What is a museum? Whom do they serve? How do they work? What belongs in a museum? What debts do today’s museums owe to their historical predecessors? In order to answer these questions, we will visit a number of Salt Lake City museums, including the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, the Natural History Museum of Utah, the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, and others. Our exploration of these institutions will take into consideration the formation of collections, curatorial practices, the function of architecture and display, and modes of community engagement. We will take advantage of the rich field of professionals in Salt Lake City, speaking with curators, educators and other museum personnel. These investigations of local institutions will be supported by readings on the history of museums, curatorial practice, architectural theory, artists’ responses to museums, and others. Assignments will include presentations on assigned readings, exhibition reviews, and the choice of a virtual curatorial project or a research paper.

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