Muse 703—Exhibition Planning and Design
AMS 700, ANTH 793, BIOL 787, GEOL 781, HIST 723

2:30 pm - 5:00 pm, Thursday, room 4074 Wescoe
Lecturer: Bruce Scherting, bruce-s@ku.edu, 864-2300
Office hours: Monday, 11:00am – 12:00pm or by appointment, Spooner Hall, room 107

Introduction
This course explores the planning and design phases of exhibition development in museums, aquariums, and zoos, with an emphasis on interpretative design. Class time will include: lectures, discussion, media presentations, and group work. This course provides motivated students with fundamental preparation for further training as museum professionals.

Exhibition design project (group projects)
The main goal of this course is for students to work collaboratively to plan, design and install an exhibit for a client. This course takes students out of the classroom, across campus and into the community to engage in an immersive project-based learning experience, which results in exhibits and on-line assets for the host institution. A team-based approach is employed where students engage in experiential learning as co-developers, designers and project managers working with their client and staff, content specialists and vendors in participatory problem-solving and project implementation. Though this process students learn to negotiate responsibilities and improve interpersonal team building skills, project management, communication, concept visualization and visual thinking skills, as well as how to build professional relationships.

Completion of the project will include research, writing label copy, planning documents, budgets, producing concept drawings, prototypes any other materials necessary to effectively communicate project ideas. The end result is the installation of an exhibit. Classroom lectures, and assignments are designed to aid in the development of your project, explore the design process, develop interpretative strategies/materials, and address visitor needs in order to create successful informal learning experiences. To do well, it is important to attend all classes and synthesize the ideas presented in the readings and classroom discussions into your project. This is a semester long project and the materials you hand and present at the end of the class need to reflect a semesters worth of thought and effort.

Required texts
- Museum Exhibition Planning and Design course pack of articles from professional journals (KU bookstore).

Assessment of learning
Grades are based on the three project development assignments, the final exhibit installation and classroom participation. All project materials will be evaluated on the incorporation of reading and discussion materials into your project development, the critical analysis of project objectives, the concise expression of ideas, the quality of visual materials, originality, organization of information, and creative problem solving. Peer evaluation is part of the learning and assessment process for the exhibition design project and associated assignments (see peer grading attachment for more information.) Full attendance is required. Classroom discussion and participation are expected.
- 15% attendance and participation
- 45%, three portfolio reviews (15% each). Includes peer evaluation.
- 40%, final project and presentation
Grading system

A = Superior
B = Above Average
C = Average
D = Below Average
F = Failing

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- Please see me after class or during my office hours if you that require some modification
  of seating, testing, or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements may be made.

Project development checklist, portfolio reviews

Exhibition planning and design is an iterative process. The assignments and portfolio reviews are designed to help clarify your exhibition ideas throughout the semester and produce final materials for an exhibition installation at the end of the semester.

Phase 1, first draft of planning documents

Meet with client and instructor as necessary

1. Exhibit context.
   - Description of where the exhibition will be located? Challenges, concerns, possible solutions.

2. Working title.
   - Present several options.

3. Communication goals / purpose of the exhibition.
   Clear communication goals are very important for defining scope of work and design team objectives.
   - Articulate in paragraph form what you want to communicate to your audience about the subject.
   - Define intended audience. What is the profile of their visitation?
   - Craft a "big idea" statement.

4. Exhibit outline.
   - The outline provides a starting point to develop exhibit/sectional headers or paragraph titles that will make apparent the content of the exhibition at a quick glance. Will visitors be able to read these and come away with a general idea of what the exhibition is about?
   - Define the important topic and sub-topical areas of your subject.

5. Exhibit script, first draft.
   - Articulate in paragraph form the story you are going to tell (word document for comments and edits).

6. Thumbnail sketches of exhibit ideas with measurements.
   - Floor plan keyed to exhibit outline, exhibit elevation drawings, graphic ideas, inspiration examples, etc.

7. Preliminary list of exhibit objects, images and bibliography.
   - Photo document objects. Include dimensional information (W x H x D) and conservation requirements.
   - Include possible photographic and graphic image ideas and sources.
   - Document all reference materials.
Phase 2, revisions of planning documents

Meet with client and instructor as necessary

1. Submit revised Phase 1 planning documents that reflect further exhibit development in response to client and instructor feedback.

2. Plan view and exhibit case drawings to scale with objects and text panel placement.
   - Drawings keyed to exhibit planning document (outline).
   - Exhibit color scheme.

3. Label (design hierarchy) and graphic prototypes.
   - Provide draft label copy (word document for comments and edits), keyed to plan view and exhibit case drawings as needed.
   - Label prototypes and graphics examples: color/design schemes, sizes, formats, materials, and installation method.
   - Font examples, point sizes, styles, etc.

4. Preliminary budget.
   - Materials, printing costs, services, etc.

5. Ideas for extending exhibition content/experience beyond the physical exhibit space.
   - Social media, community engagement, collaboration with other entities, public events, programming, walk-away materials etc.

Phase 3, FINAL REVIEW of planning documents

Meet with client and instructor as necessary

1. Submit revised Phase 2 planning documents that reflect further exhibit development in response to client and instructor feedback.

2. Develop and present promotional materials for the exhibit/event. Coordinate with client.

3. Complete installation.

Exhibition installation review

1. Attend all on-site exhibition project reviews with clients.
   - Review locations and times to be determined after mid-term.