

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

RMGT 362.001/RMGT 598 – Cultural and Environmental Interpretation
3 Credits, Fall 2024

Thursday 1:30 – 4:10 pm (*Zoom and Mid-term/End-of-Semester Class Meetings*)

Faculty

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Prerequisites/Corequisites

RMGT 300, 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

Not Applicable

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using synchronous and asynchronous format via Mason's new Learning Management System (Canvas). You will log in to the course site using your Mason email name and password. The course site will be available on August 28, 2024. To access your course in Canvas:

<https://canvas.gmu.edu/login/canvas>. Additional off-site and face-to-face gatherings will be held.

Under no circumstances may students participate in online class sessions while operating motor vehicles.

Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

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;
4. Prepare several types of effective spoken and written interpretive messages; and
5. (Graduate Students Only) Develop a plan for analysis of interpretive messaging effectiveness.

This course addresses, in part, the following professional standards of 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 Text

Beck, L., Knudson, D. M., & Cable, T. T. (2018). *Interpretation of cultural and natural heritage for a better world*. Urbana, IL: Sagamore-Venture Publishing.

Recommended Text and Readings

Tilden, F. (2007). *Interpreting our heritage* (Fourth edition, expanded and updated). Raleigh, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Additional readings and resources will be posted on Canvas

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed internet access with updated browsers.
 - Canvas supported browsers: <https://guides.instructure.com/a/720329>
- Consistent and reliable access to GMU email and the course LMS (Canvas), as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Speakers and a microphone or a microphone-enabled headset for use with the synchronous web conferencing tools.
- Note that students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.

Expectations

- Course Week: Our course week will begin on the day that our synchronous meetings take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes.
- Log in Frequency: Students must actively check the course LMS site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to

course materials at least 2 times per week. In addition, students must log in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings, if any.

- Participation: Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions (with video on and in person, as applicable).
- Technical Competence: Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- Technical Issues: Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- Workload: Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- Instructor Support: Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. The instructor is available to meet on a Mason campus or via a scheduled zoom or MS teams appointment. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
- Netiquette: The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are held to the high academic standards of George Mason University. You are expected to attend all class sections, actively participate in class discussions, and complete all in-class exercises and assignments.

All assignments must be submitted via Canvas prior to the beginning of class on the specified due date or **no credit will be given**. Only students with significant emergencies, a documented medical excuse, or university-sponsored functions discussed with the

professor prior to the due date will be given consideration for exception. It is recommended that students make copies of all written work submitted.

Assignments have been scheduled in advance to provide you with sufficient time to plan and complete. Smaller critiques and activities aligned with the process of designing interpretive programs will be completed throughout the semester, reviewed and graded. Together, these will form a basis for your final interpretive program/element. It is to your benefit to study feedback and incorporate comments, as each assignment will build upon the next.

All research, photographs and videos must be properly cited using [APA style](#).

#1	Personal Artifact Storytelling Assignment	10
	Cultural or Historical	
#2	Interpretive Program/Element Critique	10
	Natural or Environmental	
#3	Interpretive Program/Element Critique	10
#4	Plan for Interpretive Program or Element	10
#5	Interpretive Program or Element Documentation	25
#6	Interpretive Program or Element Presentation	20
	Course Participation	15
	TOTAL	100

Undergraduate

Grading Scale

A+ = 98	B+ = 88	C+ = 78
- 100	- 89	- 79
A = 94	B = 84	C = 74
- 97	- 87	- 77
A- = 90	B- = 80	C- = 70
- 93	- 83	- 73

Graduate

Grading Scale

A+ = 98	B+ = 88	C = 70
-	- 89	- 79
100		
A = 94	B = 84	F = 0
-	- 97	- 87
- 69		
A- = 90	B- = 80	
-	- 93	- 83

Use of Generative AI

Use of Generative AI tools should be used following the fundamental principles of Mason's Academic Standards. This includes being honest about the use of these tools for submitted work and including citations when using the work of others, whether individual people or Generative AI tools.

Professional Dispositions (CEHD Student Guide)

Throughout study in the College of Education and Human Development, students are expected to demonstrate behaviors that reflect the positive dispositions of a professional. See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/current-students/cehd-student-guide>.

Class Schedule

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Date		Topic	Chapter/Assignment Due
R	August 29	Course Overview Introduction to Interpretation	
R	September 5	Principles of Interpretation	Beck et al. Chapters 1 – 2 <i>#1: Storytelling Assignment</i>
R	September 12	Values of Interpretation	Beck et al. Chapters 3 – 4
R	September 19	No Class – Program Visits	
R	September 26	Audience	Beck et al. Chapters 5 – 7 <i>#2: Interpretive Program Critique</i>
R	October 3	Interpretation Methods,	Beck et al. Chapters 8 – 11

			Applications, and Contexts	
R	October	10	Interpretation Methods, Applications, and Contexts	Beck et al. Chapters 12 – 15 <i>#3: Interpretive Program Critique</i>
R	October	17	Guest Presentation	
R	October	24	Interpretation Methods, Applications, and Contexts	<i>#4: Plan for Interpretive Program or Element</i>
R	October	31	No Class – Program Work	
R	November	7	Interpretation Management and Planning	Beck et al. Chapters 16 – 19
R	November	14	Interpretation Management and Planning	<i>#5: Interpretive Program or Element</i>
R	November	21	The Profession and Opportunities	Beck et al. Chapters 20 – 21
R	November	28	No Class – Thanksgiving Break	
R	December	5	Presentations Course Wrap Up and Evaluation	<i>#6: Interpretive Program Presentation</i>
R	December	12	Finals Week	

CEHD Commitments

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to fostering collaboration and community, promoting justice and equity, and advancing research-informed practice. Students are expected to adhere to, and contribute to, these commitments, the CEHD Mission, and Core Values of George Mason University. More information can be found here: <https://cehd.gmu.edu/about/culture/>

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the Mason’s Academic Standards (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic-standards/>)
- 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 VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>.
- Questions or concerns regarding use of your LMS should be directed to:
 - Canvas: <https://its.gmu.edu/service/canvas/>
- For information on student support resources on campus, see: <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>
- TimelyCare: <https://caps.gmu.edu/timelycare-services/>
- Writing Center: <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

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

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential 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 or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.



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 PROGRAM**
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