

**George Mason University  
College of Education and Human Development  
School of Sport, Recreation, and Tourism Management**

**RMGT 533 (Section 1) – Visitor Services  
3 Credits – Spring 2024**

**Thursdays 9:00am to 11:40am, Thompson Hall, 1020, Fairfax Campus**

**FACULTY:**

**Name:** Sammie Powers, Ph.D.

**Office Location:** 213A Krug Hall (School of Sport, Recreation, and Tourism Management)

**Office Hours:** By Appointment on Calendly: [calendly.com/sammie\\_powers](https://calendly.com/sammie_powers)

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**PREREQUISITES:**

None

**UNIVERSITY CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Examines motivation of resource-based recreation participants. Covers visitors' expectations and perceptions, with emphasis on implication for service quality, staff training, and other management responsibilities. Discusses use and user conflicts and placement, information and interpretive service, and human and other interpretive service resources.

**COURSE DELIVERY METHOD:**

This is an in-person course.

**LEARNER OUTCOMES/COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

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

1. Study park and wilderness use and users, including recreation-related behavior
2. Study impacts of recreation on park and wilderness environments
3. Outline alternative strategies and tactics to manage recreation use of parks and wilderness
4. Introduce and consider a diverse array of contemporary park and wilderness management issues
5. Help develop skills (e.g., critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity) necessary to address the multidimensional/interdisciplinary issues that face park and wilderness managers

**REQUIRED READING:**

Required Texts:

Hammit, W. E., Cole, D. N., & Monz, C. A. (2015) *Wildland recreation: Ecology and management*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) New York: Wiley.

Manning, R. E. (2022). *Studies in Outdoor Recreation: Search and Research for Satisfaction* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Oregon State University Press.

Other assigned materials (e.g., readings, videos, podcasts, documents) will be posted on Blackboard.

**COURSE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION:** Students are expected to submit all assignments on time on Blackboard. This course will be graded on a percentage point system, with a total of 100 possible percentage points.

<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Percentage of Overall Grade</b>
In-Class Participation and Assignments/Activities	30 pts each x 10 (11 - 1 lowest grade dropped) = 300 points	30%
Weekly preparation assignments: questions, reflections, or quiz (Due every Wednesday night)	20 pts each x 10 assignments = 200 points	20%
Park Observation Assignment	100 points	10%
Management Issue Project	Area and Issue Identification = 50 points Literature Review Draft = 150 points Final Management Issue Report and Presentation = 200 points	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,000 points</b>	<b>100%</b>

**REQUIREMENTS:**

**In-Class Participation and Assignments/Activities**

Class assignments and activities will vary, with something different every class. These may include discussions with guest speakers, field trips, applied management scenarios or case studies, and other group activities. We will have in-class activities throughout the semester in every class. Activities give you an opportunity to apply what you have learned that week and practice implementing specific management solutions for human behavior challenges in parks and public lands. They will also help us to build a community within our class and provide an opportunity for us to get to know one another. In-class participation and assignments/activities are graded based on performance and students must be present in class to obtain points. For guest speakers and field trips, you are expected to be polite and professional. You should treat these interactions with RMGT professionals as opportunities to network and make a good impression! I expect you to be attentive and respectful, engage in conversation with professionals, dress professionally, refrain from being on your phones. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in reduced participation grades for these activities.

**Weekly Preparation Assignments**

This course will follow a flipped classroom style. Each week, you will have material to read, watch, and/or review, including, in most weeks, a brief pre-recorded lecture video introducing the week’s topic. After engaging with the week’s material, you will complete a weekly preparation assignment which may include a series of question, a reflection, or a short quiz. The weekly preparation assignments are due on Wednesday nights, in advance of our class meetings on Thursdays. Class preparation assignments are graded based on performance, and these

assignments comprise a significant portion of your grade. They are intended to help you prepare for the week's activity.

### **Park Observation Assignment**

You will select a spot in any park where you will spend a minimum of one hour observing people recreating at that site, while taking detailed notes about their recreation behavior. You'll want to make sure you pay attention to the activities people are doing, any depreciative behavior that you observe (e.g., littering), crowding, conflict, etc. You will then code and summarize those notes and write up the results, connecting them back to the content that we have covered in the course.

### **Management Issue Report with Literature Review**

This three-part assignment will span the course of the semester and result in one comprehensive final report detailing a specific recreation management issue impacting a specific area/site, current knowledge and information on this issue and why it needs to be addressed, and a plan for addressing the issue at the selected site.

#### Area and Issue Identification:

- Selection of an outdoor recreation management area and issue.
- Description of the area.
- Brief description of a recreation related management issue.

#### Literature Review Draft:

- Conduct a literature review on your selected issue, with a focus on areas like your selected area. Use your review of literature of provide a synopsis of what is currently known about your issue, what challenges it presents to the field, and why it is critical to address (consider social, recreation, and ecological impacts)
- Literature review draft should include citations of at least 15 different peer reviewed publications (e.g., academic articles, federal or state agency reports, books or book chapters).

#### Final Management Issue Report:

- The final reports will include a revised and integrated version of your Area and Issue Identification paper and your Literature Review. You will also extend what you've done in prior assignments by indicating how you will address your selected management issue.
- The final report should include the following:
  - a. Brief overview about your selected area and management issue
  - b. Literature Review on your management issue
    - What is the issue?
    - What is currently known about your issue?
    - What challenges it presents to the field?
    - Why it is critical to address?
  - c. How your issue impacts your selected area and why it needs to be addressed in this area

- d. Identification and explanation of a minimum of three solutions for addressing the issue, supported by literature. Explain how you will implement your chosen combination of solutions.

**GRADING POLICIES:**

*Attendance Policy:*

Students are expected to be in class barring exceptional circumstances. Although I will not take attendance, you must be present in class to earn points for in-class participation and assignments/activities. I will drop your lowest in-class assignment/participation grade to allow you some flexibility.

*Late Assignments:*

Each student will get one “life happens” pass for submitting an assignment late. Sometimes things happen and we encounter unforeseen circumstances. The single “life happens” pass will allow you to submit one assignment past the due date. You will have one extra week from the initial deadline to submit the assignment. Although you can use your “life happens” pass for any reason of your choosing, it is your responsibility to save your “life happens” pass for when you really need it. Once you’ve used it, you won’t get another pass.

Other than your “life happens” pass, all assignments are due on their assigned dates, and late work will not be accepted. No in-class activity make-ups will be available. I encourage you to begin work early on all assignments so in the event of unforeseen circumstances you can get them in on time.

***Grading Scale***

Grade	Percentage	Quality Points	Graduate Courses
A+	98%-100%	4	Satisfactory/Passing
A	94%-97%	4	Satisfactory/Passing
A-	90%-93%	3.67	Satisfactory/Passing
B+	88%-89%	3.33	Satisfactory/Passing
B	84%-87%	3	Satisfactory/Passing
B-	80%-83%	2.67	Satisfactory/Passing
C	74%-79%	2	Unsatisfactory/Passing
F	0%-73%	0	Unsatisfactory/Failing

**PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS:** Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

*\*\* Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students. Additional guest speakers may result in alterations to the schedule. Several activities later in the semester are denoted with a “TBD” to allow for flexibility based on guest speakers, potential field trips, and student interests.*

<b>DATE</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings/Videos Due This Week</b>	<b>Assignments Due This Week</b>
Week 1: 1/18	Introduction to Resource-Recreation <i>Activity: Outdoor Recreation Participation Activity &amp; Discussion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Manning</i>, Chapter 1: Search and Research for Satisfaction</li> <li>• 2023 Outdoor Participation Trends Report</li> </ul>	
Week 2: 1/25	Use Patterns: Social and Descriptive Aspects of Outdoor Recreation <i>Activity: Rock Creek Park Visitor Use Assessment Plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week 2 Lecture Video</li> <li>• <i>Manning</i>, Chapter 2: Social Aspects of Outdoor Recreation</li> <li>• <i>Manning</i>, Chapter 3: Descriptive Aspects of Outdoor Recreation</li> </ul>	Week 2 Prep Assignment
Week 3: 2/1	Wilderness Management  <b>ASYNCHRONOUS CLASS</b> <b>No class meeting this week.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week 3 Lecture Video</li> <li>• <i>Wildland Recreation</i>, Chapters 1-5</li> </ul>	Week 3 Prep Assignment due 2/1
Week 4: 2/8	Carrying Capacity, Crowding & Coping <i>Activity: Acadia Case Study</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week 4 Lecture Video</li> <li>• <i>Manning</i>, Chapter 4: Carrying Capacity</li> <li>• <i>Manning</i>, Chapter 5: Crowding in Outdoor Recreation</li> <li>• <i>Wildland Recreation</i>, Chapter 6: Impact Patterns</li> </ul>	Week 4 Prep Assignment
Week 5: 2/15	Quality and Normative Approaches <i>Activity: Indicators and Standards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week 5 Lecture Video</li> <li>• <i>Manning</i>, Chapter 6: Indicators and</li> </ul>	Week 5 Prep Assignment

	<i>Scenario</i>	Standards/Thresholds of Quality (A Normative Approach) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Wildland Recreation</i>, Chapter 8: Environmental Durability</li> <li>• Pettebone, D., Meldrum, B., Leslie, C., Lawson, S. R., Newman, P., Reigner, N., &amp; Gibson, A. (2013). A visitor use monitoring approach on the Half Dome cables to reduce crowding and inform park planning decisions in Yosemite National Park. <i>Landscape and Urban Planning</i>, 118, 1-9.</li> </ul>	
Week 6: 2/22	Motivations and Benefits in Outdoor Recreation <i>Activity: River Management Scenario</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week 6 Lecture Video</li> <li>• <i>Manning</i>, Chapter 7: Motivations and Benefits in Outdoor Recreation</li> <li>• Manfredi, M. J., Driver, B. L., &amp; Tarrant, M. (1996). Measuring leisure motivation: A meta-analysis of the recreation experience preference scales. <i>Journal of Leisure Research</i>, 28(3), 188-213.</li> </ul>	Week 6 Prep Assignment
Week 7: 2/29	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) <i>Activity: ROS Zoning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week 7 Lecture Video</li> <li>• <i>Manning</i>, Chapter 8: The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum</li> <li>• <i>Wildland Recreation</i>, Chapter 9: Visitor Use and Behavior</li> <li>• <i>Wildland Recreation</i>, Chapter 10: Strategies and Concepts of Management</li> </ul>	Week 7 Prep Assignment
Week 8: 3/7	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
Week 9: 3/14	Conflict <i>Activity: Consumptive and Non-Consumptive Use Conflict Case Study</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week 9 Lecture Video</li> <li>• <i>Manning</i>, Chapter 9: Recreation Conflict</li> </ul>	Week 9 Prep Assignment  Park Observation Assignment (Due 3/13)

Week 10: 3/21	Depreciative Behaviors and LNT <i>Activity: TBD</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week 10 Lecture Video</li> <li>• Freeman, S., Lawhon, B., Newman, P., &amp; Derrick Taff, B. (2021). Food Storage on the Appalachian Trail: A Theory of Planned Behavior Approach to Understanding Backpacker Bear Canister Use. <i>Journal of Interpretation Research</i>, 26(2), 73-95.</li> <li>• <i>Wildland Recreation</i>, Chapter 11: Monitoring Recreational Impacts)</li> </ul>	Week 10 Prep Assignment  LNT Certificate Course (Due 3/20, Undergrad)
Week 11: 3/28	Management Issue Project Peer Review Day <i>Activity: Peer Review Day</i>		Management Issue Project, Part 1 (Due 4/3)
Week 12: 4/4	Interpretation and Visitor Services <i>Activity: TBD</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week 12 Lecture Video</li> <li>• <i>Wildland Recreation</i>, Chapter 12: Visitor Management, and Chapter 13: Site Management</li> </ul>	Week 12 Prep Assignment
Week 13: 4/11	Substitutability and Specialization <i>Activity: TBD</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week 13 Lecture Video</li> <li>• <i>Manning</i>, Chapter 10: Substitutability</li> <li>• <i>Manning</i>, Chapter 11: Specialization in Outdoor Recreation</li> <li>• Ferguson, M. D., Mueller, J. T., Graefe, A. R., &amp; Mowen, A. J. (2018). Coping with climate change: A study of Great Lakes water-based recreationists. <i>Journal of Park &amp; Recreation Administration</i>, 36(2).</li> </ul>	Week 13 Prep Assignment
Week 14: 4/18	Place Attachment and Stewardship <i>Activity: TBD</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week 14 Lecture Video</li> <li>• <i>Manning</i>, Chapter 12: Outdoor Recreation Places</li> <li>• Wynveen, C. J., Schneider, I. E., Arnberger, A., Cottrell, S., &amp; von Ruschkowski, E. (2020). Integrating place attachment into management frameworks: Exploring place attachment across the recreation opportunity spectrum. <i>Environmental Management</i>, 66(2), 248-262.</li> </ul>	Week 14 Prep Assignment

Week 15: 4/25	<b>Management Issue Project Presentations</b>		Management Issue Project Part 2 (Due 4/24 and presented to class 4/25)
Finals Week: 4/29	<b>No final exam.</b>		



**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: <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 <http://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 VIA should be directed to [viahelp@gmu.edu](mailto:viahelp@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>. 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, sexual harassment, 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/>**