

VAH9571B Museum/Decay

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Tuesdays 2:30-5:30

Winter 2021

Synchronous

Image: The Origins of Oil and Gas. Focus on Energy Series, Canadian Petroleum Association, 1980s.

Professor: Dr. Kirsty Robertson

Office: online
Office Hours: by appointment
Email: kirsty.robertson@uwo.ca

Course Description and Objectives:

This class begins with a provocation: the museum, as an idea, tries to avoid the passage of time, through processes of conservation, through the creation of artificial climates, and through both embracing and sidestepping linearity in being simultaneously of its time/ahead of its time/behind the times. But time always catches up, often through slow processes of decay. Ranging from deep time through to the present moment, and pausing to consider plastics, fungi, jellyfish, ice, outer space, and colour (among other objects, topics, beings, and kin), this experimental class examines museums, time, and collections from the perspective of a world that is constantly in motion.

This class emerges from and is an iteration of A Museum for Future Fossils www.museumforfuturefossils.com. Every iteration of A Museum for Future Fossils is a co-learning experience.

Here, the MFFF is imagined something like a vernacular natural history museum. What might a natural history museum look like if it resisted extractivist impulses? How does the natural history museum confront and understand deep time and decay? Each week is a room or gallery in the museum. The readings are provocations; starting points rather than the finish line.

Required Texts:

All course readings are available on Owl. It is the student's responsibility to let the professor know in advance if they have any trouble downloading the readings.

Assignment Breakdown:

Final Assignment Proposal 10% ~~due March 2~~ converted to 1500 word description of final project, due April 6

Final Assignment 40% and April 6

Course journal 40% due February 9 and April 6

Participation and engagement 10%
