

PTRM 310- Natural Resource Interpretation and Communication

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Office hours: Wednesday 11am-1pm or by appointment

Course Description:

To understand the guiding principles of interpretation and how to successfully utilize multiple interpretive techniques

Course Overview:

This course is intended to educate about the connection between people, communication, and natural resource management. One goal of natural resource management is communicating the importance of stewardship of public and private land. This course is based on the idea that it is more effective to engage the public on natural resource decisions when the public is enlightened. The focus of this class will be on the foundation of how managers effectively communicate using appropriate methods for natural resource settings and topics.

Course Goals:

1. To introduce you to the field of interpretation
2. To give you an appreciation for interpretation as a management tool, public relations device, and as a way to enhance public understanding of natural resource management.
3. To understand and practice the practical skills required for successful interpretation, by designing and presenting interpretive materials and programs.
4. To be able to evaluate the effectiveness of various interpretive techniques.

Course Objectives:

When you have completed this course:

1. You will understand and be able to explain the role of environmental interpretation in managing our natural resources
2. You will understand and be able to explain the theoretical basis of an interpretive approach to communication
3. You will be familiar with several methods and techniques of interpretation. Including waysides exhibits, interpretive messages, guided walks/tours, illustrated talks, and the use of other visual aids.
4. You will be able to make intelligent decisions regarding the application of various communication techniques to situations encountered in natural resource management

5. You will be able to critically analyze interpretive programs and facilities.

Class participation and attendance:

Attendance is mandatory in this class! Exceptions will only be made if there is a documented excuse (i.e. doctors note). The success of this course depends on lively in-class discussion. Therefore, students are expected to come to class everyday well-prepared and ready to discuss the assigned readings and topics from the lectures.

Moodle:

Moodle will only be used to post assignments. No lecture notes will be posted. The grade book on Moodle does not take into account the weighting of each assignment. Therefore, Moodle will only be used as a way to record your grade, not to calculate the final grade. To calculate your grade, please use this syllabus.

Students with Disabilities:

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommason 154 or 406 243 2243. We will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate modification.

Student Conduct Code:

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](#). This includes plagiarism. Any students caught plagiarizing will be subject to failing the assignment, course, and will be subject to additional University sanctions through the office of the Dean of Students.

Grading Statement:

Please note, this class is offered for traditional letter grade only. It is not offered under the credit/no credit option.

Course Withdrawal Deadlines

Deadline	Description	Date
To 15 th instructional day	Students can drop classes on CyberBear with refund	September 19 = last day
16 th to 45 th instructional day	A class drop requires a form with instructor and advisor signature, a \$10 fee from registrar's office, student will receive a 'W' on transcript, no refund.	September 20 through October 31

Deadline	Description	Date
Beginning 46 th instructional day	Students are only allowed to drop a class under very limited and unusual circumstances. Not doing well in the class, deciding you are concerned about how the class grade might affect your GPA, deciding you did not want to take the class after all, and similar reasons are not among those limited and unusual circumstances. If you want to drop the class for these sorts of reasons, make sure you do so by the end of the 45 th instructional day of the semester. Requests to drop must be signed by the instructor, advisor, and Associate Dean and a \$10 fee applies.	November 1 – December 12

Learning Materials:

Interpretation: Making a difference on purpose, by Sam Ham and various readings on Moodle

Course evaluation

Description	Percentage of Grade
Class Participation	15%
Interpretive non-verbal	20%
Interpretive Talk	20%
Website Critique	15%
Exams (2)	30%
Total	100%

Grade Range	Letter Grade
93-100%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67-69%	D+
60-66%	D
Below 60%	F

Assignments:

The assignments and exams for this course will be used to measure your understanding of the topics covered and your ability to communicate that understanding verbally and through writing. All assignments are due at the beginning of class and late assignments will not be accepted unless the student has a written and verifiable excuse.

Course Schedule: tentative and subject to change

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments
Aug 29 M	Introduction	
Aug 31 W	Interpretation organizations	
Sept 2 F	Interpretation organizations	
Sept 5 M	No class	
Sept 7 W	Interpretive approach to communication	Ch. 1
Sept 9 F	Understanding your audience	Ch. 3
Sept 12 M	TORE	Ch. 2

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments
Sept 14 W	TORE	Ch. 4
Sept 16 F	Theories behind interpretation	Ch.5
Sept 19 M	Theories behind interpretation	
Sept 21 W	Learning theories	Moodle reading Ch. 7
Sept 23 F	Out of class assignment	
Sept 26 M	Learning theories	
Sept 28 W	Theme development	Ch. 6
Sept 30 F	Theme development	Ch. 7
Oct 3 M	Theme development	Ch. 9
Oct 5 W	Review for exam	
Oct 7 F	Exam 1	
Oct 10 M	Writing for interpretation	Moodle reading Ch. 9
Oct 12 W	Exhibits and designing self-guided trail (introduce non-verbal assignment)	Moodle reading Ch. 11
Oct 14 F	Self-guiding non-verbal critique	Moodle reading Ch. 12
Oct 17 M	Exhibit critique	
Oct 19 W	Work day on non-verbal assignment	
Oct 21 F	Presentation of non-verbal assignment	DUE: Non-verbal assignment
Oct 24 M	Presentation of non-verbal assignment	
Oct 26 W	Museums and visitor centers	Moodle reading Ch. 10
Oct 28 F	Interpreting history (introduce verbal assignment)	Moodle reading Ch. 14
Oct 31 M	Planning interpretive talks	Moodle reading Ch. 13
Nov 2 W	Interpretive talk critique	
Nov 4 F	Work day on verbal assignment	
Nov 7 M	Verbal presentations	DUE: Verbal assignment
Nov 9 W	Verbal presentations	
Nov 11 F	No class	
Nov 14 M	Verbal presentations	
Nov 16 W	Verbal presentations	
Nov 18 F	Verbal presentations	
Nov 21 M	Verbal presentations	
Nov 23 W	Technology and communication	
Nov 25 F	No class	
Nov 28 M	Websites and online media	
Nov 30 W	Presentation of website critique	DUE: Website critique
Dec 2 F	Presentation of website critique	
Dec 5 M	Working with the media	Moodle reading media guide
Dec 7 W	Working with the media	
Dec 9 F	Presentation of website critique	DUE: Website critique
Dec 12 M	Exam review	

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments
Dec 19 M	Final exam	8:00-10:00am