

New Docent Training Course

Wexner Center for the Arts

595x/795x

3 Credit Hours

Autumn Quarter 2008

Fridays, 9:30-11:48 AM

Wexner Center Film/Video Theatre

Description

This course introduces student to theory and techniques of teaching in the galleries of the Wexner Center for the Arts. Students will be trained to lead tours 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 the Film/Video Theater of the Wexner Center, located at the intersection of 15th Avenue and High Street.

Contact information

Christina Wei-Szu Mathison

GAA for Docent and Teacher Programs

cmathison@wexarts.org

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. Students will earn three hours of credit for autumn quarter and two hours for winter quarter through the Department of Art Education or History of Art. You are not required to participate in this program for credit.

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

If a student successfully completes the autumn quarter 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 winter quarter. Students who successfully complete the winter quarter 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 Quarter 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 8 of this syllabus.

- Observe and record brief reflections on six tours during autumn quarter. These reflections will be due throughout the quarter. All reflections must be in before your tour shadowing experience paper is due.
- Complete three assignments:
 - Active Looking exercises (Oct. 17)
 - Audience strategy paper (Nov.14) (plus unexpected tour situation addendum-- Nov. 21)
 - Tour shadowing experience paper (Nov. 21)
- Present a successful “tour stop” final presentation to the group (Dec. 5)
- 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 in order to schedule all of their tours (whether observation, 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 Carmen 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 (Due Dec. 5) **20%**

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

Individual tour reflections (Due throughout the quarter)

Active looking exercises (Due Oct. 17)

Audience strategy paper and addendum (Due Nov. 14)

Tour shadowing experience paper (Due Nov. 21)

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/oa/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>.

All docents are briefed on new exhibitions during the Docent Gallery Learning sessions. Attendance at either the September 12 or the 18 session is mandatory. These sessions can not be made up.

Friday, September 12

2-4 PM

Docent Gallery Learning

Thursday, September 18

6-8 PM

Docent Gallery Learning alternative time

Topical Outline

Course schedule and readings are subject to change. Readings can be found on Carmen. You will each be given access to the active docent resources for the fall series of exhibitions. Fall 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, September 26

Intro to program and class ice breaker

What does a docent do? What is our role?

Public speaking and audience engagement refresher with Mandy Fox, Assistant Professor of Acting and Directing in the Department of Theatre

Friday, October 3

The architecture of the Wexner Center:

Exploring the relationship between the artist/architect vs audience perspective

Revisit the galleries

Reading Due:

- Wexner Center Winning Entry Proposal by Trott & Bean, Architects & Eisenman/Robertson, Architects.
- Weaver, Leah, "Gardens of Glass," *Ohio State Quest*, Autumn 1993.

Friday, October 10

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

Continue exploring diverse perspectives in looking at art

Reading Due:

- Rice, Danielle & Yenawine, Philip, "A Conversation on Object-Centered Learning in Art Museums," *Curator: The Museum Journal*, November, 2002.
- Barrett, Terry, "Principles for Interpreting," *Art Education*, September 1994.
- Burnham, Rika & Kai-Kee, Elliott, "The Art of Teaching in the Museum" *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 39, No. 1, Spring 2005.

Friday, October 17

What is visual literacy?

Teaching with questions

Active looking exercise due

Reading Due:

- "Introduction to Visual Thinking Strategies," *Visual Understanding in Education*, 2000 www.vue.org
- Perkins, David, "The Challenge of the Invisible," *The Intelligent Eye*, pp 17-24.
- Perkins, David, "Knowledge Gaps and Intelligence Traps," *The Intelligent Eye*, pp 25-35

- Tishman, Shari, "The Object of Their Attention" *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 65, No. 5, Feb. 2008.

Friday, October 24

Constructing a tour

Working with adults and walk-in tours

Know your audience

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

Reading Due:

- Cross, John, "Adult Learning and Museums," paper presented at Why Learning? Seminar, Australian Museum/University of Technology Sydney, 2002.
- Ali Faruki, Mustafa, "The Line of Inquiry: Questions for Adult Audiences," *NYCMER Interpreter*, 2003.
- Grindler, Alison L. & E. Sue McCoy, "Questioning Strategies," *The Good Guide: A Sourcebook for Interpreters, Docents and Tour Guides*, pp 72-77.

Friday, October 31

Working with teens

Tackling provocative issues in contemporary art

Know your audience

The beginning, body, and conclusion of a teen tour.

Reading Due:

- Burnham, Rika, "If You Don't Stop, You Don't See Anything," *Teachers College Record*, Vol 95, Number 4, Summer 1994.
- Gough-DiJulio, Betsy, "A Method to the Madness: What Teens Need and Want from Us," *The Docent Educator*, Summer 1996.

Friday, November 7

Object Safety with Doug McGrew, Wexner Center Senior Security Supervisor.

Working with elementary aged students

Know your audience

The beginning, body, and conclusion of an elementary focused tour.

Reading Due:

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

Friday, November 14

Appreciating diversity in our visitors and in our galleries with Scott Lissner, University ADA Coordinator.

Audience Strategy paper due

Reading Due:

- TBD

Friday, November 21

What have we learned?

Gallery activities and presentation prep

Tour shadowing experience due

Audience Strategy 'surprise situation' addendum due

Friday, November 28

NO CLASS: HAPPY HOLIDAYS

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.

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

Assignment Requirements

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

Active Looking Exercise (Due October 17)

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 looking process that you will eventually lead groups through. There is no length requirement for this activity. Your logs may be hand written, but please use clear handwriting.

Individual Tour Reflections:

After you shadow each tour, take time to write down your thoughts using the template found in this packet. What went well? What would you have done differently? What surprised you? Please hand in these reflections throughout the quarter 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. 16.

Audience Strategy Paper (Due Nov. 14):

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

Surprise Situation Addendum (Due Nov. 21):

While it's extremely important to enter a gallery session with a general 'plan', it's just as important to remember that things aren't always going to happen exactly as you expect. Flexibility and a collected calm head are two very important characteristics of a great docent. During class on November 14, you will be given a scenario that will pop up during the tour that you've already planned for your Audience Strategy Paper. To complete this assignment, you may either add a brief (but thoughtful) addendum to the end of your paper describing how you would deal with the situation, or add notes within the body of your paper, detailing how specific elements that you have planned for your tour could be modified by your reaction to the situation. If you plan to add your notes to the body of your text, please differentiate the font in some way (underline, italics, etc.)

Tour Shadowing Experience Paper (Due Nov. 21):

Let your individual tour reflections jog your memory as you reflect on the entire quarter 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 quarter? What types of techniques do you plan on using when you begin touring? Etc. This paper should be approx. 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, the Center's architecture, or a high quality image of a contemporary work of your choosing. If you wish, your work on your Audience Strategy Paper may inform your presentation.

Here are some things to think about as you prepare:

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

What will we be looking for?

Are your questions and your vocabulary age appropriate?

Is any factual information that you present accurate?

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

Are you engaging the group rather than lecturing the group?

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

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

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

Looking Log #1: Give it time

Let your brain find meaning as your eyes roam

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

Helpful hints:

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

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

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

Looking Log #2: Broaden

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

Helpful Hints:

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

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

Looking Log #3: Deepen

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

Helpful Hints:

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

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

Shadowed Tour Reflection

Name: _____ Shadowed tour # _____

Date of tour: _____

Observed Docent: _____

Age of Observed Group: _____

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