

PTRM 310: Natural Resource Interpretation and Communication

Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 09:00 to 09:50 AM in HS 411

SYLLABUS

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Elena A. Bigart

Office Location: CHCB 409

Email: elena.bigart@umontana.edu

Office Phone: 406.243.6210

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays – 2-3:30 pm, or by appointment

Course Description:

The overall objective of the course is to provide understanding of the guiding principles of interpretation, and demonstrate 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 lands. 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:

- To introduce you to the field of interpretation.
- 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.
- To understand and practice the practical skills required for successful interpretation, by designing and presenting interpretive materials and programs.
- To be able to evaluate the effectiveness of various interpretive techniques.

Learning Objectives:

By the conclusion of the course you should be able to:

- Understand and explain the role of environmental interpretation in managing our natural resources
- Understand and explain the theoretical basis of an interpretive approach to communication
- Know several methods and techniques of interpretation, including waysides exhibits, interpretive messages, guided walks/tours, illustrated talks, and the use of other visual aids
- Make intelligent decisions regarding the application of various communication techniques to situations encountered in natural resource management
- Critically analyze interpretive programs and facilities

Materials:

The readings for this course will be available on Moodle as indicated in the schedule below.

We will draw upon the following two books:

- Knudson, D.M., Cable, T.T. and Beck, L., 2003. *Interpretation of cultural and natural resources*. Venture Publishing, Inc., State College, PA
- Ham, S., 2016. *Interpretation: Making a difference on purpose*. Fulcrum publishing.

Requirements and Evaluations:

- Reading materials and assignments are posted to the Moodle site every week. Please make a habit of checking and downloading each week.
- 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 will be posted in advance, and must be submitted before due dates mentioned below (at the beginning of class) and late assignments will not be accepted unless the student has a written and verifiable excuse. Extraordinary circumstance should be discussed with the instructor in advance.
- Both exams must be taken as scheduled. Midterm exam will be open for 50 minutes at class time on September 30th. Final exam will be open for 2 hours from 8 to 10 am on December 11th. Please make arrangements with the instructor prior to the due date if special circumstances require an alternative time.

Grading:

<i>Percentage of Grade</i>	<i>Description</i>
15%	Class Participation
20%	Interpretive Non-verbal assignment
20%	Interpretive Talk
10%	Website Critique
5%	Out of class assignment
15%	Midterm exam
15%	Final exam
100%	

Total percentage of grade at the end of the course will be used to determine your grade.

Grade Scale:

The grading scale is consistent with that used on the University of Montana campus. The traditional letter grade scale is below. Please note, this class is offered for traditional letter grade only, it is not offered under the credit/no credit option.

Grade	Points	GPA	Grade	Points	GPA	Grade	Points	GPA
A	93 – 100 %	4.0	C	77 – 79%	2.3	D-	60 – 62%	0.7
A-	90 – 92 %	3.7	C	73 – 76%	2.0	F	< 60 %	0.00
B+	87 – 89 %	3.3	C-	70 – 72%	1.7			
B	83 – 86 %	3.0	D+	67 – 69%	1.3			
B-	80 – 82 %	2.7	D	63 – 66%	1.0			

Policies and Guidelines:

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory in this class! Exceptions will only be made if there is a documented excuse (i.e. doctor's 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. Please arrive and leave on time, and allow for diverse opinions during discussions.

Devices: Please do not use cell phones during class time; they are a serious distraction in college classes and cannot be tolerated. Please instruct relatives or friends to call campus security in case of an emergency. Security will look up the class in the system and then send someone to the class. If you want to use a laptop during class to take notes, please talk to the instructor.

Plagiarism: Students should always make sure that their work is original. This is important because the instructor must be able to gauge what the student has learned. Therefore, copying the work of another person, whether in an assignment or during an exam, without referencing this person, is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is a form of cheating. Any time a student uses someone else's work and does not give that person credit, it is plagiarism. You must give due credit to other people's ideas by referencing or quoting the source.

Students with Disabilities Statement: 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. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

Student Conduct Code Statement: 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](#).

Course Withdrawal Deadlines Statement: For full policy see [Withdraw deadline policy link](#). If you need to drop this course, we recommend you do so as soon as possible. The following deadlines apply this semester.

Important Dates and Deadlines:

Deadline	Description	Date
To 15th instructional day	Students can drop classes on CyberBear with refund and no "W" on transcript	Sept 16, 5 pm
16th to 45th 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 17 – Oct 28, 5 pm
Beginning 46th instructional day	<u>Students are only allowed to drop a class under very limited and unusual circumstances.</u> 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, switching majors, 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 45th 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, <i>leave sufficient time to schedule meetings with each of these individuals</i> (generally this will take at least 3-5 working days). A \$10 fee applies if approved. Instructors must indicate whether the individual is Passing or Failing the class at the time of request.	Oct 28 – Dec 6, 5 pm

COURSE SCHEDULE – Subject to Change (Please check Moodle regularly!)

Date	Section/Topic	Readings for this class	Assignment
Week 1: Aug 26, Mon	Introduction to interpretation		Read Class syllabus and explore Moodle page
Week 1: Aug 28, Wed	Goals of interpretation		
Week 1: Aug 30, Fri	Interpretive organizations	Knudson (2003), Ch. 2	
Week 2: Sept 2, Mon	No class - Labor Day		
Week 2: Sept 4, Wed	Interpretation and communication	Ham (2016), Ch. 1	
Week 2: Sept 6, Fri	Understanding your audience		
Week 3: Sept 9, Mon	TORE	Ham (2016), Ch. 2	
Week 3: Sept 11, Wed	TORE		
Week 3: Sept 13, Fri	Work morning on Out of class assignment		
Week 4: Sept 16, Mon	Theories behind interpretation		Out of class assignment is due 9/16 at 9 am
Week 4: Sept 18, Wed	Theories behind interpretation		
Week 4: Sept 20, Fri	How people learn	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 7	
Week 5: Sept 23, Mon	Making a difference through interpretation	Ham (2016), Ch. 5	
Week 5: Sept 25, Wed	Guest speaker – Loren Flynn, MT State Parks		
Week 5: Sept 27, Fri	Review for exam	Exam Study Guide	Review all class materials
Week 6: Sept 30, Mon	Midterm exam		
Week 6: Oct 2, Wed	Non-verbal and verbal assignments		
Week 6, Oct 4, Fri	Theme development	Ham (2016), Ch. 6	
Week 7, Oct 7, Mon	Theme development		
Week 7, Oct 9, Wed	Writing for interpretation	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 9	
Week 7, Oct 11, Fri	Exhibits	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 11	
Week 8, Oct 14, Mon	Designing self-guiding trail	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 12	
Week 8, Oct 16, Wed	Guest speaker – Tami Blackford, NPS		
Week 8, Oct 18, Fri	Signs, trails and wayside exhibits	Gross (1994), Ch. 3 and Ch. 4	
Week 9, Oct 21, Mon	Museums and visitor centers	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 10	

Date	Section/Topic	Readings for this class	Assignment
Week 9, Oct 23, Wed	Museums and visitor centers		
Week 9, Oct 25, Fri	Work morning on non-verbal assignment	Caputo (2008), Ch. 4	
Week 10, Oct 28, Mon	Presentation of non-verbal assignment		Non-verbal assignment is due 10/28 at 9 am
Week 10, Oct 30, Wed	Presentation of non-verbal assignment		
Week 10, Nov 1, Fri	Performance interpretation Planning interpretive talk	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 13	
Week 11, Nov 4, Mon	Interpreting history and culture	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 14	
Week 11, Nov 6, Wed	Guest speaker – Jenn Thomsen, natural interpretation		
Week 11, Nov 8, Fri	Interpretive talk critique		
Week 12, Nov 11, Mon	No class - Veterans' Day		
Week 12, Nov 13, Wed	Work day on verbal assignment		
Week 12, Nov 15, Fri	Verbal presentation		Verbal assignment is due 11/15 at 9 am
Week 13, Nov 18, Mon	Verbal presentation		
Week 13, Nov 20, Wed	Verbal presentation		
Week 13, Nov 22, Fri	Verbal presentation		
Week 14, Nov 25, Mon	Websites and online media	Media Guide	
Week 14, Nov 27, Wed	No class – Thanksgiving		
Week 14, Nov 29, Wed	No class – Thanksgiving		
Week 15, Dec 2, Mon	Technology and communication		
Week 15, Dec 4, Wed	Evaluating interpretation	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 19	Website critique is due 12/4 at 9 am
Week 15, Dec 6, Fri	Final review	Exam study guide	Review all class materials
December 11: 08:00 am - 10:00 am	Final Exam		