

PTRM 310- Natural Resource Interpretation and Communication

Instructor: Elizabeth Covelli Metcalf

Office: 460 CHCB

Email: elizabeth.metcalf@umontana.edu;

Phone: 406.243.4448

Office hours: Wednesday 1pm-3pm 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 and readings. 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 & no "W" on Transcript	Sept 21 = 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.	Sept 22 through Nov 2
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 (in that order) so if you pursue this request, leave sufficient time to schedule meetings with each of these individuals (generally this will take at least 3-5 working days). A \$10 fee applies if approved. Instructor must indicate whether the individual is Passing or Failing the class at the time of request.	Nov 3 – Dec 12

Learning Materials:

Readings will be on Moodle

Course evaluation

Description	Percentage of Grade	Grade Range	Letter Grade
Class Participation	15%	93-100%	A
Interpretive non-verbal	20%	90-92%	A-
Interpretive Talk	20%	87-89%	B+
Website Critique	10%	83-86%	B
Out of class assignment	5%	80-82%	B-
Exams (2)	30%	77-79%	C+
Total	100%	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
Sept 1 F	Introduction	
Sept 4 M	Labor day	
Sept 6 W	Interpretation organizations	
Sept 8 F	Interpretation organizations	
Sept 11 M	Interpretive approach to communication	Ham Ch. 1
Sept 13 W	Understanding your audience	
Sept 15 F	TORE	Ham Ch. 2
Sept 18 M	Out of class assignment	
Sept 20 W	Out of class assignment	
Sept 22 F	TORE	
Sept 25 M	Theories behind interpretation	
Sept 27 W	Theories behind interpretation	
Sept 29 F	Learning theories	Knudsen Ch. 7
Oct 2 M	Learning theories/Review for exam	
Oct 4 W	Exam 1	
Oct 6 F	Non-verbal and verbal assignments	
Oct 9 M	Theme development	Ham Ch. 6
Oct 11 W	Theme development	
Oct 13 F	Theme development	
Oct 16 M	Writing for interpretation	Knudsen Ch. 9
Oct 18 W	Exhibits and designing self-guided trail	Knudsen Ch. 11
Oct 20 F	Self-guiding non-verbal critique	Knudsen Ch. 12
Oct 23 M	Exhibit critique	Gross Ch. 4

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments
		Caputo Ch. 4
Oct 25 W	Work day on non-verbal assignment	
Oct 27 F	Work day on non-verbal assignment	
Oct 30 M	Presentation of non-verbal assignment	DUE: Non-verbal assignment
Nov 1 W	Presentation of non-verbal assignment	
Nov 3 F	Interpreting history	Knudsen Ch. 14
Nov 6 M	Planning interpretive talks	Knudsen Ch. 13
Nov 8 W	Interpretive talk critique	
Nov 10 F	Work day on verbal assignment	
Nov 13 M	Verbal presentations	DUE: Verbal assignment
Nov 15 W	Verbal presentations	
Nov 17 F	Verbal presentations	
Nov 20 M	Verbal presentations	
Nov 22 W	No Class	
Nov 24 F	No Class	
Nov 27 M	Verbal presentations	
Nov 29 W	Verbal presentations	
Dec 1 F	Museums and visitor centers	Knudsen Ch. 10
Dec 4 M	Websites and online media	
Dec 6 W	Technology and communication	
Dec 8 F	Working with the media	Moodle reading media guide
Dec 11 M	Presentation of website critique	DUE: Website critique
Dec 14 Th	Final exam	8:00-10:00am