



The University of Western Ontario  
**HISTORY 9832A**

**Interactive Exhibits, Disability and Design Justice**  
**Fall 2026**

**Instructor: Professor William J. Turkel**

Office Hours: Online by appointment  
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Email: wturkel@uwo.ca

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**Course Description:**

History 9832 combines a studio course on interactive exhibit design with seminar discussions on disability history, disability studies, and design justice. The course is intended primarily for public historians but is open to other graduate students, space permitting, with permission of the instructor. Students learn how to create accessible interactive exhibits through a series of hands-on projects that teach the basics of interaction design, physical computing, and fabrication.

N. B. The course meeting place alternates between a hands-on lab in the Social Science Building (studio explorations) and a seminar room (usually in Lawson Hall).

**Graduate Course Level Learning Outcomes/Objectives:**

At the conclusion of the course, students should

- Be familiar with the fields of disability history and disability studies at an introductory level and be able to relate them to public history practice;
- Understand the concepts of design justice and how they apply to the creation of interactive historical exhibits;
- Have worked through the process of designing, documenting, and presenting an interactive exhibit with a partner or in a small team;
- Be familiar with the use of Internet of Things (IoT) and Generative AI-based technologies in some public history settings.

**Course Timeline and Format:**

This course alternates between seminar discussions and guided hands-on studio explorations. Both are face-to-face. The Course Schedule will be provided in the final syllabus at the beginning of term.

**Enrollment Restrictions:**

Enrollment in this course is optional to graduate students in Public History, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program. Please contact Kara Brown, Graduate

Affairs Assistant ([kbrow@uwo.ca](mailto:kbrow@uwo.ca)) if you are in a department other than History and would like to enroll in the course.

### **Course Syllabus:**

No prior experience is necessary. Attendance and participation at all class sessions is expected. You will be required to use Gen AI in this course. Please do not take the course if you are unwilling to work with Gen AI.

### **Course Materials:**

#### *Required equipment*

Before the beginning of term, you need to purchase an M5Stack M5StickC PLUS ESP32-PICO IoT Development Board. You can order directly from the manufacturer or from a Canadian reseller. As of June 2026, the cost was a little less than CAD \$30 before shipping.

- M5Stack (manufacturer) <https://shop.m5stack.com/products/m5stickc-plus-esp32-pico-mini-iot-development-kit?variant=43983456764161>
- RobotShop.ca (reseller) <https://ca.robotshop.com/products/m5stack-m5stickc-plus-esp32-pico-iot-development-board?qd=aaa6778208a0cac000abfd9003bb6374>

All other materials (including texts) will be provided in class.

### **Methods of Evaluation:**

- Guided hands-on explorations (7 \* 8% = 56%)
- Seminar reflections and discussions (4 \* 8% = 32%)
- Final project (12%)

### **Additional Statements**

#### ***Health/Wellness Services:***

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/index.html>

### ***Accessibility Options:***

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating people with disabilities in their respective graduate program. Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodation to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

### ***Request for Accommodations/Medical Issues:***

Students are entitled to their privacy and consequently they do not need to disclose personal information to their course professors. If students feel the need to discuss personal information, they should see the graduate chair. Unlike undergraduate students, graduate students cannot be referred to Social Science Academic Counselling to have their medical or non-medical circumstances evaluated and to receive a recommendation for accommodation. Those facilities are for undergraduates only, and there is no process beyond the department to secure recommendations for accommodation. Our process is that faculty should deal with routine requests for extensions. However, a student's request for accommodation (on medical, non-medical, compassionate grounds) should go to the graduate chair, Prof. Cody Groat ([cgroat@uwo.ca](mailto:cgroat@uwo.ca)) who will consult and communicate with faculty. Additionally, faculty and students should communicate with the grad chair about any case in which work is not submitted before grades are due. If the graduate chair is also the course professor, then a request for accommodation can be taken to the department chair.

### ***Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):***

I use Generative AI extensively in my own research and teaching and it will be necessary for you to use it in this course. We will discuss strategies for both studio and seminar sessions in class. Please do not take the course if you are unwilling to engage with Gen AI tools.

### ***Academic Offences:***

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_offences.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf)

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers

submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ( <http://www.turnitin.com> ).

***Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence:***

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca)

NOTE: See Policies and Statements on the Graduate Section of the History Department Website, <https://history.uwo.ca/graduate/program-information/graduate-policies-and-statements.html>. This includes additional information on academic support services for health and wellness and information on other academic policies, including copyright, plagiarism, and accessibility.