

## London in 1000 Objects

In recent years, art historians, intellectual historians, and historians of science have all turned their attention to collections: museums, private collections, botanical gardens, and the ways that bringing objects together shape our sense of their organization.

This course will be rooted in the collections of the city of London. We shall visit Tate Britain and the British Museum to consider the relationships between empire and collections; the Natural History Museum to consider both the collecting of flora and fauna and the systems by which they were organized; Kew Gardens to consider the movement of flora and fauna within the Empire.



## Assignments:

### Written:

1) For each of the collections we visit (7 in total), you are to write a brief report (50-100 words) on a single object. Describe it, its provenance if that is given, placement both in a case and in the larger floor plan of the museum, and defining characteristics. (15%)

2) One large research paper on a single collection: its origin, the persons who started and shaped it, the principles by which it was organized and displayed, the ways display may have shaped perceptions of relations. The paper, due in class April 19, is to be 3500-5000 words long. (25%)

### Oral:

During the semester, students will present oral reports on the stages of their research. You may do powerpoint presentations or simple oral reports.

a) identifying a collection (5%)

b) the biographies of the founders or shapers (5%)

c) the process of collection (the Duchess of Portland, for instance, was in regular correspondence with Cook and others, requesting shells from them) (5%)

d) the space of display and the spatialization of relations (5%)

e) the principles of organization (10%)

f) modern systems of organization and their relationship to those earlier principles (10%)







### Grading:


Class participation is 20% of your grade: each of you will be expected to help one another think through her or his collection.

You must also complete every component in order to receive credit for the course. Missing components will result in an Incomplete. The more effort you put into the course, the higher your grade.

### Reading (📖):

In addition to the reading you will do for your own individual research project, everyone will also read selections from *The History of Museums*, which is available in pdf on Learn@UW.

Class Meetings:

- January 12 Introductions and the [Natural History Museum](#)
- January 19 [Tate Britain](#): “Artist and Empire”
- January 26 “Collecting” and “Displaying”  
 *The History of Museums* individual reports
- February 2 [The British Museum](#) and Imperial Collecting
- February 6 (Saturday) class visit: [Stonehenge and Bath](#)
- February 9 Identifying the Subject of Research – class presentations
- February 16 [The Victoria and Albert Museum](#) and the Study of Culture(s)
- February 23 Founders – class presentations
- February 29- March 4            BREAK**
- March 8 [The Foundling Museum](#)
- March 15 Collecting – class presentations
- March 22 Spaces for Display – class presentations
- March 29 [Chelsea Physic Garden](#) – meet there at 2
- April 5 Principles of Organization – class presentations
- April 9 (Saturday) class visit: [Brighton](#)
- April 12 [Kew Gardens](#)
- April 19 The Structuring of the World



Suggestions for Possible Research:

<http://www.londonupclose.com/london-museums-by-theme.html>

The British Museum

The Chelsea Physic Garden

Fenton House

The Foundling Museum

Kew Gardens

The Museum of Science

The National Gallery

The Natural History Museum

Sir John Soane's Museum

The Victoria and Albert Museum

The Wallace Collection

