## **Forms, Functions and Languages of the Museum**

## Prof. Alessandra Squizzato

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to introduce students to the knowledge of one of the most fascinating and complex cultural institutions of our time: the museum.

By the end of the course, students will have an overview of the historical development of this institution, as well as its activity and role in current society, mainly within Italy, but also in comparison with Europe and beyond. Students will also have learned some specific terminology from the fields of museology and museography and will be able to analyse basic museum problems critically and with independence of judgment.

The final part of the course will take place on site at museum institutions. It is designed to improve teamwork, communication and learning skills through direct experience of the environment and works.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The questions surrounding the origin, function and fate of the museum bring together considerably interesting and topical themes, such as the notion of cultural heritage, the meaning of history and its relationship with contemporary society, the system of knowledge, trends in taste, and the educational problem.

An initial and more substantial part of the course will address the birth and development of the museum from a primarily historical perspective, starting from its oldest forms linked to the phenomenon of collecting – the *studiolo*, *Wunderkammer*, antiquarian collections – until the birth of the public museum. At an introductory level, a number of aspects related to the life of the museum today will be dealt with: definition, legal structure, set-up, the most up-to-date communication and education techniques, museum professions and links with the surrounding region.

A final section will be dedicated to exploring a single-subject theme, to be addressed in a museum on an educational trip.

This course is divided into two parts:

General part: *Museums yesterday and today: historical identity and contemporary problems*

Single-subject part: *Gian Giacomo Poldi Pezzoli's house-museum in Milan: European models and local tradition*

***READING LIST***

General reference texts:

C. De Benedictis, *Per la storia del collezionismo italiano. Fonti e documenti,* Florence, Ponte alle Grazie, 1991 (1st ed.).

A. Mottola Molfino, *Il Libro dei Musei*, Turin, Allemandi, 1991.

A. Mottola Molfino, *L’etica dei musei. Un viaggio tra passato e futuro dei musei alle soglie del terzo millennio*, Turin-London-Venice-New-York, Umberto Allemandi &C., 2004.

A. Emiliani, *Il Museo nelle città italiane*, in XXIX Convegno Nazionale ANMLI, 2015, pp. 17-21.

*Musei della Ricostruzione in Italia, tra disfatta e rivincita della storia*, in M. Dalai Emiliani, *Per una critica della museografia del Novecento in Italia. Il “saper mostrare” di Carlo Scarpa*, Venice Marsilio 2008, pp. 77-119.

F. Donato, A. M. Visser Travagli, *Il museo oltre la crisi. Dialogo fra museologia e management*, Milano, Electa, 2010, pp. 19-43.

*Comunicare il museo oggi: dalle scelte museologiche al digitale*, a cura di L. Branchesi, V. Curzi, N. Mandarano, Milano Skira 2016.

*Gian Giacomo Poldi Pezzoli. L’uomo e il collezionista del Risorgimento*, catalogo della mostra (Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, 12 November 2011-13 February 2012), ed, L. Galli Michero, Fernando Mazzocca, Turin, Umberto Allemandi & C, 2011.

Details of more specific reading materials will be provided during lectures. A course pack containing some of the course materials will be made available in digital form via the course Blackboard page and in paper form from the UC photocopy office dps.cattolica@normadec.it.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures supplemented with multimedia materials (videos, images, films and websites) as well as educational visits to various museums, both in the city and beyond, in active collaboration with the students; seminars led by sector specialists.

All teaching materials (including lecture slides) will be made available on the course Blackboard platform, including for non-attending students.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed by means of an oral exam to test their knowledge of the contents of lectures and the texts on the reading list, as well as the additional learning materials made available on Blackboard. In particular, students will be assessed in terms of the following: accuracy, clarity and synthesis of content presented, development of a critical capacity in relation to it, relevance of answers, and use of specialist language. Students will also be invited to participate in the preparation for educational trips, either working alone or in groups.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

PREREQUISITES

Since this is an introductory course, there are no special prerequisites; however, students should visit at least the main museums in the city of Milan and the Lombardy area.

N.B. Those who wish to do their three-year degree dissertation on this topic must take the Workshop on Historical-Artistic Research Methods led by the same lecturer.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG, or on the Faculty notice board.