Final Project – Exhibit Case

Your final project for this class is to research and design an exhibit case on some aspect of US women's history prior to 1865. Your exhibit case can focus on people, events, monuments, work, etc., as long as it's related to American women's history before 1865.

After you have chosen your topic, pretend like you're walking into a museum, and there's a clear bookcase in front of you. You are going to tell the story of your topic-- the women involved, the history, the context, etc.---in that case. So, you want it to be visually interesting! And, you want the text to be written in a way that anyone walking up would be able to read it and understand it. That could look like a few different things. If you're good with design work and really interested in design, you might use a design program like Photoshop or InDesign to portray your case. You might use Prezi to give an experience of walking through a digital exhibit. You might build a website using a site like WordPress, Weebly, or Google Sites to serve as a virtual exhibit. Or, you could simply use Microsoft Word: incorporate the images, have the text beside them, etc.

The exhibit should have a central narrative, a logical flow, and historical context. It should be written and presented in a style accessible to the general public. Your exhibit should not just be text-based! You will need images of some sort.

You will need to do original research in primary sources for this project. **You must use at least four primary sources that you have found through your own research from a reputable source.** I will provide a list of online primary source databases, digitized collections, etc. to help you get started, but this list is not exhaustive, and you may find additional resources.

After choosing your sources, use the questions on the document analysis worksheet on Canvas to help you decide how to approach your analysis. In order to understand more completely the story of these sources and what they reveal about women in the United States before 1865, what are some things that you need to know? The questions for primary sources and interrogating images documents on Canvas may also be helpful.

You must use at least one outside secondary source. Any outside source must be an academic journal article or book. **You may not use an encyclopedia, history.com, museum website, or C-Span as your secondary source.** I am happy to help provide direction and suggest outside sources at any point. You must properly cite your sources, following the Chicago Manual of Style.

As you are constructing your exhibit case, refer to: the Smithsonian's Guide to Exhibit Development, available in the Files folder. This document will help you think things through conceptually and practically.

> *Conceptually:* What is the big idea that you are trying to get across? What are the key messages/smaller takeaway statements that you want people to take away with them? What critical questions are you trying to answer?
>
> *Practically:* What kinds of interpretive tools will be most helpful for visitors? Objects, images, text, etc.

As you write your exhibit text, pay attention to what the Smithsonian's Guide says about structuring exhibit text (pages 10-11), and carefully read the exhibit writing tips (page 12). There is also a fantastic example of script formatting on page 13 that will show you how to structure exhibit text.

Your exhibit case should have:
1. A title
2. A big idea, with smaller takeaways, that answer a critical question for the visitors
3. A mix of interpretive tools – at least one image to accompany text. Preferably more. (Think about what you would want to see if you walked into a museum!) Text should be written in a style accessible to a general audience.
4. An introduction, body, and conclusion. (For lack of a better analogy, think of it like a more fun version of an essay – you still have to introduce your topic, provide examples and analysis, and offer a conclusion).
5. At least four primary sources found through your own research
6. Properly cited secondary sources (academic journal articles or books) to strengthen your analysis and back up your points.

For a few examples of digital exhibits, see below:
1. [Malignant Fever (Links to an external site.)](#)
2. [Women and Labor Movements (Links to an external site.)](#)
    0. [The World's Oldest Profession: Labor Organizing in Prostitution (Links to an external site.)](#)
    1. [The Working Mom (Links to an external site.)](#)
3. [Beyond Supply & Demand: Duke Economics Students Present 100 Years of American Women's Suffrage (Links to an external site.)](#)
4. [Documenting the Politics of Food (Links to an external site.)](#)

Note: I will provide examples of exemplary work by students in prior classes via Canvas. You will be able to access example websites, PowerPoints, and Prezi presentations.

Deadlines:
- Submit 3 topic choices to me by **Thursday, February 10**.
- Submit a rough draft of your final project by **Tuesday, April 5**, at the beginning of class.
- Final Project Submission: **Tuesday, April 26** by the beginning of class.