

MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES, CERTIFICATE

The certificate in material culture studies has two interrelated goals. First, students will become acquainted with the field of material culture studies and its methodologies. They will learn what kinds of objects are considered in the study of material culture (from small, intimate artifacts of daily life to large cultural landscapes) and how scholars and professionals from different fields and in different contexts enlist material culture in their research and activities. They will gain an appreciation for the information artifacts can provide. They will learn the kinds of questions that can be asked of objects and the kind of information that artifacts can show us. They will become familiar with (and able to distinguish between) descriptive and interpretive components of material culture study and gain an awareness of the variety of methods. Second, students will gain an appreciation for the ways that “things” help us to connect to the world and see it in a new way, and the ways “things” give meaning to our lives and the lives of those around us.