

EXHIBITION TOPIC | ARTS 545.801 84795 Fall 2026 Veronica Vaughan

COURSE SYLLABUS

E-mail

veronica.vaughan@etamu.edu

E-mail should be used for brief verbal communication only.

If your e-mail is longer than 55 words, I suggest some face-time—via Zoom

Office Hours:

Monday 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Wednesday 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm

or by appointment

Office: 1912

CLASS INFORMATION

Credit hours: 3.0

Meeting times: Monday 6:30 P.M.. till 10:30 P.M..

CLASS DELIVERY METHOD

This class's primary teaching methodology will be in-person, or synchronous teaching through Zoom.

SUGGESTED TEXT BOOKS AND RESOURCES

1. Book: *Change by Design* (Revised and Updated) by Tim Brown (Harper Business)
2. Book: *Think in Systems* by Zoe McKey
3. Book: Bielenberg, Burn, Galle, Dickenson. *Think Wrong* Instigator paperback edition, San Francisco; Instigator Press 2016
4. Academic texts, peer-reviewed articles, scholarly papers, sourced either through brick-and-mortar libraries or online in scholarly databases, such as JSTOR. (ETAMU research librarians will help with your needs in Veronica's Class)
5. Other major design university's MFA archives / repositories (SVA, VCU, Stanford D-School)
Note: Not all design school thesis topics may be "design-centric" research based, or deal with social/design centric issues.
6. ETAMU past thesis exhibitions. AIGA archives, Sappi Ideas that Matter, IDEO
7. Periodicals: Communication Arts Magazine, I.D. Magazine, Fast Company Magazine and others
8. Media: npr National Public Radio, and news sources of [all stripes](#), newspapers, magazines
9. Anywhere, and anything that is relevant to your developed topics (*recorded interviews, ethnography, etc.*)
10. TED Talks via YouTube, NPR (Sunday nights, or any time) or TED.com
11. Various sources identified through the student's individual research, or sources suggested by their instructors germane to the progress and direction of the thesis topics research and exhibition agenda.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide you with enlightenment, direction, feedback and focus as you embark on your exhibition topic discovery process. This class will function primarily as a critique based think-tank dedicated to defining, examining, refining and furthering the ideas that you bring to the table each week (That's right, it's your show). By week nine all of you will land on four viable, "design-centric" research-based topics with developed abstracts, preliminary ideation and preliminary exhibition look-and-feel assets. On week eleven, these four topics will be presented to the Thesis Review Committee Panel resulting in critique and feedback that will inform, or endorse your final thesis direction.

Further, this class will be more demanding in outside time as YOU are bringing in the class content every week. In short, time and effort spent outside of this class in terms of exploration and research that informs and supports your topics will yield invaluable capital going forward into your final exhibition topic development. Trust me on this.

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understand through examination, research and discovery what a relevant and viable "design-centric" exhibition topic is – or isn't
2. Learn the importance of in depth "design-centric" critical analysis academic research that informs your topics
3. Understand the *difference* in the research driven ideation process verses the more linear creative process
4. Expand and develop a wide-range of possible design exhibition directions through informed class discussion driven by your research methods and research topic substantiation
5. Develop abstracts for multiple thesis directions
6. Prepare and present your thesis topic packets to the Thesis Review Committee Panel for examination and feedback
7. Explore multiple thesis exhibition product and process directions through ideation and critique
8. Be prepared to begin the design-build creative phase of your thesis exhibition

COURSE STRUCTURE

This class will be a combination of mini-lecture/discussion and critiques with both in class, and outside class assignments.

A commitment to the outside class work will be necessary to achieve the goals for this class and its completion.
Class team based participation & collaboration will be a key component to a productive class dynamic and a positive outcome.

This is a class with limited time for each student to present and receive feedback. Please be cognisant of the need for concise, targeted feedback so that others can comment. (No stories, or going around the block to make your point)

ASSIGNMENTS (*Touch-point assignments are subject to change based upon the needs and progress*)

Assignment One

1. Round 1: Preliminary topic ideation (6 directions with ideation mind-map thumbnails and mini-abstracts)
2. Round 2: Submit 5 NEW directions (with ideation thumbnails and mini-abstracts)
3. Round 3: Present 5-6 new topics with tighter Phase 2 ideation and mini-abstracts
4. Rounds 4-8: Development w/new directions and narrow to 4 strong topics
5. Thesis topic packets and pre-presentation run through, and panel presentation
6. Attendance and Participation Grade

Assignment Two

Prepare poster to participate in the East Texas A&M University Research Symposium in Spring of 2027.

Training is required to participate.

<https://www.etamu.edu/annual-research-symposium/>

COURSE CLASS SUPPLIES (as needed)

–50 to 100 sheets of blank paper for conceiving. 8.5x11 or, whatever form you prefer for a sketch book style of layout ideation, and documentation of week-to-week progress. If you prefer to use a computer for notes–please back up.

–Writing implements (*pencils, pens, white board marker and a sharpie*).

(These are for white board critique ideation and for TAKING Notes)

–An open and informed mind, a thick skin, and the gift of "informed" gab

–Post-It Notes

COURSE SYLLABUS

ATTENDANCE POLICY

FIRST ABSENCE: The student will receive an email and a copy goes to Veronica Vaughan

SECOND ABSENCE: The student will receive an email and a copy goes to Veronica Vaughan who will contact the student.

THIRD ABSENCE: Veronica Vaughan emails the student that they have failed the course.

Two tardies of 10 minutes equals one absence.

A tardy of 60 minutes equals one absence.

If a student is OVER 10 MINUTES late for the final, a full grade will be deducted from his or her final grade.

If a student does not show up for the final they automatically fail the class.

SPECIFIC CLASS POLICIES

Students **MUST** keep up with the assignment schedule in order to pass this class. PROGRESS THROUGH THIS COURSE IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT.

No extensions or exceptions will be granted except in cases of extreme hardship or medical necessity. Professional work demands do not constitute extreme hardship exemptions.

SYLLABUS UPDATE POLICY

The syllabus and schedule are a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus and/or schedule during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus/schedule will be announced in advance.

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT AND RESPONSE TIME

veronica.vaughan@etamu.edu

Appointments will be handled via Zoom. Please email me to schedule an appointment.

Communication from students will be responded to within a reasonable time during the work week.

Weekend communication will be handled the next business day, unless noted. Due to the high volume of email that is received, an important message may be missed. If an important email has not been responded to within 2 days, please send again.

Please use your university email as your primary source of contact. If your email is more than a short paragraph, please consider making a Zoom appointment.

GRADE EVALUATION

- A 90 to 100 points: Excellent (superior effort and results above and beyond)
- B 80 to 89 points: Good (significant effort and hard work)
- C 70 to 79 points: Average (minimal class requirements met–**Minimum class grade**)
- D 60 to 69 points: Below Average (below class average expectations)
- F 50 to 59 points: Poor (inferior work and attitude)

Your final grade will be based on an average of all "touch-point" assignments, week to week sketch book style documentation, attendance and your participation grade.

The participation grade is based on: dedication to methodology application, conceptual thinking ability, daily class involvement and contributions to your classmates, as well as both a desire and capacity to show progress and meet deadlines. Vigorous contributions to class discussions is a requirement necessary to pass this class. Grades will be discussed on an individual basis outside of class – not in class.

COURSE SYLLABUS

CLASS ETIQUETTE

Cell-phones, and or Texting during class during lectures, presentations, or critiques is NOT a good idea.

Remember... We can see you.

WORDS TO-THE-WISE

Be here because you want to be. It's your show.

IF YOU FALL BEHIND—RUN LIKE HELL TO CATCH UP

Remember, I am here to help.

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

GRADE EVALUATION

Your final grade will be based on an average of all assignments, attendance and in-class participation. The participation grade is based on the application of course concepts, class involvement, and both a desire and capacity to show progress and meet deadlines. Note!!! Failure to deliver the final exam project will result in an automatic semester grade of F. Grades will be discussed on an individual basis by office appointment only — not in class.

X PLAN STATEMENT

Students, who because of circumstances beyond their control are unable to attend classes during finals week or the preceding three weeks will, upon approval of the their instructor, receive a mark of "X" (incomplete) in all courses in which they were maintaining passing grades.

When an "X" is given for a grade in a course, the credit hours and grade point averages are not included until a grade is received which can be up to one year. If the "X" is not removed by that time, the grade becomes an F, and the hours are included in the number of hours attempted.

Recording a grade of "X" requires the filing of a plan for completion. The plan will be submitted with the official grade record sent to the department head who will forward it to the Dean's office. The plan will include why the grade was given and steps necessary for the student to receive the final grade. If the X plan has not been completed by the next time the course is offered the student will need register to take the course again.

HOW TO PREPARE YOURSELF FOR CLASS

An open mind

A desire to explore

A willingness to participate and, by doing so, enrich the experience for yourself and others

AI POLICY

East Texas A&M acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text and image, or suggest replacements for text and image, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

If the instructor allows AI to be incorporated into a solution, the student must acknowledge and credit it's use and provide the prompt used to create the output.

COURSE SYLLABUS

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All **COURSE** sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

Access And Navigation

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.
Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COURSE

CWID and Password

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Technology-Related Issues

Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students will need reliable computer and internet access for this course. Students must be able to effectively use myLeo email, myLeo Online D2L, and Microsoft Office and the Adobe Creative Suite.

Learning Management System (LMS) – D2L

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are the technical requirements:

- View the Learning Management System Requirements Webpage.
- Learn more on the LMS Browser Support Webpage.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found on the Brightspace Support Webpage.

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail online in the Student Guidebook.

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette Webpage for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.03

Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.10

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES-- ADA STATEMENT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
East Texas A&M University
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

Website: Office of Student Disability Services

NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

CAMPUS CONCEALED CARRY STATEMENT

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and ETAMU Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus document and/or consult your event organizer.

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

COURSE SYLLABUS

EAST TEXAS A&M SUPPORTS STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH – COUNSELING SERVICES

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

- Scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any class-related activity.
- Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the submission of someone else's materials as one's own work.
- Scholastic dishonesty may involve one or more of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, or collusion.

PLAGIARISM is the use of an author's words or ideas as if they were one's own without giving credit to the source, including, but not limited to, failure to acknowledge a direct quotation. Cite your references.

CHEATING is the willful giving or receiving of information in an unauthorized manner during an examination, illicitly obtaining examination questions in advance, copying computer or Internet files, using someone else's work for assignments as if it were one's own, or any other dishonest means of attempting to fulfill the requirements of a course.

COLLUSION is intentionally aiding or attempting to aid another in an act of scholastic dishonesty, including but not limited to, providing a paper or project to another student, providing an inappropriate level of assistance, communicating answers to a classmate during an examination, removing tests or answer sheets from a test site, and allowing a classmate to copy answers.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY COULD RESULT IN EXPULSION FROM THE UNIVERSITY

X PLAN STATEMENT FOR MFA VISCOM

Students, who because of circumstances beyond their control are unable to attend classes during finals week or the preceding three weeks will, upon approval of the instructor, receive a mark of "X" (incomplete) in all courses in which they were maintaining passing grades.

When an "X" is given for a grade in a course, the credit hours and grade point averages are not included until a grade is received which can be up to one year. If the "X" is not removed by that time, the grade becomes an F, and the hours are included in the number of hours attempted.

Recording a grade of "X" requires the filing of a plan for completion. The plan will be submitted with the official grade record sent to the department head who will forward it to the Dean's office. The plan will include why the grade was given and steps necessary for the student to receive the final grade. If the X plan has not been completed by the next time the course is offered the student will register to take the course again.

EXHIBITION TOPIC | ARTS 545.801 84795 Fall 2026 Veronica Vaughan

COURSE SCHEDULE / ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1

1. General discussion of what makes a “design-centric” thesis topic viable
(*academic, worthwhile, relevant, new knowledge and moving-the-needle*)
2. Discuss “design-centric” critical analysis research that informs exhibitions
(More on specific academic research sources and methods in Veronica’s Studio 5 companion class.)
3. I am prohibiting the use of AI in this class for research. We are interested in “your” thoughts and insights
4. Discuss examples of successful thesis exhibitions from previous semesters
5. Intro sketchbook, format and weekly expectations for topic thumbnail ideation and abstracts
6. Assignment for week 2 (Handouts—*Design Centric, The 5 Whats, Examples*)

Week 2

ROUND 1: Preliminary topic ideation (Six topic directions with ideation thumbnails and mini-abstracts)
CRITIQUE: Crit and assign new six topic directions as needed, based on critique

Week 3

ROUND 2: Six preliminary topic directions from Week 3 with suggested revisions
CRITIQUE: Crit and assign new six topic directions as needed, based on critique

Week 4 (Labor Day Holiday)

Week 5

ROUND 3: Submit six NEW directions (with ideation thumbnails and mini-abstracts)
CRITIQUE: Assign new topic directions as needed, based on critique

Week 6

ROUND 4: Six NEW and revised topics from Week 5 with suggested revisions
CRITIQUE: Assign new topic directions as needed, based on critique
TOPIC ASSESSMENT: Narrow topics to five for Round 5, or assign new topics based on progress

Week 7

ROUND 5: Present 5 topics with tighter Phase 2 ideation and mini-abstracts
CRITIQUE: Assign revisions, or assign new topics based on progress

Week 8

Round 6 - 5 topics and abstracts from Week 8 with deeper design-centric exploration (ideation).

In Class

NARROW TOPICS TO 4, WITH ABSTRACTS, Ideation
Discuss presentation format and presentation packet

Week 9

REHEARSE: Preliminary run-through of topic presentations and presentation packets
CRITIQUE: 4 topics, abstracts and elementary exhibit look-and-feel from Week 8,
with suggested revisions based on presentation

EXHIBITION TOPIC | ARTS 545.801 84795 Fall 2026 *Veronica Vaughan*

COURSE SCHEDULE / ASSIGNMENTS

Week 10

REHEARSE: Final run-through of topic presentations and presentation packets

Week 11

Topic Presentation to Panel

Week 12

Breathe and discuss Preso. Break topic down into a critical analysis from a design POD (semantics, typography, imagery, color, etc.)

Begin work on **Assignment 2** - Research Symposium Poster and Training

Week 13

Exhibition directions, informed by current research findings to-date

Assess Assignment 2 poster progress

Week 14

Assignment 2: Final poster review, Training certificates due for symposium by **4th week of Spring 2027**

Week 15 (Thanksgiving Holiday)

Week 16

Due Due Due