

MUSEUM STUDIES

Overview

Museum Studies is an interdisciplinary secondary field (minor) that offers a theoretical and practical foundation for engaging critically and creatively with institutions—whether art museums, natural history museums, heritage (archaeological and historic) sites, botanical gardens, science centers, aquariums, or zoos—that collect, preserve, research, interpret, and exhibit tangible and intangible evidence of the human and natural world with the goal of promoting deeper knowledge, understanding, and inquiry. Students at New College will benefit from the wide variety of museological institutions in the surrounding area, including, but not limited to: the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art; the Sarasota Art Museum of Ringling College of Art and Design; the Bishop Museum of Science and Nature; Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium; the Family Heritage House Museum at State College of Florida; the Gallery at State College of Florida; Sarasota County Historical Resources/History Center; Marie Selby Botanical Gardens; De Soto National Memorial (National Park Service); Reflections of Manatee; Florida Maritime Museum; Art Center Sarasota; and Architecture Sarasota.

This secondary field is designed to complement areas of concentration in a wide variety of disciplines, though it is particularly suited to anthropology and art history. It consists of:

1. A set of courses that introduce students to the fields of museum and heritage studies, as well as to the history of collecting and museums.
2. Elective coursework and internships (selected in consultation with faculty in Museum Studies, and approved by the Director of Museum Studies) that will enable students to gain focused experience in a core facet of museum practice, whether collections or communication.

This combined exposure to broader theoretical frameworks and targeted practical experience prepares students for a variety of fields and employment, but is especially suited to students contemplating further study and a career in Museum Studies and related fields like Library and Information Science.

As indicated above, the elective coursework and internships will culminate with a focus on one of the two tracks—one that foregrounds engagement with collections, and another that foregrounds engagement with museum audiences and communities—as demonstrated by the portfolio of relevant work completed in the context of these elective activities and an accompanying, synthetic reflection. Students need not have identified the specific track by the time they begin their initial, exploratory internship, but they must do so in order to satisfactorily complete this final portfolio.

Collections Track

This track entails a focus on the management, study, and display of living and non-living collections. Such activities include, but are not limited to, conservation science and restoration; research into collection items or into the history of institutions/collections; collections management, care, and conservation; digital asset management; the preparation of curatorial briefs and exhibitions; display design; and the preparation of collection items for storage, travel, and display.

Communications Track

This track entails a focus on communication with the various communities (whether internal or external) and audiences connected to museums, shifting the focus from the collections to the publics that engage with them. While museum communication was once seen as largely unidirectional, from the institution to its audiences, it is now viewed as a more dynamic, interactive exchange among those within and without the institution. Communication may involve the traditional communication and marketing activities of promoting and advertising institutions' exhibitions, programs, and collections to local, national, and/or international media (television, radio, the press, etc.) and social media outlets, as well as activities that include, but are not limited to, the design of and creation of content for institutional websites, the creation of museum signage, various forms of interpretation of the collection for museum audiences (whether the creation of interpretive labels or the design and delivery of education programming), visitor evaluation, outreach and engagement with the local community or new museum publics, and fundraising.

Faculty in Museum Studies

Katherine Brion (<https://www.ncf.edu/directory/katherine-d-brion/>), Associate Professor of Art History and Museum Studies
Magdalena Carrasco (<https://www.ncf.edu/directory/magdalena-e-carrasco/>), Professor of Art History

Requirements for the Secondary Field in Museum Studies

A minimum of six (6) academic units.

Code	Title
Foundational Courses	
ARTH 3350	Museum Studies in Theory and Practice
ARTH 2260	Worlds of Wonder: A History of Museums*
ANTH 2200	Heritage: History and the Past Today*

One Approved Elective Course, Tutorial, or ISP

Applying knowledge and skills relevant to museum studies to a museum and/or heritage-related topic.

Two Credit-Bearing Internships

An exploratory internship that exposes the student to a broad range of museum and/or heritage functions and career paths.

An additional internship focused on either of the Collections or Communications Tracks.

Portfolio

A curated selection of relevant work that may include items such as 2D and 3D designs, creative or analytical writing, and event or program plans. To be accompanied by a synthetic reflection and completed as part of course electives.

Sample 4-Year Plan of Study

First Year

Fall Term

Foundational Course: Heritage: History and the Past Today

Spring Term

Foundational Course: Worlds of Wonder: A History of Museums

Second Year

ISP

ISP 2 Internship or ISP that satisfies the elective coursework requirement.

Spring Term

Foundational Course: Museum Studies in Theory and Practice

Third Year

Fall Term

Elective Coursework or Internship

Fourth Year

Fall Term

Elective Coursework or Internship

ISP

ISP period: Submission of Final Museum Studies Portfolio

Representative Senior Theses in Museum Studies

- Museums and Placemaking: Community Museums as Catalysts for Urban Transformation (Environmental Studies with Museum Studies)
- Let's Leap!: Dynamic Museum Experiences for Children with Autism (Art History with Museum Studies)
- Indigenous Aesthetics and Post-Revolutionary Nationalism: Defining *Mexicanidad* Through the Popular Arts and the Best-Maugard Method (Art History with Museum Studies)