

Museum Analysis Assignment

Draft for peer review (min. 2pgs completed) due in your discussion section the week of 10/21

Final version due Tuesday, 10/30 at the beginning of lecture

Hard copies only for both draft and final versions – no email submissions accepted

25% of final grade

For this assignment, you'll visit the human origins and cultural halls of the American Museum of Natural History on your own (the 8 included halls are listed at <https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent-exhibitions/human-origins-and-cultural-halls>). **Note:** The museum's admission is only suggested, and you can (and should) "pay what you wish" – they won't have any problem with you giving 50 cents or a dollar.

Pick two halls that interest you, take careful notes on them during your visit, then write a 4-5 page paper describing and analyzing the exhibits based on the topics discussed in class.

Describe the exhibits in detail: What are they about? How are they arranged? What condition are they in? What drew you to them? Is there information about the scientists, anthropologists, or other researchers who created them, or about the organizations sponsoring the exhibits? What might this tell us? Who else is looking at the exhibits? How are they interacting with the space? Write reflexively.

Analyze the way the exhibits curate and represent human culture. How do the exhibits and their accompanying texts describe these cultures? How are time and history discussed, if at all? Do the exhibits inform us about how these cultures have changed? About how the objects contained are made and used? From what historical period do the exhibits and their texts seem to be speaking? What do they tell you about the people they describe as they are now, in 2018? What do you think are the effects of all these representational strategies? What would you change or improve about the exhibits?

As you undertake this description and analysis, make reference to and cite at least 2 course readings. How do these readings, and the concepts they discuss, help you understand the exhibits?

Formatting requirements:

- Written assignments must have 1-inch margins on all sides and must be in 12 point Times New Roman, double-spaced, with no extra spaces between paragraphs;
- Avoid wasting space at the beginning – just your name, your TA's name, and a title for the assignment;
- When citing a quote or paraphrased idea, put this information in parentheses immediately after: (Author Year: Page). E.g. "This is your syllabus" (Moore 2018: 3);
- Include a basic works cited list at the end – copying and pasting references from this syllabus is fine. This does not count towards the assignment's page count.