MSST 803
MUSEUMS & MODERN TECHNOLOGY

Introduction
The course is designed to introduce students to the strategies for using multimedia and the internet in museums. We will employ a hands-on approach to learning. Keep in mind, this is an experimental course.

Background Considerations:
Past experience with this class has shown the possible need for a beginner group and an experienced group as it can be frustrating for those who are more experienced to repeat the basics when they could be exploring more advanced techniques. Therefore we will divide up the class on the first day if neccessary, and will sometimes meet in different groups.

All students will produce a web site working in teams. Each team will develop an online exhibition using materials from past University Museums exhibitions. The final products will be added to the Museums' website.

This course requires considerable comkmitments of time. The software we will be using is complex and learning the software is akin to lerning a new language; you will need to practice if you wish to go beyond rudimentary skills. We will be working on Mac computers at the computer lab in Recitation Hall. You may work at home when feasible, but much of the work will have to take place in the computer lab during its open hours. All students will keep a log of time spent on their work.

Materials:
There are no required texts; most books on computers or programs will be useless in a year which is why we don't require them for the course. There are, however, many good instruction books for the Adobe Creative Suite (CS2), the programs we will be using the most. Two good sources are Peachpit Press (www.peachpit.com) and Academic Superstore (academicsuperstore.com). Both have a good selection of books on the subjects, and both have very good prices. We will go over some of the books I use at the beginning of the course. If you wish to purchase the software to be used in the class, Academic Superstore generally charges about a third of the standard retail price.

You will need to make backups of your work and may use whatever media you feeel more comfortable with. CD-RW or flash drive would be best.

Course Objectives:
1 – Each student will learn the basic principles of visual communication
2 – Each student will learn digital processing and manipulation of image and text files
3 – Each student will be introduced to the basic principles of web design
4 – Each student will be involved in a team presentation on some aspect of computer technology and how it affects museums.
                                        5 – Students will design and produce a website.

REQUIREMENTS

Core project:
Students will work in teams to create an online exhibition in the form of a self-contained website. The site will contain text, graphics, and some form of standardized site navigation that carries through from page to page. Although we will be working in teams, each person will be required to demonstrate ability to use the programs covered in class to produce graphics and text for the web. The team will present the final site to the class and be prepared to discuss the aestehtics and content of the site and the process used in achieving the final results.

Presentations:
The teams will make oral presentations, about 30 – 45 minutes, on one of the following topics:
- *copyright laws and protections*
- *keeping track:* collections management and research database software
- *disseminating:* other forms of the web: blogging, podcasting and cel phones
- *planning:* CAD and geographic information software
- *interactives:* educational software online and in the museum
- *going past two dimensions:* 3D, animation, and VR software

The presentations should give a concise overview of the topic, going into reasonable detail, and address the following questions:
- What are the benefits or weaknesses of this technology/software for museums?
- Should the average museum adopt the technology and if so, at what point?
- How much does this cost in terms of personnel, time, and overhead?
- Can a museum staff member manage the technology or is it best left to a contractor?
The teams will post the text version of their presentation online, with links to sources and other pertinent information, after their presentation.

Other assignments, for each student and for the teams, are due the class after they are listed. These include:
- *short exercises* intended as hands-on practice using the programs
- *reviews of published websites*, equivalent to a published book review, 700 words max. (short review meaning a few paragraphs with links), and will be posted by Saturday to be read by the classs before the next meeting. You are gathering ideas for your own site so be critical and discrerning.
- *weekly annotated timesheet* recording the hours of work for that week summing up the weeks activities.

SCHEDULE

week 1: 02/07
- introduction to the course
- explaination of goals
- formation of teams
- discussion: museum website format and function
asssignment
> review a museum website, looking at design & typography issues
> teams will meet to begin planning their online exhibition

week 2: 02/14
- introduction to Photoshop: layers and tools for image repair and adjustment.
- discussion: digital input: cameras & scanners
- discussion: museum website reviews
asssignment
> short review of website graphics
> clean and repair image
> teams will prepare a written proposal for their websites

week 3: 02/21
- Photoshop: preparing images and text for the web
- critique: images from week 2
- discussion: website graphics
- team reports: proposal for website
asssignment
> prepare three vesions of an image: print, sliced web image, and thumbnail
> short review of website navigation schemes

week 4: 02/28
- introduction to Illustrator: typography for exhibitions and the web
- critique: images from week 3
- discussion: website navigation schemes
asssignment
> produce exhibition label (8"x10") using images from previous week and text
> teams prepare preliminary story-board or outline version of online exhibition

week 5: 03/07
- introduction to GoLive: tools, pallettes, basic page layout
- critique: exhibition labels
- team reports: story-board version of online exhibition
asssignment
> create a simple page using exhibition label text & image
> teams prepare draft text for online exhibition site

week 6: 03/14
- GoLive: CSS (cascading style sheets)
- critique: pages
- team reports: *topic presentations 1*
asssignment
> apply CSS to page
> teams set up style sheets for site text and pages

week 7: 03/21
- GoLive: navigation: rollovers, links, image maps
- critique: page using CSS
- team reports: style sheets
- team reports: *topic presentations 2*
asssignment
> link from page to second page using rollover
> teams establish navigation system using rollovers, image maps, or menus

WEEK 8: 03/28: SPRING BREAK

week 9: 04/04
- GoLive: layers and tables
- critique: rollover
- discussion: online exhibition navigation systems
- team reports: topic presentations 3
asssignment
> re-assemble page in two versions using tables for one and layers for the other
> teams work on exhibition site

week 10: 04/11
- GoLive: in-class Q&A, review
- critique: new page versions
- team reports: topic presentations 4 and 5
asssignment
> teams work on exhibitions

week 11: 04/18
- Servers: setting up, posting, and maintaining a site
- team reports: topic presentations 6
asssignment
> teams work on exhibition site

week 12: 04/25
- critique: first draft presentation of web sites
asssignment
> teams work on exhibition site

note: *There will be a field trip at some point during the next two weeks. The class will need to agree on a date, which will take the place of one of the class meetings. We will be visiting Quatrefoil Associates in Laurel, MD, to tour their workshops and test museum interactive prototypes. Quatrefoil is one of the industry's leading museum interactive design and programming firms.*

week 13: 05/02 OR

week 14: 05/09

- GoLive: in-class Q&A, review

asssignment

> teams work on exhibition site

week 15: 05/16

- team reports: presentation of final projects to class

GRADING

online exhibition:	30%
oral reports:	15%
reviews:	10%
log:	10%
image repair	5%
image sizing	5%
exhibition label	5%
simple page	5%
CSS	5%
rollovers	5%
tables & layers	5%

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Website: http://exhibitfundamentals.com/

Resume: http://www.baltimorerowhomes.com/portfolio/pages06/resume1.html

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