

Faculty of Information, University of Toronto

Exhibition Project MSL4000Y

Thursdays:
9 am – 12 pm
Fall 2015 – Winter 2016

Location Bissell 538

Matthew Brower

Office Hours: Thursdays from 2 pm – 3:30 pm in Bissell 609

matthew.brower@utoronto.ca

416-978-3035

TAs: Rebecca Noone and Hillary Walker-Gugan

Course Description

This is a second-year, two-term project course structured around praxis (critically engaged and reflective practice). The purpose of the course is to provide students with significant practical field experience while engaging them in critical analyses of that practice. Class time will be divided between project development and the critique of the institutional frameworks, cultural conditions, and social, economic and ideological forces that shape praxis. Students are required to develop and deliver an approved course project (either an exhibition, or an exhibition related project such as an interpretive plan, a collections survey, or other approved project). Students are also required to write a term paper demonstrating critical engagement with the research and production of their project.



Image: Snæbjörnsdóttir/Wilson, A Survey of British Taxidermic Polar Bears, Spike Island, Bristol, 2004.
<http://snaebjornsdottirwilson.com/category/projects/nanoq/>

Course Objectives

This course will:

- Provide students with a significant field experience that will engage them in critical analysis of museological practice.

- Mentor students in the development and production of a museum-related project.
- Ensure students develop knowledge of the appropriate resources and skills to carry out their projects and research.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students who have successfully completed the course will be able to:

1. Formulate an exhibition thesis
2. Develop a project plan and budget for a project
3. Publically present and defend a project proposal
4. Critically reflect on their museological practice
5. Constructively engage with and contribute to an ongoing project
6. Work professionally with partner organizations and groups to realize a project

Relation of CLOs to Program Learning Outcomes

Students will

1. gain an applied understanding of professional roles and responsibilities through interacting with stakeholders
2. gain an applied understanding of museum best practices in mounting their projects
3. learn to innovate in response to change as their projects develop
4. learn to communicate effectively within a multi-stakeholder environment using content, form and media
5. learn to evaluate their progress and effectiveness in the exhibition process
6. learn to organize resources, people, and finances to realize their projects
7. learn to manage groups and expectations both within their groups and in relation to stakeholders

http://current.ischool.utoronto.ca/system/files/user/108/mmst_vision_-_rev._march_7_2014_0.pdf/

Recommended Readings

1. Lord, Barry and Maria Piacente. (2014). *The Manual of Museum Exhibitions*. London: Rowan and Littlefield. On Reserve in Inforum (Call number 069.5 M294M2)
2. Black, Graham. (2005). *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement*. London: Routledge. On Reserve in Inforum (069 B627E)
3. Dean, David. (2002) *Museum Exhibition: Theory and Practice*, London: Taylor and Francis. UToronto ebook

Other readings as noted

Assessment

- **Proposal = 10%** **DUE: Week 7 or 8**
This is a 1,000-word written proposal for your exhibition. The proposal will outline the thesis and justification for the exhibition, its completion date, the status of any partnerships or resources required to complete the exhibition, a detailed and justified exhibition budget, and a timeline or critical path outlining the steps to the exhibition's completion.
- **Presentation= 10%** **DUE: Week 7 or 8**
This is a 5 minute presentation that pitches your exhibition to a panel of outside experts. The presentation should make a focused case for your exhibition. It should lay out the thesis and justification for the exhibition and explain why it should be completed and funded.

- **Update Meetings = 5%** **DUE: Weeks 15, 20, 24 or 26.**
 These are meetings scheduled during the Group Project Sessions in the second term. Every group should schedule at least 2 meetings with us to discuss exhibition progress, issues with partner institutions, and group dynamics.
- **Progress Reports = 5%** **DUE: Weeks 14, 20**
 These are 2-3 page formal progress reports on your exhibition. They should include updated timelines and be accompanied with appended with draft documents as appropriate. These are due at the end of the first semester and 1 month before the opening date of your exhibition.
- **Exhibition Option = 50%** **DUE: No later than Weeks 21-25**
 The appropriate format of delivery and criteria for evaluation will be determined in the context of each exhibition. The exhibition is worth 35% of your final grade.
 Those students who select an exhibition must also complete a 10–15 page report. The report is worth 15% of your grade. Guidelines for the paper will be handed out and discussed in class. The paper is due at the end of the second term.
- **Stakeholder Report = 5%** **DUE: No later than Weeks 21-25**
 A 1-2 page report on the project written for exhibition stakeholders on the process and results of the exhibition.
- **Exhibition Description on Display Case = 5%**
 Students are responsible for submitting the material for a case study of their exhibition to the online archive.
- **Class Participation = 10%**
 Marks for class participation will be awarded to students who come to class prepared (that is, having read and grappled with the assigned texts) and who engage with both the topic at hand and with their classmates in a supportive yet self-consciously critical manner. This includes the presentation of work in progress to the class and constructive critical response to other groups' projects. Students are expected to attend all classes. If a student is absent from more than one class, s/he is responsible for contacting the course directors to discuss reasons for the lapse in attendance and, if necessary, plans for making up missed lectures and assignments.

General

Exhibitions are normally done as a group. Generally speaking, there is a minimum of 2 members per exhibition and a maximum of 5. Exhibition-related projects can be solo.

Note that an exhibition with an opening date later than the end of class (April 6) may mean the students involved will be unable to convocate in June unless arrangements are made with the instructor.

Grading: Please consult the iSchool's Grade Interpretation Guidelines

(<http://current.ischool.utoronto.ca/grade-interpretation>) and the University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy

(<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>). These documents will form the basis for grading in the course.

Writing Support: As stated in the iSchool's Grade Interpretation Guidelines, "work that is not well written and grammatically correct will not generally be considered eligible for a grade in the A range, regardless of its quality in other respects". With this in mind, please make use of the writing support provided to graduate students by the SGS Office of English Language and Writing Support

(<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/English-Language-and-Writing-Support.aspx>). The services are designed to target the needs of both native and non-native speakers and all programs are free. Please consult the current workshop schedule (<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Current-Years-Courses.aspx>) for more information.

Academic integrity: Please consult the University's site on Academic Integrity (<http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>). The iSchool has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism as defined in section B.I.1.(d) of the University's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjun011995.pdf>). You should acquaint yourself with the Code. Please review the material in Cite it Right and if you require further clarification, consult the site How Not to Plagiarize (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>). Cite it Right covers relevant parts of the U of T *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (1995)*. It is expected that all iSchool students take the Cite it Right workshop and the online quiz. Completion of the online Cite it Right quiz should be made prior to the second week of classes. To review and complete the workshop, visit the orientation portion of the iSkills site: uoft.me/iskills

Accommodations: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or a health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services Office (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>) as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services staff are available by appointment to assess needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let them and I know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Syllabus

Note: Based on the availability of guest speakers the order of classes may be subject to change.

Week 1
Sept.15

Overview

This class provides a brief overview of the course goals, format, materials and assessment processes as well as an introductory lecture on praxis and exhibit theory.

Guest speakers on past projects
--

In-class Readings:

Lord and Piacente, page 2-5

Week 2
Sept. 22

Project Models and Possibilities

This lecture addresses the different goals and expectations of an exhibition project and an exhibition-related project, clarifies their similarities and differences, and provides a number of examples of each. Guest speakers will present project possibilities to the class. Students with projects currently underway will be asked to present a brief overview of their work.

Recommended Readings:

Lord and Piacente, pages 7-21.
Black, pages 186-204.

Possible project location guest speakers could include: Canadian Jewish Archive, Canadian Language Museum, Aurora Museum and Historical Society, Heritage Toronto, Campbell House Museum, University of Toronto Scientific Instruments Collection, John B. Aird Gallery
--

Week 3
Sept 29

Developing an Exhibition Brief / sharpening a Curatorial Thesis

This class is devoted to developing and sharpening student project ideas into workable project frameworks. The class will begin the process of putting together the exhibition or project proposal by outlining the expectations for the proposal.

Recommended Readings:

Miles, R. S. et al. *The Design of Educational Exhibits*, London: British Museum. Pages 43-5.
 Lord and Piacente, pages 23-36, 241-9.
 Black, pages 239-265.

Week 4
 Oct. 6

Critical Path and Project Management

This lecture presents the key steps in developing a workable critical path and discusses a range of time management strategies.

Recommended Readings:

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_03.htm (planning tools)
 Lord and Piacente, Pages 379-392
 Black, pages 230-237.

Guest speaker: Valentine Moreno, Art Gallery of Ontario
--

Week 5
 Oct. 13

Budgeting

This class looks at the financial aspects of exhibitions and helps students prepare their exhibition budgets.

Guest speaker: Rebecca Gimmi, University of Toronto Art Museum

Recommended Reading:

Lord and Piacente, Pages 373-8

Week 6
 Oct. 20

Graphic Design

This class looks at how to write a design brief; innovative materials for exhibit design; design cues and software solutions; and general tips for good design.

Guest speaker: Rachel Wong, Designer, Aga Khan Museum
--

Recommended Reading:

Victoria Newhouse, "Placing Art," in *Art and the Power of Placement*, Montacelli Press, 2005, 212-283.
 Lord and Piacente, 314-321.

Additional Resources:

Graphic design is a complex field, a good recent primer is Lupton, Ellen and Jennifer Cole Phillips. (2008). *Graphic Design: The New Basics*. New York : Princeton Architectural Press ; Baltimore : Maryland Institute College of Art, [NC997 .L87 2008](#) Moffat
 An on-line resource from UofT is [Golombisky, Kim. \(2010\). White Space Is Not Your Enemy: A Beginner's Guide to Communicating Visually through Graphic, Web and Multimedia Design, Focal Press: San Diego: Elsevier Science & Technology Books](#)

Week 7
 Oct. 27

Project Presentations

Students begin presenting their project proposals.

The presentations will be made to a panel of experts who will respond to the projects.

Students submit their project proposals, including a budget and timeline/critical path.

*****Project Proposals Due*****

Week 8
 Nov. 3

Presentations

Students continue presenting their project proposals.

Week 9
 Nov. 10

Reading Week November 7 – 11

Week 10
 Nov. 17

Exhibition Planning and Design

This class examines how to meaningfully arrange and source objects and texts to create an exhibition narrative.

Recommended Reading:

Edson, Gary and David Dean. (1994) *The Handbook For Museums*, London; New York: Routledge. Pages 145 – 159. 069.5 E24H

Miles et al. pages 56-63.

Reference:

Agnew, Ella (1991) *Legaleasy: a step-by-step legal guide to collecting for Canadian art galleries and museums*, Toronto: Published by the Ontario Association of Art Galleries in collaboration with the Canadian Museum Association, 1991. 344.0971093 A273

Week 11
Nov. 24

Exhibition Text

This class looks at issues in writing exhibition didactics including labels and wall texts.

Recommended Reading:

Lord and Piacente, 275-281.

Additional Resources:

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/Writing-Text-and-Labels>

http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/library/i40502_3.pdf

http://media.vam.ac.uk/media/documents/legacy_documents/file_upload/10808_file.pdf

Beverly Serrell, "Part 1," in *Exhibit labels: an interpretive approach*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

Week 12
Dec. 1

Media and Communications

This class looks at the issues involved in promoting and publicizing exhibitions. We will also begin discussing the exhibition class poster and reception.

Week 13
Dec. 8

Event Planning

This class covers issues in event planning for exhibitions including budgeting, invitations, and catering. It also begins the discussion for planning the class celebration.

B R E A K

Week 14
Jan. 12

Critical Praxis 1

This is the first of the class-directed praxis and practice sessions. Students will present work in progress for class discussion and critique

***** Progress Report # 1 Due *****

Week 15
Jan. 19

Group Project Session I

This session is devoted to group work on projects. We will meet with groups individually during this session.

Week 16
Jan. 26

Independent work on Exhibitions/Project

No class meeting.

Week 17
Feb. 2

Critical Praxis II

This is the second of the class-directed praxis and practice sessions. Students will present work in progress for class discussion and critique.

Week 18
Feb. 9

Independent group work on Exhibitions/Project

No class meeting.

Week 19
Feb. 16

Group Project Session II

This session is devoted to group work on projects. We will meet with groups individually during this session.

***** Progress Report # 2 Due *****

Week 20
Feb. 23

Reading Week February 20-24

Week 21
Mar. 2

Independent group work on Exhibitions/Project

No class meeting.

Week 22
Mar. 9

Critical Praxis III

This is the third of the class-directed praxis and practice sessions. Students will present work in progress for class discussion and critique.

***** Project update Due Today *****

Week 23
Mar. 16

Independent group work on Exhibitions/Project

No class meeting.

Week 24
Mar. 23

Group Project Session III

This session is devoted to group work on projects. We will meet with groups individually during this session as needed.

Week 25
Mar. 30

Independent group work on Exhibitions/Project

No class meeting.

Week 26
Apr. 6

Group Evaluation of Projects and Course

Students will present work in progress for class discussion and critique.

***** Final Paper Due Today for Exhibition-related Projects *****

April 17th is the iSchool deadline for submitting convocating student grades.