

Object Study Room Procedures & Guidelines

Please review this entire document prior to your object request and OSR visit.

How Object Requests Work

- Object study room visits should be scheduled at least 4 weeks in advance.
- First, contact museum staff to discuss your learning goals and inquire about the collections. You can be specific or open with your interest. We are happy to collaborate and brainstorm with you.
- Approximately week after our primary discussion, we will send you a preliminary list of items from our collection that we believe will fit your request. We ask that you respond a minimum of one week later and two weeks before your scheduled class visit.
- If you have chosen certain objects, we will then submit a request to our Registrar for those items to be pulled. Please keep in mind that we recommend you limit your total number of items to 4 or 5. Also keep in mind that it is possible the items you select may not be approved by the Registrar.
- Once the objects have been approved and/or denied by the Registrar, we will send you a final list of the approved objects that have been pulled for your class viewing.
- If none of the objects in the preliminary list appeal to you, we will do a second search as long as there is still at least two weeks until your scheduled visit.

OSR Accommodations

Due to the small size of our Object Study Room we are only able to accommodate 15 students at a time. If your class is larger we may be able to accommodate groups up to 25 in our Decorative Arts Gallery space to view objects. If your class is larger than 25 the students will need to be split up into smaller groups, we can discuss potential possibilities for this in our upcoming conversation if applicable.

Please note smaller groups allow for richer engagement, and that truly teaching with an object takes time, deliberate inquiry, slow examination, and conversation. Please plan to spend about twenty minutes per object when viewing something with a group.

How to Select Objects

Consider ways that the objects can tie back to your lectures and learning objectives. Those connections may be literal or illustrative. Before requesting an object or coming in for a viewing, it may enrich the experience to outline those connections in advance. [Academic Programs](#) (email katy@utk.edu) is always happy to help, as well.

OSR Class Sessions

We are eager to collaborate with you on all class visits. Many instructors prefer to lead their class discussions in the galleries and study room. However, we are happy to develop the content for the visit with you and contribute our expertise. Please let us know in advance how much input you would like from staff. The class instructor will always be better suited to place the objects within the broader context of the course.

Without prior notification, museum staff will be onsite to maintain the OSR Guidelines, handle the objects as needed, and provide basic information about the objects that have been chosen. Instructors are welcome to lead the conversation from there. It is not our policy to accommodate classes in the absence of the instructor.

Pointers for teaching with an object: Guiding a lesson with artifacts that were selected especially for your class can be a rich and rewarding experience. Often instructors approach such teaching through a line of inquiry rather than a formal lecture. If you are interested in trying to lead an object-based lesson, try using guiding questions to let a discussion unfold. Examples include:

- Why do you think this object is relevant to our class? What makes you think that?
- Look at the object. What can you observe? Describe as much as possible; what are you able to infer from these observations? What do you not know?
- Who made this and what was it made for? When and how was it made? What is it made out of? Can it be used for purposes outside of its primary function?
- How did this object come to exist in the museum's collection?
- What story is the object telling us?
- Who would have used this object and why? Who might and might not have owned this object?
- Where did this object come from?
- How old is the object? It is original or a replica? How can you tell?
- How do you feel about the object, does it illicit a specific response? Why or why not?
- Why is the object important? What purpose does it serve within a museum? Why should it be held in the collection?
- Does the object still have relevance today? How so?

Want to learn more about teaching with objects? Contact [Academic Programs](#) (email katy@utk.edu) for additional resources.

Object Study Room Guidelines

The Object Study Room offers an intimate environment in which to study original works of art and artifacts. We want this to be a special and meaningful experience for you, and at the same time insure that the objects displayed are not damaged and will be available for future use. To insure the safety of the collections, we ask that you adhere to the following:

- Pencils only—no pens, ink, or markers are allowed in the study room. Do not bring newspaper into the study room, as the ink can be easily transferred to the objects and tables that hold them.
- No food or liquid of any kind is allowed in the study room when objects from the collection are present. This includes gum and cough drops.
- Do not touch the objects unless explicitly invited to do so by museum staff. Please do look very closely and take advantage of the proximity to the objects permitted by the context of the study room.
- During your visit, leave all bulky items in the Academic Programs office, located through the door at the back of the study room. This includes backpacks, coats, umbrellas, etc. You may want to bring a notebook or tablet to make notes.
- Sneeze and cough away from the objects.
- Be aware of your body while near objects—be especially careful that you do not back into the tables holding objects, or brush against prints and paintings displayed along the walls