## **Directed Research |** CMST 6502 (3 credits)

Directed Research (DR) projects are intended to provide students with an opportunity for in-depth, original research that will enhance their program of study or field of interest. If there is an area of inquiry that a student cannot pursue within the structure of a class, a DR can be a good option ([see below for examples](#_mqo66vb0uhb6)).

Directed Research projects are the equivalent of a 3-credit class and therefore must represent a substantial undertaking on the part of the student. DRs can take the form of a traditional research paper or be project-based. Project-based DRs are distinct from internships in that they are more self-directed and should make an original contribution to the field. All DRs should include a bibliography, regardless of whether the final product is in the form of a research paper. Students whose research is project-based should include an annotated bibliography. *Please note, students wishing to conduct research involving human subjects should refer to the Office of Human Research –* [*https://humanresearch.gwu.edu/*](https://humanresearch.gwu.edu/)

DR projects are undertaken with a Directed Research Supervisor who may be a GW faculty member (typically from Museum Studies, but faculty from other disciplines, programs or departments are allowed) or an outside subject specialist (academic or museum-based). It is the student’s responsibility to engage a Directed Research Supervisor who is willing to undertake prolonged mentoring and guidance.

Students and their Supervisors meet periodically over the course of the semester to monitor progress and discuss the evolution of the project, any challenges, or any needs for readjustment. This most typically occurs in meetings every other week according to a schedule laid out in the proposal period (see below).

## Assessment

DR projects are assessed by examiners external to the Program (such as former Museum Studies professors), who make a grading recommendation for the final research product, based on the following criteria:

o 50% contribution to the field, which may include synthetic or original research (primary sources, interviews, observations in the field, etc.), and/or the application of knowledge to a professional product.

o 25% contextualizing the project within the field, using research in published or otherwise available resources (including relevance and reliability of sources)

o 25% communications, including clarity, cohesion and professionalism of final product (including appropriate use of citations)

Your Supervisor will also provide an evaluation of your work on the project.

## Process

Student interested in registering for Directed Research must complete the following **no later than 2 weeks before the start of the semester in which the DR is occurring**:

* Submit a proposal, accompanied by the curriculum vita (CV) of the Supervisor if they are not GW faculty. A formal proposal is a short prospectus (2-3 pages) that describes the idea for the project; the rationale for pursuing the topic as a Directed Research project; an intended research timeline; and projected deliverables. It must also include a preliminary bibliography indicating that the student has done enough initial research to be assured that the project can be supported by existing research. Your proposal should be presented with the [DR Cover Sheet](#_Directed_Research_Cover) (below).
* Have DR Supervisor and Museum Studies Advisor sign off on the proposal using the Directed Research Cover Sheet.
* Return the approved proposal and DR Cover Sheet to the Program Administrator (cmst@gwu.edu) for filing.

**Before the start of the semester**

* Register for the DR (CMST 6502) (3 credits) [Make sure to register for 3 credits.]

**By the date specified in the Calendar of Events for the semester (December in the Fall and May in the Spring):**

* Submit the work completed to the Museum Studies Advisor. For examples of work products, see below.
* Submit Supervisor’s evaluation of the project and the student’s work on the evaluation form (see here) to the Museum Studies Advisor for grading and to the program administrator (cmst@gwu.edu) for filing.

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### Examples of Projects and associated Work Product

Directed Research projects can take a number of forms, although a research paper is the most common. Research papers are expected to range from 5,000 to 7,500 words (20-30 pages, double-spaced). Other types of projects could be the creation of museum-based curricula, museum policies on a given topic, or exhibition projects. All DRs should include a bibliography, regardless of whether the final product is in the form of a research paper. Students whose research is project-based should include an annotated bibliography.

Some examples of recent Directed Research projects (and work product) are:

* Research paper on emergency preparedness practices for culturally sensitive Native American collections.   
  **Work product:** Finished paper with citations and bibliography.
* Research paper on Absolute Liability in Museum Loans.   
  **Work product:** Finished paper with citations and bibliography.
* Research paper evaluating hands-on exhibitions and recommendations for future policies in light of COVID.   
  **Work product:** Finished paper including policy recommendations with citations and bibliography.
* Exploration of the use of audio in immersive exhibition experiences.   
  **Work product:** Finished paper with citations and bibliography.
* Research on mission and interpretation including programming at historic house museums dedicated to nineteenth-century authors.   
  **Work product:** Finished paper with citations and bibliography.

# **Directed Research Cover Sheet |** CMST 6502

## Corcoran Museum Studies, George Washington University

**Semester Registered:**       **CRN:**

**Student Name:**

**Student email:**

**Student GWID:**

**Proposed Research Title:**

**Proposal attached?** Yes No

**Supervisor Name/Title:**

**Supervisor email:**

**Supervisor phone number:**

**Sponsoring Institution (if applicable):**

**Address:**

**Smithsonian Institution?**  Yes  No

**Supervisor CV attached?**  Yes  No

### Approval

**Supervisor signature:**       **Date:**

**Museum Studies Advisor signature:**       **Date:**

**Notes:**

*Please return this form to the Program Administrator (cmst@gwu.edu) for filing.*

## Information for Supervisors

Thank you for agreeing to supervise a Directed Research project for a student in the Corcoran Museum Studies Program. Directed Research (DR) projects are intended to provide students with an opportunity for in-depth, original research that will enhance their program of study or field of interest. Directed Research projects are the equivalent of a 3-credit class and therefore must represent a substantial undertaking on the part of the student. DRs can take the form of a traditional research paper or be project-based. Project-based DRs are distinct from internships in that they are more self-directed and should make an original contribution to the field. All DRs should include a bibliography, regardless of whether the final product is in the form of a research paper. Students whose research is project-based should include an annotated bibliography. *Please note, students wishing to conduct research involving human subjects should refer to the Office of Human Research –* [*https://humanresearch.gwu.edu/*](https://humanresearch.gwu.edu/)

DR Supervisors act as academic and/or professional mentors to students across the duration of the research project. Students and their Supervisors meet periodically over the course of the semester to monitor progress and discuss the evolution of the project, any challenges, or any needs for readjustment. This most typically occurs in meetings every other week according to a schedule laid out in the proposal period. Supervisors are also expected to provide feedback on draft writing, research direction, and to guide students to seek appropriate resources.

Although the DR Supervisor does not grade the final product, they are asked to evaluate the student’s performance and output. The Supervisor should comment on both the research process, including the professionalism of the student, and the significance of the final project. Appropriate questions to respond to include:

* Did the student work with you on this project in a professional and cordial manner? For example, did they meet with you at agree-upon meetings (or provide advanced notice if they were unable to make a meeting)? Did they attend to timeliness and deadlines? Did they communicate well?
* Does the student’s work make a contribution to the museum field, whether through synthetic or original research and/or through the application of knowledge to a professional product?
* Has the student appropriately situated their work within the field?
* Is the final product clear, cohesive and professional?

*For any questions about this process, please do not hesitate to contact the Museum Studies Program Head at* [*CMST\_Head@gwu.edu*](mailto:CMST_Head@gwu.edu)*.*