Post-semester Evaluation of "English 170 (First-year Writing Seminar):
A Semester at the Museum"
by Tim Galow
5/30/2014

Initial Plans:

When applying for the MPM fellowship, I conceived of a class that would combine traditional writing instruction with cultural engagement at the MPM. Considering the logistics of this mobile learning experiment, I added an additional technology component to the class, in hopes that students would be more productive at the MPM and better able to collaborate with peers. In my original proposal (attached as Appendix A), I structured the opening weeks of the class around different approaches to the Museum and its holdings and left the latter weeks for individual and collaborative projects that would help students' develop their understanding of particular topics.

From Plans to a Syllabus:

The early weeks of my collaboration with staff at the MPM were the most useful for me as a teacher. Initial meetings and exploratory conversations with museum staff helped me to frame the questions for my course and provided me with a range of interesting perspectives on the Museum's holdings. Many of my early visits were investigative, that is, spent walking around the collections, taking pictures, and making notes. Having the option of using an office upstairs, however, was incredibly helpful. The days when I took up residence at the museum were the most productive in terms of processing my work.

The syllabus that I developed turned out to be quite close to my original plans in general conception (see "Course Description" in the syllabus, attached as Appendix B). The assignment sequence was somewhat modified for several reasons.

- In my initial proposal, I had considered having students work with or in conjunction with staff at the museum, which, based on initial conversations, seemed to be a better long-term goal for the course. Beyond my initial meetings, I did have some trouble maintaining contact with Museum staff. While this is certainly understandable, it did hamper some of the more ambitious projects that I had envisioned. More complex projects can be gradually implemented in future iterations of the course.

- I also found it necessary to scale back some of the larger projects in order to fit in "developmental" assignments. I included several forms of journaling and some short paper assignments to help students reflect on their experiences, develop familiarity with technology, and prepare for longer writing assignments.

The class

Initial Visits

At the beginning of class, I gave students a series of assignments (see Appendix C). They were asked initially to visit the Museum and reflect on past experiences at museums. They also needed to find some promotional material that would serve as the subject of their initial rhetorical analysis. Students were asked to play the role of a marketer who had developed this product and explain its design to the Museum's Senior Vice President of Marketing and Communications. After this initial work, students seemed very excited about the course. In anonymous feedback, they noted a few small inconveniences (the difficulty of travel and some initial difficulties with admissions), but all had fun and found their papers to be a valuable learning experience. Objects of analysis ranged from billboards to t-shirts, and students produced excellent papers.

Students were then asked to visit the museum again to focus on a particular exhibit. They were asked to write a more detailed analytic paper that would incorporate elements from class discussions about architecture, the MPM's layout and mission, and the general history of museums in the United States. At the same time, students were developing a self-exhibit. While the paper asked students to analyze exhibits in historical and physical context, the self-exhibit provided them with the opportunity to create their own product, a display that needed to be informed by our course discussions and previous analyses.

Mid-semester Blues

Given the wide range of the course (covering a number of museum related topics, navigating visits to the MPM, introducing students to and troubleshooting their work with technology, and developing their facility with college-level writing), the course moved more slowly than I initially had envisioned. In addition, after three visits to the MPM and an initial flurry of assignments, students began to complain about the logistical demands of the course. Finally,

students were becoming more savvy in talking about the MPM, but they were less perceptive in their observations about the actual space there. After more anonymous feedback and some impromptu writing, I determined that after three visits, students were less invested in their work and had become less perceptive about what they were experiencing on their visits as a result.

In response, I scaled back the second half of the semester to include group work and an independent research project, two elements that would decrease the demands of travel and speed up the pace of the course. The group project began with a comparative element: students had to visit museums virtually and compare their findings to the MPM. They examined both the relationship between virtual and physical display as well as the actual presentation of objects and information. This helped them to "see" the MPM in a new way. They then put together comparative observations with other members of the class into a presentation that incorporated technological representations of museum holdings. The group aspect helped generate more enthusiasm and allowed students to pool their resources for more efficient travel and work.

Students were also asked to pursue some issue related to museums that had been introduced in the course. They were required to research academic writing on the subject and prepare a proposal for further study. In this way, students needed to familiarize themselves with a topic and its implications, but they did not need to become 'experts' themselves. This design allowed them to work in academic databases and explore issues related to a range of museums without foregoing all other work to compose a lengthy research paper. This proposal facilitated a range of other assignments, including a classroom presentation and a "letter to the editor"-style persuasive piece that forced them to take a public stand on an issue related to museum work.

Wrap-up

By the end of the semester, most students had visited the museum five times and had completed a dozen different projects of varying lengths that revolved around the MPM, issues in Museum Studies, and the topic of cultural display. Reactions to the course were largely positive. In evaluations, students regularly noted how much they had learned. Several expressed happiness at having been given an entirely new perspective on the topic of culture and two noted that they would never see museums in the same way again. Several students also applauded the way in

which the course connected writing assignments with the museum content. Less positively, several students complained about the difficulties of travel and expressed a general sense of exhaustion after having spent the entire semester "at" the MPM or working on the same topic.

In future iterations, I think being able to create more interaction with other people at the museum (staff or volunteers) or having students produce work for an outside audience (say, museum-goers) might help to mitigate some of these latter complaints. It will give students a greater sense of involvement and provide a more direct purpose for their work. At the same time, I will also need to keep the semester more balanced. I cannot reasonably ask students to do more travel without giving up a substantial portion of class time. Having a better sense of how the class will need to be paced should help as well. Finally, I will scale back the technology portion of the class. Working through issues with iPads or specific apps often distracted from the content of the course and much of this work could be replaced without impacting students' experiences at the museum or their writing practice. The other negative theme that emerged in student comments was about the course's broad focus. There was simply "too much going on" for some students. Decreasing this third element in the course should help to substantially improve the flow of the class.

At the close of the semester, I discussed the course and my experiences with other English 170 and Cultural Seminar instructors. I offered my assignments as models for others to consider and stressed the importance of engaging students outside the classroom. Fred and I had planned to hold one of our General Education meetings downtown, to facilitate a visit to the MPM and showcase our work. We were not able to hold such a meeting this semester but still hope to arrange a future meeting that will involve the MPM.

Appendix A: Initial Fellowship Proposal

Timothy W. Galow
Milwaukee Public Museum Teaching Fellowship Proposal
9/25/13

Course: Honors Composition: "A Semester at the Museum"

Benefits for the Milwaukee Public Museum:

- As the director of the writing program at Carroll, I teach a composition course every semester and would be excited to establish an on-going partnership with the MPM.

- My composition classes are structured around writing tasks rather than subject matter. As a result, the whole course could focus on collections at the MPM, and I could generate a wide range of assignments during the semester.

- Composition is the second course in Carroll's general education sequence. It is paired with an introductory seminar in which students explore the concept of culture and read *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*. My course would explicitly build on these experiences and develop students' cultural competency through work at the MPM.

- While most composition courses at Carroll do not build on the cultural seminar, we have been looking for ways to link the two classes more directly. My course would serve as a model. It would also provide a concrete example of how instructors in the two classes could use the MPM to achieve their learning goals. (Carroll runs about 35 sections of each course per year.)

- I am currently working with Terri Johnson, who heads the Center for Technology and Innovation at Carroll, to set up the class as a "mobile learning course." Every student will have an iPad to assist with off-campus work and will be required to create digital texts during the semester. The work students produce could be coordinated with MPM staff and used for instructional or promotional purposes, either in print or digital forms.

Course Description:
Students will spend a semester engaging with collections at the MPM in order to develop their understanding of culture and cultural differences, improve their writing and research skills, and learn how to use technology to reach different audiences.
Unit 1: Introduction to the Museum
Focus: In the first unit, students will examine their assumptions about museums and learn how these institutions function in the 21st century. Who are the audiences? The stakeholders? The employees and curators? How do materials make it in front of the public? How are exhibits designed? What happens to all of the other materials the museum owns?

Learning at the MPM: At the same time, students will familiarize themselves with collections at the MPM and develop their analytic skills by examining different elements at the museum, from promotional materials to architectural features to the exhibits themselves.

Assignments: Students will write reflective essays on their assumptions about museums and their general impressions of MPM. (Later in the semester, they will interrogate their assumptions and consider the experience of museum audiences, so documenting their own initial impressions will be helpful for them.) They will also work through informational guides designed to introduce them to features of the museum and produce short analyses of some of those features. The culminating assignment will be an analytic paper that explains the logic of a particular exhibit. What seem to be the purposes of this display? How are materials laid out? What is included? What is excluded? What impression does the exhibit convey to the viewer?

Unit 2: Museums and Culture

Focus: After developing a basic understanding of the museum and sharpening their analytic skills, students will reflect on how we conceptualize culture and the role that museums can or might play in those conceptualizations. First, they will consider alternate approaches to culture (culture as social behavior, a form of knowledge, material objects, social organization, etc.). Second, they will consider the different categories often used in studies of culture (family, fashion, labor, political organization, religion, etc.). Finally, they will consider the museum and its holdings from different perspectives (as a zone of cultural contact, as an educational space, as a form of entertainment, etc.).

Learning at the MPM: Students will step back from the narrowly focused paper in Unit 1 to consider how exhibits at the MPM are organized. They will also examine the way in which the MPM approaches the collection and display of cultural objects.

Assignments: Students will examine the museum's mission statement, analyze its layout, and observe audiences at the museum. Depending on logistics and other restrictions, students could interview or speak collectively with museum staff and visitors. The concluding assignment will ask students to pick one particular culture or category that will be the focus of their research. They will write a paper that contextualizes their particular subset of the museum's materials within the larger context of the museum and our discussions of culture.

Unit 3: Cultural Research

Focus: Students will research a particular culture, category, or object at the museum (as determined at the end of Unit 2).

Learning at the MPM: Students will generate a research topic based on their previous study of the MPM, its mission, and the particular exhibit(s) or topic(s) they have chosen.

Assignments: The final form of the assignment can be determined in conjunction with Museum staff. The basic information students gather could be used to develop the MPM's Wikipedia page. Students could develop informational blurbs or interactive interfaces for particular exhibits. Their work could lead to informational print handouts or presentations on particular pieces or exhibits. Or, if the MPM would rather not draw on students' research, work could be compiled in a more traditional research paper.

Unit 4: The Digital Project

Focus: In the final unit, students will be grouped according to their interests. They will work in teams to compile their research into a digital text. For example, students dealing with similar aspects of different cultures (weapons and war, cooking, fashion, religion) could work together to produce a comparative survey on their topic. Those who are interested in the same culture could create a more detailed examination of that culture combining individual research.

Learning at the MPM: Student projects will be rooted in previous research on the MPM and will be focused on particular cultures or exhibits.

Assignments: The final form of the assignment, and the audience it is produced for, can be determined in conjunction with Museum staff. Students could produce digital magazines or interactive databases. They

could create websites devoted to their particular area of study. They could give more traditional presentations supplemented by technological aids.

The primary goal of the final project is to create an exciting digital text that 1. meets the needs of some specific audience and 2. combines the different skills that students developed over the course of the semester. Students will use their research on particular cultures or artifacts. They will further develop their understanding of "culture." They will incorporate their knowledge of museums in general and the MPM more specifically. Finally, they will use their own observations and analyses of specific artifacts and exhibits at the MPM.

Learning Goals:
At the end of the course, students will be able to:
- Show a clear understanding of the complexities involved in defining the term "culture"
- Articulate the beliefs, values, and traditions of various cultures and discuss significant differences between them (and contemporary U.S. culture)
- Conduct original research on a topic related to a museum's collection and present that research in a useful way
- Analyze a museum exhibition
- Understand the issues surrounding the display of objects in a museum
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and organization of museums
- Utilize different technological tools for different kinds of projects and different rhetorical purposes

Instructional Materials Dissemination:
Instructional materials will be placed on a course website that is publicly available. MPM could provide a link for instructors or add materials to its own digital repository. Materials could also be made available in print.

At Carroll, I will present my experiences to faculty and, in particular, instructors of our Cultural Seminar and composition courses. Materials will also be made directly available to these professors as we explore options for connecting the two classes and seek out ways to develop students' cultural awareness through the general education program.

As the director of composition at Carroll, I also have regular contact with faculty throughout the area. I will be able to promote the project and distribute materials at various meetings and presentations.

Beyond course assignments, students' work could be publicly distributed as informational or promotional materials. It could also be made available to demonstrate the kind of work that can be done at the MPM or as an example of how new technologies can help students engage more fully with current cultural resources.

Plan of Action:
During the first 5-7 weeks of the program, I would visit the museum to plan students' early experiences at the MPM and the initial assignments. I would also consult with MPM staff to discuss options and possibilities for students' projects (as noted in the Course Description). By mid-November, I would need to solidify basic course materials in order to promote this unique opportunity to honors students at Carroll and to secure technological resources for the course. Over winter break, I will work at the MPM to finalize plans and materials for the spring semester.

Appendix B: Course Syllabus

Spring 2014   Instructor: Professor Tim Galow

English 170H (4 credits)   e-mail: tgalow@carrollu.edu

M/W/F 12 :00-1 :10   Office Phone : 262-524-7262

Classroom: Berg 103   Office Location: 203 Writing Lab

                                                           Office Hours: M 1:30-2:30

                                                                W 1:30-2:30

                                                                R 2:30-3:45

                                                                   or by appointment

English 170 (Writing Seminar): A Semester at the Museum

COURSE POLICIES

Introduction:

ENG170 is a writing course and a part of the General Education sequence at Carroll. As such, it will help you develop both the technical and the technological skills needed to complete coursework at Carroll, and it will continue the work done in your first-semester seminar on the concept of "culture." In your previous Gen Ed class, you have begun to consider the complexities of this term and have examined how cultures can develop quite differently in different parts of the world. Many of the things that we take as "normal" or "natural" are unique to our own social, economic, or geographic location. They are in fact the product of complicated historical processes that can be studied (and questioned). Over the course of the semester, we will raise, if not necessarily answer, important questions about our own cultural attitudes. How do we imagine those who are different from us? What motivates our behaviors and attitudes towards others?

The focus of our investigations will be on museums, those institutions that collect, organize, and classify objects from various cultures and places around the word. We will be using the Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) as our primary resource over the course of the semester, though we will also discuss and virtually examine collections from other places around the world. We will consider what museums are and what they do. We will examine collections and consider what it means to put particular objects in various kinds of displays. We will also consider who attends museums and why they might do so.

It is important to note that, unlike most other courses you will take at Carroll, the subject matter is not the sole focus of the course. We will also be exploring the writing process and the construction of arguments. Culture will serve to ground these reflections and allow the class to participate in a common discussion over the course of the semester. It will also help to unify our conversations, particularly as we move between different academic disciplines and different modes of argument. We will, however, spend a great deal of time discussing college-level writing and developing those skills that you will need to be successful at Carroll.

In addition to the technical aspects of writing, we will be exploring how technology changes the way we construct arguments and present information. Each student will be given an iPad to use throughout the semester. I see these two parts of the course (the cultural exploration and the examination of the writing process) as complimentary. In our work at the MPM, we will explore how different forms of display convey different meanings to audiences. In our work with iPads, we will consider how different forms of presentation alter the ideas you are trying to convey.

A Few Important Logistical Notes:
1. You will be required to visit the MPM several times over the course of the semester. You will be responsible for these visits outside of class-time, though we will do our best to modify class activities and workload to accommodate these visits.
    a. Expenses: Carroll University has a partnership with the MPM, which means that <u>you will not have to pay admission</u>. You can simply show your Carroll ID card at the admissions counter to receive a ticket.
    b. You will, however, have to arrange for travel. (Note: MPM does not control parking around the Museum, which means that, unfortunately, **you will be responsible for parking expenses.** <u>Street parking on Sundays is free.</u>)
2. You will be loaned an iPad for use throughout the semester. You will be responsible for returning the iPad in good condition at the end of the term. In short, **you will be responsible for lost or damaged tablets**, so please be careful.

Course Goals:
Because ENG 170 is required for all first year students at Carroll, all sections will work to achieve the same goals and student learning outcomes:
1) To help students understand writing as a process and develop an effective process of their own through work in planning, drafting, revising, and editing their writing
2) To help students develop effective skills for interpreting and evaluating a variety of texts and use those texts to create, develop, and support ideas of their own in their writing

Course Organization:
The class will be divided into small groups that will work together throughout the semester. This way, you will have a group of peers to help you generate ideas, work on projects, and, most importantly, evaluate your work before it is turned in for a final grade.

Accordingly, we will maintain a discussion-oriented environment. I will have to stand and talk to you from time to time, particularly when we have to cover major problems or challenges. However, you will often set the agenda with your projects and ideas.

Class Site and Discussion Forum:
In keeping with the communal focus of the class, we will have an online course site at <u>my.carrollu.edu</u>. It will contain course documents, writing guidelines, links, and announcements, and it will provide an easy and efficient forum for communication outside of the classroom.

Student Learning Outcomes:
By the end of 170 students should be able to:
1) Demonstrate proficiency in using writing as a process as evidenced in their course portfolio
2) Demonstrate the ability to create final essays that effectively develop and communicate their position within the context of other points of view and demonstrate proficiency in employing appropriate conventions including structure, grammar, mechanics, and documentation

Office Hours:
I am here to help you as much as I possibly can, so feel free to come by and see me. I am available to discuss this class, the university, or just life in general. My office hours are listed above. If you cannot

make any of these times, feel free to send me an e-mail or talk to me after class and I will be happy to set up an appointment with you.

THE WRITING CENTER:
The Writing Center is a free service available to all students who would like additional help with their writing. Tutors can assist you with any writing problems that you may have.

The Carroll University Writing Center, located in the Learning Commons is open Sunday through Friday. Assistants are available to help with all stages of the writing process, from pre-writing to development to citation.

Assistants can be seen on a first come, first served basis, though the Center recommends making an appointment by accessing LC Online through the Learning Commons link on the student portal: http://www.carrollu.edu/learningcommons/writingcenter.asp?nav=5790

LOGISTICS:
Required Texts:
1. There will also be a large number of readings and handouts available through our page on MyCourses. You will be responsible for bringing the readings to class on the appropriate days.

Recommended Texts:
1. Hacker, Diana and Nancy Sommers   A Pocket Style Manual, 6th Edition

Evaluation:
Your final grade in the course will be determined in the following manner:

Attendance and participation	10%
Museum Journal	10%
Initial Reflection on Museums	5%
Business Letter	5%
Exhibit Analysis	10%
Self-exhibit	10%
Paper	5%
Annotated Bibliography	5%
Research Paper	20%
Digital Compilation	15%
Final Reflection	5%

The grading scale is as follows:

A	92-100%
A/B	89-92%
B	82-89%
B/C	79-82%
C	70-79%
D	60-70%
F	Below 60%

Coursework:
See "Assignment Sequence" handout.

Attendance and Participation:
Attendance is mandatory. Your ideas are the focus of this class and your group members will be counting on you to help them every single day. As such, you will receive a participation grade every single day. If are significantly tardy (more than five minutes late), chronically tardy (regardless of time), absent, show up without an assignment, or refuse to participate in the day's activities, it will be reflected in your daily participation grade.

Moreover, if you miss class more than four times over the course of the semester, your <u>final grade in the course</u> will be lowered 2% for each additional absence. For example, if you miss 5 classes during the semester and you earn an A/B (89%), your final grade in the class will be a B (89%-2%=87%). Special cases will be dealt with on an individual basis.
In addition, for every three times you are significantly tardy (more than five minutes late), you will be given one absence in the class.

One last important note: not being present for a day's class does not excuse you from that day's work, and it is not an excuse for being unprepared for the next class. If you are absent, you need to submit an

assignment to me by the beginning of class time on the day it is due. For instance, if you will not be in class on the day a paper is due, plan on handing your essay in early. It is also up to you to find out what you missed and be prepared for the next class. "I wasn't here last time" is not a valid excuse for coming to class unprepared.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING PAPERS:
- Do not use title pages, BUT EVERY PAPER MUST HAVE A TITLE.
- Typed and printed on standard 8 ½ x 11" white paper. No colored paper. No handwritten pages.
- All papers MUST BE STAPLED. Not paper clipped, not binder clipped, not with corners folded down, etc.
- Standard font is 12-point Times New Roman. Papers should be double-spaced.
- Papers should have 1" margins.
- You should include your name, course, course time, and the date on top of every paper.
- All assignments must be handed to me at the beginning of class: **Late work is unacceptable.**

Grammar and Syntax Issues:
Although grammar and syntax are not emphasized in this class, you will be expected to turn in papers that are error-free. Carroll faculty have selected six grammatical issues that are to be considered particularly important:
1. Run-on sentences and sentence fragments
2. Use of apostrophes, including its/it's and they're/there/their
3. Agreement-- including subject-verb and pronoun-noun
4. Tense consistency, both throughout essays and within sentences
5. Comma Usage—especially splices
6. Modifiers-- including misplaced, dangling, adverbs, etc

Disability Accommodations:
If you have a disability that may require an accommodation for taking this course, please notify me during the first week of classes and, if you have not already done so, contact Ms. Martha Bledsoe, Director of Services for Students with Disabilities, immediately. She can be reached by calling (262)524-7335 or via e-mail at mbledsoe@carrollu.edu.

Academic Integrity:
The Carroll University Academic Integrity Policy is located in your student handbook. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with it. If a student violates this policy in any way, I reserve the right to impose a sanction of failure on the assignment/assessment or failure in the course.

Plagiarism:
Plagiarism is conventionally defined as the unattributed or unacknowledged use of another's words or ideas. Don't do it. Ever. Failure to document sources will result in a zero grade. There will be no second chances and no exceptions to this policy.

Final Note:
The instructor and the University reserve the right to modify, amend, or change the syllabus (course requirements, grading policy, etc.) as the curriculum and/or program require(s).

Appendix C: Initial Assignment Sequence

<u>English 170 Tentative Assignment Sequence</u>

Assignment 1-Museum Journal:
Over the course of the semester, you will visit the MPM 4 times. Each time you go, bring your iPad for photographs, video, notes, or voice recordings. You will keep an electronic journal of your visits that documents your process as you work towards completing each assignment. Each entry should contain 250-500 words, along with at least one other kind of supporting material (photo, video, etc.). I will also ask you to try at least 3 different media forms (photography, video, etc.) in the journal. In other words, all entries cannot simply be a page of writing and a photo.

When grading your journal, I will look for a thoughtful engagement with the task at hand.
- These are not supposed to be mini-essays but a way for you to explicitly consider your own process. For example, your second visit to the museum will involve selecting a display for your analytic essay. Your journal could document your decision-making, especially if you have a hard time picking between exhibits. It could present your initial thoughts about a particular exhibit, if the selection process was easy. Or it could simply provide your thoughts as you consider various sections of the museum.
- If these journal entries are not mini-essays, they are not simply summaries of your trip either. ("I went in and looked at x. Then I walked down the hall and looked at y. Y looked cooler." Etc.) I will be looking for evidence that you actually considered the task at hand and did not simply pick the first exhibit you passed. You must be able to EXPLAIN your process.

Assignment 2-Technology Journal:
In this informal journal, I would like you to jot down things each week that you learn about your iPad. Just keep a document open as you work or play, and write down new discoveries. Nothing is too small. If you are a beginner, there are other folks in the class who are also frustrated by the same thing. Your ability to stop the screen from turning or enlarge your font could be very useful to others. You could briefly mention apps you found, or uses for apps that we all share. Anything at all that is new to you.

Each week, I will ask you to jot down three things and how you did them. The entries do not have to be formal. They can be lists or bulletpoints or paragraphs. Just keep a running tab of all the things you learned. We'll report back and I'll collect them periodically. So just make sure you have a series of DATED ENTRIES.

Assignment 3-Initial Reflection
I would like you to write a short reflection (2-3 pages) that briefly documents your experiences with and/or your preconceptions of museums. What do you think of when someone says the word "museum"? You could think about your own experiences with museums, stereotypes you have of museums/staff members/exhibits/etc., or cultural representations of museums (in the movies, on television, etc.). In your response, I would like you to briefly discuss what you think a museum is. Why do we have these institutions? Whom do they serve? You could consider a particular museum, museums in general, or a "type" of museum (one dedicated to: a particular historical event, the history of an area or period, a particular kind of artifact as in art museums, etc.).

Unit 1: Introduction to the Museum
Overview:
In the first unit, you will examine your assumptions about museums and begin to familiarize yourself with the MPM. We will also begin to consider how museums function in the early 21st century. Who are the audiences? The stakeholders? The employees and curators? How do materials make it in front of the public? How are exhibits designed? What happens to all of the other materials the museum owns?

Along the way, we consider the basics of rhetorical analysis and examine some crucial concepts for college level writing, including ethos/pathos/logos and analysis (as opposed to summary). We will employ our knowledge in a range of writing assignments, including a short reflection, a business letter, and a formal analytic essay.

Assignment 1-Reflection on the First Visit
While visiting the museum for the first time, I would like you to note down everything you can about the experience outside of the individual exhibits. What does the building look like (both from the outside and inside)? What kind of visitors are there? What kinds of signs do you see? What kind of guides/information does the museum provide?

Your explicit task will be finding a particular promotional material to analyze in your business letter (Assignment 1.2). (You could write your journal entry about the process of selecting your object, or about any other part of your visit.)

You will then write me a 2 page response that considers the museum itself. What details do you note and what do they suggest to you about the kind of place this is, who its market is, etc.? What I will be grading you on is your ability to ANALYZE aspects of the museum, that is, to say interesting things about it.

Assignment 2-Analyzing Promotional Materials
Writing Tasks: Composing a business letter; rhetoric review; introduction to analysis.

First, select one promotional piece from the MPM. It can be a pamphlet, a billboard, an educational brochure, etc. For the purposes of the paper, you headed the team that produced this ad. The Senior Vice President of Marketing and Communications, Mary Bridges, is upset. She was out of the country during the planning process and is unhappy with the way the ad turned out. Your job is to explain to her what is going on in the ad and why.

NOTE: You may not use the same piece as anyone else in your group.

Your assignment is to write Ms. Bridges a 2-3 page business letter explaining the purpose of the ad and how its elements work to convey that message to the ad's audience.
Her information: Ms. Mary Bridges, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Communications, The Milwaukee Public Museum, 800 West Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53233.

A successful letter will briefly discuss the primary "point" or message of the piece and who it is intended to reach (as specifically as you can but without making unwarranted assumptions). Then, you must explain how the ad's linguistic and visual elements contribute to that message. As we discussed in class, a contextual analysis (considering the context of the ad) may be necessary to illustrate the purpose of certain elements.

Clarity of prose, effective organization, and grammatical correctness will also factor into your final grade.

Bring a completed hard copy along with a copy of your ad to class on:
Final draft due:

Assignment 3-Analyzing an Exhibit

Writing Tasks: Composing a formal academic paper; in-depth analysis.

You will write a 4 page analysis of an exhibit that depicts a particular culture at the Milwaukee Public Museum.

- Keep in mind that you are not evaluating your source ("This isn't accurate") and you are not speculating about the actual culture (what real people might have thought, felt, believed, etc.). You are explaining how the exhibit conveys a particular impression of this culture.
- Your analysis should build to some larger point about the exhibit. What did you learn from examining it?

The four major things that I am looking for in this paper are:
1. Your ability to GENERATE A PAPER TOPIC.
2. Your ability to SUPPORT CLAIMS with evidence/details from the exhibit.
3. Your ability to ANALYZE details/evidence from the exhibit.
4. Your ability to ORGANIZE CLAIMS into a coherent argument.

You are not required to consult outside sources. Remember that if you do use any sources, no matter how unscholarly, and they influence the development of your ideas, you must cite them in a works cited list.

NOTE: You cannot work on the same exhibit as someone else in your group.

A few questions to consider:
- How is the exhibit arranged in the museum? (Is it part of a geographical range, chronological, thematic, etc.?)
- Does the organization or placement of the exhibit influence the viewer in any way?
- What is the impression that this exhibit creates on you? Why?
- How is the exhibit structured? Is it a collection of objects, a scene, etc.?
- What objects are included in the exhibit? How are they grouped?
- What is the focus of attention in the exhibit?
- What information is provided to help explain the objects?
- How are visitors encouraged to interact or react to this exhibit?

Formatting: See "Course Policies" for formatting requirements

Grading:
- A successful paper will demonstrate the writer's familiarity with the exhibit and his/her ability to conduct an in-depth analysis, which is to say, the paper will make a clear argument, have well-organized points, and provide analysis to support each point.
- Your final grade will be dependent on your ability to ANALYZE the exhibit. Your insight into particular details (the amount of analysis and the significance of your insights) will be important as well.
- As in the last feeder, I will also pay careful attention to your ability to connect your paragraphs with transitions and create a logical flow in your paper.
- As always, clarity of prose and grammatical correctness will factor into your final grade.

You will submit to me a BINDING choice of exhibit to work on for your paper:
1st draft due:
Final draft due:

Unit 2: Museums and Culture
Overview:
After developing a basic understanding of the museum and sharpening your analytic skills, you will reflect on how we conceptualize culture and the role that museums can or might play in those conceptualizations. In this unit, we will take a step back from the narrow focus of Unit 1 to consider how exhibits at the MPM are organized and how the MPM approaches the collection and display of cultural objects more generally. We will examine the museum's mission statement, analyze its layout and observe audiences at the museum. At the end of the unit, you will select a particular culture and category to be the focus of your research.

Assignment 1-Self-Exhibit
If you had to curate an exhibition whose topic was YOU, what are the objects you would choose to represent your life? What are the milestones and mementos that you have saved? How could these artifacts and memories be organized to give strangers a glimpse into your life and past?

For this assignment, you will be asked to create a digital exhibit that reflects you. You cannot, of course, physically insert your football jersey or a promise ring into the computer. And it would be too boring if you just put a bunch of photos together in a chronological chain. (Way too one-dimensional and flickr-y!) Digital exhibitions are becoming increasingly popular in part because they allow institutions to showcase large amounts of work while employing multimedia elements such as sounds, music, images, and words that make information easy to access.

We will discuss potential resources to assist you in class, but here are a couple to get you started.
- www.artsteps.com
  This one's easy and obvious. **artsteps.com** will hand-guide you to select photographs or other digital images from your archives, computers or online and kickstart a virtual gallery. You can choose the mood, theme, color scheme, lighting design and other attributes. Straightforward and definitely not rocket science.
- www.imapbuilder.com
  This one's a bit unique, because generally, maps are not considered obvious materials for an online / virtual museum. imapbuilder.com helps you set up an interactive map across any city, state, country or continent with images, text, logos or captions. So, imagine in the State of California, you go to high school at Beverly Hills, and music classes in your neighborhood, plus drinks and kicking back at the local bar on your 21st birthday – you get to plot all these events and important days on the map.
- www.dipity.com
  The **dipity** timeline creator got this journalism grad his job at Huffington Post (http://techcrunch.com/2011/03/22/infographic-nation/). Simple, easy to upload and with a variety of uses, the timeline creator can notch up your **memories, milestones and mad magic moments** via color-coded, chart-and-bar diagram types, and pop-up bubbled infographics.

So, remember, virtually curating an exhibition means you have the freedom to explore NEW ways of doing a show. There is no written rule or law which says that art objects and artefacts need to be showcased in a particular manner, within pillared walls and squeaky clean glass cases. An autobiographic museum exhibition of a famous personality, Martin Luther King, for example, would mean lots of photographs, publications and copies of his speech, and other material things which have been done to death before. The virtual world gives you the means to think out the box and get people to respond to what you have curated.

In class, you will also play the role of tour guide and, in a short presentation, walk us through your exhibit.