

PTRM 310 – Natural Resource Interpretation and Communication

Spring 2016, Section 1. 3 Credits.

Stone Hall 217. Wednesday 2:10 PM – 5:00 PM.

Instructor

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Course Description

This course will help students in understanding the guiding principles, equipment, and methods of interpretation and how to successfully utilize multiple interpretive techniques.

Course Overview and Goals

This course is intended to educate students about the connection between people, communication, and natural resource management. Students will understand the multiple roles of interpretation in resource management. Additionally, students will understand how to apply their knowledge through a series of projects. The focus of this class will be on the foundation of how managers effectively communicate using appropriate methods for natural resource settings and topics. The goals of this course are:

1. To introduce you to the field of interpretation
2. To give you an appreciation for interpretation as a management tool 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.

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course:

1. You will understand and be able to explain the role of environmental interpretation and education 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. These include displays, social media, interpretive talks, and video formats.
4. You will understand how interpretation/education are used by professionals in the field.
5. You will be able to make intelligent decisions regarding the application of various communication techniques to situations encountered in natural resource management
6. You will be able to critically analyze interpretive materials.

Learning Materials

These materials will enable you to be successful in this course. Using the Moodle site for this course will be an essential part of learning in this class.

Textbook

Ham, S. (2013). *Interpretation: Making a difference on purpose*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

Sobel, D. (1996). *Beyond ecophobia: Reclaiming the heart in nature education*. The Orion Society: Great Barrington, MA.

Other materials

As provided on Moodle or in class (see course schedule at the end of this document).

Attendance

Life is all about choices. Attendance is not required in this class. However, attending class will help you learn more about the class subject, earn a higher grade, and place you in a better position to get a job. If you miss a class, you **will not** be able to make up any missed points or assignments (i.e., you cannot participate if you're not in class, if you miss an in class assignment, it cannot be made up). Only a verifiable absence (like a doctor's note) will allow you to make up work missed due to class absence.

Assignments

The assignments for this course will be used to measure your understanding of the topics covered and your ability to communicate that understanding verbally, interpretively, and through writing. These assignments are designed to prepare you with interpretive skills that you can use in a professional manner. The assignments will also provide additional opportunities for learning about and synthesizing the topics covered in this course. For due dates, please consult the class schedule. **Late work is never accepted in this class. You will receive a zero on the assignment if it is late.**

Participation

Much of this course will be focused on discussing topics and concepts from the course materials in class. Your participation in class is essential to making this class successful. Participation *does not* mean showing up to class. Participation is a meaningful engagement with your peers, your instructor, yourself, and your course materials. In this class, **your participation grade is earned as an entire group**. This means that everyone in class that day receives approximately the same grade. The reason for this is to create an environment in the classroom that actively encourages students to engage each other, and avoids a small number of people dominating the conversation. Small adjustments may be made to an individual's grades if they did exceptionally well or poor in class that day. Participation grades may also be adjusted due to additional assignments; such as question preparation for a guest speaker or a quick-write assignment.

Environmental education activity

In groups, students will lead the class in an environmental education activity from one of the resources available (e.g. Project WILD or Project WILD Aquatic). In order to earn a high grade, students should be organized, well-rehearsed, facilitate the activity well, and have a meaningful debriefing of the activity. More details will be discussed in class and are posted on Moodle.

Social media campaign

Social media is becoming a communication tool that many public land agencies are using to communicate with the publics. This assignment is designed to help you apply interpretive and educational concepts from class to a social media audience. For this assignment, it will be helpful to follow/like several organizations/agencies on Facebook to see what they are currently doing. Your job is to create a social media campaign that can be done on a recurring basis via Facebook that provides an interpretive/educational experience for followers/likers of the page. More details will be discussed in class and are posted on Moodle.

Interpretive nature/outdoor-safety talk

These are brief (4 minutes) presentations made to the class about common concerns people have about plants, animals, safety, weather, and other things in nature. Just the sort of stuff every park ranger is asked about and should know about. Please clear your topic with Zach before proceeding with this assignment. In order to earn a high grade on this assignment, students should present the positive qualities of an interpreter in themselves, have a TORE quality talk, and present a sequential theme development (Ham, 2013 Chapter 9 can help you with this). Details will be discussed in class and are posted on Moodle.

Exam 1

This exam is designed to test your knowledge of the materials covered in class. It is comprehensive in nature and will cover everything up to this point. The test is a mix of multiple-choice, true/false, fill in the blanks, and essay format. More information on this will be discussed in class.

Interpretive display

Using your knowledge, experience, and materials from the class, you will design an interpretive display. In order to achieve a high grade, your interpretive display must follow good design principles, be TORE quality, and be aesthetically pleasing. Having a clear target audience will also be helpful. More details will be discussed in class and are posted on Moodle.

#Findyourpark project

2016 marks the 100th (centennial) anniversary of the founding of the National Park Service through the Organic Act of 1916. All across the nation, national parks are celebrating the past 100 years of the National Park Service. Additionally, they are looking towards to next 100 years. Part of this celebration is a campaign called "Find Your Park" (#findyourpark or #FYP), which is run by the National Park Service. This final assignment of the semester allows students the opportunity to put all their interpretive skills together (in small groups) to create a 60-90-second-long video about what it means to "find your park." More details will be discussed in class and are posted on Moodle.

Academic Integrity

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. The Code is available for review online at: [Student Conduct Code Web Page](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php) (http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php).

Equal access

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 Lommasson 154. We will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

Grades

Grading for this course will be as follows:

Component	Weight
Participation	30%
Exam 1	15%
Environmental ed. activity	10%
Interpretive display	10%
Social media campaign	5%
Interpretive talk	10%
#Findyourpark project	20%
Total	100%

This class will follow a standard final grade assignment:

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

Course Schedule

Day	Class segment	Topic	Assignments due	Readings due
Jan. 27	Class introduction	Class overview and the big picture	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colwell et al. (2012) Ham (2013) – Chapter 1
Feb. 3	Nature study and environmental education	Nature study and environmental ed.	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finch (2004) Ivey & Bixler (2013) Sobel (1996), p. 1 – 10 (Searching for a Cure) Louv (2013)
Feb. 10		Montana Natural History Center trip	None	None
Feb. 17		Environmental ed. activities	Environmental ed. group activity	Get an early start on next week
Feb. 24	Resource interpretation	TORE model of interpretation and theme development	Social media assignment (in class)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ham (2013) – Chapters 2, 6, & 7
Mar. 2		Field trip to the Lee Metcalf Wildlife Refuge	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cordell & Herbert (2002) Kareiva (2008) Lee Metcalf website
Mar. 9		Knowing your audience and preparing for interpretive talks	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sobel (1996), p. 14 – 42 Ham & Krumpel (1996) Ham (2013) – Chapter 9
Mar. 16		Interpretive talks	Interpretive talks due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Mar. 23		Theoretical approaches to interpretation	Topic and theme clearly laid out for FYP video (in class)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ham (2013) - Chapter 5 & Appendix 1 Brown, Ham, & Hughes (2010)

Mar. 30		EXAM 1	None	None
Apr. 6	!!! SPRING BREAK !!! SPRING BREAK !!! SPRING BREAK !!! SPRING BREAK !!!			
Apr. 13	Resource interpretation	Interpretive display design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretive display due (in class) • FYP storyboard due (beginning of class) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ham (2013) – Chapter 10 • Ham (1992) – Chapter 8 • CHT Interpretive Sign Recommendations • USDA FS Interpretive Sign Design
Apr. 20		The end game	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schultz (2011) • Ham (2013) – Chapters 3 & 8
Apr. 27	#FINDYOURPARK	Lab time	None	None
May 4		Lab time	None	None
May 11		#Findyourpark video showings and evaluations	FYP Videos	None