

PTRM 310- Natural Resource Interpretation and Communication

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Office hours: Thursday 10am-12pm 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.

Learning Materials: *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources*, by Knudson, Cable, and Beck and Various readings on Blackboard

Course evaluation

Class participation	15%
Interpretive brochure	20%
Interpretive talk	20%
Website critique	10%
Lubrecht kiosk plan	15%
Short film	20%
Total	100%

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

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.

Class participation and attendance: 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.

**Be explicit, start taking attendance, require it

*** be sure to include quizzes next year, not exams

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.

Academic Integrity: (Mandated by Academic Officers of The University of Montana) Students are expected to abide by the University of Montana Student Conduct Code. Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. The Student Conduct Code can be found here in case you have any questions: [http:// life.umt.edu/vpsa/documents/StudentConductCode1.pdf](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/documents/StudentConductCode1.pdf)

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. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

Course Schedule: tentative and subject to change

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments due
Aug 28	Introduction Interpretation organizations	Ch.1-2
Sept 4	Interpretive approach to communication Understanding your audience	Ch. 3, 5, 6
Sept 11	Theories behind interpretation Developing effective themes	Ch. 4
Sept 18	Exhibits and Designing self-guided trail Writing for interpretation	Ch. 11-12
Sept 25	Travelers Rest SP and Lee Metcalf Wildlife Refuge	9:30am-4pm
Oct 2	Planning interpretive talks (shortened class)	Ch. 13 Interpretive brochures due
Oct 9	Interpreting history Technology and communication	Ch. 14
Oct 16	Interpretive talks group 1	Interpretive talk due
Oct 23	Interpretive talks group 2	
Oct 30	Creating videos and film assignment	Website critique due
Nov 6	Lubrecht Fieldtrip	
Nov 13	Communicating with your audience: presentations and tools	
Nov 20	TBD	Lubrecht kiosk plan due
Nov 27	No class	
Dec 4	Working with the media Evaluation	
Dec 11	Final	Final short films due