *The Journal of Museum Education*, vol. 43, no. 4, Dec. 2018
- *The Journal of Museum Education*, vol. 45, no. 1, Mar. 2020

**Writing Assignments**
The short papers should be written in essay form and well-organized, using proper grammar and spelling. Where necessary you should use end or footnotes, but you do not have to include a bibliography. The semester’s education program project will take a different form and will require a bibliography. Details on the project format are given in a separate document and will be posted on Blackboard.

All assignments are due on the dates noted in the syllabus. **Late assignments will be penalized** (unless there is good reason about which you notify me).

**Grades**
Grading will be broken down as follows:

**Attendance and discussion** 20%
COVID-19 Precaution Statement

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. **The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine.** If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org.

And now for the course schedule (subject to change):


Aug. 26: The Call to Arms from the AAM (*Excellence and Equity*)

**Some Building Blocks of Museum Learning**

Aug. 31: Learning in Context: The Personal (*Learning from Museums*, Chapter 2)

Sept. 2: Learning in Context: The Sociocultural (*Learning from Museums*, Chapter 3)

Sept. 7: Exploring an Example of Educational Theory (Howard Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons*, Chapters 1-2)

Sept. 9: *Multiple Intelligences* continued (Chapters 6-7 and Chapter 8 pp.134-142)

**Making a Difference: Museum Education/Interpretation and Society**

Sept. 14: Connecting with Communities (Heba Abd el Salam, Dawn McCormack and Brenden Martin, “Connecting People with Their Museum” and Emma Martell, “Engaging in the Community: Zoo Camp Goes to School” both from *Journal of Museum Education* = JME, vol. 42. No. 4, Dec. 2017)
Sept. 16: Bridging Communication Gaps (Sam Theriault and Beth Redmond Jones, “Constructing Knowledge Together: Collaborating with and Understanding Young Adults with Autism” and Meredith Lehman, Sabrina Phillips and Andrea Saenz Williams, “Empowering Identity Through Art: Bilingual Co-Teaching at the Blanton Museum of Art” both from JME, vol. 43, no. 4, Dec. 2018)


Decision on project place deadline

Sept. 23: Seeing Multiple Stories (Rex M. Ellis, “Interpreting the Whole House” from Donnelly, Interpreting Historic House Museums) Field trip to Magoffin Home

Sept. 28: A Deeper Dive into Group Learning (Learning from Museums, Chapter 7)

Education within the Museum Structure

Sept. 30: Learning in Context: The Physical, Space and Time (Learning from Museums, Chapters 4-5)

Oct. 5: Creating Spaces for Learning (Learning from Museums, Chapter 8)

Oct. 7: Tales from the Field: Revisioning a Museum; guest speaker Ariadna Velez, Assistant Director, Los Portales Museum in San Elizario- First paper due


Oct. 14: Interpretation Within Exhibits (Discussion of examples from Beyond the Borderland and other local exhibits)

Oct. 19: Tales from the Field--Zoom session with Rebecca Gavin, Director of Education at the Connecticut Historical Society

Oct. 21: Gallery Teaching in Action; Field trip to the El Paso Museum of Art to observe the ArtBeats! Program. We will be meeting at 5:00. If you are unable to meet at that time, please let me know.

Varieties of Museum Education

Oct. 28: Digital Media and Museum Learning (Discussion of “Animating the Kress Collection” project and of Megan Reel, Jessica Stapp and Eileen Johnson, “A Multiprong Approach to Digital Content and Accessibility at the Lubbock Lake Landmark” from Haitham Eid and Mellissa Forstrom eds, Museum Innovation: Building More Equitable, Relevant and Impactful Museums)

Nov. 2: Supporting Learning in Museums for the Personal and Sociocultural Contexts (Learning from Museums, Chapter 11, pp. 181-196)

Nov. 4: Supporting Learning in Museums for the Physical, Time and Space Contexts (Learning from Museums, Chapter 11, pp. 196-204)

Nov. 9: Museum Theater as Interpretive Tool (Ilyanette Bernabel, “Performances in Museums: Exploring the Complexities of the Human Condition” from Museum Innovation...)

Nov. 11: Connecting Programming with School Curricular Needs--Check-up on Semester Projects

Nov. 16: Tales from the Field—Zoom session with Michelle Martz, Visitor Services Manager, Lincoln Cottage Second paper due

Nov. 18: Work Day (please use this time profitably!)


Nov. 25: Thanksgiving!!

Nov. 30: Promoting Self-Guided Interaction (Phillippa Pitts, “Visitor to Visitor Learning: Setting Up Open-Ended Inquiry in an Ustaffed Space” from JME, vol. 43...)

Dec. 2: Making Connections with ESL Learners (Cathy Saunders and Samantha Hunter, “Immigration and Change in Rhode Island’s Golden Age: A Program for English Language Learners” from JME, vol. 43...)

Dec. 4: Project Presentations

Dec. 12: Projects due to me by 6:00