Module Description
What does the practice of contemporary curating mean in an international arts institution like Tate? What is the role of a curator, and how do curators negotiate between the wide range of social, political, and economic factors that shape the context within which they operate? What are the decisions, strategies, and approaches that inform and shape the work of curators today?

This module considers the ways in which curators at Tate develop, manage, and engage with the Collection, temporary exhibitions, events, and arts projects within the current global climate, while responding to diverse institutional and non-institutional contexts, histories, as well as geo-political and social conditions.

Course participants develop a critical understanding of contemporary curating practices through a behind-the-scenes look at the ‘management’ role of curators across a diverse range of the museum’s activity.

Across the eleven weeks, participants learn about the different curatorial models in place at the Tate in relation to the permanent collection, exhibition organisation, event management, and audience development. Tate serves as the main case study for this course; however, references and examples of other curatorial models from various private and public arts organisations in the UK and internationally will be brought in for comparative discussion by the tutor.

Teaching and Module Structure
The course takes place in the spring term and consists of ten sessions plus a reading week.

Across the eleven weeks, each session offers a balance of theoretical context introduced by the tutor, more practice-focused presentations from Tate staff on their specific roles and specialisms, class readings, group discussions and visits to the galleries. An opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the museum professionals who devise, implement, and deliver Tate’s exhibitions, displays, and events offers participants a unique and rounded understanding of the skills and expertise required to successfully manage and deliver a diverse curatorial programme, both now and in the future.

The course is organised and led by Alex Hodby in collaboration with the Public Programmes team at Tate Modern.

Location and Visits
The weekly sessions are predominantly based in the Level 1 Seminar Room at Tate Modern. Visits to temporary exhibitions, collection displays and the Stores at Tate are integrated into the structure of the course. Participants are also expected to make independent visits to galleries and special exhibitions at both Tate London sites, and other galleries and museums in London during the course.
Key texts


**Week 1: Tuesday January 19th: 14.00 – 17.00, Level 1 Seminar Room Tate Modern – Introduction to Museum Curating Now course**

This introductory session outlines the aims and outcomes of the course, its structure, weekly themes, visiting speakers and practical task. We start with the investigation of the term ‘curating’ in the context of an art museum by considering key developments in this field and the diverse curatorial models in place. Tate serves as the main case study and resource for this course and it is considered in relation to diverse examples of curatorial practice worldwide.

**Essential Reading**

**Week 2: Tuesday January 26th: 14.00 – 17.00, Level 1 Seminar Room Tate Modern – The Collection: Part 1 (What’s on Display)**

Only 2% of the permanent collection is on display at a particular time due to limited physical spaces of the four Tate sites, various conservation requirements of individual artworks and other institutional commitments. How do curators at Tate decide and manage what goes up on display, when and for how long? This session sheds light on the curatorial processes in place when planning a collection display and the decisions involved in presenting different types of hangs. We consider the various display models from chronological through to monographic and thematic by incorporating visits to the gallery and group discussions.

**Essential Reading**

**Week 3: Tuesday February 02nd: 14.00 – 17.00, Level 1 Seminar Room Tate Modern – Learning & Audiences**

This week looks at the role of the permanent collection in the context of a national art museum. How does the collection reflect the institution’s vision and strategy while addressing its responsibility to a diverse local, national and international audience? With special focus on Tate’s acquisition policy, we learn how a public art collection is built over time responding to the continuously changing landscape of art practice across the globe and the various social, political and economic developments.

**Essential Reading**

**Week 4: Tuesday February 09th:** 14.00 – 17.00, Level 1 Seminar Room Tate Modern – The Collection Part 2 (Behind the Scenes)

Tate has pioneered a broader use of the term ‘curator’ to not only include staff looking after the collection displays and temporary exhibitions but also those responsible for learning and interpretation programmes. Learning is central to Tate’s mission to promote public understanding and enjoyment of British, modern and contemporary art.

In this session we consider how staff at Tate curate contexts and situations in which different types of learning and exchanges between people can occur.

**Essential Reading**

**Week 5: Tuesday February 16th:** 14.00 – 17.00, Level 1 Seminar Room Tate Modern – Planning and Sustainability

What are the financial and economic constraints and enablers of curation? How do curators manage the diverse financial aspects of temporary exhibition projects? This week we explore how Tate is adapting to the current financial climate, focusing on budgets and the various aspects of exhibitions including advocacy, fundraising, sponsorship, loans, partner venues, insurance, ticketing and membership. This session includes dedicated time to focus on the practical task.

**Essential Reading**
- Tate Funding: http://www.tate.org.uk/about/who-we-are/funding

**Week 6: Tuesday February 23rd:** 14.00 – 17.00 – Reading Week: Optional Tate Stores Visit

**Week 7: Tuesday March 1st:** 14.00 – 17.00, Level 1 Seminar Room Tate Modern – Curating Exhibitions: Concept & Research

This session charts the development of Tate’s exhibitions programme, mapping the different types of temporary shows presented across the years. We learn about the different institutional exhibition models ranging in size and focus from mid-career to retrospectives, from live exhibitions to group shows. We scrutinize how exhibition concepts and curatorial approaches are developed. We look at how exhibitions are shaped by the
institution and the role of curators in mediating between the needs and expectations of the artist, the curatorial department, the institution as a whole and the public.

**Essential Reading**


**Week 8: Tuesday March 8th: 14.00 – 17.00, Level 0 McAulay Gallery Tate Modern – Curating Exhibitions: The Practical Side**

This week we consider the practical aspects of the curatorial role, addressing some of the social, political and economic factors that shape the context in which curators operate. We are guided step by step through the practical stages of mounting an exhibition and drawing up an exhibition timeline with key deadlines. This session offers an invaluable insight into how curators collaborate with members of other key staff across Tate including registrars, conservators, art handlers, press, marketing, learning and visitor experience to make the show possible.

**Essential Reading**


**Week 9: Tuesday March 15th: 14.00 – 17.00, Level 0 McAulay Gallery Tate Modern – Working with Artists**

This session explores the ways in which curators work with living artists in putting together an exhibition, film screening, performance, learning programme or a collection display. What are the skills required and approaches that Tate curators assume when collaborating with artists for the different types of projects including solo exhibitions, group shows, monographic displays, live performances through to Turbine Hall commissions? This week includes a dedicated slot for the development of the practical task.

**Essential Reading**


**Week 10: Tuesday March 22nd: 14.00 – 17.00, Level 0 McAulay Gallery Tate Modern – The Future of Museum Curating**

On 17 June 2016 Tate Modern’s long anticipated extension is due to open with 60% more gallery space including the unique Tanks. The new Tate Modern will present a complete
rehang of the permanent collection, offering more space for performance, installation art and learning. This session explores the potential possibilities and challenges that these new spaces offer to the institution’s approach to curating by focusing on recent developments in live art, film and learning. Building on ideas and examples covered across the nine weeks, what are the future trajectories for the broad curatorial practice in an institution like Tate?

**Essential Reading**


**Week 11: Tuesday March 29th: 14.00 – 17.00, Manton Studio Tate Britain – Group presentations and Conclusion**

We conclude the course with presentations of the practical task developed throughout the ten weeks in small groups.
This final session also offers participants a chance to review and evaluate the course, discussing key issues arising across the weeks with an emphasis on developing and exchanging further critical insights and perspectives.