

APUSH 2023-24  
Dr. Heise  
Summer Work

### Summer Project: Museum Trip

I am assigning you a trip to a museum for your summer work for APUSH. New England is overflowing with history, but if you happen to be taking a summer trip this break, anywhere you visit will have historical institutions. Visit one of these establishments, spend some time learning about the past, and come to class at the start of school with a new perspective on how the world used to be, and how we have arrived in this bright future.

The Assignment:

Step 1: Visit a museum. It does not necessarily HAVE to be a historical museum, but I would prefer if it were. Any museum you visit will have a historical aspect to it. Yes, even a science museum will have some historical exhibits.

Step 2: While you visit the museum, take notes on the ways in which the museum presents the past. Do they have historical reenactors? Do they have interactive activities? Do they have a tour you can take (you don't actually have to take the tour, but if you ask about it, most museums will be more than happy to give you an overview of what the tour is about)? Does the museum have a way for the patron to interact with the historical material on hand, or is it static (i.e. displays with words written on them, or maybe some videos)?

Step 3: Read [James Gardner's "Contested Terrain: History, Museums, and the Public"](#) and reflect upon the museum you visited, and what you saw. Consider the following questions: did the museum provide a nuanced, messy, difficult interpretation of the past, or was their story simpler? Did the story the museum told contain both features of progress and failure in the past, or did it provide a linear, always progressing story? What groups were represented in the museum displays, and how did the museum discuss diverse perspectives on the past?

Step 3: Write a 3-5 page paper that answers the following question: how did the museum live up to the standards laid out in the article we read, and how did the museum challenge or change your understanding of the past? Paper should be 1000-1500 words double spaced, in a standard 12 pt. font . Somewhere in the paper you should probably also tell me which museum you visited, how long you were there, any notable things you noticed, things like that.

Step 4: Turn your paper in on the first day of class! Late papers will lose points.

Link to Gardner, "Contested Terrain": [Gardner - Contested Terrain.pdf](#)