Instructor  
Chris Siefert  
Adjunct Instructor, Heinz College  
Deputy Director, Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh  
cs6u@andrew.cmu.edu  
csiefert@pittsburghkids.org  
Cell phone: 412-848-6705

Office Hours  
By appointment, Thursdays between 5:30 and 5:55 pm at the MAM office;  
Appointments at other times/places available by request

Text  
Additional texts will be provided as .pdf files via Blackboard or in class

Course Description  
Museum Operations (93-807) addresses how museums operate by considering the day to day responsibilities of staff and board members to deliver the mission and vision of a museum. This course will provide an overview of various operational processes that museums employ and thereby provide insight into how museums implement their mission, care for their collections and serve the needs of visitors and communities. A range of museum types will be utilized for instruction, including Art Museums, Natural History Museums, Children’s Museums, Science Centers, Craft Centers, Art Centers, and others.

The course considers museum operations through the lens of various practitioners in museums: directors, curators, program managers, coordinators, administrators and so forth. Emanating from the foundation of the annual budget, students will examine the structure, leadership, and management of institutions. Students will then develop an appreciation for departmental operational planning for programs and projects, and gain an understanding for the process of decision-making and allocation of resources. Students will explore context, current perspectives and trends associated with various museum divisions such as collection management, guest services, publications, exhibitions, programming and so forth through research, meetings with practitioners and presentations.

The course work involved in Museum Operations requires students to make connections between theory, practice and implementation. The course ultimately surveys the many factors inherent to running a museum in the 21st century.
Learning/Course Objectives
Skills and knowledge gained through this class will be assessed through analysis and discussion of readings, class participation, and assignments.

Objectives-Week One (Introduction)
- Discuss course content and structure; confirm learning objectives for course
- Identify the Characteristics of Excellence for US Museums, based on the American Alliance of Museums (AAM’s) core standards across seven categories of museum operations
- Introduce museum types and categories
- Share examples and interpretations of financial information vis-à-vis the mission, and consider notions of accountability / oversight of non-profit organizations
- Review basic components of an annual operating budget

Objectives-Week Two (Governance, Organizational Structure and Systems)
- Overview of organizational structures and options, identify approaches and discuss pros and cons
- Understand the options and mechanics of management systems in museums
- Review the roles and accountabilities of the Staff and Board of Directors
- Address expectations of visitors and how they might be shaped by experience or other information
- Discuss the types of museums and reasons why a museum might renovate or expand

Objectives-Week Three (Museum Planning and Trends)
- Evaluate the critical role of proactive planning for appropriate and affordable facilities to optimally support mission delivery
- Consider the many personnel who actively participate in a museum setting and what resources the physical plant needs to provide.
- Consider the ‘facility’ of a Museum, offering distinct types of space, serving a variety of functions
- Identify capital and operational financial considerations of building and running a museum
- Discuss risk management considerations
- Examine concerns in the field regarding current issues facing museum operations

Objectives-Week Four (Visitor Services and Collection Management)
- Address expectations of staff and board in lines of communications and delivering services
- Contextualize the importance of auxiliary services in terms of both visitor experience and in terms of revenue streams for a museum
- Describe the opportunities and challenges unique to museums in seeking earned revenue (museum stores, cafes, special events, travelling shows, etc.)
- Examine the role and facets of a collections management plan
Objectives-Week Five (Collect, Preserve, and Present: Practitioners)

- Participate in museum operations review of two local but internationally recognized museums
- Learn from practitioners about the current state of publications and curatorial processes
- Consider the historic context of museums to “Collect”, “Preserve”, and “Present”
- Understand that “Presenting” is a comprehensive term that addresses visitor access, understanding, and appreciation for the work of a museum

Objectives-Weeks Six and Seven (Final Project Presentations)

- Students present term projects; Students look critically at regional museums to determine how effectively they serve the community
- Acknowledge the importance of museums in a community's culture.
- Through the lens of various operational systems, reflect and analyze the responsibilities of museums in terms of collecting, preserving and presenting works
- Consider how the different types of museums interpret their mission, specifically in the context of the output of museums: programming, publications, exhibitions, education, and other operations
- Identify and discuss new models/directions for museum work and audience engagement

Course Requirements and Policies

Students must participate in class presentations, discussions, workshops and exercises; show evidence of having completed the readings at a comprehensive level; satisfactorily complete all assignments. All students should be present and focused during class. Please turn off cell phones or other mobile devices. Laptops may be used for note taking only. It is the preference of the instructor that the class not be recorded. Specifically, the instructor expects the following of each student:

- Complete the assigned textbook sections and/or readings prior to each class meeting.
- Attend all classes: attendance is mandatory. If you must be absent for any reason, kindly contact the instructor by email as to the reason. Absentees will need to make arrangements with another student for any materials and content covered from the class.
- Complete all assignments on time. Submissions are due at the beginning of class. Late submissions are not accepted—a score of zero will be assigned. Assignments are meant to challenge students to consider issues covered in the readings, in class discussion and in relevant museum research. It is the expectation of the Instructor that written assignments are grammatically correct with proper capitalizations, punctuation and citations. All work must be professional, to the point, and convey ideas beyond the less formal email or conversational style. Points will be deducted if the assignment is not written or presented at a professional level.
- Quizzes will be at the discretion of the Instructor. Quizzes will be based on material covered in class, or in assigned readings and are designed to confirm student knowledge of the subject. Quizzes will provide opportunities for extra points towards final grade. Make-up quizzes are not offered.
Museum Operations  
(93-807), Spring 2016  
Thursdays, 6:00 pm – 8:50 pm  
Hamburg Hall, room # 1003  
Carnegie Mellon University, Heinz College  
Master of Arts Management Program

Grading Values & Evaluation Criteria:
Class Attendance, Participation: 35 points
Assignments 1 thru 3: 30 points  
  #1 = 15; #2 – 10; #3 = 5
Final Project: 35 points
  • At the discretion of the Instructor, other opportunities for additional points towards  
    final grade may be afforded.

Grading Scale:
A+ 98 – 100 Exceptional  B+ 88 – 90 Good  C+ 78 – 80 Poor  R Failing
A 94 – 97 Excellent  B 84 - 87 Acceptable  C 74 – 77 Very Poor  I Incomplete
A- 91 - 93 Very Good  B- 81 – 83 Fair  C- 71 – 73 Min Passing

Cheating & Plagiarism Notice
Plagiarism and other forms of academic misrepresentation are viewed as extremely serious  
matters. Misrepresentation of another’s work as one’s own is widely recognized as among the  
most serious violations. The violation is clearly flagrant when it occurs as plagiarism on a  
required paper or as cheating on an examination, including take-home as well as in-class  
examinations. The punishment for such offenses can involve expulsion from the MAM program  
and Heinz College. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism (explained below);
2. Submission of work that is not the student’s own’
3. Submission or use of falsified data;
4. Unauthorized access to an exam or assignment;
5. Use of a stand-in for an exam;
6. Use of unauthorized material in preparation of an assignment of during an examination;
7. Supplying or communicating unauthorized information to another student for use in an  
assignment or exam;
8. Unauthorized collaboration on an assignment. Collaboration must be explicitly permitted by an  
instructor for it to be considered authorized.
9. Submission of the same work for credit in more than one course.

Plagiarism is the failure to indicate the source of work—either with quotation marks or  
footnotes. The source can be a phrase, a graphic element, a proof, specific language, or an idea  
derived from the work of another person. Note that material on the web is another person’s  
work and is therefore equally subject to the rules on plagiarism and cheating as any other  
source material.

Cheating and/or plagiarism on an assignment will result in a failing grade (0 points) for that  
assignment will be factored into the final grade. A cheating student’s final grade will be  
impacted significantly. In addition, cases of cheating and plagiarism will be submitted to and  
reviewed by the Dean’s Office; more severe penalties may be imposed, up to and including  
expulsion from Heinz College.
Outline of Course including Sessions and Readings

Week 1: January 14, 2016

Introduction to Museum Operations

Class Session:
- Introductions: Sharing of museum experiences
  - Values: What is important to you about museums? What do you value about it?
  - Motivation: Why do you go to a museum? What is your primary reason?
- Course Overview
  - Expectations: What do you want to learn about in this course?
  - Review of Syllabus
- Overview of Assignments:
  1. Operational Revenue and Expense Analysis – Due Week 2
  2. Conceptual Description of a Museum– Due Week 3
  3. Questions for Practitioners – Due Week 4
  4. Final Project: Visitor Experience and Operational Practices - Reports and Presentations Due Week 6; NOTE that certain other milestones must be met during the earlier weeks of the course

Class Workshop:
- Museums Types / Categories (Handout pages 12-15 and 18-19 from Museum Administration: an Introduction by Genoways and Ireland)
- AAM Characteristics of Excellence (Handout– located in Blackboard, AAM Folder)
- Annual Report (board oversight) and the IRS 990 Form (government oversight)
  - In class analysis of Annual Report and IRS 990 Form

Readings DUE Week 2:
- The Manual of Museum Management, pages 1-76; 212-217; 250-259
- Running a Museum, A Practical Handbook (ICOM), Museum Management by Gary Edson, Pages 133-145; PDF in Blackboard
- The Executive Director v. The Board Jonathan Poisner, PDF in Blackboard
- Other readings TBD by Instructor
Week 2: January 21, 2016  meet in HBH-1003

Museum Operations: Governance, Organizational Structure and Systems

Class Session:
- Students present summary of Assignment 1: Operational Revenue and Expense Analysis with Observations
- Discussion / overview of readings
  - High level: Governance, management structures, organizational charts
  - Processes: Departments, systems; how teams deliver projects and programs

Class Workshop:
- Imagining a museum and mapping the visitor experience: Audience :: Expert
  - Visitor services; hospitality :: Content; collections
  - Museum types, settings
  - Planning for museums: capital, operational

Readings DUE Week 3:
- The Manual of Museum Management, pages 166-212
- Facilities Management, from Museum Administration, Genoways and Ireland
- AAM Trends Watch 2012
- Budgeting for Non Profit Organizations
- Building Type Basics for Museums, Rosenblatt, pages TBD - HANDOUT in class

Week 3: January 28, 2016  meet in HBH-1003

Museum Operations: Museum Planning and Trends

Class Session:
- Students present Assignment #2: Conceptual Description of a Museum
- Discussion / overview of readings

Class Workshop:
- Develop draft Capital and Operational Plans
- Review of Trends in the industry; Museum operations in the future

Readings DUE Week 4:
- The Manual of Museum Management, pages 76 – 166; 217-241
- Article: Museum of Jurassic Technology
- Museum Store (PDF in Blackboard)
- Collections Management, from Museum Administration, Genoways and Ireland
Museum Operations: Visitor Services and Collection Management

POSSIBLE SITE VISIT TO CHILDREN’S MUSEUM

Class Session:
- Presentation by Guest Speaker: George Brzezinski, Director of Visitor Services, Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh
- Topic: Admissions and membership operational issues; Earned revenue streams

Class Workshop
- Students present highlights from Assignment 2: Visitor Experience Critique
- Discussion: Museums delivering services and content (visitor services :: content)
- Seminar: Collections Management

Readings DUE Week 5:
- Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative, Getty Foundation
- It’s Complicated: The Institution as Publisher — Walker Art Center
- Other readings TBD by Instructor

Week 5: February 11, 2016 meet at Carnegie Museums of Natural History and Art

Museum Operations: Collect, Preserve, and Present: Practitioners

Class Session:
- Site visit to Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History
  - Discussion with Katie Reilly, Director of Publications, Carnegie Museum of Art
  - Discussion with Erin Peters, Assistant Curator, Carnegie Museum of Natural History

Readings DUE Week 6:
- See resources in Blackboard
- TBD by presentations
Week 6: February 18th, 2016  meet HBH-1003

**Museum Operations: Final Project Presentations**

**Class Session:**
- Submission of Final Projects
- Presentation of Final Projects: In-depth and student led discussions surrounding specific visitor experiences and operational practices
  - Student groups will present in conference style, with Instructor as moderator. Each student will be expected to present for up to 15 minutes. Additional time will be available for questions and class discussion.

**Readings DUE Week 7:**
- See resources in Blackboard
- TBD by presentations

Week 7: February 25th, 2016  meet HBH-1003

**Museum Operations: Final Project Presentations**

**Class Session:**
- Presentation of Final Projects: In-depth and student led discussions surrounding specific operational concerns
  - Student groups will present in conference style, with Instructor as moderator. Each student will be expected to present for up to 15 minutes. Additional time will be available for questions and class discussion.

- Readings DUE Week 8: NONE

Week 8: March 3rd, 2016  meet HBH-1003

**Museum Operations: Individual or Group Meetings (optional)**

**Class Session:**
- Instructor is available for individual or group meetings
- Agendas to be determined by students