

PTRM 310: Natural Resource Interpretation and Communication

Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 09:00 to 09:50 AM

University Center (UC) 320

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Elena A. Bigart, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: Wed 1-3 pm via Zoom (<https://umontana.zoom.us/j/9561984646>, passcode 840961)

Course Description:

The overall objective of the course is to provide understanding of the guiding principles of interpretation, and demonstrate in practice 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.
- Two exams will be given during the semester. Exam dates are posted on the course schedule and must be taken as scheduled. Please make arrangements with the instructor PRIOR to the due date if special circumstances require an alternative time. Midterm exam will be open for 50 minutes at class time on 09/23. Final exam will be open for 2 hours from 8 to 10 am on 11/25. Both exams will have true/false, multiple choice and short answer questions that will come from lectures, class discussions and assigned readings.
- Four assignments will be given during this semester. For the out-of-class assignment, students will visit a local site and submit an essay evaluating its interpretive products. Website and social media critique will involve evaluation of a recreation website and social media pages. These two assignments must be submitted on Moodle. For the interpretive non-verbal assignment, students will create an interpretive product for a state park in Montana; this is a creative effort and will be presented in class. For the interpretive talk, students will choose a theme, develop a talk, and present it in class. Instructions for all assignments will be posted in advance, and must be submitted before the due dates mentioned below (at the beginning of class). 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.

Grading:

<i>Points</i>	<i>Description</i>
15	Class Participation
40	Interpretive Non-verbal assignment
40	Interpretive Talk
15	Website and Social Media Critique
10	Out-of-class Assignment
40	Midterm Exam
40	Final Exam
200 Total Points	

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

Please note that you will see your grades on Moodle for the exams and assignments. However, attendance and participation grade will be assigned manually by the instructor, and won't be seen on Moodle. Therefore, the automatic final grade that is shown on Moodle throughout the semester is not exactly accurate, and will be adjusted at the end of November based on your participation in class activities.

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: Active engagement and lively in-class discussions are essential to succeeding in this class. Students who regularly attend classes find it much easier to learn the materials and gain a much better understanding of the subject. They also do well on exams, complete assignments with ease — and benefit overall much more from the course. Students are expected to attend every class (in person if they feel healthy, or remote otherwise), and be 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.

Social Distancing and Mask Policy: According to UM policy, students are required to wear a mask at all times in the classroom and in all indoor settings. Specific seating arrangements will be used in the classroom to ensure social distancing of six feet between students. Each student is provided with a cleaning kit. The expectation is that students will clean their personal work space when they arrive for class, and before they leave the classroom. Please avoid congregating outside the classroom before and after class. Drinking liquids and eating food is discouraged within the classroom as it requires mask removal.

Please stay home if you feel sick and/or if exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. Up-to-date COVID-19 information from the University of Montana is available at [UM COVID-19 Fall 2020 website](#).

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 9, 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 10 – Oct 21, 5 pm
Beginning 46th instructional day	<u><i>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, 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, 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. Instructors must indicate whether the individual is Passing or Failing the class at the time of request.</i></u>	Oct 22 – Nov 18, 5 pm

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

Date	Section/Topic	Readings for this class	Assignment
Week 1: Aug 19, Wed	Introduction to interpretation		Read Class syllabus and explore Moodle page
Week 1: Aug 21, Fri	Goals of interpretation		
Week 2: Aug 24, Mon	Interpretive organizations	Knudson (2003), Ch. 2	
Week 2: Aug 26, Wed	Interpretive organizations		
Week 2: Aug 28, Fri	Interpretation and communication	Ham (2016), Ch. 1	
Week 3: Aug 31, Mon	Understanding your audience		
Week 3: Sept 2, Wed	TORE	Ham (2016), Ch. 2	
Week 3: Sept 4, Fri	TORE		Out-of-class assignment is due 9/4 at 9 am
Week 4: Sept 7, Mon	No class - Labor Day		
Week 4: Sept 9, Wed	Applied principles of interpretation – guest lecture		
Week 4: Sept 11, Fri	Theories behind interpretation	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 7	
Week 5: Sept 14, Mon	Theories behind interpretation		
Week 5: Sept 16, Wed	How people learn	Ham (2016), Ch. 5	
Week 5: Sept 18, Fri	How people learn		
Week 6: Sept 21, Mon	Review for exam	Exam Study Guide	Review all class materials
Week 6: Sept 23, Wed	Midterm exam		
Week 6: Sept 25, Fri	Non-verbal and verbal assignments		
Week 7: Sept 28, Mon	Theme development	Ham (2016), Ch. 6	
Week 7: Sept 30, Wed	Theme development		
Week 7: Oct 2, Fri	Writing for interpretation	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 9	
Week 8: Oct 5, Mon	Exhibits	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 11	
Week 8: Oct 17, Wed	Designing self-guiding trail	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 12	
Week 8: Oct 9, Fri	Applied principles of interpretation – guest lecture		
Week 9: Oct 12, Mon	Signs, trails and wayside exhibits	Gross (1994), Ch. 3 and Ch. 4	
Week 9: Oct 14, Wed	Museums and visitor centers	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 10	

Date	Section/Topic	Readings for this class	Assignment
Week 9: Oct 16, Fri	Design basics	Caputo (2008), Ch. 4	
Week 10: Oct 19, Mon	Presentations of non-verbal assignments – in class		Non-verbal assignment is due 10/19 at 9 am
Week 10: Oct 21, Wed	Performance interpretation Planning interpretive talk	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 13	
Week 10: Oct 23, Fri	Interpreting history and culture	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 14	
Week 11: Oct 26, Mon	Verbal presentations		Verbal assignment is due 10/26 at 9 am
Week 11, Oct 28, Wed	Verbal presentations		
Week 11, Oct 30, Fri	Verbal presentations		
Week 12, Nov 9, Mon	Verbal presentations		
Week 12, Nov 11, Wed	No class - Veterans' Day		
Week 12, Nov 13, Fri	Websites and online media	Media Guide	
Week 13, Nov 16, Mon	Evaluating interpretation	Knudsen (2003), Ch. 19	Website critique is due 11/16 at 9 am
Week 13, Nov 18, Wed	Final Review	Exam study guide	Review all class materials
Week 13, Nov 25, Wed 08:00 am - 10:00 am	Final exam		