Designing an Object of Play

This is your final project! It is a chance to bring together everything we have been working on throughout the course and produce a well-thought out, highly polished final product.

You will be split into groups of two or three by us. We choose the groups in order to match students with different backgrounds and skill sets, so that the final product reflects a balanced approach, and so that you can learn from each other's diverse strengths.

In these groups you will produce an object of play, to be presented in an exhibition format during the last week of the class. You will also be responsible for presenting the final product in a "sales pitch" format to the rest of the class, accompanied by explanatory material. Part of the exhibition will include documentation of your process, so <u>make sure you take photographs of your work during the course of your journey</u>!

There are no restrictions on the type of object you can produce. As you've learned throughout the course, objects of play come in many forms. But make sure that you are realistic about what you choose to make. Four weeks is not very much time, and we want projects that have been completely and skillfully executed, not partial versions of a vision that would take more time (and possibly more skill or material) to complete.

General Project Timeline

- **Week One** Produce two coherent proposals for a final object of play. These proposals should be clear on the theoretical framework that defines your project, the skills and materials that are necessary to complete the project, and the projected time frame (schedule) for the completion of prototype, final product, and exhibition materials. Make sure to specify your target audience, and refer to specific portions of the texts we have studied throughout the course. We will meet with you and help evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the proposals, after which you will choose one to pursue.
- **Week Two** By the end of this week the group should have a prototype of the final product. These prototypes can take many forms, depending on the type of object being created. They should exhibit the functionality of the objects, allow for audience interaction, and facilitate critique. We will meet together as a class to evaluate each other's prototypes.
- **Week Three** The basic structure of the final project should be complete. From here on out the major focus should be details: polishing the product, testing its functionality, and working on putting together the polished pitch and exhibition material.
- **Week Four** Final week! Keep testing and polishing your objects of play, and start thinking about how to make your exhibition-material and sales pitches audience friendly. Ideally draft your explanatory material and then revise it twice.

At the end of every week, each of you will submit a 2-3 paragraph summary and photographs (where applicable) of the group's work and your role in it. Please be specific. Talk about each individual's contribution in as much detail as possible. This is not the time to be generous—it is your opportunity to be accurate, and give us feedback that will help inform our evaluations of the final project.

Groups will also be responsible for maintaining a collective blog that documents your progress—pitfalls, surprises, successes, changes of plan. <u>There should be at least two blog posts per week, one written the day after in-class work, and another written after the weekend has ended to document work completed outside of class.</u>

Points to keep in mind as you plan and execute your projects:

1) *At every stage of the project, you should be able to articulate the underlying theoretical model that motivates every choice you make. <u>There is no choice that just "seemed right."</u>*
2) *You will be responsible for presenting to a general audience, not just your instructors and classmates. Make sure you are comfortable enough with the material that you can explain it to someone unfamiliar with anything we've studied.*
3) *Your project cannot please everyone. Be confident in your choices and know why you made them.*
4) *Execution is more important than ambition.*
5) *The frame of the object is a part of the object. Don't skimp on packaging, instructions, or context. These are not add-ons—they are a crucial part of the final product. You should have thought about these as much as the object itself.*
6) **Do not leave preparation of the exhibit to the last minute. You will be graded on the exhibition in addition to your final project. Remember: There are many good ideas/products in the world—the ones that end up succeeding were presented in a compelling way.**

If you are having trouble at any point during the project, please contact us by e-mail. This extends to trouble with your group members or personal problems committing time outside of class. We are here to offer confidential support and guidance.