Museums are institutions that collect, preserve, and display objects. More than that, they are sites for the expression (and often contestation) of value, ownership, and identity. This course surveys the fundamentals of contemporary museum practice, viewed in light of debates over the meaning of objects and the concept of heritage, collections and collecting, the politics of museum education, representation, and display, and the involvement or exclusion of various constituencies in museum operations. Drawing on case studies of different types of museums—including art, history, science, and anthropology—we will explore museum practices, particularly curation and exhibition, as complex cultural phenomena involving not only museum professionals but also audiences, scholars, critics, creators and collectors of objects, and people and cultures represented. The course will be of particular interest for students who plan to conduct research on or in museums, as well as those with a strong interest in material culture and representation and those who may be thinking of museum work as a career.

Requirements:
Prerequisites:
Texts: