Exhibition and Experience Design

NYSED: 29386 CIP: 50.0799

The full-time program in Exhibition and Experience Design prepares students for a variety of careers in the exhibition and experience design profession. The studio-driven curriculum focuses on designing meaningful narrative environments and experiences for audiences. Students explore exhibition and experience design in multiple areas, including museums, corporate, retail, and public venues, and develop skills in concept development, experiential design, graphics, technology, lighting, and model making. Working closely with industry partners, the program features actual client lead projects and studio-based competitions with local and international firms, museums, and public facilities. Students can elect to complete an internship at a specially designated site appropriate to their learning needs and career visions. The program culminates with a critical thesis exhibition and experience design project. Curriculum below is for the entering class of fall 2025.

CHRISTINA LYONS, Associate Chair
christina_lyons@fitnyc.edu
fitnyc.edu/exhibitiondesign

COURSE OF STUDY

Fall - Semester 1		
ED 502	Experiential Branding Design and Research	1.5
ED 571	Illuminating the Exhibition Experience	3
ED 572	Historical Perspective and Theory	3
ED 581	Introduction to the Exhibition Design Studio	1.5
ED 582	Exhibition and Planning Design Studio	3
Optional Winter Session		**0-6**
ED 5	Sustainability for Exhibitions	
ED 52	Exhibition Design International Professional Practices Seminar	
Spring - Semester 2		
ED 523	Exhibition Design for the Museum Setting	3
ED 531	Presentation Techniques	3
ED 542	Exhibition and Experience Design Graphics	3
ED 584	Exhibition and Experience Design Development and Evaluation	3
Optional Summer Session		**0-2**
IC 5	Internship: Graduate Level	
Fall - Semester 3		
ED 600	Spatial Experience Design & Integrated Technologies: Capstone	3
ED 643	Exhibition Design Graphics II	3
ED 651	The Exhibition Model	3
ED 691	Project and Qualifying Paper: Capstone	3
Total Credits		**36-44**

Optional Noncredit Seminar

Existing and incoming students have the opportunity to take optional noncredit seminar EXD 001 MA Exhibition and Experience Design Technical Skills Certification Seminar and/or certification EXD 002 Professional Certification in Prof Practices & Bus Development in Exhibition & Experience Design through the Center for Continuing and Professional Studies.

COMMON REQUIREMENTS

All degree programs require that students maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 every semester while enrolled in the program. A student is placed on probation if his or her semester GPA is below 3.0. A student is not subject to academic dismissal at the end of his or her first semester in a degree program. A student will be dismissed from the college after two consecutive semesters with a GPA below 3.0. A final GPA of 3.0 is required for graduation.

ADVANCEMENT TO DEGREE CANDIDACY

Eligibility to Attend Commencement Exercises

Candidates for the master's degree at FIT must have advanced to candidacy before being permitted to attend graduation ceremonies.

Degree Requirements

General

For admittance to degree candidacy, students must have satisfied all prerequisites and completed a minimum of 39 approved course credits in 16 months of full-time attendance. Please contact the program chair for information. Student must achieve a final grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0, and had their qualifying thesis project approved by their committee. Students must have advanced to degree candidacy before being permitted to attend graduation ceremonies.

Qualifying Thesis Project

The final semester of the program comprises four interdisciplinary courses, through which students conceive and execute a professional-quality, independent thesis design project, subject to department approval. The thesis is comprised of a design hypothesis proven through research and the execution of a comprehensive exhibition design and qualifying academic paper.

Laptop

Students accepted into the Exhibition and Experience Design program are expected to bring a laptop computer that meets current program specifications. For specific information, please contact the program chair.

ED 501 — Sustainability for Exhibitions

3 credits; 6 lab hours

A series of exercises and design projects assist students in studying the impact of sustainable materials and practices for exhibitions and tradeshow events on society, design, cost and project management.

ED 502 — Experiential Branding Design and Research

1.5 credits; 3 lab hours

This course introduces students to design research methods based on a people-first approach, participatory design relating to building branded experiences; along with learning the fundamentals of typography, color, visual language and crafting the brand voice and messaging for building concepts that deliver concrete solutions to broaden the scope of projects.

ED 523 — Exhibition Design for the Museum Setting

3 credits; 6 lab hours

This studio course focuses on the diversity of museums and museum exhibitions, and the fundamental approaches to designing in these unique settings. Via an integrated series of studio exercises, applied projects, professional visits, students will utilize their technical design and concept development skills to generate exhibition solutions. An industry-sponsored exhibition project is the featured element of this course.

ED 531 — Presentation Techniques

3 credits; 6 lab hours

Introduces the planning and design of professional presentations, including drawings, digital images, and boards. Quick and formal sketch techniques, as well as appropriate materials, are reviewed. This course functions in an interdisciplinary manner with ED 542.

ED 542 — Exhibition and Experience Design Graphics
3 credits; 6 lab hours
Students explore and employ principles of advanced spatial graphic design, with a special emphasis on form, sustainable materials and methods, typography, and color, as tools for placemaking and navigation. Students work closely with a selected real world client on a real project to create an experiential graphic design solution based on the client's needs, audience and mission.

ED 567 — Exhibition and Experience Design History and Evolution
3 credits; 3 lecture hours
This course introduces exhibition and experience design's history and evolution from ancient times to the present. Students will recognize key milestones and perspectives throughout history and practice the latest principles, such as empathy, design thinking, iterative design, gamification, and inclusive design.

ED 568 — Spatial Experience Design and Integrated Technologies I
3 credits; 1 lecture and 4 lab hours
In this course, students will develop familiarity with spatial experience design principles such as Human-Centered Design, Sensory Stimulation, Emotional Engagement, and Journey and Flow. The work in this course will consist of design research, three-dimensional solution, visualization, and the integration of related technologies for the built environment.

ED 569 — Exhibition Audience & Narrative Experience Studio
3 credits; 6 lab hours
This course explores the elements of how content interpretation, storytelling and an awareness of visitors serve to shape an exhibition's design. Through a series of presentations, studio activities, visits and applied projects, students will gain an understanding of audiences and how story and narrative are essential to designing meaningful exhibitions.

ED 570 — Experiential Graphics and Branding
3 credits; 2 lecture and 2 lab hours
Students will be introduced to the multi-faceted nature of branding and its impact on designed experiences. Students will have opportunities to dissect existing brands, as well as develop one of their own. The course incorporates best practices on design research as well as visual presentations using basic graphic design principles.

ED 571 — Illuminating the Exhibition Experience
3 credits; 1 lecture and 4 lab hours
Students explore the art, craft, tools, and methodology of exhibition and experiential lighting design. Through an examination of the properties of light, lighting design theory, and hands-on experience, students will examine how light shapes our environments, creates visual hierarchy, supports narrative, and enhances visual aesthetics.

ED 572 — Historical Perspective and Theory
3 credits; 1 lecture and 4 lab hours
This studio-based course explores the history, theory, and practice of exhibition design. Through presentations, studio design work and visits to design firms, museums, public and corporate venues, students examine key events and issues. Emphasis is placed on exhibitions as arbiters of fact and content authority, and the extraordinary gains being made in design innovation.

ED 573 — Exhibition Design International Professional Practices Seminar
3 credits; 1 lecture and 4 lab hours
Students work directly with international business partners to learn fundamental, state of the art, business practices. Through panel discussions, presentations, industry-led tours, and studio work, they delve into current marketing, management, and vendor relationship issues that impact the world of exhibitions and project management.

ED 574 — Design for Social Justice and Community Engagement

3 credits; 3 lecture hours

This course explores inclusion Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion (DEAI), social justice, and community in exhibition and experience design. Through lectures, guest experts, and exercises, students will engage with social justice work in design and develop an understanding of their role in creating designed experiences that enable people to thrive.

ED 575 — Spatial Experience Design and Integrated Technologies II

3 credits; 1 lecture and 4 lab hours

In this course, students will develop integrated spatial design tools, techniques, and technologies through individual projects focused on complex constraints. These projects will include applications in commercial/trade shows and traveling exhibits. In a studio environment, students will learn multidisciplinary design approaches to create physical environments through individual projects.

ED 576 — Dynamic Branding and Accessible Experiential Graphic Design

3 credits; 6 lab hours

The course allows students to reflect on their creative practice while developing a dynamic branding system that will be applied to multiple platforms. The course will advance students experiential graphic design competence with a focus on creating accessible experiential branding and interpretive graphic design programs catering to diverse user needs.

ED 577 — Sustainability in Experience Design and Practice

3 credits; 3 lecture hours

Understanding and applying sustainability is an essential skill for experienced designers. This course prepares students to evaluate critical choices in the design process, advocate for best practices, and think critically about materials and methods that impact production and operations as an effective and cost-saving business approach.

ED 581 — Introduction to the Exhibition Design Studio

1.5 credits; 3 lab hours

Addresses the three-dimensional challenges faced by exhibition designers. Topics include space design; conceptual development of a thematic approach; and creation of a presentation system for products, artifacts, or artwork. Guest lecturers include exhibition designers, producers. and historians. Site visits incorpated when possible. All student projects must meet American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. This course functions in an interdisciplinary matter with ED 541.

ED 582 — Exhibition and Planning Design Studio

3 credits; 6 lab hours

Develops an understanding of small- and large-scale projects. Three assignments drawn from such exhibition venues as galleries, museums, trade shows, symposia, and traveling exhibitions are required. Students develop exhibition-design programs that include research, programming, space planning, lighting, graphics, audiovisual components, electronic media, and proposal/presentation development.

ED 584 — Exhibition and Experience Design Development and Evaluation

3 credits; 6 lab hours

This studio-based course introduces students to fundamental processes of exhibition design development and the variations in practice across different venues. Creative team design development and Front-End, Formative and Summative evaluation techniques are applied in a long-term project. Brainstorming and ideation techniques are exercised and key phase deliverables are explored.

ED 600 — Spatial Experience Design & Integrated Technologies: Capstone
3 credits; 6 lab hours
During this individualized studio course, each student will develop a unique experiential design project to apply and test their thesis hypothesis. The course incorporates Universal Design Principles, sustainable methods and materials, and the integration of the latest emerging technologies. The student will create a Final Design drawing and specification package following all industry standards.

ED 601 — Phenomenology and Exhibition Object Encounters
3 credits; 3 lecture hours
Phenomenology is the study of experiences, human consciousness and self-awareness. This course explores such in designed environments including exhibition object encounters as primary experiences within interpretive environments. This course will introduce theorists in phenomenology with emphasis on scholars defining the relationship of objects in experience and their role in exhibitions.

ED 602 — Applied Thesis Research and Project Initiation
3 credits; 1 lecture and 4 lab hours
In this course students employ graduate level research methodologies and applications particular to exhibition and experience design in the creation of an original, purposeful and meaningful thesis. Emphasis is placed on utilizing professional-level industry standards of practice and theory in exhibition and experience design in the formation of the thesis.

ED 632 — Advanced Presentation Techniques
3 credits; 6 lab hours
Covers digital enhancement of manual sketches, portfolio development, and the design, style, layout, content, labeling, and material for each individual's thesis project.

ED 643 — Exhibition Design Graphics II
3 credits; 6 lecture hours
Focuses on the development of the interactive components and graphic elements, specifically all collateral and print items, for each individual's thesis project. Covers the graphics requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

ED 651 — The Exhibition Model
3 credits; 6 lecture hours
Focuses on the construction of three-dimensional exhibition models, and the role these models play in communicating exhibition design concepts. Students develop projects from initial visits to finished presentation pieces. Includes lectures, industry presentations, and site visits to professional model-making facilities.

ED 675 — Spatial Experience Retail Design and Integrated Technologies III
3 credits; 1 lecture and 4 lab hours
In this advanced course, students enhance their spatial design abilities through complex, technology-driven projects. Emphasizing teamwork and multidisciplinary methods, students craft innovative retail environments with a focus on user experience, industry standards, sustainability, and digital integration. Practical projects and professional feedback prepare students for real-world challenges. Prerequisite(s): ED 575.

ED 690 — Exhibition Model/ Prototype Making and Integrated Technologies: Capstone
3 credits; 1 lecture and 4 lab hours
In this course, students will learn the fundamentals of planning and constructing scaled models and prototypes and their role in the design process through a series of hands-on building projects to be integrated into students' thesis capstone projects. Particular attention will be paid to digital software and fabrication integration.

ED 691 — Project and Qualifying Paper: Capstone

3 credits; 6 lab hours

Utilizing college resources including the Library, The Writing and Speech Studio, Emerging Technologies Lab, and via a series of studio-based exhibition development and creative writing exercises, students will generate the foundation of their final capstone applied design project and complete a graduate level Qualifying Paper. Prerequisite(s): ED 602.

ED 692 — Independent Study: Exhibition and Experience Design

1-3 credit

Under the guidance of a faculty member, students undertake advanced work, purse an individual project, or combine both of the activities toward a subject of their choosing. Proposals for independent study must be submitted in a timely fashion, and must adhere to the guidelines set by the School of Graduate Studies.

ED 693 — Project Management and Business Development

3 credits; 3 lecture hours

In this course, students will develop familiarity with Exhibit and Experience Design industry standards, procedures and deliverables for Project Management and Business Development. The work in this course will focus on marketing strategies, proposals, budgeting, team and client management, contracting and other factors for a full project life cycle.

ED 694 — Spatial Experience Design and Integrated Technologies IV: Capstone

3 credits; 6 lab hours

During this studio course students will develop a unique experiential design project to apply and test their thesis hypothesis. The course incorporates Universal Design Principles, sustainable methods and materials, and the integration of the latest emerging technologies. Students will create a design drawing and specification package following industry standards.

ED 695 — Exhibition and Experience Design Graphics: Capstone

3 credits; 6 lab hours

The course focuses on graphic opportunities for individual applied thesis projects, emphasizing the development of dynamic branding programs and interpretive spatial graphic solutions. It provides guidance on orchestrating content and messaging through branding, hierarchy, typography, color, and imagery for all graphic components of the final capstone thesis project.