

LIS 612: Art Librarianship

The Art Information World

Instructor: Stephen J Bury MA MA Dip Lib PhD FCILIP

Course Description: Students will be introduced to all aspects of art librarianship, with an emphasis on reference and collection development issues. Field trips will supplement in-class lectures, exercises, and hands-on practice with print sources and databases for art, architecture, and design research.

This course will look at the art information world from the perspective of four types of users – the artist, dealer, art historian and museum or gallery curator. We will visit an auction house, an art foundation archive, art history library, and a museum library. There will also be a focus on four corresponding categories of material – the artist’s book, auction catalogue, catalogue raisonné and exhibition catalogue. We will see how these have changed over time and are changing (or not) in our increasingly digital world. We will look at the roles of art information specialists and librarians in different types of institutions and examine the question of whether or not art librarianship is a discrete sub-discipline.

Course Objectives: By the conclusion of the course, students will be familiar with:

1. The information needs of the artist, dealer, art historian and museum or gallery curator, and how they overlap.
2. The role of art information specialists and librarians in different types of institution
3. Familiarity with the artist’s book, auction catalogue, catalogue raisonné and exhibition catalogue, including their history, use and the impact of the digital on them

Palmer School Student Learning Objectives (SLOs): This course will address Palmer school learning goal 3 (“Deliver user-centred services and cost-effective programs tailored to the needs of diverse populations”, and in particular the following two SLOs:

- 3a. Evaluate and use information resources and services to meet the needs of diverse populations
- 3b. Develop and deliver information programs designed to meet the needs of specific users and communities

Required Text: There is no required text for this class; most readings are available online or will be provided as PDF files.

Assignments and Evaluation: All assignments are due four weeks after the last day of class i.e. 22 July 2016

Choose **two** from this section:

- What are the pros and cons of digital art sales catalogues? (25%) (2-4 pages)
- Develop a brief glossary of art auction terms (25%) (2-4 pages)
- Compare a digital with a hardcopy catalogue raisonné (25%) (2-4 pages)
- When does a library item become a curatorial object? (25%) (2-4 pages)
- Select an object in a museum and develop a bibliography based on the same museum's library holdings. (25%)
- Write a book review of an artist's book. (25%) (2-4 pages)

AND **one** from this section:

How could the relationship between a library catalogue and a museum's collection management system be improved? (50%) (4-6 pages)

How distinct a field is art librarianship? (50%) (4-6 pages)

Course Schedule:

Class One (June 3):

- **Introduction to class:** discussion of syllabus, required readings, visits, assignments and expectations
- Introduction to the art information world, types of users, types of institutions, specialist materials, contemporary developments
- Is art information/art librarianship a distinct field?
- Introduction to the world of art sales and documentation

pm. Visit to Sotheby's sale preview: *Important*

Readings:

Design <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/2016/important-design-n09519.html>

Artsy: www.artsy.net

Class Two (June 10):

am. and pm. Visit to The Frick Art Reference Library, 10 East 71st Street, New York NY10021

- Tour of the Library, archives, photoarchive, digilab etc.
- Introduction to the catalogue raisonné

Readings:

(2014) Schonfeld, Roger L. and Matthew P. Long, *Supporting the Changing Research Practices of the Art Historian*, commissioned by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation,

<http://www.sr.ithaka.org/publications/supporting-the-changing-research-practices-of-art-historians/>

Class Three (June 17):

am. Visit to the Rauschenberg Foundation

pm. Discussion of artists as users
Introduction to artists' books

(1995, 2015) Bury, Stephen J. "Towards a history of artists' books", in *Artists Books: The Book as a Work of Art 1963-2000*, London: Quaritch

Class Four (June 24):

am. Discussion of museum libraries
Introduction to the exhibition catalogue

pm. Visit to Brooklyn Museum Library

Readings:

(2012) *Art Museum Libraries Symposium* at the Phillips Library of the Peabody Essex Museum

http://www.pem.org/library/symposium#proceedings_of_the_art_museum_libraries_symposium_2012