

Exhibition Catalogue Assignment

(Class project)

Exhibition curators have a multifaceted job. In addition to researching topics and spending countless hours looking through materials, crafting a narrative and designing a visually and intellectually stimulating space, writing label copy and giving tours, curators also develop exhibition catalogues. These catalogues can take various forms. In some cases, they simply list the materials on display. In other cases, they are more descriptive of the materials, with the intention not only of giving information about the displays, but also seek to offer valuable scholarly information that will simultaneously be appropriate for a general audience. While some curators choose to write the catalogue themselves, others solicit catalogue essays from other scholars.

For this assignment, we will imagine that our class has been tasked with developing the exhibition catalogue for the current Rose Library exhibition. We will spend time looking at several exhibition catalogues, and we will also spend one class session at the exhibition having a curatorial tour, which will give us insight into how the exhibition was developed and designed, the significance of some materials, and the general tone of the exhibition. Then you will sign up to write a catalogue essay about an aspect of the exhibition (such as an item, a case, or another grouping of materials). Each student will select a different topic to write about, with the intention of working together to create the catalogue as a group.

Although your grade will be assessed primarily on the basis of your own essay, the class will work together to make editorial decisions, such as who the target audience is for our catalogue, what tone to aim for, what genre conventions we need to use, what details each essay should include, and what layout and design choices each essay should adhere to (including use of images). Grades will be assessed on the quality of the writing and the essay's adherence to the collaboratively selected editorial guidelines, and to a lesser extent on your participation in the editorial decision process.

Each essay will be approximately 1,000 words in length.