

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
College of Education and Human Development  
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism  
PRLS 362, Section 001—Cultural and Environmental Interpretation  
3 credits, Spring 2018  
Monday 10:30am-1:10pm, 249 Bull Run Hall, Science and Technology Campus  
Recreation Management

**Faculty**

**Name:** Susan L Johnson, M.S.  
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](mailto:sjohnsoi@gmu.edu)

**PREREQUISITES/COREQUISITES**

PRLS 300 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

- a. As a class, we will visit three interpretive sites this semester. 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.

#### Individual Project (or teams of 2)

- b. You will visit one interpretive site/facility outside of class during this semester. Select a site/facility that offers cultural, natural, environmental theme. You will complete analysis of the site and share experience with the class.

#### 3. 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 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. **Note: you must attend all three classes (April 17 and May 1) to receive full credit—no early departures.**

## EVALUATION

This course will be graded on a percent basis.

<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Points per Project</b>
FINAL EXAM- comprehensive	100
Assignments	
<i>Agency Presentation</i>	75
<i>Site/Facility Analysis, includes individual project</i>	100
<i>Interpretive Talk</i>	100
CLASS PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE (includes field trips, homework, quizzes)	<u>75</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>450 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 1/17/18**

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>TOPIC FOR CLASS</b>	<b>READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS/Homework for next class</b>
1 (Jan.22)	Introductions, ice breakers, review course requirements	Read: IX,XI, XIII Section I and II

2 (Jan. 29)	What is Interpretation? Why Interpret?	Read: Section III
3 (Feb.5)	What Guides us?  Introduce Site/Facility Analysis Assignment and Who offers Interpretation Project (Agency Presentation)	Read: Chapter 15
4 (Feb.12)	<b>FIELD TRIP</b> Great Falls National Park 9200 Old Dominion Dr. McLean, VA 22102	Read: Section IV <b>NO SITE ANALYSIS DUE</b>
5 (Feb.19)	<b>**No Class**</b>  Work in teams on Agency Presentation	Read: Chapters 11, 12, 13
6 (Feb. 26)	<b>Agency Presentations-students</b>  Introduce Tangibles and Intangibles, How People Learn, Flow Learning, NPS Training Video	
7 ( March 5)	<b>FIELD TRIP</b> Ben Lomond Historic Site 10321 Sudley Manor Dr. Manassas, VA 20169  Topic: HOW TO PLAN FOR AN INTERPRETIVE TALK. CREATING -- Meanings & Relevance and Facilitating a Connection, Immersion Interpretation	<b>Site Analysis #1</b> <b>DUE: (3/9/2018)</b> <b>Ben Lomond Historic Site</b>
(March 12)	<b>SPRING BREAK</b> <b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>Individual Site Analysis</b>
9 (March 26)	<b>Guest Speaker or work on your Individual Site Analysis</b>	Read: Chapters 18 and 19

11 (April 2)	<b>FIELD TRIP</b> Eleonore C. Lawrence Park Fairfax County Park 5040 Walney Rd Chantilly, VA 20151  Topics: Interpretive Planning and Evaluation	<b>Site Analysis #3 DUE</b> <b>Individual Site Analysis</b>  <b>Read: Chapter 14</b>
12 (April 9)	Planning Your Interpretive Talk  Talk Formula, Components of an Interpretive Talk, Thematic Interpretation, Effective Writing and Speaking  Work on Interpretive Talk w/partner	<b>Site Analysis #4 DUE</b> Eleonore c. Lawrence Park
13 (April 16)	Review DRAFT with Professor	<b>DUE: DRAFT OF INTERPRETIVE TALK</b>
14 (April 23)	INTERPRETATIVE TALK-student presentations	<b>Due: Final Interpretive Talk</b>
15 (May 30)	INTERPRETATIVE TALK-student presentations  Review for Final Exam	
*May 7,8	<b>READING DAYS!!</b>	<b>NO CLASS May 8</b>
16 (May 14)	<b>FINAL EXAM</b> <b>(SAME TIME AS CLASS)</b>	<b>HAPPY SUMMER!</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 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 <http://www.gmu.edu/honor-code/>)

\* 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 <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).

\* Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced 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 <http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

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



**PRLS/TOUR 362**  
**Cultural and Environmental Interpretation - Spring 2018**  
**FINAL Interpretive Talk Presentation**

**POINTS: 100pts**

**Main Task**

This culminating project will demonstrate the knowledge you have gained as it relates to interpretive programming, talks and walks, leisure services, and park events.

1. Each team of 3 will choose a topic in which you are interested and develop a specific theme framed around that topic.
2. Each team will follow steps of planning and preparing a thematic interpretative talk discussed in class. You will create an outline stating your Topic, Theme and 3-5 Talking points.
3. Each team will have 20 minutes to give its interpretive talk to fellow classmates. Each team member shall have a part in the talk-- you can move back and forth between speakers.
4. For this presentation, you will **not** create a power point but **you may** use YouTube videos no longer than **3 minutes that support your topic/theme**. You will be focusing on “the talk” – a good interpretive talk, which means you should apply the principles of interpretation: uses of good communication skills; is entertaining and/or engaging; is meaningful and relevant; has a clear theme; uses stories to emphasize specific points; is well organized and has 3 to 5 main points. You need to think about how to catch your audience’s attention and make them remember your theme! That means you will want to **be creative!**
5. It is ok to use note cards for this presentation – but you should only be using those notes to remind you of key points. You don’t want to read directly from note cards when giving an interpretative talk since that can distance you from your audience. And, you want to be sure to engage them ☺.

**Remember:** The key elements of any interpretive program are provided by tangibles and intangible meanings that link to universal concepts.

The tangible resources/ icon you identify will lead the audience to care about the intangible meaning to the resource/icon. Be creative in how you use universal concepts to connect the audience to the resource and make them relevant to your audience. Think of opportunities for the audience to make their own emotional connection to the meaning of the resource.

**Include:** provide a visual, tactile and auditory experience in your presentation.

**Planning and Preparation:**

- **Do your research--KNOW YOUR TOPIC!**
- **Plan the 20 minute presentation-define the roles of each team member**
- **No power points. You may use other types of visual aids and props.**
- **Agree how you will communicate with each other. Hold each other accountable.**
- **Practice your presentation prior to giving it in class**
- 

**Mandatory attendance :** April 25, May 2, May 9

**Students must attend all three days to receive full credit (-25pts will be taken off your project grade if you miss EITHER day.**

### Rubric for assessing your Interpretive Product

Your task is to develop and deliver a 20-minute presentation with a team of individuals which interprets a cultural, historical, or natural resource. Your talk should have a clearly identifiable topic around which your theme is developed, a specific message is conveyed in 3-5 talking points, and your presentation should engage your audience.

	Exemplary	Competent	Needs extensive work
<b>Topic/Theme (out of 10 pts)</b>	The theme is appropriate to the topic. The theme is evident throughout the program. Presenter styles help to convey the theme to the audience. 10-5 pts	The theme is appropriate to the topic. The theme is not also evident in program. Presenter styles could be more effective in conveying the theme. 5 pts.	The theme is not appropriate to the topic. The theme is not evident throughout program. Presenter styles are not effective in conveying the theme. 0-2 pts.
<b>Message 3-5 main point (out of 10 pts)</b>	The message is clearly identified & memorable. 10 pts	The message is presented but could be clearer or more memorable. 5 pts.	The message is unclear, not identified and/or difficult to recall. 0-1 pts.
<b>Talk Outline (out of 10 pts)</b>	The outline draft was submitted on time & program improvements reflect feedback 10-8 pts.	The outline draft was submitted on time, but there appears to be only some response to feedback 7-5 pts	The outline draft was not submitted on time and there was minimal response to feedback 0-2 pts.
<b>Audience Engagement (out of 10 pts)</b>	The presenters use lively tones & gestures, and make eye contact with the audience. Presenters respond effectively to audience reactions & questions. 10-8 pts.	The presenters could improve use of tones, gestures & eye contact. Presenters respond adequately to audience reactions & questions. 7-5 pts	The presenters use minimal to no lively tones, gestures, or audience eye contact. Presenters do not respond to audience reactions & questions. 0-1 pts.
<b>Creativity (out of 20 pts)</b>	Presenters use imaginative strategies to deliver program. Presenters adapt to unexpected challenges during the program. 20-15 pts.	Presenters use adequate imaginative strategies to deliver program. Presenters adapt somewhat to unexpected challenges. 10-5 pts	Presenters do not use imaginative strategies to deliver program. Presenters do not adapt well to unexpected challenges. 0-1 pts.
<b>Program &amp; Materials Bias (out of 10 pts)</b>	Program & materials were presented in an unbiased way 10 -5 pts.	Program & materials were presented with limited bias 5-3 pts	Presenter bias is clear in program & materials 0-1 pts.
<b>Take Care of Your Audience (out of 5 pts)</b>	The audience is comfortable and able to easily access all information presented. 5 pts.	Audience is moderately comfortable and most can access information presented. 3 pts	Multiple individuals are uncomfortable and/or it is difficult for audience to access information. 0-2 pts.
<b>Organization/Delivery (out of 15pts)</b>	The program is coherent and easy to follow. Team transitions well between speakers. Presenters speak clearly and loudly enough to be heard. 15-10 pts.	The program is adequately cohesive and moderately easy to follow. Team transitions adequately between speakers. Presenters can be heard. 10-5 pts	The program lacks cohesion and is difficult to follow. Team does not transitional well between speakers. Presenters are difficult to hear. 0-2 pts.
<b>Audience Connections (out of 5 pts)</b>	Presenters effectively facilitate audience connection to resource 5 pts.	Presenters help audience connect to resource moderately well 3-4 pts	It is difficult for audience to connect to resource. 0-2 pts.

**OUTLINE DRAFT:** \_\_\_\_\_ **25**

**PRESENTATION:** \_\_\_\_\_ **75**

**TEAM'S TOTAL SCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **100**