

Museum Studies

View Museum Studies Program website

The museum studies program is designed to help students explore the theory and practice of museums in the contemporary world, with emphasis on the conservation and preservation of collections as well as the creation of exhibits, interpretive programs, and educational outreach services. Museology is inherently multi-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary, benefiting from knowledge and experience in the fine arts, sciences, history, anthropology, education, computer science, design, marketing, finance and other fields. The museum world is richly varied: in addition to the familiar museum categories of art, history, natural history, technology and science museums, there are many similar institutions including national and state parks, zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums and children's museums. The program's offerings will help prepare students for their future understanding of and contribution to the realm of museums.

The program is a cross-disciplinary study area with course offerings across several disciplines. The required core course, "Introduction to Museum Studies" (MUST 200), is offered each fall. Formal declaration of intent to complete the program's requirements must be preceded by completion of the core course or by consent of the program coordinator. Students are advised to declare their participation and plan their program's make-up in consultation with the program coordinator as early as possible, but no later than by the beginning of the first semester of the senior year.

To complete a minor in the museum studies program, students must satisfy the following requirements designed to acquire the depth and breadth of knowledge and experience intended for the program.

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the history and purpose of museums
- Distinguish the modes, theories and practices of interpretation and display.
- Develop an interpretive plan, project and/or public presentation.

- Active engagement with museums, historic or other sites that interpret cultural or natural heritage

Degree Requirements for the Minor

General College Requirements

- General College Requirements.
- All requirements of the chosen major field.

Required Course

- One required four-credit, 200-level course, “Introduction to Museum Studies” (MUST 200).

Elective Courses

At least 12 hours of appropriate electives with museum studies focus, eight of which need to be upper-level, selected from at least two disciplines.

Completion of a single eight-credit internship in a museum-related area of study; upon approval of the program coordinator, two four-credit internships may be substituted.

Students must achieve at least a C- in all courses counting towards the minor. Elective courses with a museum studies focus are offered in disciplines such as history, anthropology, art history, art, computer science, biology, chemistry, education, economics, English, museum studies, and more. A complete list of these will appear in the online “Schedule of Classes.”

Internship Requirement

Completing the minor in museum studies also requires students to complete an four-credit internship. Upon consultation with the coordinator, a combination of two-, four-, or six-credit experiences may be used. Students often complete their internships at places like the College’s Boyden Gallery, Historic St. Mary’s City, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, Sotterley Plantation, Calvert Marine Museum, and other institutions across the region, the nation, and the world. Students are advised to initiate contact with institutions where they would like to intern, though all for-credit internships must have a faculty supervisor and be approved by the Program Coordinator.

The Martin E. Sullivan Museum Scholars Program

The Martin E. Sullivan Museum Scholars Program. was established in 2009 in honor of Martin E. Sullivan, who served as the director of the Historic St. Mary’s City Commission from 1999

until 2008. Sullivan was a nationally recognized museum professional. He passed away in 2014.

The Sullivan Scholars program recognizes students of exceptional promise by providing opportunities to explore the field of museum studies in a museum setting. Sullivan Scholars are eligible for paid internships and other stipends. In addition, the Sullivan Scholars program provides professional development opportunities by bringing prominent museum professionals to St. Mary's and allowing students to attend conferences and workshops. Rising second-, third-, and fourth-year students are invited on an annual basis to apply to the program. Applicants must have completed "Introduction to Museum Studies" (MUST 200), be a declared museum studies minor, and meet certain other academic requirements, including maintenance of a GPA of at least 3.5.

Sullivan Scholars may work in any museum field, from art galleries to science museums, and in any role, from advancement and marketing to research and interpretation. Successful applicants will complete internships in museum settings at the local, regional, or global level, though most students will select HSMC or the Boyden Gallery as their preferred site.

For more information on the Sullivan Scholars program, visit the webpage or contact the museum studies program coordinator.

St. Mary's Project

Students may pursue their St. Mary's Project in museum studies with the permission of their major department and with a museum studies faculty member serving as mentor or co-mentor. St. Mary's Project credit (eight hours) does not apply toward fulfillment of the curriculum requirements of the program.