MUSEUMS: SOUTHEAST + BEYOND

FACULTY  Dr. Emily Makas (emakas@uncc.edu) + Adam Justice (ajusti10@uncc.edu)

MEETING  Tuesdays / Thursdays, 2:30 – 3:45, CCB

PREMISE  This course explores the history of museums as a building typology with a focus on the relationship between the container and the contained, that is, between the architecture and spaces of museums and the collections, display, and curatorial strategies within them. Themes addressed will include iconic museum architecture, the adaptive reuse and interpretation of historic structures, architectural exhibitions, the ethics of collecting and display, the blurring of education and entertainment, museums as public spaces, as well as exhibition path, layout, and design. Looking at both art and history museums, the course also specifically investigates contemporary museum issues the Southeastern United States by exploring the role of museums in constructing identity and preserving memory of the civil war, slavery, and civil rights, and minority communities, among other themes.

METHOD  The course includes thematic mini-lectures, in-class discussions, and student presentations focused on the development, purpose, form, and organization of museums as well as the relationship that museums have to history, memory, identity, visitor experiences, education, and urban culture. In addition, it includes field trips to museums in Charlotte, guest speakers from local and regional museums, and a series of debates to investigate certain key issues.

OBJECTIVES  The objectives of this course are for students to:

- understand the history of museum architecture and curation in the 20th and 21st centuries;
- understand the complexities and multiplicities of museum functions and how these relate to broader cultural trends and to specific architectural forms;
- understand contemporary museum architectural and museological issues specific to the Southeastern United States as well as shared with museums nationally and globally;
- improve abilities to organize and conduct research-oriented investigations on architecture and to express ideas and arguments orally and in writing; and

READINGS  A selection of readings from a wide variety of related fields will be made available to students as pdf documents on the course Canvas site. One key text on which we may rely heavily is:


ASSESSMENT  Students are assessed based on participation in class discussions, debates, activities, and field trips as well as on written and oral responses to these activities and of case studies.