ARCL0118: Collections Management & Care

TERM 1 HANDBOOK 2023–24

Taught in association with UCL Museums & Collections
www.ucl.ac.uk/museums

30 CREDITS

Deadline for coursework for this course: Term 1 – 19 December 2023
Marked assignments returned on: Term 1 – 19 January 2024

Course Co-ordinator term 1: Prof. Alice Stevenson   **Email:** alice.stevenson@ucl.ac.uk

Moodle: https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=38474

1. OVERVIEW

Short description
The management of collections is the foundation for many other museum activities. Although it may seem to involve straightforward administrative practices, many aspects of collections management are determined by social and political values of society. Consequently, what may initially appear uncomplicated, in reality requires reflexive decision making and problem solving. The aim of this course is to provide students with a thorough knowledge of the principles and practice of collections management and care, and familiarity with established professional standards concerning collections development, documentation, care, and use, to inform such decisions. The course covers key areas of museum practice as outlined in the summary below. Having taken the course students should understand why collections management is important, have a good practical idea of how to go about the different aspects of it, and understand some of the ethical issues involved. The course is taught in association with UCL Museums & Collections and with Institute of Archaeology's collection's manager, Ian Carroll, through a series of workshops.

Week-by-week topic summary

Term 1

Wk	Date	Topic
1	3 October 2023	Introduction, Museums and Collections Development
2	10 October 2023	Handling and Examining Objects
3	17 October 2023	Portfolio Development (no class but object study in 209)
4	24 October 2023	Museum Documentation, Object Labelling
5	31 October 2023	Portfolio Development (no class but object study in 209)
6		READING WEEK
7	14 November 2023	Object Cataloguing, Collection Management Systems
8	21 November 2023	Portfolio Development (object study catch-up)
9	28 November 2023	Photography (Group A)
10	5 December 2023	Photography (Group B)
11	12 December 2023	Term review session, portfolio Q&A

Term 1 Collections Management and Care Workshops Weeks 1–5

DATE	TIME	COHORT	VENUE
1. Tuesday 3 October	14:00-15:45 16:00-17:45	Group A Group B	IoA Room 209
2.Tuesday 10 October	14:00-15:00	Group 1 & 2	IoA Conservation Lab 615
	14:00-15:00	Group 3 & 4	IoA Room 209
	15:00-16:00	Group 5 & 6	IoA Conservation Lab 615
	15:00-16:00	Group 1 & 2	IoA Room 209
	16:00-17:00	Group 3 & 4	IoA Conservation Lab 615
	16:00-17:00	Group 5 & 6	IoA Room 209
3.Tuesday 17 October	14:00-17:00	14:00 Group 1 & 2 14:30 Group 3 & 4 15:00 Group 5 & 6	IoA Room 209
4.Tuesday 24 October	14:00-15:30 15:45-17:00	Group A Group B	IoA Room 209
5.Tuesday 31 October	14:00-17:00	14:00 Group 6 & 5 14:30 Group 1 & 2 15:00 Group 3 & 4	IoA Room 209

Collections Management and Care Weeks 6–10

DATE	TIME	COHORT	VENUE
7.Tuesday 14 November	14:00-15:30 15:45-17:15	Group B Group A	IoA Room 209
8.Tuesday 21 November	14:00-16:00	14:00 Group 3 & 4 14:30 Group 5 & 6 15:00 Group 1 & 2	IoA Room 209
9.Tuesday 28 November	14:00-14:20	Group A (all)	IoA Room 209
	14:30-15:30	Group A1	IoA Photography Lab room 405
	15:30-16:30	Group A2	IoA Photography Lab room 405
10.Tuesday 5 December	14:00-14:20	Group B (All)	IoA Room 209
	14:30-15:30	Group B1	Photography Lab
	15:30-16:30	Group B2	Photography Lab
11.Tuesday 12 December	14:00–15:00 15:00-16:00	Group B Group A	IoA Room 209 IoA Room 209

Basic texts

The following provide some general guidance, but you are likely to make more use of online resources, particularly those collated by the *Collections Trust*.

Chapman, M. 2015. Managing collections or managing content? The evolution of museum collections management systems. In *International Handbook of Museum Studies: 2. Museum Practice*

Fahy, A. (ed.) 1995. *Collections Management*. London: Routledge.

Harrison, M. and McKenna, G. 2009. *Documentation: A Practical Guide*. Collections Trust.

Hillhouse, S. 2009. *Collections Management: A Practical Guide*. London: Collections Trust.

Keene, S. 2002. *Managing Conservation in Museums*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Matassa, F. 2011. *Museum Collections Management: A Handbook*. London: Facet Publishing.

National Park Service. 1990. *Museum Handbook*. Washington, DC: National Park Service. Updated version available online at www.nps.gov/museum/publications/handbook.html

Pinniger, D. 2008. *Pest Management: A Practical Guide*. Cambridge: Collections Trust.

Simmons, J.E. 2006. *Things Great and Small: Collections Management Policies*. Washington: American Alliance of Museums Press.

Method of assessment

The course is assessed by means of a portfolio (equivalent to 8,000 words, 30 credits or 16.7% of total MA mark). You will submit the first half of the portfolio in December (tasks 1-5). The portfolio assignment is described in the Aims, Objectives and Assessment section of this handbook and will also be discussed in class. If students are unclear about any assignment, they should contact the Course Co-ordinator.

Teaching methods

The course is taught across terms 1 and 2 through a series of ten 2-3-hour workshops every other week, and personal object study sessions to prepare your portfolio assessment on the alternate week. The workshops are taught in association with UCL Museums & Collections staff and as much time as possible is spent working with UCL's collections and in its museum environments. The workshops typically include introductory lectures, practical sessions, and opportunities for discussion.

Small group practical sessions ('Portfolio Development Sessions) are set aside on some of the Tuesday afternoons for you to apply your knowledge from the previous week to objects in the IoA's collection as part of your portfolio tasks. Either Ian Carroll or Alice Stevenson will be on hand in those development sessions to guide and support the completion of the portfolio tasks. Students are expected to undertake a considerable amount of self-directed learning preparing for the workshops, conducting research and working on their Portfolios. It is particularly important that students keep up to date with portfolio activities and come to the workshops suitably prepared, having familiarized themselves with sector practice as directed, as they will be expected to apply this knowledge in class. Students will be often asked to undertake portfolio related research between workshops and asked to report back on this in class.

Workload

In addition to approximately 30 formal contact hours of workshops, you are expected to spend 140 hours on private reading, research and preparation for the course, as well as 130 hours working on Portfolio assignments. This adds up to a total workload of 300 hours for the course.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course. It is a core course available only to MA Museum Studies students.

2. AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT

Aims

The aim of this course is to provide students with a thorough knowledge of the principles and practice of collections management and care, including the acquisition; object handling and observation; museum documentation; accessioning and cataloguing; object labelling; collections management systems; storage; environmental conditions and monitoring; pests; preventive conservation and

condition reporting; loans; packing and moving collections; disposal; and ethical frameworks. Having taken the course students should understand why collections management is important, have a good practical idea of how to go about the different aspects of it, understand the wider picture of some of the ethical issues involved, and gain a sense of what interesting things a museum can do if its collection is in good order.

Objectives
On successful completion of the course students should:
- Understand why collections are important to museums, that good management of them is essential to making them a useful resource, and that they should be seen as the basis for services to be delivered
- Be conversant with the practices of managing the handling, acquisition, documentation, protection, storage, and accessibility of museum collections
- Be familiar with established professional standards relating to collections management, care and documentation
- Understand the role of preventive conservation and the care of collections
- Be familiar with the ethical issues surrounding collections and collecting, such as acquiring and disposing of objects
- Have a working familiarity with UCL's museums and collections

Learning outcomes
On completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of a wide range collections management issues
- Show awareness of the importance of established museum standards
- Provide practical solutions for a wide range of collections management tasks and issues
- Be able to communicate collections management principles and their importance to both professional museum staff and non-specialists in a variety of formats (reports, database entries, blogs)

Coursework
As noted above, the course is assessed by means of a portfolio (equivalent to 8,000 words), which will be submitted in two parts. Throughout the course a series of ten 'portfolio tasks' are set corresponding to each of the ten themed classes. These ideally should be completed during or after the respective workshops and help you manage completion of the assessment. The first five tasks should be submitted by 19 December 2023 and the second five tasks by 27 March 2024. Exercises may include a variety of activities: writing short reports, cataloguing objects, documenting practical exercises, writing a blog etc. The length for each exercise will vary depending on the activity, but <u>on average</u> this will be about 800 words per workshop (i.e. 10 x 800 = 8,000 words). In addition to written work, <u>students are strongly encouraged to</u> supplement their texts with images, drawings, sketches, diagrams, photographs, and other materials documenting their workshop activities (bring a camera/camera phone along to the workshops). It is important that students keep up-to-date with their portfolio exercises and ensure that they catch up if they miss a workshop through illness. If students are unclear about the nature of a portfolio task, they should contact the Course Co-ordinator, and students are encouraged to ask questions and discuss tasks in class.

Portfolio format

The portfolio should be produced as a Word document report and it should be clearly formatted with relevant subject headings. You should cite appropriate literature in the body of the text in Harvard style, with a reference list at the end of the portfolio. Pay particular attention to museum sector guidelines and standards, which you should be able to draw for to inform answers to the tasks. You are encouraged to use photographs and other illustrations to document the tasks, and to incorporate these images within your portfolios to complement and illustrate your written text. You will need five sections in each part of your portfolio, corresponding to the five portfolio tasks covered that term, a cover page, a contents page and a reference list. Each section may require different forms of

presentation, from narrative text, to bullet points, and the use of tables and diagrams to blog-style writing.

Word-length
The following should not be included in the word-count: title page, contents pages, lists of figure and tables, abstract, preface, acknowledgements, reference list, captions and figures, appendices.

Due to the nature of the portfolio task it is understood that an exact word count may be difficult to estimate. However, students are encouraged to aim at an <u>average</u> of 800 words per task, with a total word count of a maximum of 4000 words for each part of the portfolio.

WORKSHOP 1: INTRODUCTION TO COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

With Alice Stevenson

In this first workshop students are introduced to the course, the topics and skills it seeks to cover, and the approach to teaching that we employ. We will look at the requirements of the portfolio task and assessment expectations.

This week we will consider the need for establishing guidelines and codes of best practice relevant to museum collections management and care. Museums are required to demonstrate their adherence to such standards in order to acquire 'accredited' status. In England, the Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries is run by the Arts Council and aims to encourage all museums and galleries to achieve agreed standards in how they manage their collections and reinforce a shared ethical and professional basis for museum practice. Students will be introduced to the accreditation guidelines relating to collections management and care, which will provide an important framework for this course, embedding it in a professional context.

In the second part, we will focus more specifically on museum acquisition. Museums acquire objects through various means, but it is important that they do so in a coherent and ethical manner according to an institutional acquisitions policy. This is part of a broader collections development policy, which should accord to the over-riding mission statement of the museum. We will examine examples of collections development policies, as well as the different methods by which things come into museums from bequests to rapid response collecting.

PORTFOLIO TASK 1

There are two parts to this task:
  (1) Choose a UK-based museum of interest to you and which has a clear mission statement and collections development policy – please put a copy of the relevant parts (collection overview and themes and priorities) in an 'Appendix A' at the end of your portfolio (it does not contribute to your word count). Collection Development Policies usually include: (i) a section giving an overview of current collections and; (ii) a section identifying themes and priorities for future collecting. In this task please develop your own themes and priorities for future collecting in the context of your chosen institution.
  (2) Describe an object that your chosen museum might be interested in acquiring in line with your themes and priorities (this could be, but does not need to be, a specific object, just a general object type, e.g. antiquity, modern sculpture, taxidermy specimen etc.). What information do you need to collect along with the object and what else do need to take into consideration in order to ensure ethical compliance?

Further Reading

Matassa, F. 2011. *Museum Collections Management: A Handbook.* London: Facet Publishing. (Chapter 8: Acquisitions, pp.145-167)
Mackenzie, S., Brodie, N., Yates, D. and Tsirogiannis, C. 2019. Introduction. *Trafficking Culture. New Directions in Researching the Global Market in Illicit Antiquities.* London and New York: Routledge.

Simmons, J. 2013. Collection care and management. History, theory, and practice. In McCarthy, C. (ed.) *The International Handbook of Museum Studies*. *Museum Practice*. Chichester: Wiley.

RESOURCES

Arts Council England. 2014. Accreditation Guidance. Section two: collections.
Heritage Collections Council (Australia). 1998. 'ReCollections: Managing Collections'
National Park Service. 2006. *Museum Handbook*. Washington, DC: National Park Service. (Appendix B: Accreditation

Collection Policies
Arts Council England. 2011. http://326gtd123dbk1xdkdm489u1q.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Collections-Management-Policies.pdf

Acquisition
Collections Trust. 2017. Due Diligence checklist http://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/acquiring-objects-due-diligence-checklist/
London Transport Museum 2020. Contemporary Collecting Ethical Toolkit, https://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/collections/projects/documentary-curators
Museums Association. 2004. 'Acquisition: Guidance on the Ethics and Practicalities of Acquisition'

Museum Accreditation (International Contexts)
UK: Arts Council England - www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme/
UK: Museums Galleries Scotland: https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/accreditation-recognition/
USA: American Association of Museums - http://www.aam-us.org/resources/assessment-programs/accreditation
Canada: https://www.accreditation.ca/become-client?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIpcWiv7Gz1QIVZbXtCh1L8Qy6EAAYASAAEgJ7PfD_BwE

Useful websites for due diligence:
https://cites.org/eng/disc/text.php
https://www.nps.gov/nagpra/
http://icom.museum/programmes/fighting-illicit-traffic/red-list/
http://icom.museum/the-vision/code-of-ethics/7-museums-operate-in-a-legal-manner/
http://www.lootedart.com/
https://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/what-we-do/contributing-sector/spoliation/spoliation_statement/

WORKSHOP 2: HANDLING AND EXAMINING OBJECTS

With Dean Sully and Ian Carroll

Many curatorial activities, including cataloguing, photographing, housekeeping, research, etc., require staff to handle and engage closely with objects. It is thus important for students to learn good handling techniques and to become confident at handling objects. Indeed, there are many things that we can learn about objects only through picking them up and examining them closely. This workshop is therefore concerned with developing appropriate object handling skills and learning about what objects can tell us. The workshop will be comprised of two parts: (1) an introduction to handling different types of collections (live workshop in 209) and objects, including a consideration of hazardous objects in collections and issues to watch out for (pre-recorded lecture) (2) an exploration of approaches to examining objects from the perspective of conservators and how they make inferences about the history of objects just from handling them (pre-recorded lecture + live workshop in the IoA's conservation lab).

PORTFOLIO TASK 2

There are two parts to this week's portfolio exercise:

(1) Imagine that you are welcoming a researcher to your museum. Draft a set of handling guidelines for one of the portfolio object selections that you would issue to them. Your guidelines should take account of such issues as the material(s) that the object is made from, manufacturing techniques, its design, weight, and so on. It should also take into account the kind of uses to which the IoA collection is put, and whether you think that handling might be an important part of the museum's practice for staff, students and visitors.

(2) Using that object discuss what you can discern about its life history from examination alone. Think carefully about *how* you know what you know about the object. What knowledge can you derive exclusively from examining the object itself. What information can you not access from such an examination? What information are you unable to ascertain? How might you go about acquiring this knowledge?

RESOURCES

Candlin, F. 2010. *Art, Museums and Touch*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Caple, C. 2006. *Objects: Reluctant Witnesses to the Past*. London: Routledge.
Chatterjee, H. (ed.) 2008. *Touch in Museums: Policy and Practice in Object Handling*. Oxford: Berg.
Heritage Collections Council (Australia). 1998. *ReCollections: Handling, Transportation, Storage and Display* (Moodle) – see pp.2-14 on Handling
Kingery, W.D. 1996. *Learning from Things: Method and Theory of Material Culture Studies*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.
Kopytoff, I. 1986. 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process' in A. Appadurai, A. (ed.) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.64-91.
Longstreth-Brown, K. 1998. 'Handling' in A. R. Buck & J. A. Gilmore (eds) *The New Museums Registration Methods*. Washington, DC: American Museums Association, pp.45-48.
Morris, J. 2007. 'Handling Stored Collections', *Museum Practice* 37: 65-67 (Moodle)
National Park Service. 1990. *Museum Handbook*. Washington, DC: National Park Service. (Chapter 6: Handling, Packing, and Shipping) (Moodle)
Pearce, S.M. 1993. *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press. (Chapter 2: 'Objects Inside and Outside Museums', pp.15-35)
Pye, E. (ed.) 2007. The Power of Touch: Handling Objects in Museum and Heritage Contexts. Left Coast Press.

Oddy, W. A. 1992. *The Art of the Conservator*. London: British Museum Press.

Schlanger, N. 2005. 'The Chaîne Opératoire' in C. Renfrew and P. Bahn (ed.) *Archaeology: The Key Concepts.* London: Routledge, pp.25-32.

Smithsonian Institution Education, n.d. 'Looking at Artifacts, Thinking about History' - www.smithsonianeducation.org/idealabs/ap/essays/looking.htm

WORKSHOP 3: MUSEUM DOCUMENTATION and OBJECT MARKING
With Alice Stevenson and Ian Carroll

Museum documentation comprises all the recorded information that a museum holds about the objects in its care. In her pre-recorded video Sarah Brown of the Collections Trust will consider the kinds of documentation that are appropriate at different times in the museum object's status and use: object entry, accessioning, loans, location and movement control, object exit through the lens of the UK's Collections Trust SPECTRUM.

In our live workshop, after reviewing a few principles of documentation, our practical workshop will look at object marking. It is important that all objects in a museum collection are marked or labelled with the unique identifying number given to the object in the process of accessioning. This ensures that each object is linked with the information that the museum holds about it. Students will be shown a variety of techniques appropriate to different objects and materials.

PORTFOLIO TASK 3

There are two parts to this week's portfolio exercise:

(1) Identify an appropriate numbering solution for one of the IoA portfolio objects and justify where and how you would mark your object with an accession number.

(2) Describe and justify a solution to <u>one</u> of the real-life documentation scenarios described below:

   a) 'At the SS Great Britain a descendent of Brunel has brought in a carrier bag that contain a collection of documents relating to Isambard Kingdom Brunel. They wish to donate the collection to you. There are 69 items in the bag, separated between three modern folders. It's unclear why the material has been stored in three folders. The material includes letters, drawings, handwritten reminiscences, newspaper clippings, postcards and envelopes – most relate to IK Brunel or his father, Sir Marc Brunel, but some items relate to more recent family members. Many of the letters are on multiple pages. Many of the envelopes are empty, but appear old, while some are clearly modern, but contain older letters. It is impossible to match all of the empty envelopes with the letters. One of the letters has a calling card tucked inside which appears unrelated to the letter, and from a later period. The oldest item in the collection is a letter from Sir Marc and dated 1817. The most recent item is a post card showing two hunting dogs, and dated to the 1920's. The SS Great Britain's Collecting Policy is to collect material related to Isambard Kingdom Brunel; 19th Century Science and Engineering; and Maritime History.

   i. How do you catalogue this collection? All one number, with parts, or do you assign separate accession numbers? Do you group by folder? Are the multiple sheets of the letters catalogued as one or separately? How about the calling card?

   ii. Do you keep all of the collection, even though some appears to fall outside the collecting policy? Do you keep all the envelopes, even the modern empty ones? If not what do you do with them, and how is it recorded? Do you keep the folders? Do you keep the bag? [Courtesy of Nick Booth, Collections Manager SS Great Britain]

   b. At the University of Oxford's Natural History Museum the Oxford dodo is one of the most iconic and arguably most cited natural history specimen and has been the subject of research since 1650. Unfortunately, the documentation of the specimen has not been so well managed. The specimen now comprises the skull with skin on the right side, the skin removed from the left side, a foot skeleton, scales from the foot, a sclerotic ring (from the eye), feathers removed from the head and mounted

on a slide, strange concretions from inside the skull and tissue samples taken for genetic analysis as well as numerous casts of the head (taken at various dates) and wax models of the head and foot. The specimen itself, or parts of it has been cited in the literature hundreds of times under one number. How would you document this specimen? All parts of the original under one number even if each is stored in different locations due to storage requirements? Should the models and casts be separate? Should each part be numbered separately? How would we rectify this with the widely published literature on the specimen and the images and scans we hold for this? [Courtesy of Collection Manager Mark Carnall].

c. Historic Royal Palaces acquired several hundred fragments of pottery from an 18th-century shipwreck. Some pieces were nearly complete, some very fragmentary. The best pieces were accessioned into the collection and used to dress the rooms in the palace. Some items with lots of barnacles and sea accretions were given to the handling collection. At some point a very keen conservator accessioned each fragment with an individual number and labelled with paraloid all the tiny fragments individually. In addition they were individually wrapped in acid-free tissue paper (to prevent abrasions) and bagged. How should this material be managed? Should it all be accessioned into the same sequence of numbers or the different parts (e.g. handling material) numbered using a different system. Was the numbering of all the fragments a practical solution? If not, what would have been a better approach to the collection? [Courtesy of Curator Megan Gooch].

d. The Collections Manager comes across a box of 27 flint blades inside a larger box containing material — including lithics — from Hierakonpolis. The 27 flint blades are not marked with an accession number, some are marked 'Hierakonpolis' in pencil whilst others have no markings at all. There are flint blades from Hierakonpolis accessioned as 1917.214 with no storage location, but also with no details of the number of blades. Should the Collections Manager: a) tentatively assume that the 27 unmarked blades are 1917.214; b) accession the flint blades; or c) assign TEMP (i.e. temporary) numbers to the flint blades. If b) or c) should they be accessioned as a single accession number, or should each blade have its own accession number. What Place information should be given? [Courtesy of Imogen Gunn, Collections Manager, MAA Cambridge]

RESOURCES

Collections Trust: http://collectionstrust.org.uk/spectrum/

Braun, Thomas J. 2007. An alternative technique for applying accession numbers to museum artifacts. *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 46(2): 91–104
Collections Trust. 2017. '*SPECTRUM* Advice: Acquisition'
Collections Trust. 2017. '*SPECTRUM* Advice: Labelling and Marking Museum Objects'
Collections Trust. 2017. '*SPECTRUM* Advice: Numbering'
Collections Trust. 2017. '*SPECTRUM* Advice: Object Entry'
Collections Trust. 2017. *SPECTRUM: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard*, Version 5.0.
Harrison, M. & McKenna, G. 2009. *Documentation: A Practical Guide*. Cambridge: Collections Trust.
Holm, S.A. 2002. *Cataloguing Made Easy: How to Catalogue Your Collections*, 2nd Edition. Cambridge: MDA.
Matassa, F. 2011. *Museum Collections Management: A Handbook*. London: Facet Publishing. (Chapter 5: Documentation, pp.67-93)
National Park Service. 2000. *Museum Handbook*. Washington, DC: National Park Service. (Chapter 2: Accessioning) (Moodle)

National Park Service. 2000. *Museum Handbook*. Washington, DC: National Park Service. (Appendix J: Marking) (Moodle)

Pedley, M. 1998. *Standards in Action.* Cambridge: MDA.

VIDEO RESOURCES

Share Museums East. 2012. The Contents of a Museum Labelling and Marking Kit - http://youtu.be/osEIQsqG3CU

Share Museums East. 2012. Labelling and Marking Paper Objects in Museum Collections - http://youtu.be/BF2olxq1hmc

Share Museums East. 2012. Labelling and Marking Textiles in Museum Collections - http://youtu.be/-zCXNphTv0U

Share Museums East. 2012. Marking Museum Objects Using the Starch Paste Method - http://youtu.be/XB30xTpYJ00

WORKSHOP 4: OBJECT CATALOGUING, COLLECTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
With Rachael Sparks

Cataloguing is the process of recording detailed information about individual items or groups of items. It is important for many reasons, including collections management (recording information such as an object's location, loans history and valuation for insurance purposes), research (providing detailed information about an object, its provenance and history), and public access (increasingly selected 'public fields' in a catalogue system feed open access online catalogues). We will discuss the kinds of information that it is important to record for different types of objects, and the importance of data consistency and terminology control. In particular we will refer to *SPECTRUM* standards regarding data consistency and control, and explore the requirements of database interoperability. We explore some examples of museum object and materials thesauri. The majority of museums now use computer-based collection management systems. There is a great variety of systems available – we will discuss the basic features common to all systems as well as some of the more advanced features. During the workshop students will have an opportunity to practice cataloguing skills with a variety of museum objects.

PORTFOLIO TASK 4

Select an object from one of UCL's museums or collections. List in a table the database fields you would ideally need in order to fully document this object and complete as much as you are able [note it may not be possible to fill out all the fields you identify and you do not need to undertake lots of new research to fill fields]. However, pay particular attention to full object description, putting into practice the techniques outlined in class. For each field, identify which should be controlled fields (state whether syntax control and/or thesaurus control is needed) and which should be free text. With an asterisk (*) note which fields are minimally necessary for accreditation. **Note that your table does count towards your word count as it is the primary text for this task.

RESOURCES

British Museum Materials Thesaurus - http://www.vocabularyserver.com/materials/
British Museum Object Names Thesaurus - http://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/british-museum-object-names-thesaurus/
Collections Trust. 2017. '*SPECTRUM* Advice: Cataloguing' (Moodle)
Collections Trust. n.d. 'Terminology Control' factsheet (Moodle)
Dalal-Clayton, A. and A. Rutherford. N.d. Against a New Orthodoxy: Decolonised
    Objectivity in the Cataloguing and Description of Artworks. London: Paul Mellon Centre.
Drabinski, Emily. 2013. Queering the Catalog: Queer Theory and the Politics of Correction. *The
    Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 83 (2): 94–111
Haberstock, L. 2020. Participatory description: decolonizing descriptive methodologies in archives.
    Archival Science 20: 125–38.
Harrison, M. and McKenna, G. 2009. *Documentation: A Practical Guide*. Cambridge: Collections
    Trust.
Matassa, F. 2011. *Museum Collections Management: A Handbook*. London: Facet Publishing.
    (Chapter 5: Documentation, pp.65-94)
Museums Australia. 2009. 'The Small Museums Cataloguing Manual: A Guide to Cataloguing
    Object and Image Collections'
National Park Service. 2000. *Museum Handbook*. Washington, DC: National Park Service.
    (Chapter 3: Cataloging)
National Park Service. 2000. *Museum Handbook*. Washington, DC: National Park Service.
    (Appendix C: Cataloging Guidelines)

Many Museum databases are procured from Axiel and include commonly encountered software
    such as: Adlib, Calm, EMu and Mimsey (see https://alm.axiell.com/)

WORKSHOP 5: Photography and Collection Management's Publics
With Antonio Reis

This session will discuss the role of photography within museum collections documentation, it will also offer practical techniques and skills for common situations encountered in museum photography. Topics include how to photograph two and three-dimensional objects, equipment selection, lighting techniques, setting up a photographic workspace and basic image editing. We will address issues of exposure, depth of field, lighting, background, and scales. Emphasis is placed on practises and settings to present the factual, true and accurate imagery that is vital in all aspects of museum collections management.

PORTFOLIO TASK 5

1) You will produce a digital portfolio with a selection of your own photographs of an object.

    This photographic exercise aims to provide you with the experience of photographing an object following industry conventions and standards, such as, composition, lighting, the use of scales, digital file handling, image editing and digital archiving. You will capture a series of photographs of your object. These will include photographing the whole object, small details, and various perspectives from top, sides and base. All photographs must include an appropriate size scale, which you will select from the scales pdf file you downloaded from the course Moodle page.

    Write about 200-words to discuss your photo – describe your planning and why you have chosen those views and details to photograph, the lighting angles and any challenges the object posed to photographing it (you DO NOT need to discuss photoshopping just the original photo set up).

2) Write an *c.*600-word blog for the general public on any aspect of museum collections management, documentation or care taking an object from the IoA collection or indeed any museum object you are familiar with as your focus. Do remember to include any images that might be relevant. Twitter threads or a TikTok dialogue are also acceptable as forms of micro-blogging.

    Your blog (or micro-blog) should be written and illustrated so that non-specialists will find it engaging, but at the same time it should retain professional rigour; to achieve this you will need to adopt a voice which is personal (yours) and so less formal than a journal article (best not to use Harvard reference), but you should nevertheless provide links to appropriate sources and ensure that your prose is grammatically correct. You can highlight where you place hyperlinks using a different colour of font on the words you would link and use a footnote to give the url of the link.

    'Should museums have a personality?' by Russell Dornan: https://medium.com/@RussellDornan/museumpersonality-87ab2112ee9e

    Adam Kosazary on what museums should be doing on social media: https://medium.com/@adamkoszary/seven-broad-statements-that-may-or-may-not-help-your-museum-do-a-bit-better-at-social-media-6173c3b3af0c?source=friends_link&sk=c4212f314f76ea3c108479d5f6dfeb18