

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism
PRLS/TOUR 362—Cultural and Environmental Interpretation (002)
Spring 2014

DAY/TIME:	Monday 10:30 – 1:15 p.m.	LOCATION:	249 Bull Run Hall
PROFESSOR:	Susan L. Johnson	EMAIL ADDRESS:	sjohnsoi@gmu.edu
OFFICE LOCATION:	Freedom Center Administration	PHONE NUMBER:	703-993-3761
OFFICE HOURS:	Mondays 11:00 am – 1:00 p.m. and by appointment	FAX NUMBER:	703-993-8478

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.

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*:

- 7.02: Students graduating from the program shall be able to demonstrate the ability to design, implement, and evaluate services that facilitate targeted human experiences and that embrace personal and cultural dimensions of diversity.

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.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: GMU is an Honor Code University; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? First, it means that when you are responsible for a task, you will be the one to perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives and traditions. When in doubt, please ask for guidance and clarification.

COMMUNICATION: Communication is an important part of this course, therefore, I ask that you check our website, **using Blackboard 9.1 each morning for course communications.** To do this, you'll need to go to "MyMason" (found at the top of our gmue.edu webpage), log in with your username & password, click on the "Courses" tab along the top right of the page, and go to the "9.1 Course List" to find our course. This is important since we're using Blackboard 9.1 (not the old CE Blackboard version).

REQUIRED READINGS

Knudson, D.M., Cable, T.T., and Beck, L. (2003). *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources, 2nd edition*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc.
Beck, Larry, and Cable, Ted T. (2011). *The Gifts of Interpretation*. Urbana, IL: Sagamore Publishing LLC

ASSIGNMENTS: 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

Agency Presentation (teams of 3)

You will become familiar with some of the various local, state, and federal agencies associated with cultural and environmental interpretation. You will explore in-depth the mission, purpose, structure and interpretive program offerings of the agency. You will create a power point presentation to share your findings with fellow classmates. Format and outline for the presentation will be provided by the instructor.

Site/Facility Analysis (individual or in teams of 2)

You will visit two interpretive sites/facilities outside of class during this semester. Select a site/facility that offers a cultural, historical, and environmental theme. Write a short (approximately 3-4 page) report detailing your assessment of the facility and their use of interpretive design techniques we discuss in class. An assessment form will be provided by the instructor as a guide.

Interpretive Program (teams of 2)

This is a culminating project for our course and will require you to develop an interpretive talk for a specific age group in an assigned (or chosen) category. You will work in teams to design and present your talk to your peers during the last several weeks of this course. Guidelines will be provided by the instructor.

EVALUATION

This course will be graded on a percent basis.

Requirements	Points per Project
Mid-term Exam (based on text & class discussions)	75
Assignments	
<i>Agency Presentation</i>	75
<i>Site/Facility Analysis</i>	150
<i>Interpretive Talk</i>	200
CLASS PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE (includes field trips)	<u>25</u>
TOTAL	525 possible points

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	

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>].
- 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/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- 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.

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/>].

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR: Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

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.



COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK	TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS
1 (Jan.27)	Introductions, ice breakers, review course requirements	ICNR-Chapters 1 & 2 (all of Section I) The Gifts-Chapter 1,2,3
2 (Feb. 3)	Historical Perspective of Interpretation Principles of Interpretation, why interpret?	ICNR -Chapters 3,4 & 5 (all of Section II) The Gifts-4,5,6
3 (Feb.10)	How to Interpret Meanings & Relevance and Facilitating a Connection, Themes (<i>Walk in the woods-EDGE</i>)	ICNR-Chapters. 6,7,8,9
4 (Feb.17)	Tangibles, intangible, universal concepts	ICNR – Chapters 10, 11, 12, 19 Introduce Site/Facility Analysis Assignment
5 (Feb.24)	Ellanor C. Lawrence Park , Chantilly, VA Guided and Self-guided Tours & Walks (MEET THERE- to be confirmed)	http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ecl/site_history.htm Site/Facility Analysis-
6 (March 3)	Mid-term	Site/Facility Analysis #1-DUE
7 (March 10)	SPRING BREAK	Chap. 10 & 11
8 (March 17)	Review mid-term Historical & Cultural Interpretation	
9 (March 24)	CLASS VISIT to Manassas Battlefield National Park (MEET THERE-to be confirmed)	Chap. 14 http://www.nps.gov/mana/index.htm Site/Facility Analysis #2- DUE
10 (March 31)	Site/Facility Analysis-out of class	Chap. 15
11 (April 7)	Interpretive Talk Planning-topic, theme, message development	Chap. 16
12 (April 14)	Work on Interpretive Talk-out of class	
13 (April 21)	Interpretation for the Future (Katie Shaw-Walker Nature Center, Reston Association)	Draft of Interpretive Talk- DUE
14 (April 28)	Final Interpretive Talk Planning-review with Instructor	
15 (May 5)	STUDENT INTERPRETIVE TALK PRESENTATIONS	
Final (May 12)	STUDENT INTERPRETIVE TALK PRESENTATIONS	Happy Summer!

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