



Museum &

Exhibition Studies

at UIC Grad Student Guide

Museum and Exhibition Studies
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School of
Art & Art History





Master of Arts in Museum and Exhibition Studies

Welcome to MUSE, an interdisciplinary graduate program with a social justice focus. MUSE emphasizes the evolving social and political contexts of today's cultural institutions, including museums of art, anthropology, architecture, history, nature, science, youth and contemporary culture, and provides students with the intellectual and professional engagements essential to careers in diverse positions, including curators, exhibition developers, gallery directors, museum educators, collections managers, and social media directors.

MUSE students take five required courses addressing exhibition-making, collections, writing for exhibitions, strategies of public engagement, and museum genres and histories; choose elective courses and can opt to do a supervised internship; participate in skill-developing projects; and complete a capstone during the two-year program.

MUSE uses Chicago's cultural institutions as classrooms, and UIC's Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, Gallery 400, and 5th Floor Gallery support research and practice opportunities on campus. Our position within a major urban research university also provides access to a wide range of resources.

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Faculty

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Affiliated: Brian Bauer (Anthropology), Jennifer Brier (History, Gender and Women's Studies), Rosa Cabrera (Rafael Cintrón Ortiz Latino Cultural Center), Lennard Davis (English, Disability Studies), Anna Guevarra (Global Asian Studies), Robert Johnston (History, Jewish Studies), Ronak K. Kapadia (Gender and Women's Studies and Global Asian Studies), Mario La Mothe (Anthropology), Lisa Yun Lee (Art History), Mark Martell (Global Asian Studies), Karyn Sandlos (Art Education), Carrie Sandahl (Disability Studies), and David Stovall (Black Studies, Criminology, Law and Justice).

Advisors and Readers

In addition to those already noted these have included: Esra Akan (Art History), Elise Archias (Art History), Catherine Becker (Art History), Rosa Cabrera (Rafael Cintrón Ortiz Latino Cultural Center), Penelope Dean (Graham Foundation), Ömür Harmanşah (Art History), Roberta Katz (Art History), Barbara Koenen (DCASE), Jonathan Mekinda (Art History), Virginia Miller (Art History), Sabrina Raff (Art), Ella Rothgangel (St. Louis Art Museum), Carrie Sandahl (Disability and Human Development), Kevin Schultz (History), Ashley Smith (Arizona Historical Society), Blake Stimson (Art History), and David Sokol (Art History), and others.

Lecturers

These have included: Johanna Burton (New Museum), Kemi Ilesanmi (The Laundromat Project), Ethan Lasser (Chipstone Foundation, Milwaukee Art Museum), Margaret Lindauer (Virginia Commonwealth University), Porchia Moore, Occupy Museums (everywhere), Sarah Pharaon (International Coalition of Sites of Conscience), PJ Gubatina Policarpio (Museum of Modern Art), Kamilah Rashied (Art Institute of Chicago), Kameelah Janan Rasheed (artist), John Ronan (John Ronan Architects), Rhoda Rosen (Northwestern University and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago), Stephanie Smith (The Smart Museum at the University of Chicago), Eric A. Stanley (director Criminal Queers), Lisa Stone (Roger Brown Study Collection), Nato Thompson (Creative Time, NY), Chris E. Vargas (Museum of Transgender History & Art, director Criminal Queers), Hamza Walker (The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago), and others.



“A Museology that is not life-oriented is not worthy; All the memories are kept in our bodies; Our museological practice involves affection, fraternity, reciprocity, love, joy and poetry; Memory is a conscious channel of resistance, a struggle against the leveling forces that destroy those ways of life that are not framed into colonialism—the capitalistic system, patriarchy, among others. Memory is, at the same time, a claim for human values, dignity and social cohesion, becoming a direct action of occupation of the present, allowing the invention of possible futures.”

—MINOM-ICOM, Córdoba Declaration, XVIII International MINOM Conference, Córdoba/ Argentina, 2017

MUSEUMS and CULTURAL JUSTICE

Therese Quinn

Chicago has a vibrant history of museums created by participants in movements for justice.

The oldest museum of Black art and culture in the United States—founded as the Ebony Museum, and now called the DuSable Museum (for the Haitian settler credited as the first permanent non-indigenous resident of Chicago, Jean Baptiste Point du Sable)—was started in Chicago in 1961 by Margaret Burroughs, an African American educator (Rocksborough-Smith, 2011). Two Mexican American Chicago Public School teachers, Carlos Tortolero and Helen Valdez, took the lead in cofounding the National Museum of Mexican Art, the only accredited Latino museum in the United States, in 1982 (Storch, 1994). And in 1998 Peggy Montes, a Black teacher, started Chicago's Bronzeville Children's Museum, the first and only African American children's museum in the United States (The Historymakers, 2019). These institutions collect the material culture, exhibit the art, and share the histories of groups that are underrepresented in mainstream museums, and also provide essential employment opportunities for people of color, who are largely excluded from the nation's museum workplaces.

Elected representatives have also taken up the cause of cultural justice. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Illinois State Representative Cardiss Collins, the first African American woman to represent the Midwest in Congress, focused her attention on “minority employment in senior level managerial positions” within museums in major American cities. Chicago's hearings were held at the Field Museum of Natural History in 1989, with leaders of the major public museums asked to report on their hiring practices (101st Congress, 1990). Employment data revealed the museums were segregated workplaces; the most diverse was 81% White at the senior levels.

Representative Collins was determined that these institutions, located rent-free on public land and receiving federal support through their tax-exempt status, should serve communities by hiring diverse staffs and by producing “culturally responsive” content. Without evidence of attempts to desegregate staffs and subject matters, she suggested, museums' subsidies should be reconsidered. Today, decades after these efforts by Collins and so many others, museums are still segregated workplaces, with Whites now holding 84% of curator, conservator, and educator positions (McCambridge, 2017).

Museums, in other words, like all public institutions, are shaped by their contexts. They are fantastic, and also as flawed as our society is, and they are ready for reimagining. In this way, they are similar to schools. Both schools and museums can be powerful sites of learning and experience. Yet, to survive as public entities and fulfill their potential as essential assets to a thriving democratic sphere, both schools and museums must be urged and supported to redefine themselves. The MUSE Program proposes ways that cultural workers can use the resource of museums to facilitate visitors' probing explorations of the world, drawing out their critical potential, and pointing the way toward the futures we deserve, by asking “power-sensitive” questions (Lather, 1991) and addressing justice-centered themes, including commitments to activism, democracy, equality and inclusion, in your papers and projects. For example, “Who benefits?” is a “perennially essential” starting point, according to the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (Brantlinger, 2004). Applied to the employment structures, funding streams, and curatorial decisions that shape the status quo of museums and exhibitions, could lead to ideas about reshaping these spaces around goals of fair employment practices and access, for starters, challenging the status quo of cultural work. Projects developed from these lines of thought might include initiating a “community curated” exhibit at an elementary school, senior residence or community center; designing an audio program for blind/low vision gallery visitors; exploring how faith systems are represented within museums; and surveying if and how museums represent queer and trans people and communities. We are excited to see what you come up with in the program. Museums, their home communities, and the whole world will benefit from your work.

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Much of this text is adapted from *School: Questions About Museums, Culture, and Justice to Explore in Your Classroom* (2020, Teachers College Press) by Therese Quinn.



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Welcome to MUSE!



ACADEMICS

Advising

Every MUSE student will have access to the MUSE Graduate Advisor; this advisor will meet with you regularly on Advising Days and help you support your goals in graduate education and beyond with suggestions for elective courses, faculty to meet, museums and galleries to explore, and other ideas. The Program Advisor can answer questions about credits, registration, schedules, and other Program-related concerns. Later in the program, you will choose committee members who will advise your capstone thesis/project process, as detailed later in this handbook. Your Graduate Advisor will offer suggestions as you identify these university-based and field professional guides for your work. Consider our Affiliated Faculty as resources for mentoring roles, as well.

“Another art world is possible.”

—Occupy Museums, 2013

Interdepartmental Graduate Concentrations

Interdepartmental Graduate Concentrations allow students in one program to add a formal concentration from another program to their studies. Currently, MUSE students have the opportunity to join the concentrations in Black Studies and Gender & Women’s Studies. If you are interested in pursuing any of these concentrations, please contact the MUSE program advisor or director.

Program Overview and Requirements

Overview

- Minimum number of semester credit hours required: 52 credit hours
- Minimum Grade Point Average required: 3.0
- Only 400- and 500-level courses count for graduate credit
- Credit toward a graduate degree is only given for courses in which a student receives a grade of A, B, C, P, or S.
- Important forms and documents for the MUSE Program

Required Courses and Descriptions

MUSE 532: Museum Collections (4 Credits)

This seminar critically investigates museum practices and histories linked to collections. Students meet in class and at historic and heritage sites in the Chicago area; explore the shifting social meanings of collecting; become familiar with theoretical frameworks that offer ways of understanding collecting; and gain practical experiences with collections.

MUSE 542: Exhibition Practices (4 Credits)

This course examines key issues in making exhibitions today, including historical precedents, theories, techniques, audience, collaboration, context, new technologies, and the relationship of exhibitions to changes in the fields they present. Students will critically analyze exhibitions as entities, evaluating them in relationship to stated aims; recognize sources of influence and interest and relating exhibitions to institutional contexts; and discern goals for programs. In class, all will learn steps necessary for developing exhibitions, from idea conception and planning, to evaluation.

MUSE 543: Writing for Exhibitions (4 Credits)

This is a practicum in producing texts for sites across physical and virtual museum and exhibition environments, from labels to exhibition catalogs. Includes digital and virtual exhibition venues. Students will read, discuss, and debate theories of what constitutes effective and engaging exhibition writing. At the same time, students will tackle practical writing exercises aimed at developing and strengthening writing skills through the production and workshopping of a selection of text forms.

MUSE 544: Public Engagement in Museums (4 Credits)

This participatory seminar examines the ways that museums and related institutions create opportunities for audiences to engage with ideas, objects, and actions through programs, exhibitions, and other museum products. Through course readings, conversations with museum and gallery professionals, and museum and exhibition visits, students will learn institutions' methods for reaching the public, evaluating museum and exhibit visitor experiences, and the possibilities and limits for diverse publics to express agency within these diverse settings.

MUSE 545: Museum Genres, Practices, and Institutions (4 Credits)

This seminar examines the history of museums through critical inquiry and close readings of literary, theoretical, and other kinds of media and "texts" produced about and by museums. Students will gain perspectives on the institutional contexts, the social practices, and the political potentials of museums. The seminar room serves as a "base station," and the class also meets at museums and cultural sites throughout the city as a laboratory for readings and discussion; these visits often include conversations with museum professionals and practitioners at Chicago's diverse cultural institutions. Students will also independently visit museums to inform their engagement with readings; documentation of visits via social media will be a course assignment.

MUSE 582: Supervised Internship in Museum and Exhibition Studies (4 Credits)

Elective Courses

(20 credit hours minimum)

Choose classes from across the university. Check for MUSE electives with these course numbers:

MUSE 400: Topics in Museum and Exhibition Studies (4-5 credits)

Investigation of a problem, topic or issue relevant to the interdisciplinary field of Museum and Exhibition Studies. Content varies.

MUSE 582: Internship

MUSE students can elect to complete 160 internship hours to receive credit. These hours can be completed at one site or multiple sites. We accept a broad range of experiential learning experiences as qualified internship, including assistantships, paid work, and student-initiated projects, as long as you have a supervisor at the site willing to verify your work. All internships should include an educational component.

Approval: Internships must be approved by the Director prior to the start date. To initiate approval, students must complete and turn in the Internship Placement form available at

<https://artandarthistory.uic.edu/important-forms-and-docs>

Credit: At completion, the Intern Supervisor must submit a letter verifying successful completion of internship; students are responsible for securing and delivering this to the MUSE office. Students register for the 4-credit course MUSE 582 the semester they intern; credit will be recorded after the letter has been received by MUSE staff.

MUSE 546: Seminar in museum and Exhibition Studies (4 credits)

Investigation of a problem, topic or issue relevant to the interdisciplinary field of Museum and Exhibition Studies. Content varies.

**"Museums are a form of cannibalism
made safe for polite society."**

—Jane Tompkins, At the Buffalo Bill Museum, 1990

Capstone Research

(8 credit hours)

Professional Development: Hands-on professional experience will be integrated into MUSE core classes. Topics may include research methods, collections management software, exhibit evaluation strategies, how to write conference and grant proposals, and more.

Capstone Experience (Project or Thesis): The culminating, or capstone, experiences for MUSE students are tailored to individual intellectual paths and career goals. Students completing capstones during the summer or any term beyond the program's two years must submit a timeline for completion at the beginning of each additional semester.

MUSE 597: Project Research and Implementation

0 TO 8 hours (Typically 4 in second semester, 4 in third semester).

Project appropriate to student interests and career goals developed in consultation with graduate advisor. Projects may cover areas of museum and exhibition work, and other professional practice that fall outside traditional boundaries of scholarly research, including: website design; organizational management projects; festivals; collaborations arranged among different institutions; program planning; and more. May be repeated to a maximum of 8 hours.

MUSE 598: Master's Thesis Research

0 TO 8 hours (Typically 4 in second semester, 4 in third semester).

Individual research under faculty direction. Students will present their work for review by a three-member committee including MUSE faculty, and other faculty from disciplines in support of student interests and goals. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading only. May be repeated to a maximum of 8 hours.

Annual Progress Report

One-page Progress Reports are due from all first year students at the end of the Spring Semester. The reports should include:

- Completed and current courses;
- Progress toward the fulfillment of requirements (including coursework, internships, and more);
- Advancement toward the thesis or project, as appropriate;
- The name of your faculty advisor if you are working closely with someone other than the advisor you were assigned when you entered the program;
- The names and titles of other advisors you are working with;
- Your achievements in the past academic year (e.g., grants and awards, papers and projects presented, boards served on, exhibitions and programs developed, positions related to museums and exhibitions that you hold, etc.);
- Any other information that you would like to share with the MUSE Program.

Final Reflection Paper

This 4–6 page (double-spaced) paper is due from all graduating students before grades are submitted. Email these to the program advisor. The reflection paper is a document that you will use to look back on the development of your capstone and perhaps respond to the feedback you will have received in your final meeting with advisors; and reflect on other aspects of your graduate studies at UIC, including courses, assistantships, internships, funding, electives, advising, and more.

The paper does not require new research. We know the end of the semester is busy, and hope that the 4–6 page length is broad enough to be manageable while offering enough space for the reflection to be meaningful.

Past and present positions of MUSE alumni include:

- Women's Board Education Fellow, the Art Institute of Chicago
- Community Engagement and Programming Coordinator, Rebuild Foundation
- Visitor Service Engagement Representative, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Project Manager for Marketing & Development, Adler Planetarium
- Research Assistant, MIR Appraisal Services
- Botany Contractor, Smithsonian Institution, Museum of Natural History
- Invertebrate Zoology Contractor Smithsonian Institution, Museum of Natural History
- Associate Registrar, John Michael Kohler Arts Center
- Collections Manager, Registrar and Exhibitions Coordinator, Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art
- Collections Assistant, The Field Museum of Natural History
- Academic Operations Facilities Specialist, Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design
- Editorial & Program Assistant, Smart Museum of Art
- Curator of Public Art, Albright-Knox Art Gallery
- Exhibit Specialist, The California Museum
- Curatorial Assistant, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
- Public Programs Fellow, Studio Museum in Harlem and Museum of Modern Art
- Manager of Operations, Hong Kong Pavilion at the Venice Biennale/M+ Museum in Hong Kong
- Kress Interpretive Fellow, National Museum of Mexican Art
- Development Manager, Girls on the Run-Chicago
- Civic Engagement Educator, UIC Latino Cultural Center
- Student aide for student with learning disabilities, British International School
- Exhibitions and Graphic Design Specialist, Centro Cultural Universitario Bicentenario, San Luis Potosí, Mexico

Suggested MUSE Program Years At-A-Glance

Year One

Fall:

- Document your graduate education experience.
- Explore diverse museums, galleries, and related institutions as potential internship sites.
- Learn how to use the library databases and archives.
- Plan to work on the Museum and Exhibition Studies publication; register for the spring seminar.
- Apply for an Award for Graduate Research to support your research; the fall deadline is in October.
- Look campus-wide for classes.
- Clean up your résumé; start a cover letter for internship-seeking.
- Decide which conferences you want to attend; join one or more of their organizations.

Winter Break:

- Research internship deadlines; some internships have winter applications.
- Go on a study trip.
- Research international study and research opportunities; your capstone and internship can take place anywhere in the world.

Spring:

- Apply for an Award for Graduate Research to support your research; the spring deadline is in March.
- Apply for and solidify summer internships and research residencies.
- Look up the deadlines for conference proposal submissions and plan an individual or group session.
- Take the first capstone class and develop a schedule for meeting with your capstone advisor/readers.

Summer:

- At your internship site, interview employees about their positions (ask how they got their jobs, what they do, what they like and don't like about their work, and if they plan to remain in their positions or seek new ones) and ask for challenging, interesting projects.
- Visit museums small and large, obscure and mainstream, quirky and traditional.
- Document everything.
- Continue work on capstone.

Year Two

Fall:

- Attend and present your work at a conference.
- Request support for your graduate work-focused travel.
- Interview a scholar or professional in the field; tell her about your capstone.
- Do a group project with your peers—propose an exhibit for the 5th Floor Gallery or a panel discussion at Gallery 400 or Hull-House Museum, for example. Don't forget to send out a press release. Take the second capstone course and make a work plan and schedule for capstone completion.
- Document everything.

Spring:

- Finish your capstone and prepare for thesis or project defense!
- Visit the Office of Career Services to practice interviewing and plan your next steps.
- Network by attending and presenting your exciting research and projects at conferences everywhere.



PROGRAM CAPSTONES

Capstones are opportunities for MUSE students to engage in extended research and practice focused on their areas of interest; demonstrate professional competence to prospective employers; and to contribute to the field of museum and exhibition studies. Your Master's Capstone is the culminating experience that launches you into the next phase of your life, so consider its topic and form carefully. The topic should be interesting to you and others, useful, and feasible—you should be able to complete it during the program. Finally, these projects and thesis papers are opportunities to pose questions and explore ideas about museums and exhibitions, cultural work and institutions, and social justice.

**Below is a sampling of the capstones completed
by MUSE students:**

Marina Álvarez (2021), *Women, Graffiti, Nation: Writing Anti-colonial Resistance in the Public Spheres of Mexico*

June Ahn (2020), *Greenspace: A Yearlong Series of Public Engagement at the UIC Plant Research Laboratory*

Ivan Guzman (2019), *The Packingtown Museum: Creating a Museum and Engaging a Mexican, Immigrant, Working-Class, Spanish Speaking Community*

Noora Al Balushi (2018), *Representing People with Disabilities and Women at the National Museum of Oman*

Matthew Yasuoka (2017), *Hawaii/Hawai'i: Space, Alterity and the Settler Imaginary*

Alice Kovacik (2016), *Through Story: A Guide to Oral History for Community Organizations*

Jamie Lewis (2015), *Reinterpreting Ethnographic Collections: Online Community Curation of the Philippine Collection at The Field Museum*

“Where am I in the collection?”

—Fred Wilson, *Mining the Museum*, 1991

Advising and Reading

MUSE students are assigned program advisors at the start of the first semester (which may change later), and choose capstone advisors (projects) and readers (thesis) from their home program, department and school, across the university, internships, and other sites to support their work. Students are responsible for regularly meeting with their program advisors.

Project

Project Overview:

Projects may stem from internships, class assignments or courses of independent study, and can involve UIC or outside institutions and organizations. Students may pursue projects related to Collections, Exhibition Planning, Museum Education, Online Resource Development, or other approved areas. Students should work closely with a primary advisor to develop a project that relates to their future professional and intellectual goals.

Students are responsible for all logistical aspects of their project, including arranging space and funding. The program can assist in finding appropriate locations and museum/exhibit professionals with whom to work.

Project Semester Credit Hours:

8 credit hours in MUSE 597 (project research) required; these can be taken during the final semester or split between the third and fourth semesters, depending on advisor approval. Students must turn in all required proposals before registering for MUSE 597. Students must attend all capstone meetings and workshops to receive credit.

- By the end of the 1st semester, students should have an idea of which option (Project or Thesis) they intend to pursue and sign up for the corresponding capstone class (MUSE 597 for a project and MUSE 598 for a thesis).
- By the 5th week of their 2nd semester, students should approach a project advisor to discuss their Master's Project idea.
- By the 10th week of their 2nd semester, students should choose a primary advisor who is a UIC faculty member and submit to them a Project Proposal (See Project Proposal Outline on the next page) draft for discussion.
- By the end of the 2nd semester, send a capstone proposal should be shared with the instructor of the Capstone 1 course. Include the names of people you think you will ask to be project advisors.
- Over the summer, students should revise their Project Proposal. Also use this time to learn about Human Subjects & IRB requirements for all students and faculty conducting research (this includes capstones).
- Complete your Initial Investigator Training (CITI) (<https://research.uic.edu/compliance/human-subjects-irbs/>). Some committee members may also need to complete this training; check with OVCR about this. Direct questions about Human Subjects & IRB to (312) 996-4995 and ovcrweb@uic.edu.
- No later than the 5th week of their 3rd semester, students should choose a 2-member committee, consisting of the advisor and one additional member, either University faculty or a professional in the field. Students must also complete a Capstone Approval Form (available at <https://artandarthistory.uic.edu/important-forms-and-docs>), including the Human Subjects Review section.

- By the 1st Friday of the final semester, students should submit a Capstone Committee Approval Form (available at <https://artandarthistory.uic.edu/important-forms-and-docs>) and their IRB determination letter, exemption, or approval.
- Projects should be documented (film; screen shots; photographs; written descriptions), and after completion the documentation should be supported with a written report of the process and results, and a conclusion that offers thoughts about the implications of this project for the student and for museum and exhibition studies (6–8 pages).
- The project concludes with the written report and an oral defense with visual presentation—see below.
- Projects should be completed by the end of 12th week of the final semester.
- The oral defense—including a brief presentation of visuals and a discussion of the project's results— will be scheduled between the 12th week and the close of the semester, and after the advisors have reviewed the written report (at least one week before the defense).
- A digital version of the presentation should be provided to the MUSE Program Coordinator before the end of the semester, along with a final digital draft of the report.
- A "Certificate of Approval" signed by the committee must be submitted to the Graduate College by the date listed on the Academic Calendar, typically the Friday before graduation.

Capstone Project Proposal Outline

Preparing a capstone project proposal is part of your graduate experience. It is an opportunity to organize your thoughts about your topic, to decide how you will pursue the work, and to spell out what resources (financial, material, and technical) you need to carry it out.

- **Title Page:** With your name, date, working title, committee members, or follow format of thesis.
- **Introduction:** This should include a problem statement and give a clear explanation of what the project is about, why the work is worth doing, and how the results support the goals of the MUSE program and contribute to museum and exhibition studies. To address: How will it advance our understanding or thinking? Why is it important to do it this way, as opposed to another way? Who is your audience; who is this for? What are your objectives for the project, i.e. its outcomes? This section succinctly introduces your topic and project.
- **Literature Review:** The literature review must be up-to-present date. Discuss published work pertinent to your research – i.e., the literature needed to define the research problem, describe the study area, or explain the choice of methods to be employed. This section supports your case for doing the work; establishes your theoretical framework; and demonstrates knowledge of your subject matter. Describe what has been said about your topic, what you are contributing, and how this advances our understanding of the subject.
- **Methods/Work Tasks:** How are you going to do this project? This section describes all steps needed to complete the project, from researching and defining critical content to include, to evaluating its success in addressing the problem or gap you are addressing.
- **Management Plan:** Include here a project timetable indicating when specific work tasks will be started and completed. This section should also include a schedule with deadlines for draft versions and reviews, revision timeframes, an outline for each element of the project, plans for seeking funding, and a preliminary budget. The plan should clearly indicate which aspects of the plan have already

been completed (such as during an internship and in a class), and which will be completed by others (collaborators, supervisors).

- **Determination Letter or Approval from IRB:** The UIC Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) may determine that capstones do not “meet the definition of human subject research” (meaning you may proceed without further review). If they determine that your capstone does meet the definition, you must receive either exemption or approval of your research plan from OPRS.
- **References:** These should be presented in the format (MLA/APA) of your choice.
- **Page Numbers:** Number your pages!
- **Naming Files:** Your digital file should be named as follows: Last name_First name_Project_Proposal_Date. For example: Stepter_Anthony_Project_Proposal_01_01_13

Your objective is to write a proposal that is intelligible to an educated non-specialist, and convince them that the proposed work is worth doing. At the same time, the writing should be sufficiently detailed, that an expert reader will be convinced that you know what you are doing and that the approach you propose is feasible.

- **Next Steps:** The Project Proposal forms the basis of the written summary your readers will respond to at your defense. Your final Project Report should use the Capstone Outline format that follows the Thesis section in this handbook.

“Deconstructing the museum apparatus can transform it into a space for on-going cultural debate.”

—Lisa Corrin, *Mining the Museum: Artists Look at Museums*, 1991

Thesis

Thesis Option Overview

The thesis option involves conducting research and writing a well-developed thesis paper of flexible length to be determined in consultation with your thesis advisors. Thesis topics can focus on a variety of museum and exhibition studies and related topics selected in consultation with an advisor. Students intending to pursue additional graduate study or to engage in research as part of their professional work are encouraged to select this option.

Thesis Semester Credit Hours

8 credit hours in AH 598 (thesis research) required. Four credits are completed in the third semester and four credits are completed in the fourth semester. Students must turn in all required proposals before registering for AH 598. Students must attend all capstone meetings and workshops to receive credit.

Thesis Overview

- By the end of the 1st semester, students should have an idea of which option (Project or Thesis) they intend to pursue and sign up for the corresponding capstone class (MUSE 597 for a project and MUSE 598 for a thesis).
- By the 5th week of their 2nd semester, students should approach a potential advisor to discuss their Master's Thesis idea. Students must also complete a Capstone Approval Form (available at <https://artandarthistory.uic.edu/important-forms-and-docs>), including the Human Subjects Review section.
- By the 10th week of the second semester, students should:
 - Prepare to research and write your thesis by visiting the Daley Library and learning to use the databases; opening a RefWorks account; and looking at examples of Master's Theses on the shelves. Ask the library's wonderful reference librarians for assistance with these steps.

- Choose a primary thesis advisor. The primary thesis advisor must be a UIC faculty member who is also a member of the Graduate College. Master's committees require one full member of the graduate faculty and one member with tenure. The same person may fulfill both of these requirements. The only requirement for the other members is that they have at least a Master's degree in any area. There is no Graduate College requirement for an outside member on a Master's thesis defense committee.
- By the 1st Friday of the final semester, students should submit a Capstone Committee Approval Form (available at <https://artandarthistory.uic.edu/important-forms-and-docs>) and their IRB determination letter, exemption, or approval.
- No later than the 5th week of the final semester (earlier for summer semesters) students completing a thesis muse submit a Committee Recommendation Form (available here: <https://artandarthistory.uic.edu/important-forms-and-docs>) to the Graduate College. This form must be submitted at least four weeks prior to a thesis defense in order for the Graduate College to send the forms that must be signed by the thesis committee at the defense. If the form is submitted late, we cannot speed up the process.
- As a resource and guide to research, writing, and referencing we recommend the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Writing Deadlines

- A thesis draft must be complete and distributed to the full committee no later than the first Friday of the student's final semester. The thesis advisor should approve the draft before distribution to the full committee.
- A final revision is expected by the 6th week of the semester. Students should allow two to three weeks turnaround time by committee members for each thesis draft and should also be aware that committee members routinely require extensive revision and rewriting of the thesis drafts before approval.
- The oral defense of the thesis will take place after the committee has approved the final draft of the thesis. Students are responsible

for reserving a room (contact the MUSE program advisor to reserve a classroom), and coordinating the date and location with their committee members. The defense should take place no later than 3 weeks after the final version of the thesis has been approved.

- The deadline to submit the final, approved thesis for graduation is normally the 10th week of the semester (6th week of the summer semester). The exact date is listed on the Academic Calendar for each semester.

MUSE Thesis Proposal Outline

Preparing a thesis proposal is part of your graduate experience. It is an opportunity to organize your thoughts about your research topic, to decide how you will pursue the work, and to spell out what resources (financial, material, and technical) you need to carry out the research.

The proposal needs a thread of logic. It should build from a statement of the research problem or gap in knowledge, and follow an outline of detailed objectives that must be achieved (or questions that must be answered) if the problem is to be solved. The presentation of methodology should be clearly connected to the stated objectives.

- Open with a title page that includes a working title, your name, and the date.
- The Introduction should give a clear understanding of what the proposal is about, why the work is worth doing, and how the results will contribute to general knowledge. It provides the context within which the rest of the proposal is read and offers an assessment of the likely significance of the work. How will it advance our understanding or thinking?
- The Literature Review must be up to present date. Discuss published work pertinent to the proposal—i.e., the literature needed to define the research problem, describe the study area, or contribute to understandings of the topic. This section supports your case for doing the work.

- The Methodology section explains how you will answer your research question; for example, you might conduct oral histories, look at original materials in archives, or conduct observations in museums, depending on the questions or topic you are exploring; and offers a rationale for why the methods you are using are the best for your thesis.
- Include References in the consistent format (MLA/APA) of your choice.
- Make sure your pages are numbered.
- Your digital file should be named as follows: Last name_First name_Thesis_Proposal_Date. For example: Stepter_Anthony_Thesis Proposal_01_01_13

You may require a number of iterations to produce a final version of the proposal. Your advisor has a responsibility to provide you with feedback on the writing before you submit it, but you must in turn be professional in providing her or him with enough time to do this. A few days before the deadline is not appropriate—if you are in doubt about how long is needed, discuss this in advance with your advisor.

Your objective is to write a proposal that is intelligible to an educated non-specialist, and convince them that the proposed work is worth doing. At the same time, the writing should be sufficiently technically detailed, especially when it comes to methods, that an expert reader will be convinced that you know what you are doing and that the approach you propose is feasible.

“It is the intellectual as a representative figure that matters—someone who visibly represents a standpoint of some kind, and someone who makes articulate representations to his or her public despite all sorts of barriers.”

—Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 1994



Capstone Outline

This format should be used for both final Capstone Thesis papers and Project Reports. All Capstone Theses and Project Reports may be archived in the UIC library and can be accessed by the public.

Capstone Thesis and Project Report Outline

The following information is to guide you in composing the different sections of a capstone thesis or project report. The sections are described in the order they are to appear in your paper. This list is not inclusive of all possible sections, however—project reports may include other materials you decide are relevant (timelines, budgets, work samples, and more), and if you are writing a thesis refer to the Graduate College Thesis Manual for details. You will also need to choose and use a consistent referencing style—MLA and APA are two of the most common.

- 1. Title Page:** If producing a thesis paper refer to the Graduate College Thesis Manual for specific formatting information. The title should clearly state your topic—the subject of your thesis or project. A title that does not communicate the content of your thesis/report can be misleading. How will your title help a potential reader search for material on your topic?
- 2. Table Of Contents:** Use appropriate headings. List page numbers for each individual chapter or section of the entire thesis.
- 3. Introduction:** The Introduction should give a clear understanding of what the proposal is about (the question/idea/problem you are exploring/addressing), how you came to this set of concerns, why the work is worth doing, and how the results will contribute to general knowledge/the field. It provides the context within which the rest of the thesis/report is read.
- 4. Literature Review:** The literature review must be up-to-present date. Discuss published work pertinent to your research – i.e., the literature needed to define the research problem, describe the study area, or explain the choice of methods to be employed.
This section supports your case for doing the work; establishes your theoretical framework; and demonstrates knowledge of your subject matter. Describe what has been said about your topic, what you are contributing, and how this advances our understanding of the subject.
- 5. Methods:** This is where you describe how you plan to answer your research question/s, or engage the work of your project.
- 6. Discussion:** In this section describe what happened: Offer your evidence and how it answers your questions/supports your claims/ offers insight on this subject; share the experience of engaging with the work of your project.
- 7. Conclusion:** Here you will sum up what you learned through this research/project. State any implications your research has for the field, other researchers, or related institutions. Name and claim your original contributions.
- 8. References:** All works cited should be included in your references page(s) using a consistent style (MLA/APA).
- 9. Appendices:** Provides the reader with supporting material including project documentation, images, figures, charts, and other data.

Finding Funding

The university is vast and there are support opportunities to be found. Here are our suggestions:

Look Widely

Start by reading through the Funding Your Education pages on the Graduate College website: <https://grad.uic.edu/graduate-funding-overview/>. Put the fellowship and award application deadlines in your calendar and don't miss any of them.

Plan to apply for the Award for Graduate Research to support your work; there are two deadlines every year—October and March. Begin your application as soon as you enter the MUSE Program: <https://grad.uic.edu/funding-awards/graduate-college-fellowships/agr/>

Find Positions

Don't be shy; get a résumé ready with help from the Office of Career Services: <http://careerservices.uic.edu/students/resumes-cvs-cover-letters>. Send it out with email inquiries about campus jobs.

Here are some places to look: From the home page of the university, check the Campus Unit Listings using the Directory: <http://www.uic.edu/apps/find-people/search>. Start by thinking about what you are interested in and look for initiatives that match. For example, if you are interested in gender and women's studies, email the program (and include your résumé) to check on hiring possibilities.

Also look under "I" for Institutes. The Institute for Humanities is one that has hired MUSE students. And check out "C" for Centers. The Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change are good

partners to the MUSE Program and are often sources of internships and Graduate Assistantships.

Other Possibilities

Look for and learn about Graduate Assistantships here: <http://grad.uic.edu/assistantships>

Feel free to ask us in the MUSE Office for help and letters of support—we want you to reap all the benefits the university can offer.

Fund Your Travel

There are several options for funding travel related to your work.

Research Travel

Apply for funds to do research and related projects in other places. MUSE Research Travel Grants are competitive. Application form available at <https://artandarthistory.uic.edu/important-forms-and-docs>

Conference Travel

Apply to present your papers and projects at conferences. If your presentation is accepted you can seek support from the MUSE program. Application form available at <https://artandarthistory.uic.edu/important-forms-and-docs>

Travel funding is also available from the Graduate Student Council, from the Graduate College, and through the President's Research in Diversity Travel Award.

“Social advance depends as much upon the process through which it is secured as on the result itself.”

—Jane Addams, *Peace and Bread in the Time of War*, 1922

International Research, Residencies, and Presentations

The MUSE program encourages students to apply for support for international study and presentations; our research and conference travel grants can be used for these purposes. It's also possible to do international internships. For example, a MUSE student interned at an International Site of Conscience (<http://www.sitesofconscience.org/>), the District Six Museum in South Africa, during her first year in the program.

If you have ideas for international travel related to your graduate studies, let us know and we'll try to make it happen.



RESOURCES ON CAMPUS

UIC IT Office

Visit this website to explore services, trainings and equipment lending options, including cameras, recording devices, and more.
<https://it.uic.edu>

Centers for Cultural Understanding and Change

The UIC's Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change (previously the Centers for Diversity) constitutes six autonomous and collaborating units under Academic Affairs. They are great partners to the MUSE program, regularly hiring our students to assist with their programs and inviting us to use their resources in our courses, and hosting exciting events including lectures and exhibitions.

<https://diversity.uic.edu/engagement/ccusc/>

The Centers include:

- African-American Cultural Center
- Arab American Cultural Center
- Asian American Resource and Cultural Center
- Disability Cultural Center
- Disability Resource Center
- Gender & Sexuality Center
- Rafael Cintrón Ortiz Latino Cultural Center
- Women's Leadership and Resource Center.

Libraries

UIC has two libraries—The Daley Library on the east campus, which houses most materials you will use, and the Health Sciences Library on the west campus. Learn to use the databases and explore the archives and special collections. <http://library.uic.edu/>

Office of Career Services

Anytime, but especially in your final semester, you should visit the OCS website to learn about the services it offers, from advising to videotaped mock interviews. Use them! careerservices.uic.edu

Writing Center

The Writing Center provides individual tutoring for your writing, including resumes, papers, and more; you can make appointments online. Its website also has links to resources for academic writing, research, MLA/APA. writingcenter.uic.edu

Department of English Editors

Check the Department of English webpage for names of graduate students and lecturers available for editing services. engl.uic.edu

RESOURCES OFF CAMPUS

Chicagoland Museums, Galleries, and Other Internship Possibilities

A. Phillip Randolph Pullman Porter Museum
Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum
Alphawood Gallery
American Indian Center of Chicago
American Writers Museum
Art Institute of Chicago (Rolling internship deadlines)
Arts Club of Chicago
ALARM Press
Beyondmedia Education
Brookfield Zoo
Bronzeville Children's Museum
Busy Beaver Button Museum
Cambodian American Heritage Museum and Killing Fields Memorial
Chicago Architecture Foundation
Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design
Chicago Art Department

Chicago Artists' Coalition
Chicago Botanic Garden
Chicago Children's Museum
Chicago Cultural Alliance
Chicago Cultural Center
Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs
Chicago History Museum
Chicago Public Art Group
Chinese American Museum of Chicago
City of Chicago
Chicago Park District
Clarke House Museum
DANK Haus German American Cultural Center
DePaul University Art Museum
DuSable Museum of African American History
Esperanza Community Services
The Field Museum of Natural History
Frances Willard Historical Association
Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio
Frank Lloyd Wright Frederick C. Robie House
Gallery 400
Garfield Park Conservatory
Glessner House Museum
Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts
Haitian American Museum of Chicago
Hyde Park Art Center
Illinois Arts Alliance Foundation (IAAF)
Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center
Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures Museum
International Museum of Surgical Science
James Charnley House
Jane Addams Hull-House Museum
Japanese American Service Committee
Landmark Preservation Council
Leather Archive and Museum
Lill Street Art Center

Lincoln Park Conservatory
 Lincoln Park Zoo
 Little Black Pearl
 Logan Arts Center (University of Chicago)
 Loyola University Museum of Art
 Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art (Northwestern University)
 Mitchell Museum of the American Indian
 Morton Arboretum
 Museum of Contemporary Art
 Museum of Contemporary Photography
 Museum of Science and Industry
 Muslim American Leadership Alliance
 National Hellenic Museum
 National Museum of Mexican Art
 National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture
 National Public Housing Museum
 National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum
 Newberry Library
 Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum of the Chicago Academy of Sciences
 Renaissance Society (University of Chicago)
 Poetry Foundation
 Roger Brown Study Collection
 John G. Shedd Aquarium
 Smart Museum of Art (University of Chicago)
 Smith Museum of Stained Glass Windows
 South Side Community Art Center
 Spertus: A Center for Jewish Learning & Culture
 Stony Island Arts Bank
 Swedish American Museum and Children's Museum of Immigration
 Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art

National Internship Sources

Metropolitan Museum of Art (January deadline):
<https://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-met/internships>

National Gallery of Art (January deadline):
<https://www.nga.gov/education/interns-fellows.html>

Smithsonian, Office of Fellowships and Internships
 (Several deadlines): <https://www.si.edu/ofi>

Build Connections and Get Your Work Out There

You should consider submitting your work, individually or with others, for presentation at a conference or publication in a journal. These are great ways to build skills, meet new people, to network for jobs, and to have some intellectual fun. The MUSE program and the university will help support your conference attendance, and we can also help you prepare your proposals for conferences and journals.

The following is a short list of some national and international organizations that host conferences and journals about or amenable to work on museums. But don't stop with this list; there are many interesting organizations and publications out there, each with its own culture and value, and even if you aren't presenting your own work, you'll benefit from attending sessions on all kinds of topics.

Organizations and Conferences

Allied Media Conference

Held every summer in Detroit, the conference brings together a vibrant and diverse community of people using media to incite change: filmmakers, radio producers, technologists, youth organizers, writers, entrepreneurs, musicians, museum workers, dancers, and artists. AMC defines “media” as anything used to communicate with the world. You are a media-maker. The conference defines media-based organizing as any collaborative process that uses media, art, or technology to address the roots of problems and advance holistic solutions towards a more just and creative world.

American Alliance of Museums

The primary museum-specific conference in the United States is hosted by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). This conference often feels more like a trade show, with sessions on nuts-and-bolts physical plant issues sponsored by for-profit companies, than a place to share critical perspectives on museums. It is expensive and attended mostly by executive level museum professionals from larger institutions. That said, it’s still worth checking out and over the years has been the site of some activist museum-worker interventions...and could always use more of that. Plan an action and/or submit a proposal for a critical symposium, then apply to the MUSE office for funding. www.aam-us.org/

American Studies Association

This association is “devoted to the interdisciplinary study of American culture and history” and its conference would be a great place to submit your critical papers and presentation proposals about museums. Attend to learn from the other presenters and to enjoy roaming through the publications exhibits where you’ll find books and journals on all subjects. www.theasa.net/

Association of Midwest Museums

Especially if interested in seeking museum employment in the Midwest, this would be an excellent conference to attend and submit your proposals to. The organization’s website has job listings and a salary survey, in addition to other resources. www.midwestmuseums.org/

Cultural Studies Association

With divisions like cultural policy studies, visual culture, critical feminist studies, environment, space and place, technology and pedagogy, you’ll find something at this conference aligned with your specific museum and exhibition interests. The organization has low student membership rates. www.culturalstudiesassociation.org/

The Inclusive Museum

This conference, which is one aspect of the Inclusive Museum “community,” takes place yearly. The community is widely diverse, with advisory board representatives from many countries, and the conferences are always held in different locations around the world. The other ways the community interacts are through a weblog, a journal, and a book series. You can participate in all of these. The overall focus of the group is on how museums can become more inclusive. They ask: In this time of fundamental social change, what is the role of the museum, both as a creature of that change, and perhaps also as an agent of change? Learn more here: <http://onmuseums.com/>

Museum Next

This organization and conference started in 2009 to bring together global museum practitioners interested in the future of the institutions. It hosts three gatherings each year: One focused on tech, one in Europe, and one in the US.

National Art Education Association (NAEA)

This organization hosts two conferences—the main art education meeting, which often includes sessions of relevance to those with museum and exhibit interests, preceded by a gathering focused

on museum education. The webpages for each gathering are good sources of information about museum-related topics.

<http://www.arteducators.org/>

Museum Education Pre-Conference:

<http://www.arteducators.org/community/museum-education>

National Council on Public History

The website of this public history organization is loaded with resources, including jobs postings, links to their blog and FB page, and a bibliography of suggested readings. You can join the group and the International Federation for Public History through the main page, and there are student membership rates. The conference looks awesome, with a wide range of presentation formats invited. <http://ncph.org>

Social Media

Join the Museum-L listserv for job postings and more. Go here for details: <http://www.lsoft.com/scripts/wl.exe?SL1=MUSEUM-L&H=HOME.EASE.LSOFT.COM>

ICOM has a good list of other discussion boards and listservs: http://archives.icom.museum/mus_dist_list.html

Get involved with local groups through Facebook.

Below are a few good ones:

The Chicago Museum Exhibitors Group

Chicago Cultural Organizations Research Network (CCORN)

Drinking About Museums

Emerging Museum Professionals

Museum Workers Speak

Journals

Curator: The Museum Journal

Review the Table of Contents and Abstracts for Curator online, and take a look at its related blog, then look for its articles in the UIC databases. Wide-ranging content by professionals in the field.

<http://www.curatorjournal.org/>

Fwd: Museums Journal

A yearly journal produced by University of Illinois at Chicago Museum and Exhibition Studies graduate students and published by Chicago-based StepSister Press, Fwd: Museums is a space for challenging, critiquing, and reimagining museums and our work within them. The first issue of Fwd: Museums—exploring the theme “Inaugurations”—was released in 2016. Learn more: fwdmuseumsjournal.weebly.com

Journal of Museum Education

Published three times yearly by the Museum Education Roundtable, this journal is welcoming to papers by students and emerging scholars, and is an excellent source for your research while in the MUSE program. <http://www.museumedu.org/journal/>

Sociomuseology

This journal published by the University of Lisbon, Portugal, publishes work on the newest and evolving museological frameworks including new, liberatory, and altermuseologies, and eco and community museums, and more. Three volumes of the journal have been published as books. Ordering and other information can be found on the website of the Movement for a New Museology (MINOM):

<http://www.minom-icom.net/about-us>

Suggested Readings

A selection of articles, books and chapters with critical and social justice perspectives on art, exhibitions, history, museums, and cultural work:

Elizabeth Alexander, *The Black Interior* (Graywolf Press, 2004).

Maurice Berger, "Are Art Museums Racist?" in *Art in America*, (September, 1990), 69-77.

Pierre Bourdieu (translated by Richard Nice), *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Harvard University Press, 1984).

Amanda Cachia, "'Disabling' the museum: Curator as infrastructural activist," in *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 2013, 12(3), 257-289.

Melissa Adler, *Cruising the Library: Perversities in the Organization of Knowledge* (Fordham University Press, 2017).

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey (2015).

Kayleigh Bryant-Greenwell, "Taking a Stand Against Neutrality: The Role of Social Justice in Museums" published online at museum-id.com.

Gregory Chamberlain, *The Radical Museum: Democracy, Dialogue and Debate* (Museum Identity, 2011 (especially Lisa Junkin's essay about Sex +++ at the Hull-House Museum).

Aruna D'Souza, *Whitewalling: Art, Race & Protest in 3 Acts* (Badlands Unlimited, 2018).

Gina Dent (Ed.), *Black Popular Culture: A Project by Michele Wallace* (Bay Press, 1992).

Steven C. Dubin, *Displays of Power: Memory and Amnesia in the American Museum* (New York University Press, 1999).

Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer, & Steven D. Lavine, *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture* (Smithsonian Institution, 1992).

Lisa Lee, "Peering Into the Bedroom: Restorative Justice at the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum" in *The Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics*, Janet Marstine (Ed.), (Routledge, 2011).

Amy Levin (Ed.), *Gender, Sexuality and Museums: A Routledge Reader* (2010).

Lucy Lippard, "The Art Workers Coalition: Not a History," (1970), reprinted in *Modern Art in the USA: Issues and Controversies of the 20th Century* (2001).

Therese Quinn, "Exhibits Through the 'Other Eye': How Popular Education Can Help Us Make Exhibits that Push," *Journal of Museum Education*, 2006, 31(2), 95-104.

Richard Sandell & Rosemary Garland Thompson (Eds.), *Representing Disability: Activism and Agency in the Museum*, (Routledge, 2010).

Richard Sandell & Eithne Nightingale (Eds.), *Museums, Equality, and Social Justice* (Routledge, 2012).

Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum* (Museum 2.0, 2011).

Social Justice & Museums Reading List by LaTanya Autry at <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Social-Justice-Resources-for-Museums.pdf>.



**Changing culture,
Changing the world.**