

**University of Mary Washington – Department of Historic Preservation**  
**MUSEUM DESIGN AND INTERPRETATION (HISP463)**  
**Spring 2019, T: 2-4:45, Combs Hall 9**

**Instructor:** Dr. Cristina Turdean  
**Email:** [cturdean@umw.edu](mailto:cturdean@umw.edu)  
**Tel:** 540-654-1310  
**Office hours:** M: 10:00-12:00, T: 11:00-2:00 or by appointment  
**Location:** 139 Combs Hall

**Course**

**Description:** This upper-level laboratory provides students with hands-on experience in planning a museum exhibition. This semester, the class project has the goal of producing a permanent exhibition on the history of African American education in Spotsylvania County, with emphasis on Snell Training School and John J. Wright Consolidated School, for **John J. Wright Museum and Cultural Center** in Spotsylvania, Virginia. During the first half of the semester, students conduct research on the exhibition topic, discuss selected readings on best practices in museum exhibitions, and participate in class activities meant to build practical skills in exhibition development. The second part of the semester is dedicated to the production of the actual exhibition.

**Learning**

**Outcomes:** At the end of the class the students will demonstrate familiarity with the planning of a small-budget exhibition as a *process* entailing the following elements:  
(1) research of primary and secondary sources to document a historical narrative for an exhibition project  
(2) development of an exhibition storyline and textual information (labels) to support it  
(3) planning the layout and design of an exhibition using Adobe InDesign  
(4) collaboration with team members and third parties

**Texts:** All the readings (articles in academic journals and book chapters) are available in electronic format on Canvas.

**Assignments:**

**Assignment # 1 Research portfolio:** The results of the research conducted during the first weeks of the semester will be compiled in individual portfolios. Throughout this time, students give weekly class reports on their work so that new directions of research are identified and the entire class learns the progression of the overall narrative.

**Assignment # 2 Design project:** Following the class lecture and activities on exhibition design, students are required to produce an InDesign poster.

**Assignment # 3 Label workbook:** This collection of label writing exercises requires students to critique, edit, and write exhibition labels, including those for the semester project.

**Assignment # 4 Semester project:** This assignment refers to the work conducted in specialized teams (design, label writing, etc.) during the second part of the semester.

**Assignment # 5 Final essay:** This 5-page reflective essay requires students to analyze critically their progress and challenges in learning exhibition planning skills.

**Assignment # 6 Class participation:** This component refers to students' class performance during the entire semester, including its both first half, when the class discusses the assigned readings, and last part, when the class creates the storyline of the exhibition and solves practical problems pertaining to its design and installation. The class participation grade takes into account (1) the quality and frequency of a student's contribution and (2) his/her professionalism in supporting the group effort.

Separate handouts detail these assignments.

**Grading:** The final grade is based on the following components:

1. Research portfolio	20%
2. Design project	10%
3. Label workbook	20%
4. Semester project - team work	20%
5. Final essay	10%
6. Class participation	20%

According to the UMW grading scale, academic performance in this course is graded as follows: A for “unusual excellence”; A-, B+, B, B- for “work distinctly above average”; C+, C, C- for “work of average quality.”

Grading scale:	A	4.00	93-100%
	A-	3.70	90-92%
	B+	3.30	87-89%
	B	3.00	83-86%
	B-	2.70	80-82%
	C+	2.30	77-79%
	C	2.00	73-76%
	C-	1.70	70-72%
	D+	1.30	67-69%
	D	1.00	60-66%
	F	0.00	<60%

In the middle of the semester, the Office of the Registrar will notify the students whose performance in this course is unsatisfactory.

**Academic**

**Honesty:**

All work in this course is covered by the UMW Code. This refers to the promise you made to your fellow students and the UMW community not to lie, cheat, or steal. Check the following websites to find out more about (1) the UMW Honor Code, Honor Council, policy on academic integrity, and disciplinary sanctions against offenders

<https://students.umw.edu/fredericksburghonorcouncil/>

and (2) information about plagiarism and how do avoid it

<http://students.umw.edu/fredericksburghonorcouncil/citation-resources/>

Violations of the UMW Code in this course will be reported to the UMW Honor Council. Please see me if you have questions about proper citation and attribution of sources.

**Office of**

**Disabilities:**

If you have a disability and need special accommodations in this class, please contact the Office of Disabilities Resources (540- 654-1266) or online at

<https://academics.umw.edu/disability/how-to-register/>and bring the official letter to me,

preferably by the end of the first week of the semester, so I can take the appropriate steps to meet your needs for the entire length of the semester.

**Title IX**

**Statement:**

University of Mary Washington faculty are committed to supporting students and upholding the University’s *Policy on Sexual and Gender Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence*. Under Title IX and this Policy, discrimination based upon sex or gender is prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex or gender-based discrimination, we encourage you to report it. **While you may talk to me, understand that as a “Responsible Employee” of the University, I MUST report to UMW’s Title IX Coordinator what you share.** If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, please contact the below confidential resources. They can connect you with support services and help you explore your options. You may also seek assistance from UMW’s Title IX Coordinator. Please visit <http://diversity.umw.edu/title-ix/> to view UMW’s *Policy on Sexual and Gender Based*

*Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence* and to find further information on support and resources.

### Resources

Tiffany W. Oldfield, J.D.

Title IX Coordinator  
Office of Title IX  
Fairfax House  
540-654-5656  
toldfiel@umw.edu

Myranda Thomson  
Title IX Deputy for Students  
Area Coordinator  
540-654-1184  
mthomson@umw.edu

### Confidential Resources

#### *On-Campus*

Talley Center for Counselling Serv.  
Lee Hall 106

Student Health Center  
Lee Hall 112

#### *Off-Campus*

Empowerhouse  
540-373-9373

RCASA  
540-371-1666

**Attendance** Attendance will be checked at the beginning of class. Absences are not penalized directly but will be reflected in the class participation grade. For medical reasons, only absences supported by doctor's notes will be excused. There is no make up for missed class activities.

### Classroom

**Etiquette:** Students are expected to turn off their cell phones at the beginning of the class.

### Weekly

**Schedule:** I reserve the right to alter the readings list and schedule for any class. In case of changes, you will be notified at least 48 hours before the class.

01/15 **INTRO TO THE COURSE AND THE SEMESTER PROJECT. Class meets at J.J. Wright Museum.**

01/22 **INTERPRETATION AND MEANING MAKING**

Research reports (I) Come to class prepared to report on the preliminary results of your research and turn in a hard copy of it

Read: Tami Christopher, "The House of the Seven Gables" (pp.63-76) in Amy K. Levin. *Defining Memory. Local Museums and the Construction of History in America's Changing Communities.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2007.

Beverly Serrell, Chapter One "The Big Idea" (pp. 1-8) in *Exhibit Labels. An Interpretive Approach.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996.

Browse: Tom McKay "'Minor League, Major Dream.' Keeping Your Eye on the Idea" (pp. 162-185) in Kenneth L. Ames, Barbara Franco and L. Thomas Frye (eds.) *Ideas and Images. Developing Interpretive History Exhibits.* Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1992.

01/29 **DESIGN (I) (location: HCC Training Lab 130)**

Research reports (II) Come to class prepared to present the preliminary results of your research (materials you covered since the previous report) and turn in a hard copy of it. Upload your final cumulative report on the class dropbox by 2pm today.

Class activity: Intro to InDesign

02/05 **DESIGN (II)**

Research reports (III) Come to class prepared to present the preliminary results of your research (materials you covered since the previous report) and turn in a hard copy of it

Browse: Chapter I – V and VII of *Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibition Design*, available at <http://accessible.si.edu/pdf/Smithsonian%20Guidelines%20for%20accessible%20design.pdf>

02/12 **LABEL WRITING**

Research reports (IV) Come to class prepared to present the preliminary results of your research (materials you covered since the previous report) and turn in a hard copy of it

Read: Beverly Serrell. *Exhibit Labels. An Interpretive Approach*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996). Chapters 2-4, 7, 8, 13.

02/19 **CRAFTING THE NARRATIVE (I)**

Design project is due in class today

Label workbooks (**Part 1- Exercises 1-5**) are due in class today (hard copy)

Class activity: “the big idea,” section topics and main ideas

02/26 **CRAFTING THE NARRATIVE (II)**

Class activities: section topics and main ideas, selection of visuals, planning teamwork. Team 1: Design (mock-up, prints, etc.); Team 2: Labels (writing and editing; photo preparation, etc.)

03/05 Spring Break

**WORK IN SPECIALIZED TEAMS**

03/12 Label workbooks (**Part 2**) are due today. Bring a hard copy to class and upload your labels on the class dropbox by 2 pm today.

03/19 Class activity: Progress report. Team work

03/26 **PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT (location TBD)**

Class activity: Planning the final steps

04/02 Class activity: Progress report. Team work

04/09 Exhibition production

04/16 Exhibition production

04/23 Installation of the exhibition

Final essay is due in class today (hard copy)