

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism  
PRLS/TOUR 362—Cultural and Environmental Interpretation (3)  
Spring 2013

<b>DAY/TIME:</b>	T, TH 3:00– 4:15 p.m.	<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>258 Bull Run Hall</b>
<b>PROFESSOR:</b>	Susan L. Johnson	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	<b>sjohnsoi@gmu.edu</b>
<b>OFFICE LOCATION:</b>	Freedom Center Administration	<b>PHONE NUMBER:</b>	<b>703-993-3761</b>
<b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>	By appointment	<b>FAX NUMBER:</b>	<b>703-993-8478</b>

**PREREQUISITES:** PRLS 300 or PRLS 328 or TOUR 352 or permission of instructor

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Focuses on communication processes and practices used to explain and interpret special characteristics of cultural and environmental resource sites for visitors. Conceptual principles for planning interpretive programs and multi-media delivery techniques are discussed. Methods for programming interpretive services, addressing multi-audience accessibility, and administration and evaluation of interpretive services used at recreation and tourism sites are also examined.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** At the completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain how interpretation is important to the management of tourism, event and recreation resource sites;
2. Discuss principles of interpretation and communication;
3. Analyze interpretive materials and presentations; and,
4. Prepare several types of effective spoken and written interpretive messages.

**COURSE OVERVIEW:** In this course, we will examine, discuss, develop, and critique multiple examples of interpretive projects developed by you, your colleagues, and professionals. Because your contributions are so important to this course, you will be expected to attend all class meetings scheduled, actively participate in class discussions on-line and in-person, complete in-class exercises as distributed, and fulfill all assignments according to the due dates noted.

Further, upon completion of this course, students will meet the following professional accreditation standard for the *Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Related Professions*:

7B.03	Understanding the principles and practices of stewardship and use of natural resources and the ability to interpret them to the general public, particularly as related to the public's role in stewardship.
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**NATURE OF COURSE: Face-to-Face**

**REQUIRED READINGS**

Beck, Larry and Cable, Ted T. (2011). *The Gifts of Interpretation*. Urbana, IL: Sagamore Publishing LLC

Additional readings to be assigned.

**EVALUATION:** Assignments will be due at the beginning of class on the specific due date. All written papers are to be submitted in WORD (.doc or .docx). **Papers received after the beginning of class will be considered late and receive a 20% deduction in points per 24-hour period.** If you encounter extreme emergencies or are participating in a pre-approved university-sponsored function, exceptions may be made; however, these must be discussed with me to determine if they fall in this category. I strongly encourage you to make a back-up copy of any work submitted since computers have been known to crash at the most inopportune times.

**Assignment Summaries**

**Facility Analysis**

For this assignment, you will travel to three interpretive facilities that have a focus on natural history, cultural history, and historical interpretation. You may attend an interpretive talk, view exhibits, walk a self-guided trail, etc. You will provide feedback about your experience on an evaluation form provided by the instructor.

### Brochure Analysis

For this assignment, you will collect an interpretive brochure from the tourism, park, and recreation field and analyze it for its effectiveness at communicating its intended message, as well as for its effectiveness in following interpretive brochure design and communication strategies. You will write a short (approximately 1-2 page) report detailing your assessment of the brochure using criteria identified in our course. (Yes, you may select a brochure from a site you visit for your Facility Analysis.)

### Interpretive Talk

For this assignment, you will choose a topic, with a specific theme. Then, following the steps for planning, preparing, and delivering a thematic interpretation, you will give a short interpretive talk (without using PowerPoint!). You will present the interpretive talk to your peers in class.

Requirements	Possible Points
Mid-term Exam (based on text & class readings)	100
Assignments:	
<i>Facility Analysis (individual)</i>	75
<i>Brochure Analysis (individual)</i>	75
<i>Interpretive Talk (pairs)</i>	100
CLASS PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE (includes field trips)	<u>50</u>
<b>TOTAL possible points=</b>	<b>400</b>

### Grading Scale

A+ = 98 – 100	B+ = 88 – 89	C+ = 78 – 79	D = 60 – 69
A = 94 – 97	B = 84 – 87	C = 74 – 77	F = 0 – 59
A- = 90 – 93	B- = 80 – 83	C- = 70 – 73	

### COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK	TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS
1 (Jan.22 & 24)	Introductions, ice breakers, review course requirements What is Interpretation? Who Offers Interpretation? The Gift of Spark	Prologue, Preface, Introduction and Chapter 1
2 (Jan 29 & 31)	The Gift of Revelation, Chapter 2 The Gift of Story(Care about...care for – Larsen Video)	Chapter 2 & 3& 4
3 (Feb 5 & 7)	What and how to Interpret: historical, cultural, natural history Creating Themes, Topics, 3-5 talking points Review Chapter Five. In class activities.	Chapter 5 & 6
4 (Feb.12 & 14)	Know your audience. Review Chapters Six and Seven. (Linking a tangible to an intangible – Larsen Video) Nature journaling	Chapter 7 & 8
5 (Feb. 19 & 21)	Field Trip to Elenore C. Lawrence Park-both days Exhibits and self-guided trails	
6 (Feb 26 & 28 )	Interpretation in the National Parks (Guest Speaker)	Chap. 12 & 13

7 (March 5 & 7)	Interpretive Talk Presentations Skills Practice Skills – in class	Chap. 10 & 11
8 (March 12 & 14)	SPRING BREAK	
9 (March 19 & 21)	Historical & Cultural Interpretation <b>March 21- CLASS VISIT to Manassas Battlefield National Park (MEET THERE by 3:15 – 5:15pm!)</b>	Chap. 12 & 13 <a href="http://www.nps.gov/mana/index.htm">http://www.nps.gov/mana/index.htm</a>
10 (March 26 & 28)	Work on brochure and facility analysis	
11 (April 2 & 4)	Mid-term review and exam	
12 (April 9 & 11)	Interpretation Flow	Chapter 14 thru the end
13 (April 16 & 18)	Environmental Education and Interpretation (Guest Speaker)	
14 (April 23 & 25)	Work in teams	
15 (April 30 & May 2)	STUDENT INTERPRETIVE TALK PRESENTATIONS	ALL CLASS MEMBERS MUST BE PRESENT
16 (May 7 & 9)	STUDENT INTERPRETIVE TALK PRESENTATIONS	ALL CLASS MEMBERS MUST BE PRESENT

*Note: Faculty reserves the right to revise the course schedule.*

### **STUDENT EXPECTATIONS**

- ❖ Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- ❖ Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- ❖ Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- ❖ Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- ❖ Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- ❖ Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

### **CAMPUS RESOURCES**

- ❖ The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- ❖ The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- ❖ For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism, please visit our website [See <http://rht.gmu.edu>].

**CORE VALUES COMMITMENT:** The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

