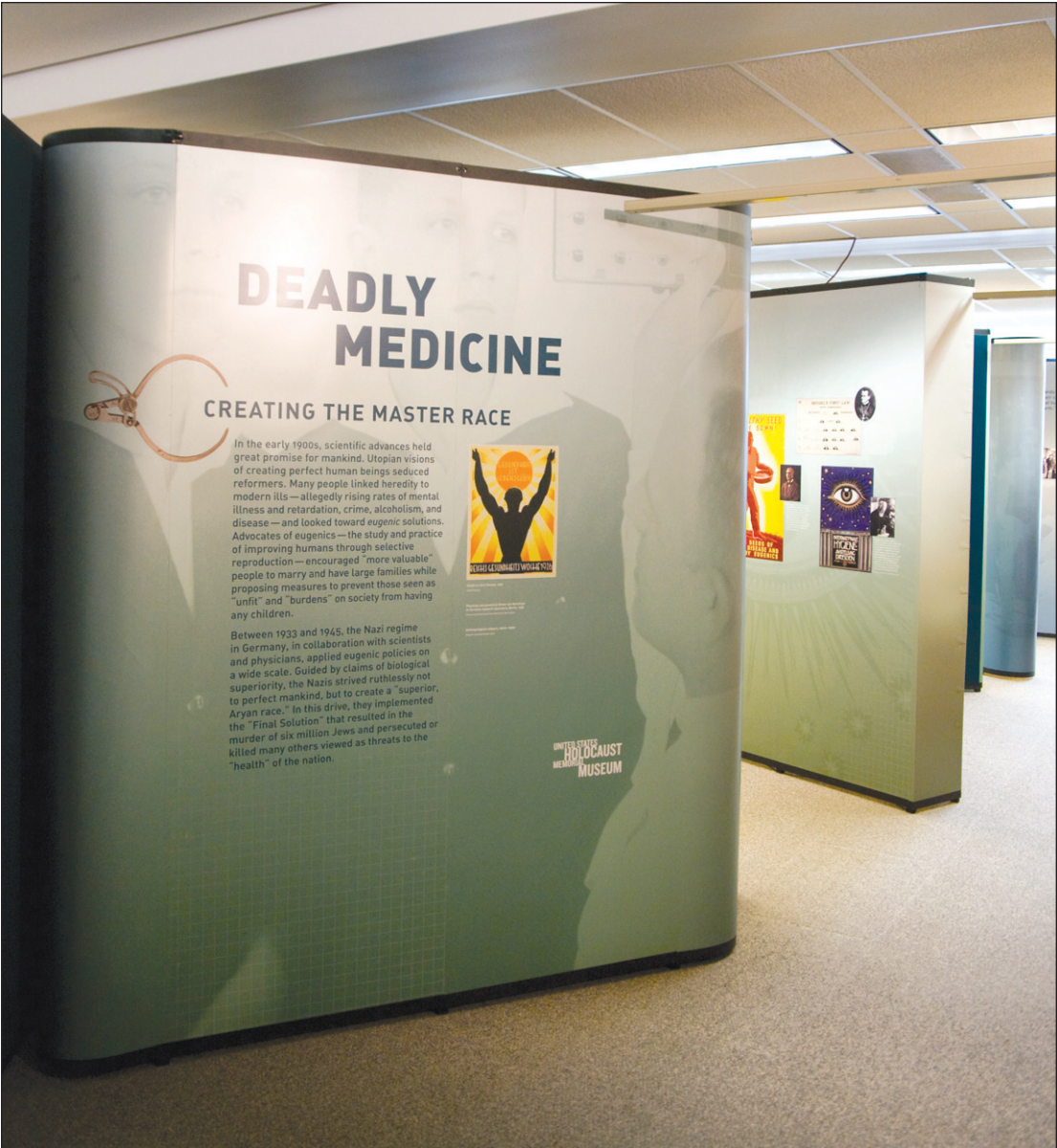




Photo: Karen Nadeau
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These photos show the displays that are part of “Deadly Medicine,” a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s traveling exhibition that is at University Libraries on the campus of the University of South Dakota in Vermillion.



‘Deadly Medicine’

USD Brings Holocaust Exhibit To Campus

BY ANDREW ATWAL
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The Holocaust was a dark time of death and destruction with scientists trying to find out what they considered to be the perfect race.

“Deadly Medicine,” a Holocaust exhibit, recently opened at the USD University Library located on 414 E. Clark, Vermillion. The exhibit details scientists and doctors of the Holocaust period and how they wanted to create the “perfect race.”

“More than a year ago, the United States Holocaust Museum had contacted us and said that South Dakota has been one of the only states in the country that one of their exhibits had not been to,” said Danielle Loftus, an assistant professor and technology and fine arts librarian at USD. “They have had four exhibits going around the country for the past several years, and they wanted to know if we would be interested in bringing an exhibit here.”

At first, USD officials said the “Nazi Book Burning” exhibit would come to campus but a time could not be worked out. So, they decided to apply for the “Deadly Medicine” exhibit.

“We felt it was a good choice for the population we have here in the area,” she said.

With the application, officials had to document the structure of the library and the space available for the exhibit.

The primary focus of this exhibit is on the doctors and scientists who were responsible for the eugenics of the Holocaust and their version of a perfect human. The exhibit also documents the euthanasia program and what scientists described as an “imperfect human.”

“This exhibit has a lot of primary documents, footage from the Holocaust, film and news clips, propaganda films, and there are several different videos you can watch as you walk through the exhibit,” Loftus said. “There are countless examples of primary information that people can look at in the exhibit.”

She added that because a lot of the information in the exhibit is very sensitive, she recommends the exhibit for those in sixth grade and older.

“We really wanted to try to fit this exhibit into the school year so we know college students can come see it,” Loftus noted. “We also wanted to have it during a time of the year that people from the public would be available to come in and take a look at it.”

So far, she says there has been

a very positive reception with the exhibit and said that she has seen a lot of school groups come through already, with more planning to attend.

“It’s been really amazing to watch all these people coming through and looking at the exhibit,” Loftus said. “I come up here a lot to check on things, and I always see people walking through to check it out.”

She estimates that it would take someone about 45 minutes to go through the exhibit, but it could take much longer for a large group of people.

She added that the exhibit is important for people to see, despite how sensitive some of the material is.

“Even though the subject matter is emotional, it is important for people to look at our history,” Loftus said. “Something a lot of people mentioned to me has been that there is a lot of information in here they didn’t know about with the Holocaust.”

One of those pieces of information is how the Holocaust is tied into World War II, information that Loftus says “everyone needs to know about their history.”

She added that this is a unique exhibit and is very professionally done.

“The people that put this together are some of the top notch in their fields and are all scholars as well,” Loftus said. “The materials and videos in the exhibit are all very well done.”

She said that the language and dialogue is all easy to read and understand.

“Even if you come in and only have a few minutes to look around, it’s easy to go around and look at all the photos and digest all the information you might want to get out of it,” Loftus said. “You don’t have to read every single word — you can get a lot of information just by looking at the photos.”

Throughout the exhibit, there will be lectures that take place on various aspects of the Holocaust.

Carol Leibiger will speak about children’s literature during the Holocaust at 7-8 p.m. on Nov. 6 and 3-4 p.m. Nov. 8 on the second floor of the library. Dr. David Burrow will lecture on eugenics and the Nazi conscience at 3-4 p.m. Nov. 13 and 11 a.m.-noon and 7-8 p.m. Nov. 15 on the second floor of the library.

The free exhibit runs through Jan. 6 and is open Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. until 2 a.m. On Fridays the exhibit is open from 7:30 a.m. until 11 p.m., on Saturdays the exhibit hours are 10 a.m. until 11 p.m., and on Sundays the exhibit is held

from 10 a.m. until 2 a.m.

“What I think is really awesome about this exhibit is that it’s full of facts,” Loftus said. “It’s not ‘This is what I think and you should think this way, too.’ It’s all factual documentation of what happened during that time.”

You can follow Andrew Atwal on Twitter at twitter.com/andrewatwal



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