

Final Report and Critique Specifications

Aesthetics of Design

Spring 2020

Due dates (Revised due to CoVid):

- Your product (artifact, plans or whatever you have created) must be completed by 11 am Monday April 20
- You are encouraged to revise and improve them later, but this is the version you must document for critique. If you revise your creation, submit an additional post about it later too.
- Final Report Part 1 Post Title Due on AesDes.org midnight Sunday April 19. Filled out into complete report midnight Weds April 22.
- Final Report Part 2, plus Video of your Final Report Presentation in the post due midnight April 29.
- 2 In-Depth Critiques (i.e. for two people) of Part 1 and 2 together due as comments in Part 2 reports due Midnight Sunday May 3, Submit the names of who you critiqued in Canvas.
- Ungrading Statement Sunday May 3 7:30 pm
- Virtual AesDes Expo Sunday May 3, 7:30 – 10 pm
- Any final revisions or make-up work, plus the Exit Survey: Weds May 6, 5 pm.

Details

Main Project Artifact

From the Initial Assignments document.

“You can make anything you want, as long as it has some sort of dynamic component; a moving part or something that changes with time. You are expected to pay for the materials (cost at least equivalent to a hardcopy textbook, say \$150) and the project is yours to keep at the end of the semester.”

And of course, it must express some aesthetic that you choose and define. That’s what this class is about, right?

In view of stay-at-home orders, your design can be virtual. If so, please include more sketches, renderings and detailed assembly plans. Spend more time describing the aesthetic, and include alternate aesthetics if possible.

Final Report/Blog post, Parts 1 and 2

Length: As long as it needs to be to include the following. This documents your efforts for two thirds of the semester. Don't scrimp.

Your complete report will be due in two parts, as posts in consecutive weeks. Part 1 focuses on the 'what' and Part 2 focuses on the 'how'

- Title/blog placeholder for Part 1 due midnight Sunday April 19, so your pod can comment on it during your presentation. Don't forget to set a Featured Image for each part.
- OK to cut and paste from previous posts about your main project, but be sure to update the content and incorporate into a narrative of how your project developed. Don't forget to turn future tense into past tense throughout ('I will do XYZ' should become 'I did XY but couldn't do Z').

Part 1: What

- Describe and **cite** your inspirations and any existing designs that you adapted. *You must cite ALL content on your blogs for this course! Any photo that you did not take, any text that you did not write MUST have a citation, a source link. If you can't remember where you got something DON'T USE IT. Go back and search for something similar that you can cite.*
- Describe your vision for your project, the specifications that you developed for its function and its form, your artistic vision and **aesthetic**. What were you trying for?
- Include and describe your initial sketches and final design plans. Include your CAD drawings if you are using CAD in your design process. Include how your aesthetic was embodied in your design

Part 2: How

- Create a timeline graphic. Show your actual design process. Be sure to show times for exploration, skill acquisition, looping, shopping, fabrication and documentation.
- Add a detailed description of your fabrication process, planned or actual. How did you make your artifact, or how would you if not for the pandemic? What are the steps? Describe the steps shown in your timeline graphic. Document with lots of additional sketches, flowcharts, photos and/or video.
- Write a conclusion. Where did you start, where did you end up? What do you wish you had done differently? What will happen to your creation now? Focus on the aesthetics.
- Include a link to the video you made of your live presentation, or another video that provides an equivalent full description. If you want this to appear with a play button instead of a Featured Image, insert the link to your video (upload to YouTube or Vimeo) as the first text in your post, and set your post type to Video. You won't get credit in the end for this major post without a video.

Two In-Depth Written Critiques

Choose two Final Reports to read carefully, critiquing Parts 1 and 2 together. Look for a spreadsheet link from Behruz in Slack to tell you who still needs critique. Use these specs to help you critique. Try to apply the Critical Response Process (see below) principles. Provide statements of meaning first, being specific. Ask neutral questions, but don't avoid the important questions! If you don't understand the aesthetic, or how the thing will be assembled, ask for clarification ("Please tell us more about XYZ...") If you have a suggestion, go ahead and state it as such. Tell Behruz who you've critiqued via the Final Critique assignment in Canvas.

Final Report Presentations

In class starting Monday April 20 (see Schedule), we will have presentations in pods. These will be the same pods as the rest of the semester (posted on AesDes home page if you forgot). Your pod will have an assigned facilitator/timekeeper/session chair to keep things moving along (5228 grad section is expected to volunteer, please email me). Your facilitator will host a Zoom session, with link provided in Slack. **Plan on three (3) students per session**; a little longer than Upcycle.

Each student will give a presentation on their project, with the content of the presentation to mirror the entire (Parts 1 and 2) written report, detailed above. Yes, Powerpoint is suggested. Plan to talk for 7 minutes, then take 7 minutes for Q&A, then one minute for the next speaker to get set up while others are commenting. This way **3** students can speak each period. The order of speakers will be set by who volunteers to go next, but if desired your pod can decide to set an order.

It's up to you to make sure you can share your screen in Zoom. If it doesn't work, be prepared to have a backup posted (in Slack?) to show on somebody else's laptop or speak without it.

Say Thank You at the end of your talk. Do NOT say 'Any questions' right away; wait until after the applause or thumbs ups. Then ask for questions. It's magic. It completes the rhythm of the talk. Allowing applause sets the audience free to ask.

Your facilitator should record the entire session, but you should probably record your session yourself, to add to your posted report. Yes, **this is required**. If your video turns out awful for some reason, you may re-record your talk afterwards and post that. Title your video, then upload to Youtube or Vimeo and put the link in your post Part 2.

Everyone is expected to comment on your podmates' presentations, live in class. **Even on the days you are not presenting, you must attend and comment**. This is another opportunity to hone your critique skills. If you cannot attend, be sure to comment anyways, and figure out some other way to contribute to the class.

Ungrading Statement

As I said at the start of the semester, everybody who has done all their weekly posts, required presentations, substantive comments, and made a good effort at all the other stuff will get an A. However, I have no way to really understand all the stresses you've been under and challenges you are facing, so we will also use a form of 'ungrading' (there is interesting research on this approach). I am hereby requesting you to send me (DM in Slack or email) a short statement of what grade you believe you have earned and why, taking everything into account. This is the grade you will get, unless I see substantial evidence to the contrary in your work. This statement will be due at our final expo, Sunday May 3.

Final Revisions, Exit Survey, due 5 pm Weds May 6.

Exit Survey: Check your email for a Qualtrics survey link. I very much value your thoughtful responses, and will use them to improve the class.

Final Revisions: You can submit edits, posts and comments until 5 pm May 6; please email Behruz, so he knows to update Canvas. You are welcome to keep working on your project, and revise/add to your posts accordingly, up to January 2021; you'll still have editing access. If you believe your extra work merits a change in grade, be sure to let me know.

Critiques

Our critique method is adapted from

Lerman, Liz. *Critical Response Process: A Method for Getting Useful Feedback on Anything You Make, from Dance to Dessert*. EBook., 2002. https://www.amazon.com/Liz-Lermans-Critical-Response-Process-ebook/dp/B00CF8MYD6/ref=sr_1_1?crd=33FL1ANVGPYPF&keywords=liz+lerman%27s+critical+response+process&qid=1565033305&s=gateway&sprefix=liz+lerman%2Caps%2C576&sr=8-1.

Step 1: Statements of Meaning

These are often, but not always positive statements, calling out a strength of the work.

What does this work say about design? About the intended aesthetic?

If making a positive comment, BE HONEST and SPECIFIC. What did you like and why? DO NOT JUST SAY 'good job'

Step 2: Artist as Questioner

The student presenting can ask for specific feedback to guide further development of the work: "What do you think of the way top is supposed to open? What about the saturation of the color, is it too hot? Did you notice how the fasteners are hidden?" etc. Don't ask just 'what do you think', that's too vague. You'll get more useful answers if your question is focused.

Responders should answer with honesty even if your opinion is negative. However, offer suggestions only in response to the artist's question.

Step 3: Neutral questions from Responders (audience).

This is tough, to ask a question without embedding an opinion. It will take practice. For example, instead of "It's kind of rough" or "why does it look unfinished" ask "How does the finish interact with your aesthetic" Be sure to ask about the aesthetics. DO NOT OFFER SUGGESTIONS HERE. Instead, ask about why certain choices were made.

Step 4: Permissioned Opinions

Responders name the topic of their opinion, then ask the artist for permission to state it. For example, "I have an opinion about the overall size of your artifact. Do you want to hear it?"

The artist can answer yes or no. If you already know that the artifact is too small and what to do about it, you can say "No thanks." If you are open to suggestions, then say "yes". If you have a suggestion about how to make the artifact differently that hasn't been discussed yet, here you can say "I have an opinion about how to fabricate your device. Do you want to hear it?"

Students in the 5228 section are expected to volunteer as Pod Coordinators for one of the three major critiques: Design Review, Design Review, and Final Presentations

In-Class Critiques:

- Log in toAesDes.org
- Find the post with the presenter's Final Report

- **For each work, try to type or verbalize at least one substantive comment:**
 - a. **A statement of meaning** or
 - b. **A response to a question from the artist** or
 - c. **A neutral question** or
 - d. **Ask to offer an opinion.** If you only type the offer, be sure to follow up later when artist will respond; if yes, then add your opinion.
- If you verbalize a comment, type it too.

Suggestions on what to do at each stage if you are the ARTIST

Preparing for the Process

... invested in continuing to work on the piece you are showing and open to the possibility that you might change it.

... thinking about what you want to learn related to where you are in the process of developing the work you are showing.

... in an open frame of mind about what you will hear.

... learning as much as you can about the physics before you present

Step One: Statements of Meaning

... suspending the need to hear “this is the greatest thing I’ve ever seen.”

... suspending the need to question the sincerity of positive comments.

... attending to your own internal reactions to the comments in terms of how they inform the steps to come:

Are they answering the questions I have about the work?

- Are they suggesting that I need to probe deeper on any subject?
- Are they raising my sense of curiosity about something new?
- Are they reflecting a consensus reaction or a diverse response?

Step Two: Artist Asks Questions

... building on the information you have heard in step one.

... refraining from long explanatory preambles.

... considering possibilities for two-part questions or general questions.

... ready to narrow questions down when they spill out in groups.

... ready to hear opinions, including negative ones, when they are in direct response to the question you have posed.

Step Three: Responders Ask Neutral Questions

... attentive to possibilities and issues that may not be prominent in your current thinking.

... using the dialogue as an opportunity to advance your thinking about the work rather than to repeat what you already know.

... not working too hard to divine the opinion behind the question

Step Four: Permissioned Opinions

... listening to the content of permission requests as well as opinions.

... exercising the options of saying “yes” or “no” to a proposed opinion.

... considering how content of this and previous steps is informing your thinking about how you want to continue with the piece you are working on

Wrap-up

... consolidating the most useful information you’ve heard.

RESPONDER

Preparing for the Process

- ... invested in the potential for the artist to do his/her best work.
- ... thinking ahead to how you will participate in the steps of the Process as you observe the presentation of the artist's work.

Step One: Statements of Meaning

- ... making comments that add new perspectives to what has already been stated.
- ... limiting your response to one or two points when many responders are participating.
- ... if you have a strong opinion that you would eventually like to make, addressing a related aspect of the work in your step one statement.
- ... noting the meanings that others have found in the artwork, observing how those comments are expanding your own perception of the work.
- ... observing your own preferences and points of reference.

Step Two: Artist Asks Questions

- ... keeping your answers honest and specific to the artist's question.
- ... expressing opinions, even negative ones, IF they are in response to the artist's question.
- ... listening carefully to the areas of interest and concern that are directed by the artist.
- ... staying interested in the conversation, even when it is about an aspect of the work about which you may not have a strong opinion.

Step Three: Responders Ask Neutral Questions

- ... framing a neutral question about the area of your opinion.
- ... considering options from general to specific and the possible merits of posing a more general question before a specific one.
- ... listening to the artist's response for indications that the opinion you have in mind may be either very valuable or irrelevant to the artist's concerns.
- ... curious about aspects of the work that aren't related to strong opinions (i.e., open to asking questions that are not opinion driven)

Step Four: Permissioned Opinions

- ... always prefacing opinions by saying "I have an opinion about ___ would you like to hear it?" and waiting until artist consents.
- ... indicating, in your request to the artist, if your opinion contains a suggestion or fixit.
- ... not loading the content of your opinion into the permission request.
- ... engaging the artist directly rather than dialoguing with other responders.

Wrap-up

- ...observing the quality of the contribution you and your fellow responders have made.