

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
College of Education and Human Development  
School of Sport, Recreation and Tourism Management  
PRLS 362, Section 002—Cultural and Environmental Interpretation  
3 credits, Spring 2020  
Wednesday 1:00pm-4:10pm, Hanover Hall L003, Fairfax Campus

**Faculty**

**Name:** Susan L Johnson  
M.S. Recreation Administration

**Office Hours:** Mondays: 2:00-3:00pm, by appointment

**Office Location:** Freedom Center, Administration Office

**Office Phone:** 703-993-3761

**Email Address:** sjohnsoi@gmu.edu

**PREREQUISITES/COREQUISITES**

PRLS 300 or PRLS 328 or TOUR 352 or permission of instructor

**UNIVERSITY CATALOG 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 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.

**COURSE DELIVERY METHOD**

This course will be delivered through lecture, field trips, and guest speakers.

**LEARNER OUTCOMES OR 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 sites, materials and presentations; and,
4. Prepare several types of effective spoken and written interpretive messages.

**PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

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.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Beck, Knudson, Cable (2018). *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Heritage for a Better World*, Urbana, IL: Sagamore Venture Publishing. **(Professor's resource for lectures)**

## COURSE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

### ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments will be due at the beginning of class on the specific due date. All written papers are to be submitted in WORD. **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

#### 1. Agency Presentation (teams of 2)

You will become familiar with some of the various local, state, and federal agencies associated with cultural and environmental interpretation in Virginia. 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 in class.

Format and outline for the presentation will be provided by the instructor.

#### 2. Class Field Trips/Site Analysis

As a class, we will visit three interpretive sites this semester during our regular class time. At each site we will have a lecture or program lead by their interpretive staff. Each site will help familiarize you with and increase your knowledge of Interpretation. We will visit sites such as ones noted in Section IV of our text.

#### 3. Pitch in on the Piedmont

Give back to the environment and "volunteer" at The EDGE. Plan to attend this event on **April 4, Saturday, 9:00 am-1:00 pm**. We will be a service project along the Piedmont Trail At the Sci Tech Campus. Register for this event at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pitch-in-on-the-piedmont-tickets-79367104145>. More details will be provided.

#### 4. Interpretive Talks: Mini and Final

**Mini Interp. Talk-** these will be presented in teams of 2. The instructor will provide the template to use and the topic. In pairs, you will research the topic and conduct a 10 min. talk presentation to the class. We will critique your talk and provide constructive feedback.

**Final Talk-** This is a culminating project for our course and will require you to develop an interpretive talk on a topic that focuses on a cultural, historical or natural history topic. You will follow the template and format used in the Mini Interp. Talk, however your talk will be longer and many include a hands on activity. You will research, design and present your talk to your peers during the last several weeks of this course. Guidelines will be provided by the instructor. **Note: you must fully attend both classes (April 29 and May 1) to receive full credit—late arrivals or early departures.**

## EVALUATION

This course will be graded on a percent basis.

Requirements	Points per Project
FINAL EXAM- comprehensive	100
Assignments	
<i>Agency Presentation</i>	75

<i>Site/Facility Analysis, includes individual project</i>	75
<i>Mini Interp. Talk (25) and Final Interpretive Talk (75)</i>	100
CLASS PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE (includes Pitch In, homework, quizzes)	<u>50</u>

TOTAL	<b>400 possible points</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	

### PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

<https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>

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

### Class Schedule

**Note: all field trips are waiting for confirmation as of 1/29/20**

WEEK	TOPIC FOR CLASS	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS/Homework for next class
WEEK 1 (January 22)	Introductions, ice breakers, review course requirements.	READ: IX ,XI, XIII and Section I, II- Introduction and Why Interpret?
WEEK 2 (Jan. 29)	What is Interpretation? Why Interpret?  Introduce Site/Facility Analysis Assignment and Who offers Interpretation Project (Agency Presentation)  What Guides us?  Mini Interp. Talk Assignment	READ: Section III- What Guides Us?
WEEK 3 (Feb.5)	<b>No in class session</b>  <b>Work in your teams on the Agency Presentation</b>	<b>February 12 – FIELD TRIP TO WOLF TRAP NATIONAL PARK</b>

WEEK 4 (Feb.12)	<b>FIELD TRIP</b> <b>Wolf Trap National Park</b> <b>1551 Trap Rd</b> <b>Vienna, VA 22182</b> <b>1:00-4:00pm</b>	READ: Section IV-How to Interpret? <b>Feb. 19- Agency Presentations</b>
WEEK 5 (Feb.19)	<b>Agency Presentations-students</b>  <b>Debrief Wolf Trap Field Trip</b>  Introduce Tangibles and Intangibles, NPS Video  *Mini Interp. Talk	<b>DUE: SITE ANALYSIS #1</b>
WEEK 6 (Feb. 26)	How People Learn, Flow Learning- Cornell Meanings & Relevance and Facilitating a Connection, Learning Styles.  Using Field Guides in Interpretation Research  *Mini Interp. Talk	<b>March 4- FIELD TRIP to Potomac Overlook Re- gional Park</b>
WEEK 7 (March 4)	<b>FIELD TRIP</b> Potomac Overlook Regional Park 2845 Marcey Rd. Arlington, VA 22207	
(March 11)	<b>SPRING BREAK</b> <b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>DUE TO ME BY 3/8 --SITE ANALYSIS #2</b>
WEEK 8 (March 18)	Planning Your Interpretive Talk  Talk Formula, Components of an In- terpretive Talk, Thematic Interpreta- tion, Effective Writing and Speaking  Debrief Potomac Overlook Field Trip  *Mini Interp. Talk	<b>MARCH 25- Field Trip to Ellanor C. Lawrence Park</b>
WEEK 9 (March 25)	<b>FIELD TRIP</b> <b>Ellanor C. Lawrence Park</b> <b>5040 Walney Rd</b> <b>Chantilly, VA 20151</b>	

WEEK 10 (April 2)	<p><b>In class work on Interpretive Talk</b></p> <p><b>Debrief Ellanor C. Lawrence Field Trip</b></p> <p>*Mini Interp. Talk</p>	<b>DUE: SITE ANALYSIS #3</b>
<b>April 4 Saturday</b>	<p><b>Pitch in on the Piedmont-Volunteer Day</b></p> <p><b>The EDGE</b></p> <p><b>Sci Tech</b></p>	
WEEK 11 (April 8)	<p><b>No in class session</b></p> <p><b>Work on Interpretive Talk</b></p>	<p><b>READ: Section IV</b></p> <p><b>April 15 - Field Trip to Bull Run Regional Park</b></p>
WEEK 12 (April 15)	<p><b>FIELD TRIP</b></p> <p><b>Roving Naturalist Presentation</b></p> <p>Bull Run Regional Park 7700 Bull Run Dr. Centreville, VA 20121</p>	<b>DUE: DRAFT INTERPRETIVE PLAN</b>
WEEK 13 (April 22)	<p><b>DRAFT OF INTERPRETIVE</b></p> <p>Review in class w/ Professor</p> <p>Debrief Bull Run Field Trip</p> <p>*Mini Interp. Talk</p> <p>Review for Final Exam</p>	<b>DUE: FINAL INTERPRETIVE TALK</b>
WEEK 14 (April 29)	INTERPRETATIVE TALK-student presentations	
WEEK 15 (May 6)	INTERPRETATIVE TALK-student presentations	
EXAM DAY	FINAL EXAM ( <i>SAME TIME AS CLASS</i> )	HAPPY SUMMER!

## 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 their principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

## GMU Policies and Resources for Students

### *Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/> ).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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 with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

### *Campus Resources*

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

### **Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:**

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/> .**



School of Sport, Recreation,  
and Tourism Management