R.I.T
Museum Studies
Using the tools of the future to preserve the past
What is Museum Studies?

RIT’s bachelor of science degree in museum studies is an innovative, technically based undergraduate program that prepares you for careers in museums, archives, libraries, historical societies, historic sites, historic houses, and photography collections. Museum studies is an exciting and rapidly changing field that increasingly needs professionals who can bring 21st century technological skills to institutions with cultural or scientific collections. The program will provide you with a thorough grounding in museum studies, supplemented by specialized professional cores. This combination, enhanced by your experiential learning in internship programs, will set you apart from others in the field.

Broaden your knowledge base

The hallmark of an RIT education is its interdisciplinary approach to the design of its curriculum. The museum studies program draws from disciplines across the traditional liberal arts and sciences, as well as from specialized professional programs. You will choose a minor to complement your program of study, or to expand an area of personal or professional interest. Elective courses allow you to explore deeper specializations, or try something new.

Beyond the classroom

RIT has the fourth oldest, and one of the largest, experiential education programs in the world. You’ll gain valuable experience through cooperative education, internships, and research opportunities. Both tracks of the museum studies program require internships or co-op assignments at relevant cultural institutions locally, nationally, or internationally. Faculty advisers help students search for and apply to internships/co-ops.
The program
The program includes introductory and advanced core courses that will familiarize you with the history, theory, and practice of institutional collecting, exhibition design and development, public history, collections management, fundraising and grant writing, and a range of digital technologies used in the collecting field. All of the program courses include hands-on experiences and many include field trips. You will choose one of two specialized professional tracks, each of which will provide you with the competencies identified by museum professionals as increasingly relevant for young professionals in the 21st century. Your experiences in the museum field will also be enhanced by completing an internship.

The museum studies track prepares you to work in a wide variety of settings, including museums, galleries, historical societies and historic sites, archives, and libraries. You will work with curators, exhibit designers and preparators, collections managers and registrars, archivists and librarians. Your museum studies professional core courses will be augmented by a series of management courses and museums and technology courses.

The public history track will prepare you to work in a wide variety of settings, including museums; local, state, and national government agencies; national parks; science museums; living history museums; historic houses and sites; archives; and local, state, and national historical organizations. Graduates may find positions in a wide variety of fields, such as museums and heritage organizations, historical consulting, heritage tourism, and historic preservation.
Places you’ll go
Course-related field trips take you to many Rochester cultural institutions, including the Memorial Art Gallery, the Susan B. Anthony House and Museum, the Rochester Museum and Science Center, the Genesee Country Village and Museum, the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography, The Strong National Museum of Play, and the Seneca Park Zoo.

Things you’ll do
Students in the program have worked with professionals in designing and developing large and small exhibitions, have presented posters of their research at regional museum conferences, have obtained research grants to visit exhibitions relevant to their research, have helped pack and unpack collections during museum gallery renovations, have installed permanent exhibitions, and have worked on museum programs designed to attract young professionals.

Places you’ll work
Students in the program have done internships at The Strong, the Memorial Art Gallery, the Genesee Country Village and Museum, the George Eastman House, the Rosen House at Caramoor, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, the Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts at St. Bonaventure University, the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, the Smithsonian Museum Conservation Institute, the Library of Congress, and the Olana State Historic Site.
A career awaits you
When you complete the museum studies program, you will be prepared to enter the work force with a highly marketable mix of knowledge, skills, and experience that will make you stand out from the competition. You will be well versed in the history, theory, and practice of institutional collecting, knowledgeable about specific areas of collecting, and fully grounded in the technical skills you’ll need to step right in to a project. Combined with your practical internship or cooperative education experience, you’ll be an immediate asset to any future employer.

Advanced degree options
The BS degree in museum studies provides a solid background for those who choose to pursue graduate study. The museum studies track will prepare you for such diverse graduate programs as a master of arts degree in museum studies, art history, informatics, or arts management; a master of library science degree; or a master of business administration degree. Students pursuing the public history track will be well prepared to enter a master’s level program in either public history, specifically, or history, generally.

Contact Us
For more information, please visit our website at www.rit.edu/museumstudies or contact Dr. Tina Lent at tnlgsh@rit.edu, phone (585) 475-2460. You can also contact Ms. Peggy Noll at mengsh@rit.edu or by phone at 585-475-6095. For information on setting up a campus visit, contact Amy Lyman, Admissions Liaison, at axlgl@rit.edu or by phone at 585-475-4137.