

ARCH 1160

The World of Museums: Logistics, Laws and Loans

DUE September 16, 2009

Assignment #1 Watch "Night at the Museum" (the original)

Writing and discussion assignment



"Night at the Museum is a 2006 American adventure comedy film based on the 1993 children's book with the same name by Milan Trenc. It follows a divorced father trying to settle down, impress his son, and find his destiny. He applies for a job as a night watchman at New York City's American Museum of Natural History and subsequently discovers that the exhibits, animated by a magical Egyptian artifact, come to life at night." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Night_at_the_Museum)

The movie is available from Netflix, libraries, and local video rental stores. We will use the film for class discussion about perceptions about the value of museums, stereotypes of museum professionals, and other themes. Keep in mind the YouTube video by Mimi and Kim (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gaFbmuEUdwl>) and the issues that are raised in that video when answering the questions.

Night at the Museum Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the very obvious stereotypes about museums in the film?
2. What staff members are evident in the film, and what is their role in the Museum?
3. What inaccuracies do you notice (examples: things in the wrong time or place)?
4. Where are issues of gender and race evident in the film?
5. Though it changes by the end, what is the nature of this museum in its relationship to community?
6. People seem to have fantasies about staying overnight in a museum (think Lisa Simpson and others as well as this film). Why?
7. What other observations would you make about the film?
8. Does this film help or harm museums? Why?

Be prepared to discuss these questions in class and have a 2-3-page essay addressing the questions. DUE September 16, 2009