

HISTORICAL COLUMNS

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Keywords	Historic Design Idioms, Contemporary Design Vocabulary, Team Project
Category	History and Theory
Type	Class Assignment
Level	Sophomore
Duration	1 Week
Project Level	Sophomore
Abstract	This project requires students to be exposed to historic design idioms and forces reinterpretation of those idioms into the current design vocabulary taught in the class. The project requires team effort and cooperation. It is the first project, which has the ability to influence the physical environment with its drastic jump in scale from previous micro scale to full-scale mock-ups.
Objective	To have students work in a team format, research a specific historic period/style/movement and reinterpret it in a non-literal manner in the form of a three-dimensional sculpture.
Criteria	The column as finally built must be not shorter than 7'-0" or taller than 8'-0" or wider in any direction than 3'-0". (The width may be exceeded above the 6'-8" mark.) The column must be self-supporting and must be attached to the floor with masking or duct tape only. Any material may be used. Inexpensive materials such as corrugated cardboard and cardboard tubes (carpet rolls, etc.) are encouraged. Weighted bottoms (sand bags, concrete blocks) are often critical. Each design must incorporate the name of the assigned historical period and each of the team member names, in a manner or typeface consistent with the historical period.
Process	In a two session per week schedule, the project is introduced during the first class. During the second class students make oral reports on their assigned historic period and present study models (scale: 1/2" = 1-0"). Full-scale models are erected during a separate session after 5:00p.m to avoid conflict with day-

to-day activities within the building where they are being displayed.

Work generated: 1) individual written data on historic period; 2) oral team report; 3) diagram of concepts within the historic period; 4) scale model of column, and 5) full scale constructed column.

Creative interpretation of the assignment is the key, including: 1) good rendition of the historic period done non-literally; 2) appropriate use of materials; 3) understanding of consequences of the scale; and 4) following all the dimensional and physical requirements (particularly stability of structure.)

I team students carefully to achieve a mix of good and average students (in terms of design ability). I have found it valuable to have each student rate the other members of the team as to input of ideas, level of cooperation, and workload assumed. This can be a factor in assigning an individual grade to either raise or lower the group grade.

Evaluation This project counts 15% of the course grade (higher than any other single project) as it requires a great deal of work of varying nature, and according to group choices as to materials, can incur a reasonable amount of money. Due to the effort expended, it is critical that students document the project on film and slide format.

Resources Students must have access to written and graphic information on their assigned historic period. This research is not taken to any great length, but merely intends to expose the entire class to a variety of periods/styles that will be studied in depth later in their interior design studies.

Historic styles which have proved adaptable to non-literal interpretation are: American Victorian (Queen Anne), Art Deco, Art Nouveau, Aztec, Bauhaus, Egyptian, Gothic, Greek Classical, Japanese, Post-Modern, Prairie School, and Roman Classical.

Credits This project was conceived as an historic "portal" or door surround (we used faculty and classroom doors in major halls of our academic building). All parameters stay about the same. It helps to have hall ceiling heights greater than 8'-0". Two member teams work well for this effort.

I have also tried this project with historic "arches" which span the hallways. These have a tremendous impact on the environment, but are very dependent on hall widths and ceiling heights.

I have timed this project each term to fall on either the university "Parent's Weekend" or "Homecoming Weekend". The nature of the project and the ability to come up with innovative forms can easily capture the attention of visitors to the site and thus create a high level of visibility for the Interior Design program. The enthusiasm of the viewers is certainly not lost on the student designers as they see how they have positively influenced the built environment, perhaps for the very first time.