

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism
PRLS/TOUR 362 (1)—Cultural and Environmental Interpretation
Spring 2015

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 2:00 pm – 3:00 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*:

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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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 "My Mason" (found at the top of our gmu.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

Larsen, David (2011). *Meaningful Interpretation. 2nd Edition.*National Association of Interpretation./National Park Service. Washington, DC. Eastern National Warehouse.

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. Students are required to attend both days of final presentations or no credit will be given.

Assignment Summaries-all are REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS COURSE

Site/Facility Presentation (teams of 3)

You will select a local, state, and federal site/facility to visit that is associated with cultural, historical and/or environmental interpretation. You will explore in-depth the mission, purpose, structure and interpretive program offerings of the organization. You will create a power point presentation to share your findings with fellow classmates. A presentation outline/format will be provided by the instructor.

Site/Facility Analysis (class field trips-Attendance is REQUIRED)

We will visit THREE interpretive sites/facilities during class this semester. The sites/facilities will offer us hands on learning about their specific cultural, historical, and environmental themes and their unique qualities as a park. You will write a short (1-2 page) summary 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 3)

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 point per project basis.

	Points per Project
Requirements	
Final Exam (based on text readings, class notes/PPT and field trip discussions)	100
Pop Quiz	25
Assignments	
<i>Site/Facility Presentation</i>	50
<i>Site/Facility Analysis</i>	150
<i>Interpretive Talk –Final Project</i>	100
CLASS PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE (Remember FIELD TRIPS ARE REQUIRED)	<u>25</u>
TOTAL	450 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	

GMU Policies

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/>].
- 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.26)	Introductions, ice breakers, review course requirements	
2 (Feb. 2)	What Interpretation Does? Principles of Interpretation. Historical Perspectives <i>In class activities.</i>	<i>Strength Finder Inventory</i>
3 (Feb.9)	How People Learn Learning Styles Strength Finder Results <i>In class activities.</i>	<i>Table of Contents. Tenet 1., Tenet 2., Tenet 3 What Interpretation Does. Too Many Interpretations. Interpretation Defined.</i>
4 (Feb.17)	No Class	<i>More Relevant to More People. Human or Natural? The Visitor is Sovereign. The Visitor. Linking Tangibles to an Intangible.</i>
5 (Feb.23)	How to Interpret Facilitating a Connection Tangibles, intangibles, universal Concepts-NPS Video <i>In class activities.</i>	<i>Making it a Process- read all of this section</i>
6 (March 2)	Ellanor C. Lawrence Park , 5040 Walney Rd Chantily, VA 20151 Guided and Self-guided Tours & Walks	http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ecl/site_history.htm Influence and Power –read the section
(March 9)	SPRING BREAK	
8 (March 17)	Wolf Trap Center for Performing Arts - National Park Service <i>(to be confirmed)</i>	www.nps.gov/wotr/index.htm Site/Facility Analysis #1-DUE
9 (March 23)	Interpretive Themes. The Interpretive Equation. “Clearing the Fog” Facilitation Techniques. Presentation skills	Site/Facility Analysis #2-DUE The Interpretive Equation
10 (March 30)	No Class- Personal Site/facility visit.	Create power point on your site/facility to present in class on April 13.
11 (April 6)	Potomac Overlook Regional Park 2845 N. Marcey Rd Arlington, VA 22207	www.nvrpa.org-Potomac Overlook Site/Facility Analysis #3- DUE
12 (April 13)	Present power point on your site/facility visit.	Site/Facility Analysis #4-Due The Interpretive Process Model
13 (April 20)	Final Exam Interpretive Talk planning – <i>in class</i>	

14 (April 27)	Final Interpretive Talk Planning- review with Instructor- <i>in class</i>	Draft of Interpretive Talk- DUE
15 (May 4)	STUDENT INTERPRETIVE TALK PRESENTATIONS	
Final (May 11)	STUDENT INTERPRETIVE TALK PRESENTATIONS	Happy Summer!

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