



**the artifact project**

## \*the artifact project

*\*developed by Maria Rogal*

*Invested in every artifact is a significance which provides information about the culture from which it originates. As designers (students and practitioners), we can continue to learn valuable lessons about our field, & design theory + practice in particular, through exploring the function, meaning & significance of a designed artifact.*

*sugar packet  
fork  
seed packet  
telephone  
radio  
coupon  
nutrition label  
airline ticket  
medicine labels  
matchbook  
cigarette pack  
magazine  
coaster  
menu  
street sign  
books  
package labels  
t-shirt  
clock  
letters  
brochures  
posters  
money  
typewriter  
coffee cup  
fortune cookie  
lottery ticket*

**Relevant Issues—Basic Ideas & Questions to be Explored:** How do we introduce design theory into practice? This project engages students in design history and theory, and creates an understanding of the relationship of design to culture through the investigation of the origins and significance of a designed artifact. In exploring the role the designed object plays in our society, we gain insight into the impact of design and communication, history and the significance of context.

**Project Goals:** Emphasis is placed on examining the social, economic, political and cultural contexts with research, process documentation and production. The instructor will provide lectures and resources designed to provide the student with the tools to explore how visual communication provides insight into the shared consciousness of a culture. This project is geared to assist advanced-level designers in becoming more insightful and socially responsible communicators.

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**Benefits & Lessons Learned (Learning Outcomes)** The study of an artifact can be an excellent method to engage students in the usefulness of design history and theory. In addition, it is very relevant to design professionals, because it fosters:

- *an understanding of the function and implications (aesthetic and beyond) of the designed object in a culture.*
- *decoding meaning demonstrates all design decisions have relevancy (in discussions we point to specific examples) which creates a stronger foundation for creating meaning.*
- *discussion of social responsibility.*
- *construction of relationships across time and space, between seemingly disparate objects*
- *an understanding of how broad and expansive research can enrich the design process;*
- *familiarity with post structuralist theory including how our perception of meaning and value of an object is affected by culture.*

## making the book

### Project Phases (from “the Universal Traveler” reading):

- **ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE** (*Commitment to the project*)
- **ANALYZE** (*Research, text, image + media gathering etc...*)
- **DEFINE** (*define the role your artifact plays in our culture, outside influences, etc..—you may need to define a scope when it comes to "culture"*)
- **IDEATE** (*what does your artifact's future role look like? )*
- **SELECT** (*commit to designing a future application that's the best fit based off your findings*)
- **IMPLEMENT** (*make*)
- **EVALUATE** (*reflection, what did you learn and were you successful sharing with your audience?*)

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**Final Deliverable—One Process Book:** This book is the culmination of your research and conclusion about your artifact's role (and potential future role) in the cultural scope you have defined at large. **Content in addition to design will be factored into your overall grade for this course. The goal is to provide extensive, nuanced research with excellent design in a publication format.**

- *Size, binding and cover type are open to you*
- *You may craft yourself or produce with a service like paperchase or blurb*

### Process Book Sections (must follow this basic framework, but you can re-name the sections):

- *History*
  - *Evolution & Outside Influences*
  - *Contemporary Cultural Impact*
  - *Visualize / Design the Future*
  - *References/Works Cited for research*
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## semester schedule

Mondays flex, Wednesday meetings only

—BEGIN RESEARCHING BOOK—

**WED 01/24)** ~~Launch Artifact Project, Watch Objectified, Begin Research~~

**WED 01/31)** Discuss Universal Traveler reading, announce chosen artifact, discuss

**WED 02/07)** Ligature prep—collect research, feedback in class

**WED 02/14)** Collect research cont, feedback in class

**WED 02/21)** Research packets due: PRESENT RESEARCH, words | images | media | future plan

—BEGIN DEVELOPING BOOK—

**WED 02/28)** Make adjustments on research based on feedback and begin developing book, work on websites + resumés

**WED 03/07)** NO CLASS—spring break, continue developing book

**WED 03/14)** Website and resumé check-in + eval sheet, book development

**WED 03/21)** Book development

**WED 03/28)** DIGITAL VERSION OF BOOK DUE—prepare for production

—BEGIN PRODUCING BOOK—

**WED 04/04)** Book production

**WED 04/11)** FINAL WEBSITE & RESUME CHECKIN, book production

**WED 04/18)** Book production

**WED 04/25)** Final artifact books due + show websites and resumes

**Finals:** 04/28-05/04 PLEASE DON'T MAKE PLANS TO LEAVE DURING FINALS WEEK