Narrative Environments

Designing spaces to communicate stories and connect with communities

DES 187 Narrative Environments, Spring Quarter 2019

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 4:00–5:00 p.m. or by appointment

Course Overview: Design of storytelling environments and multi-sensory experiences for cultural, commercial, entertainment and public spaces. Interpretive planning and design for specific exhibit audiences. The manipulation of objects and the communication of complex ideas in the exhibition environment.

Course Description: Narrative environments are public spaces that are designed to communicate a story, deliver a message, provide entertainment, create a sense of place, or sell a product. Examples include exhibitions (museum or tradeshow), transaction experiences (store or restaurant), entertainment venues (theater or theme park), or events (interventions, festivals or parties). Designer's for these spaces are articulate storytellers who use strategies to engage, inform and entertain multiple audience types. Each environment varies by region and country, dictated by unique cultural differences, historical and social contexts, and public consumer markets. This course will examine the expanded role of the designer as entrepreneur, inventor, protagonist, communicator of information, and shaper of style and place.

Multiple techniques are available to convey content and shape spatial environments. Multi-sensory tools such as graphics, objects, sound, audio, light, video, touch and role playing can be used in varying degrees to create experiences that extend from the contemplative to the highly participatory. This course will introduce a range of design techniques and methods, and how they are appropriated into a storytelling environment. A series of projects will tackle the fluid boundaries between public art and public design, and the emergence of the experience economy, where culture, commerce and entertainment are packaged for public consumption in a variety of hybrid display venues and theme based environments.

Each project will be explored using professional design standards and techniques to introduce visual and written design research, spatial and information organization, problem solving methods, sketch and computer visualization, model making, prototypes, object staging principles, and budget analysis. The means and methods of designing narrative environments will be explored through lectures, field trips, studio assignments, critiques and fieldwork. While pragmatic concerns will be stressed in all phases, experimentation and a *high* level of creativity is a requirement. Individual instruction and group discussion will occur regularly to foster the generation of ideas and monitor progress.

Course Objectives

- To gain knowledge in creating multi-sensory experiences for the built/natural environment
- To explore audience driven and human-centered content delivery methods and narratives
- To provide tools, resources and action steps for academic and professional advancement

Summary of Course Topics

History of exhibition/experience design; audiences and learning strategies, human-centered and accessible design solutions; interpretive planning, writing and methods; spatial planning and object staging; interactive, participatory and hands-on exhibits; typography, imagery, symbols and pictograms; color, size, shape and form; design intent, style guides and design specification packages; exhibit materials, budget, fabrication, installation and maintenance.

Reading See Bibliography and Reference List

Course Schedule

(Classes are T/TR from 9:00 – 11:50 a.m. in Cruess 208 unless noted otherwise)

WEEK 1	Apr 2:	Course introduction/Overview of project 1
	Apr 4:	Overview of project 2.1 and 2.2/Studio/Lecture
WEEK 2	Apr 9:	**Project 1 due (presentation and critique)**
	Apr 11:	Field Trip - 9:30 a.m. Aerospace Museum of California
WEEK 3	Apr 16:	Studio/Project 2.1 and 2.2 overview (Professor Stephen Robinson, Sarah O'Meara, and Jennifer Donofrio)
	Apr 17:	4:30 p.m. Jenny Sabin gives the Alberini Design Lecture
	Apr 18:	Studio/Computer lab/Fieldwork
WEEK 4	Apr 23:	Studio/Computer lab/Fieldwork
	Apr 25:	**Project 2.1 and 2.2 due (phase 1: research)**
WEEK 5	Apr 30:	Studio/Computer lab/Fieldwork
	May 2:	Studio/Computer lab/Fieldwork
WEEK 6	May 7:	**Project 2.1 and 2.2 due (phase 2: concept)**
	May 9:	Studio/Computer lab/Fieldwork (mid-term check-in)
WEEK 7	May 14:	Studio/Computer lab/Fieldwork
	May 16:	Studio/Computer lab/Fieldwork
WEEK 8	May 21:	**Project 2.1 and 2.2 due (phase 3: development)**
	May 23:	Studio/Computer lab/Fieldwork
WEEK 9	May 28:	Studio/Computer lab/Fieldwork
	May 30:	Studio/Computer lab/Fieldwork
WEEK 10	Jun 4:	**Project 2.1 due (phase 4: presentation)**
	Jun 6:	**Project 2.2 due (phase 4: presentation) - Aerospace Museum of CA**
	Jun 9:	**Project 2.1 (final public event) - City of Davis**

Schedule is subject to change.

Pre-Requisite Courses

DES 185 (Exhibition Design), DES 186 (Environmental Graphics), or consent of instructor

Grading

Class participation (20%); Project 1 (10%); Project 2 (70%)

A = 90–100					
B = 80–89	100–97 A+	<90–87 B+	<80–77 C+	<70–67 D+
C = 70–79	<97–93 A	<87–83 B	<77–73 C	<67–63 D
D = 60–69	<93–90 A-	<83–80 B-	<73–70 C-	<63–60 D-

Grades are determined by:

- your work, methodology and design originality.
- your ability to explore, develop and refine a wide range of solutions.
- your ability to clearly communicate your ideas in person, in images and words.
- your active participation, both in critiques and studio work sessions.
- your response to criticism.
- your craft and professionalism.
- your notebooks and sketches.
- your attendance and completing assignments by the specified deadlines.

Your final grade is not necessarily an accumulation of assignment grades, but rather a weighted consideration of the above. Grades will be posted on **Canvas**.

Materials and Equipment

You are required to have the following materials: sketchbook/tracing pad/roll and markers, digital camera, Olfa knife and blades, metal ruler and self-healing cutting mat, white drafting tape, UHU Tac, model making, glues and mounting materials as needed.

Attendance and Etiquette

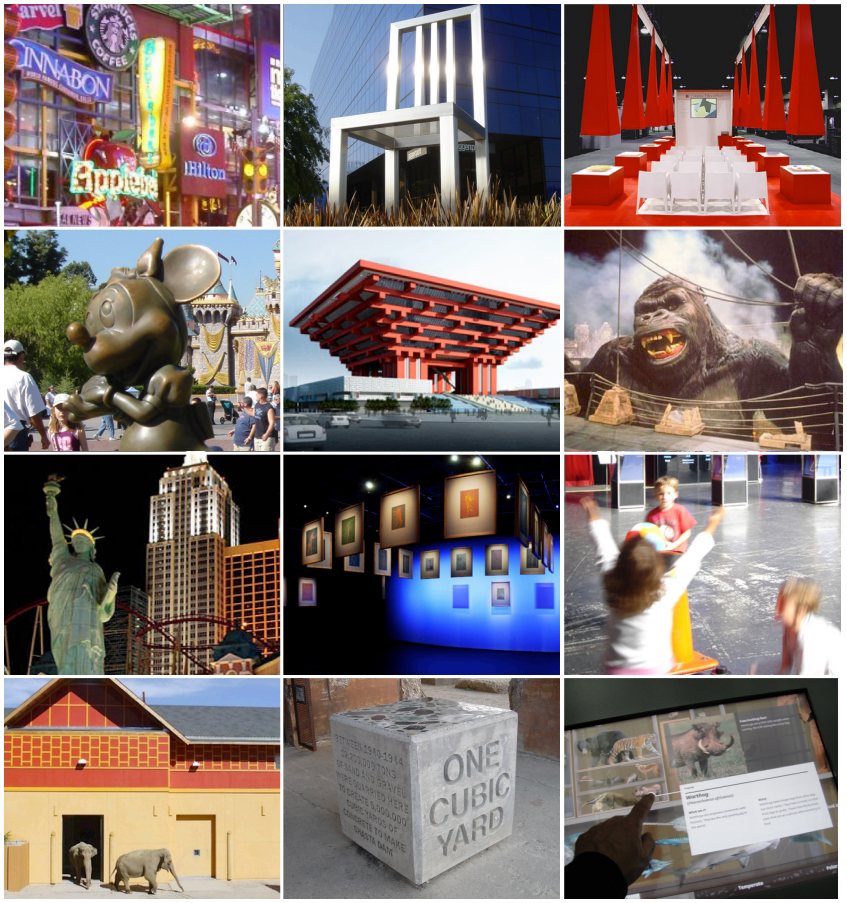
Attendance is required for all classes unless instructed otherwise. Please be on time for all classes, lectures, studio work, field trips and critiques. If you are not on time and consistently late this will lower your final attendance/participation grade for each time it occurs. Remain for the entire duration of the class unless excused. Email instructor/TA with a valid reason prior to missing a class. Two absences allowed if notified in advance, unless agreed otherwise.

Please attend all presentations and meet the deadlines. Late work will not be accepted and you will forfeit a grade. If necessary, present a project incomplete and on time rather than not at all. IMPORTANT - Studio time is valuable, do not use it to work on non-course related projects.

Mobile phones, tablets and laptops should be closed during lecture, discussion and field trips unless they are exclusively being used for note taking. Design work should be conducted on laptops and lab computers only with the appropriate software and not on mobile phones.

What is a Narrative Environment?

A story purposefully embedded in the environment, that can be expressed through multiple explicit and implicit means. – Tricia Austin



To help frame the exhibition/narrative environment, refer to "Engaging Spaces" by Kossmann.dejong in the course reference materials on *Canvas.*

Types of Exhibition Environments

Cultural environments include museums and historical sites. These are highly narrative spaces where the principal means of visitor communication are exhibit based experiences, which are presented in an open-ended, informative and educational manner. The California Academy of Sciences is a good example.

Commercial environments include retail spaces, trade shows, corporate displays and restaurants; any space that is communicating a brand story and trying to sell you something. Starbucks is a good example, where a consistent customer experience is conveyed through staff, decor, graphics, music and smell.

Entertainment environments include theme parks and attractions; any place where storytelling is delivered primarily through interaction. Disneyland is the archetypal example and sports arenas, theaters and museums are influenced by how Disney manages crowds, entertains diverse audiences, and sells fun.

Community/Civic environments include public parks, streets, libraries, government buildings, churches; these are open-ended, publicly funded sites that are usually free. Central Park is a good example, free and open to all.

Types of Exhibition Storytelling, Audience Engagement and Interpretive Methods

Contemplative (looking/viewing) is a static form of communication that uses predominantly two-dimensional graphic elements such as words, images and illustrations. Less than 10% of people actually read messages in the built environment.

Sensory (feeling/touching) is a mode of exhibition interpretation that uses passive physical elements, such as sound, smell, and light to deliver content. These techniques use a highly emotive form of communication that can transcend multiple languages, cultural identities and demographic forces.

Discovery (doing/making) is as an active method of interpretation that uses hands-on elements such as playing games, simulated rides, solving puzzles and dress-up. Studies show that 90% of people learn through doing and are far more likely to absorb an idea when they physically have to discover the content or answer a question.

Participatory (exchanging/modifying) is an interpretive method that uses reciprocal interactive elements such as computer kiosks, activities and games, facilitated discussions, talks and role playing. Science centers, theme parks and expositions use these techniques to create immersive and memorable experiences.

THE BASICS

Designing for Your Audience

What do people want?
To seek experiences that are functional, educational, entertaining, esthetic, escapist, and social

Exhibition design deals with the disposition of objects in space: their conceptual and physical relationship to one another and to the observer. – Abbott Miller

AUDIENCE FACTORS

Audience Contextual Experiences
Falk and Dierking, 1992

Personal Context: prior knowledge, experiences, motivation, values

Sociocultural Context: cultural background, interactions with others

Physical Context: environmental factors, design, comfort, accessibility

Understanding Audience Needs
"Visitors' Bill of Rights" by Judy Rand, 1996

Comfort; Orientation; Welcoming & Belonging; Enjoyment; Socializing; Respect; Communication; Learning; Choice & Control; Challenge & Confidence; Revitalization

Plan for Audience Behavior
People who visit exhibition environments can be described as:

Streakers (spend seconds)
Strollers (spend minutes)
Studiers (spend hours)

Cater to Audience Behavior
Bernice McCarthy, 1997

Imaginative people: seek meaning, ask "why?"
Analytical people: seek facts and ask "what".
Common people: ask "how does it work".
Dynamic people: ask "what if...".

OR

The Visual Learner: Image based exhibits that use visual impact rather than words

The Auditory Learner: Verbal communication based exhibits that use sound and narration

The Kinesthetic Learner: hands-on exhibits that allow for touch and physical interaction

DESIGN FACTORS

Universal Design Principles
The Center for Universal Design, 1997

1: Equitable use: design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

2: Flexibility in use: design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

3: Simple and intuitive use: design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills or current concentration level.

4: Perceptible information: design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

5: Tolerance for error: design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

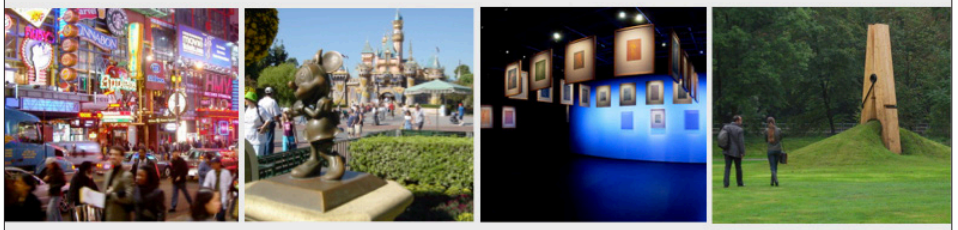
6: Low physical effort: design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

7: Size and space: design provides approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture or mobility.

Design Thinking Process
Courtesy of IDEO

Empathize: understand user/audience
Define: research problem, challenge, need
Ideate: create various concepts
Prototype: test most promising concepts
Refine: select the best solutions
Implement: design and production

Exhibition Environments



Commercial	Entertainment	Cultural	Public/Civic
Environments that sell something	Environments that inspire and sell fun	Environments that inform, educate and inspire	Environments that enhance experiences
Retail	Theme Parks	Museums	Parks
Trade show	Events	Visitor Centers	Streets
Branding	Sports venues	Historical Sites	Libraries
Corporate	Theaters	Zoos	Worship
Restaurants	Expositions	Aquariums	Government

Interpretive Methods: Analog

PASSIVE
Personal Experience

INTERACTIVE
Social/Reciprocal Experience

Contemplative	Sensory	Discovery	Participatory
Looking/Viewing	Feeling/Touching	Doing/Making	Exchanging/Modifying

The Role of the Exhibition Designer

1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 2020

Solitary	Commercial	In-house	Contract/Global	Trans-disciplinary
Herbert Bayer	Misha Black (DRU)	Frank Oppenheimer (Exploratorium)	Ralph Appelbaum (RAA)	Kossmann.dejong
El Lissitzky	Charles & Ray Eames	Gill Ravenel (National Gallery of Art)	Event Communication	Tamschick Media+Space
Frederick Kiesler	James Gardner	Margaret Hall (British Museum)	Atelier Brückner	Local Projects

Anatomy of an Exhibit Graphic

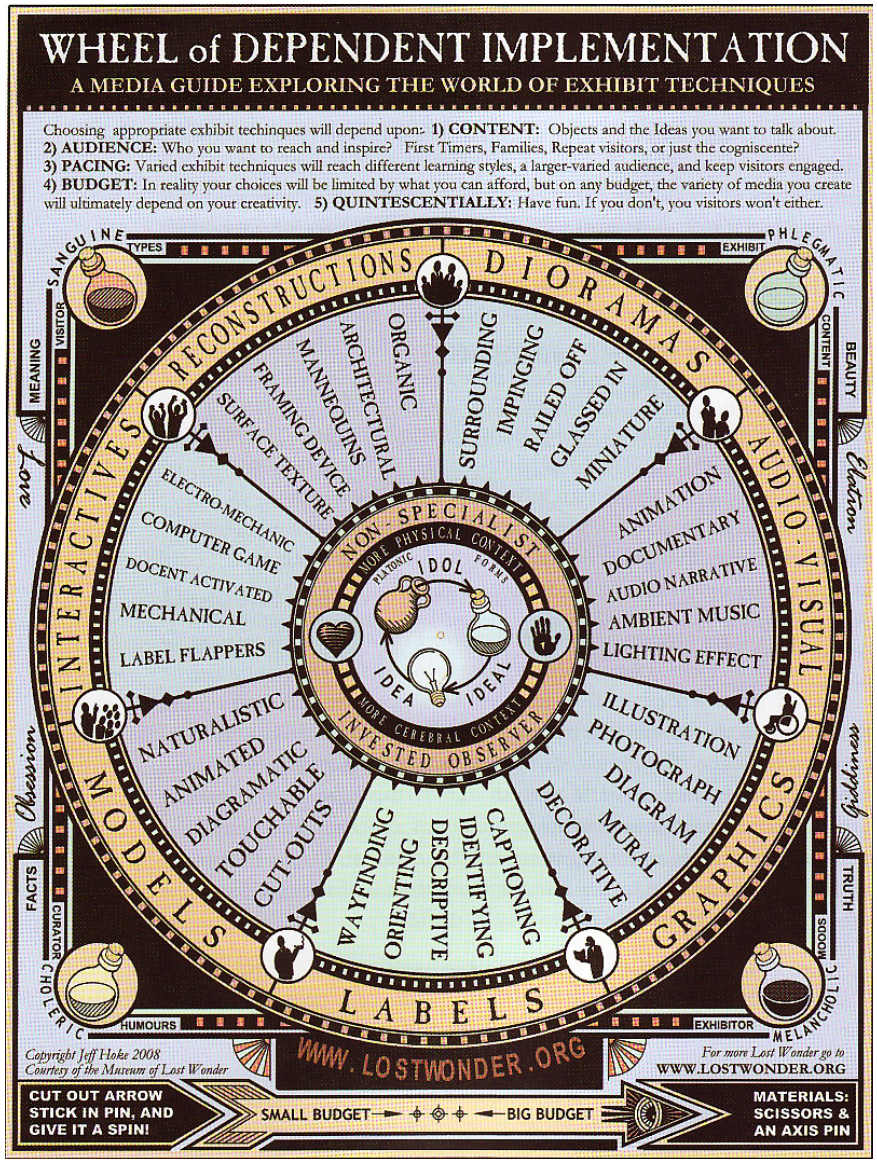
Five basic design considerations

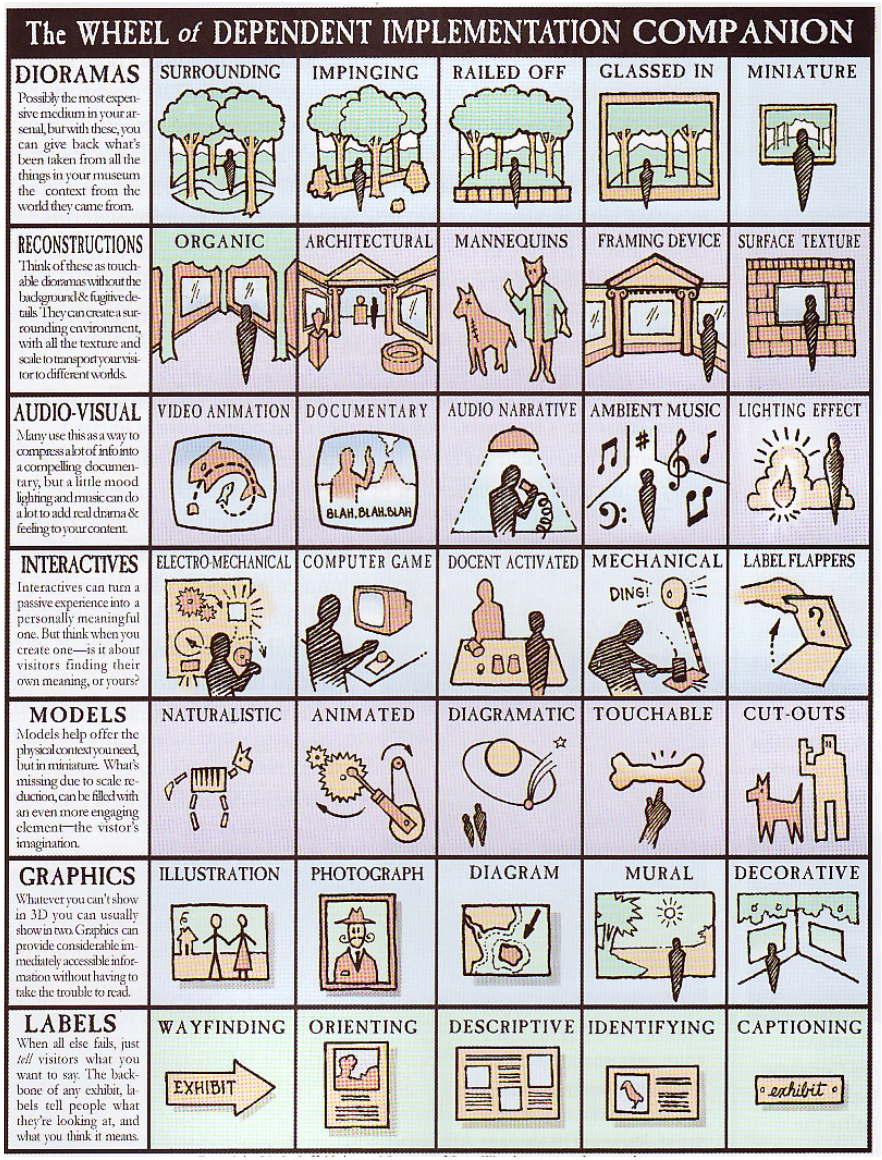
1 2 3 4 5

Message	Placement	Graphics	Form	Accessibility
Voice	Location	Typography	Shape	Universal Design
Word count	Orientation	Grid	Size	Legibility
Grade level	Plane of vision	Symbols/Pictograms	Materials	ADA
	Lighting	Arrows/Lines		
		Map/Image		
		Color		

Reference

Courtesy of the Museum of Lost Wonder by Jeff Hoke, 2008.





CREATIVE JOURNAL

Creativity, Ideation, Mind Mapping and Visual Thinking

Sketchbook by designer Ann Willoughby

Experience design is transactive and transformative: every experience designer is an experiencer; and every experiencer, via his or her reactions, a designer of experience in turn.

– Futures: Experience Design, California Association of Museums

CREATIVITY PRESENTATIONS: DUE JUNE 6, 2019

Keep a journal that contains notes, ideas, sketches, drawings, diagrams, photographs and clippings that respond to class based creative exercises and exploratory work for all course projects (this journal will not be graded, it is for your own personal use).

Creativity is at the heart of good design, it is a quality that is highly valued, but not always well understood. Those who have studied and written about creativity stress the importance of a kind of flexibility of mind. Studies have shown that creative individuals are more spontaneous, expressive and less controlled or inhibited. They also tend to trust their own judgement and ideas—they are not afraid of trying something new.

A common misunderstanding equates creativity with originality. In fact, there are very few absolutely original ideas. Most of what seems to be original is simply a bringing together of previously existing concepts in a new way. Psychologist and author Arthur Koestler referred to this merging of apparently unrelated ideas as *bissociation*. The fact that creative thinking is based on a knowledge of previous work in one's field is the justification for teaching the history and foundations of a given field as a resource for future research and creative work. Thus, creativity is the ability to see connections and relationships where others have not. Thinking in intuitive, non-verbal, and visual terms has been shown to enhance creativity in all disciplines. See: *An Introduction to Design Thinking: Process Guide*.

This journal begins its life on the first day of the course. Over the next ten weeks multiple rapid creative design challenges will be assigned, some of these will be studio based, others will occur in the field. A successful journal (hard bound sketchbook 8.5 x 11 inches) shows experimentation and steady progress throughout the course. It contains sketches and drawings (observational, transformative and speculative) and has few blank pages by the last day of instruction.

Storytellers and Protagonists

When you're designing your experience or setting up visitors' interaction with staff, always remember to ask, "Is it fun?" Does it engage all five senses?" and "Is it unexpected".

- Stephanie Weaver, Creating the Visitor Experience

PROJECT 01 – DUE APRIL 9, 2019

STEP 1: Working independently present an example of a narrative environment. Use the design studios below for inspiration. Research the project and what makes it exemplary.

STEP 2: Develop a three page PDF presentation that includes (1) project title slide, (2) brief written summary of the selected project noting design features and the audience experience, (3) at least one image that conveys the project. Use images, film and media links if available.

STEP 3: Upload as a single PDF file to Canvas, identified with your last name and assignment number in the title (187W19_lastname_01.pdf).

Listed here are some of the most progressive multidisciplinary design studios, artist collectives, architects, builders and makers with links to their work. Experience design is a broad and complex field. Studying best precedence examples provides an introduction to this dynamic discipline. See course bibliography for further examples.

1. Obscura, San Francisco
http://obscuradigital.com/

2. Walt Disney Imagineering, Burbank
https://aboutdisneyparks.com/about/around-the-world/walt-disney-imagineering

3. Studio Drift, Amsterdam
http://www.studiodrift.com/

4. Artichoke, London
http://artichoke.uk.com/

5. Burning Man
http://burningman.org/

6. Pure+Applied, New York
http://pureandapplied.com/

7. Snarkitecture, New York
http://www.snarkitecture.com/

8. The Decorators, London
http://the-decorators.net/

9. Daily Tous les Jours, Montreal
http://www.dailytouslesjours.com/

10. Simparch, Chicago
http://www.simparch.org/category/simparch/

11. Mel Chin, Houston
http://melchin.org/oeuvre/category/work/3d/installations

12. Studio Joseph, New York
http://www.studiojoseph.com/work/exhibition/

13. Studio Makkink & Bey, Amsterdam
http://www.studiomakkinkbey.nl/

14. Studio Matthews, Seattle
http://www.studiomatthews.com/

PROJECT 2.1: CONTEMPLATIVE, SENSORY, DISCOVERY AND PARTICIPATORY

Searching for Stories

We focus on engaging audiences through emotion and technology, developing new ways for people to interact with cities and one another.

- Jake Barton, Local Projects, 2014

PROJECT 2.1 - DUE JUNE 4, 2019 (PUBLIC EVENT - JUNE 9, 2019)

Working as a team, develop, design and implement a public bicycle scavenger hunt in the City of Davis that celebrates a unique theme or aspect of the city or region.

Narrative Environments student design teams have developed this event in collaboration with the City of Davis Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for the past two years. 2019 will mark the 4th annual Davis bicycle scavenger hunt. Consult the process books for 2017 and 2018 on the course Canvas site. The project includes a full identity system for marketing and promotional purposes, as well as a carefully choreographed set of clues and destination experiences within the city.

The most important goals are to establish a viable theme with broad appeal that is associated with an aspect of Davis, and create a series of experiences that are fun and informative for a general audience. The audience for this event is varied and includes seasoned bicyclists and families with young children. The design challenge is to come up with 14–16 clues that are not too difficult to solve, and lead participants to a variety of activities in Davis locations. The entire scavenger hunt should take no more than 2 hours to complete.

The event is marketed on social media and in the Davis Enterprise. Prizes are awarded to the winners (fastest e-bike team, fastest family, fastest human-powered team) and donated by local Davis businesses. It is the design teams responsibility to help solicit and secure these donations. Elements that need to be designed and produced for the event include: theme identity, clue booklet and rules, stickers or some way of proving teams found the clues, t-shirts for facilitators and as prizes, promotional posters, signage, marketing materials, and the all-important clue destination experiences. This public event will be held between 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 9th. All students are required to help facilitate the event.

Client: City of Davis

PROJECT 2.2: CONTEMPLATIVE, SENSORY, DISCOVERY AND PARTICIPATORY

Spaceflight: Now and Future

I would like to die on Mars. Just not on impact.

- Elon Musk, 2013

PROJECT 2.2 - DUE JUNE 6, 2019

Working as a team, develop creative, appropriate and responsive design intent solutions for a new spaceflight exhibition/experience at the Aerospace Museum of California.

The Cold War between the United States and former Soviet Union gave birth to the space race and an unprecedented program of scientific exploration. The Soviets sent the first person into space on April 12, 1961. In response, President John F. Kennedy challenged our nation "to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to earth." It took eight years and three NASA programs—Mercury, Gemini and Apollo—but the United States got to the moon.

Sixty years have passed since this remarkable event captured the imagination of the world. A new generation of entrepreneurs and innovators have set their sights on commercial space travel and exploration to the edges and beyond our solar system. The majority of exhibits in air and space museums tell the story of human spaceflight with a focus on past accomplishments and not the rapidly changing future. This expanding future of space exploration will not only enable us to continue to improve our world, but force us to confront the dilemma of who owns and controls what in this expanding frontier. Advances in spaceflight will open up employment to a wider and more diverse range of talented people in a multitude of professions, people just like YOU.

This new exhibition should address two key audience questions: "Where do I fit in the spectrum/pyramid of human effort that supports the adventure/challenge of spaceflight?" And "What might we discover in the future pursuit of spaceflight that could benefit everyone on Earth?"

Client: Aerospace Museum of California, Sacramento
Venue: main display hall, exhibit components portable, use high ceiling
Audience: 5th grade level (those that will play a part in the future of spaceflight)
Stories and objects: see preliminary list
Promotion: market as a new approach to communicating the future of spaceflight
Budget: TBD

GENERAL GUIDELINES, PHASES AND DELIVERABLE'S FOR PROJECT 2.1 AND 2.2
(SEE EACH PROJECT DESCRIPTION FOR SPECIFICS)

PHASE 1

Research and Design Analysis

Research Phase

Work in teams (numbers/type to be determined), collaborate and participate equitably.

Study and evaluate any websites and reference materials, take notes during any information sharing opportunities.

When choosing a site, theme or topic to explore, consider your team's strengths and skill sets. Keep the project scope focused and manageable given the time constraints.

Document the site (using photographs, sketches and notes), note any existing conditions, site specifics or design constraints.

Ask yourselves: Who is the audience? Where is the site/building? What is the relationship to the community? What information, stories and experiences need to be conveyed?

Strive to develop solutions that are fresh and new, and take advantage of a gap or opportunity in the market/public forum. How will it make a profit/be successful/financially viable?

1. **Guest analysis**: create and document at least four audience personas for your site.

2. **Site analysis**: take pictures of your site, produce a site plan showing the location, public access points and traffic patterns.

3. **Content analysis**: gather images and written materials about your site or topic.

4. **Marketing analysis:** develop a marketing strategy to promote the event/experience.

PHASE 2

Concept and Design Proposal

Concept Phase

Using the research and analysis, brainstorm a series of design concepts.

How can you respond to the content in an informative, engaging and fun way?

Draw on the range of interpretive methods we have previously covered (contemplative, sensory, discovery, participatory).

Strive for solutions that are appropriate for the site and community, and inform, engage and entertain the user.

Address the accessibility and human factor issues that are relevant to your experience.

Revisit the research as needed for further analysis and documentation.

Gather VISUAL research and best precedent examples. Review any past presentations.

Produce concept sketches/scale models that explore multiple ideas and are highly creative.

1. **Written proposal/brief**: title and 250 word minimum summary of goals and objectives for your project preferably in bullet form.

2. **Concept sketches and studies:** numerous sketches that demonstrate adequate exploration of the idea and design concepts. Use storyboards, diagrams and massing studies to help convey intent.

3. **Best precedent examples:** multiple inspirational images from other projects in the form of a look book.

PHASE 3

Detailed Design Solutions

Development Phase

Realize your concept designs in detail.

Draw on the experiences from past courses, particularly DES 185 and DES 186. Use words, symbols, images, scale, emphasis, lighting, staging and objects effectively.

Explore solutions that are simple, and informed by studying the research material, user testing, and through visual storytelling and participation.

Produce detailed visualizations of your solutions from every angle and perspective.

Create scale model(s), prototypes or other mock-ups to explore your ideas as needed.

Render elevations, plans, perspectives and details using appropriate tools/software, with notations about content, audience experience, scale, materials, color, dimensions and design details.

Present detailed designs, mock-ups, props and materials to adequately address the project scope and convey your concept.

1. **Design visualization**: multiple rendered elevations, x-sections, perspectives, graphics, construction details, photographs of mock-ups that capture the final design intent. Include scale people, reference images, dimensions, and annotated descriptive notations.

2. **Design palette:** materials, color, typography, images, symbols, media as appropriate.

PHASE 4

Design Documentation and Intent

Presentation Phase

Present final design intent, prototypes and materials to adequately address the project scope and convey your concept. Presentations will occur in the field and/or classroom.

Submit as 36 x 48 inch poster(s) and/or spiral bound 11" x 17" design process book composed in InDesign. Upload PDF versions to Canvas, file size below 50 MB,
Title: DES187_S19_project name.pdf.

The following sections are required:

1. **Project summary:** title, cover and contents page; guest, site, content and marketing analysis from phase 1 (include financial viability study if applicable); written proposal from phase 2.

2. **Look book:** visual research materials, photographs of site, concept sketches and studies, and best precedent examples from phase 2.

3. **Design visualization:** detailed renderings and mock-ups from phase 3.

4. **Design palette:** materials and graphic specifications from phase 3.

5. **Prototypes, Models and/or Presentations:** documentation of full-size versions, simulations, or demonstrations of the exhibit/experience in a public setting.

NOTE: Deliverable's will vary depending on the project and the nature of the final presentation.