

THE ASSIGNMENT

Overview: You will visit the American Visionary Art Museum, The Walters Art Gallery, and Baltimore Museum of Art. While you will need to take notes on each museum, your paper will focus on how you could revise one exhibit to increase diversity and accessibility. Then, you will propose a public engagement event/workshop/children’s activity that will enhance the exhibit experience.

Audience: You should be writing your paper for someone who works in a museum at either the curatorial level or at the public engagement/community outreach level. You need to establish yourself as someone who has researched this particular place and who has done your due diligence to understand what other institutions have done to solve similar problems. Your own experience as a visitor is valid in terms of your personal comfort but you must be respectful and considerate when making your observations and suggestions.

Writing Requirements:

Genre: Proposal

Mechanics: 5 pages (not including images), Times New Roman, Double Spaced, MLA citation, at least 4 sources

Image Requirement for slides:

At least 4 images, at least 720 dpi, no bigger than 1.5 by 1.5 inches, captions clarifying content

Suggested Resources: [Museums are Not Neutral Database](#) and [Museum Blog](#)

Step 1: Describe the current exhibit, the goals of the exhibit, the types of artists, and the types of art displayed in the exhibit. Consider the strengths and limitations of this exhibit. Do not just make generalizations such as “they should have more wheelchair ramps” or “they could give more informative plaques.” Which exhibits? Where exactly? What kind of information? Be creative!

Step 2: Using at least 2 of the articles, provide a literature review that outlines why this issue is important to address. For instance, if you are suggesting that a certain exhibit needs to showcase more diversity, you would be looking for articles that discuss the importance of having diverse exhibits in museums.

Step 3: Using at least 2 of the articles, provide a literature review that outlines how other institutions have handled similar problems.

Step 4: Describe your revised exhibit. Detail what artifacts would be included, what you have done to ensure a commitment to diversity, and what you would do to make the exhibit more accessible to those with disabilities.

Step 5: Propose an event/workshop/children's activity that would supplement your exhibit. Who might sponsor this activity? What would the purpose of this activity be? How does it enhance the material presented in the exhibit?

Step 6: Reflect on the experience of attending these museums and participating in this project. How has this changed how you experience museums? Has this project changed the likelihood of you visiting a museum in the future?

EXTENDED LEARNING OPTIONS

For this step, the instructor will contact potential judges (fellow faculty, museum staff). Students will create visual representation of their revised space. It might be a diorama, a digital mock-up, a blueprint, etc. They will create a handout for your judges and prepare a short oral pitch about your exhibit. This pitch should be about 3 minutes. Student projects will be judged on professionalism, aesthetics of model, creativity of revision, and realism of suggestion.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Students use Google Docs to sign up with our Writing Fellow for at least one meeting. Each of them also has to talk with me via phone to discuss their idea and to have it approved. For traditional class format, I spend two days with laptop carts reviewing research strategies and detailing how to write a literature review. When this class is taught online, I have an embedded course librarian who has a chat function to communicate with students throughout the course. Finally, I use a phone app called "Remind" which allows students to message me with quick questions or images. In a class with so much moving from location to location, Remind has been a crucial tool in maintaining contact with students.

ASSESSMENT

Student essays are graded on the following criteria (see prompt for correctly formatted rubric): 1) Focus and Specificity 2) Organization 3) Incorporation of Evidence 4) Originality of Ideas 4) Adherence to MLA 5) Use of Images 6) Compliance with technical requirements and meeting with the Writing Fellow.