

## Proposal for Ethics and Integrity Requirement

### MA in Material Culture and Public Humanities School of Visual Arts (CAUS) and Department of Religion and Culture (CLAHS)

The MA program in Material Culture and Public Humanities will address issues of ethics and integrity across the two ‘core’ courses in its curriculum that are required of all students their first year:

- ART/HUM 5104 Historical and Theoretical Frameworks in Material Culture and Public Humanities
- ART/HUM 5204 Research Methods in Material Culture and Public Humanities

As well as through other means documented in this proposal.

ART/HUM 5104 Historical and Theoretical Frameworks in Material Culture and Public Humanities

This course is required of all students entering the program so it is a natural place for the most basic ethical issues in scholarly discourse: **plagiarism and other violations of the Graduate Honor code; and proper use of professional conventions in citation of existing research and scholarship, accurate reporting and ownership of findings and acknowledgement of contributions to the work.** The topics will be introduced at the beginning of the semester and there are three papers, totaling 15-25 pages in which the student must demonstrate their mastery of these concepts. The third paper is a case study, which is largely independent, original research so the adherence to and integration of these ethical concepts will be evident.

ART/HUM 5204:

This course is required of all students in their second semester of the program and will address **ethical standards in teaching, mentoring and professional activities** through a class specifically devoted to those activities. Other faculty teaching in the program will be invited to a roundtable discussion with the students on these issues. This is in addition to requiring that all GTAs attend the Graduate School’s session on teaching and mentoring.

For Topic 4 (**Available avenues for reporting alleged misconduct**) we will add a link to our Standards and policies manual (<http://www.mcph.sova.vt.edu/wp-content/uploads/MCPHStandardsPoliciesFinal.pdf>

to the Research Integrity Office’s “Research Misconduct – What it is and How to Avoid it” [www.research.vt.edu/research-integrity-office/brochure/misconduct-brochure.pdf](http://www.research.vt.edu/research-integrity-office/brochure/misconduct-brochure.pdf) and also add a section on the Appeals Process from the Graduate School catalogue: <http://graduateschool.vt.edu/node/6042>

This topic will also be addressed during our fall orientation session.

In addition, ART/HUM 5104 and ART/HUM 5204 and the other core courses (ART 5564 Advanced Exhibition Design and Display and HUM 5304 Material Culture and Humanities in the Public Sphere) address (and re-address) many ethical issues that are specific to our field such as the repatriation of Native American objects (with special reference to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)) and to ancient objects in western museums (such as the Elgin Marbles); the recovery and restitution of looted objects; copyright and fair use in relation to issues of “appropriation” relevant to much contemporary art. There is also a broad array of ethical issues that are integral to a program that is concerned with public and private funding of the arts and humanities: censorship and public art; public funding of controversial objects, deaccessioning by museums of objects in the public trust; the relationship between corporate sponsorship and museums; possible conflict of interest between board of trustees and museums.

Students pursuing the Public Humanities track are required to take one of the Public History graduate-level courses offered by the Department of History (HIST 5424, 5434, 5444, 5454). All introduce the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and HIST 5444: Oral History specifically offers training.

The goal of the MA program in Material Culture and Public Humanities is ground our students thoroughly both in the ethical standards shared by academic fields and institutions and in the ethical issues specifically germane to our discipline.