

Art Policy and Museum Studies (A005583)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 Study time 150 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 2)	English	Gent	excursion lecture	0.0h
B (Year)	English	Gent		0.0h

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Debackere, Dries	LW17	staff member
Delbecke, Jasper	LW17	lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Arts in Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in History	5	A
Master of Science in Teaching in Arts and Humanities (main subject Archaeology)	5	A
Master of Science in Engineering: Architecture (main subject Architectural Design and Construction Techniques)	5	A
Master of Science in Engineering: Architecture (main subject Urban Design and Architecture)	5	A
Master of Arts in Archaeology	5	A
Master of Science in Engineering: Architecture	5	A
Exchange Programme Art Studies	5	A
Postgraduate Curatorial Studies	6	B
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Museum studies; museum histories; museum theories; contemporary museum topics (decoloniality, sustainability, technology); art policy; art policy practicum

Position of the course

This Bachelor-level course examines the history, function, and evolving role of museums from the Renaissance to today. Students explore how museums shape cultural narratives, mediate power, and construct knowledge, with attention to historical developments, ethical debates, and contemporary policy challenges. Through theoretical readings, case studies, and lectures students gain insight into the political, social, and economic forces that define museums as institutions. The course also addresses contemporary debates on decoloniality, sustainability, and digital transformation, and includes site visits and interactions with museum professionals.

Exchange students may take up this course unit, for which no prior knowledge of Dutch is required.

Contents

This course is structured around four key components, providing a comprehensive foundation in museum studies and art policy:

1 Historical and International Perspectives

- Trace the evolution of museums from Renaissance collections to

contemporary institutions.

- Analyze how museums have been shaped by colonialism, nationalism, and changing societal values.

2 Museum Theory and Critical Practice

- Study key museum theories on curation, display, and the construction of knowledge.

3 Art Policy and Applied Engagement

- Develop a knowledge of Flemish cultural heritage policy.

4 Professional Interaction and Contemporary Debates

- Engage directly with museum professionals through guest lectures and workshops.
- Address critical issues facing museums today, including decoloniality, sustainability, and digital innovation.

Initial competences

- An intrinsic interest in museums, heritage, and art policy.
- No prior knowledge of museum studies or art policy is required.

Final competences

- 1 Acquire a foundational understanding of the historical development of museums, exhibitions, collecting practices, and curatorial strategies from the Renaissance to the present.
- 2 Critically analyze and evaluate the "museum effect," understanding how exhibitions shape viewer perception and construct cultural meanings.
- 3
- 4 Reflect on the intersection between museums and the performing arts, with particular attention to exhibitionary conventions and performance-based practices.
- 5 Engage in critical discussions about contemporary societal challenges facing museums, including issues of decoloniality, sustainability, and digital transformation.
- 6 Engage with museum professionals by preparing and posing thoughtful, critical questions during guest lectures.
- 7 Demonstrate a knowledge of Flemish cultural heritage policy and the Heritage Decree funding framework.
- 8

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Excursion, Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

Depending on current developments and guest speakers: approximately 11 lectures (180 min each); 1 museum visit.

Study material

Type: Handouts

Name: Various articles and book chapters

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Excursion

Name: Mandatory Museum Visit

Indicative price: € 8

Optional: no

References

Course content-related study coaching

Questions can be asked by e-mail. Appointments can be made with the professor during office hours: <https://calendly.com/maude-basskrueger>

Assessment moments

end-of-term assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

in-person exam: multiple choice and open question

Calculation of the examination mark

UGent students:

100% exam

Curatorial Studies - KASK students:

Graded assignments will be communicated at the start of the semester.

Facilities for Working Students

Attendance is highly recommended for successful completion of the course, as most lectures are not recorded. Participation in the scheduled excursion—or, if necessary, completion of an approved individual visit—is mandatory. Individual feedback sessions can be scheduled by appointment with the professor or assistants.