**PLS 310: Environmental Interpretation (3 Credits)  
Course Syllabus – Fall, 2014**

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| **Instructor:** | David A. Graefe, Ph.D. | **Class Meets:** | Tuesday, Thursday 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM |
| **Office:** | 201 Prichard Hall | **Classroom:** | Morrow Library Commons |
| **Phone Number:** | (304) 696-2608 | **Office Hours:** | Monday 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM  Tuesday 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM  Wednesday 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM  Or by appointment |
| **E-Mail:** | graefe@marshall.edu |

**Course Description (from catalog):**

Principles and techniques of environmental interpretation as practiced in federal, state and private agencies.

**More Description:**

This course provides an introduction to the philosophy and practice of interpreting our natural and cultural resources. Subjects include history, philosophy and principles of interpretation, breadth of the profession, benefits and values, understanding clientele, learning theories, interpretation research, written and oral interpretation, museums and exhibits, interpretive trails, and others.

**Course Format:**

Class will meet on Tuesday and Thursday each week from 11:00 to 12:15 PM, unless otherwise specified by the instructor or course schedule. Materials will be presented and discussed using lectures, in-class discussions, field trips, and class projects and presentations. Students will be expected to attend each and every class and participate in class discussions, complete written homework assignments, participate in a field trips, and prepare and present both written and oral interpretive materials.

**Required Texts, Additional Reading, and Other Materials:**

Required texts:

* Knudson, D. M., Cable, T. T., & Beck, L. (2003). *Interpretation of cultural and natural resources* (2nd ed.). State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc.
* Other readings as assigned and provided by the instructor.

Suggested titles for further study (not required):

* Gross, M., Zimmerman, R., & Buchholz, J. (2006). *Signs, trails, and wayside exhibits: Connecting people and places* (3nd ed.). Stevens Point, WI: UW-SP Foundation Press Inc.
* Ham, S. H. (1992). *Environmental interpretation: A practical guide for people with big ideas and small budgets*. Golden, CO: North American Press.
* Tilden, F. (2007). *Interpreting our Heritage* (4th ed.).Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Assigned readings are an essential component of this course and provide students with a baseline of knowledge that will be expanded upon through more detailed and complex in-class lectures and discussions. Students will be required to complete assigned readings prior to the class period in which the material will be discussed.

Supplemental course materials (e.g., handouts, reading assignments, etc.) will be posted to the Blackboard (<http://www.marshall.edu/muonline/>). I will be sending class announcements, updates, etc. to your Marshall University email address, so be sure to check your account daily.

**Course Objectives / Learning Outcomes:**

Students who complete this course will have the ability to accomplish the following:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Student Learning Outcomes** | **How Practiced in this Course** | **How Assessed in this Course** |
| Describe and implement the recognized principles and practices of environmental and cultural interpretation. | Lectures, discussions and readings, field trips, assignments | Class participation, homework assignments, group project, and exams |
| Prepare and present written and oral interpretive materials for a variety of audiences. | Lectures, discussions and readings, field trips, assignments | Class participation, homework assignments, group project, and exams |
| Understand and describe the values and benefits of interpretation to individuals and society. | Lectures, discussions and readings, field trips, assignments | Class participation, homework assignments, group project, and exams |
| Research pertinent literature in the development of interpretive materials. | Lectures, discussions and readings, field trips, assignments | Class participation, homework assignments, group project, and exams |
| Design and construct high-quality interpretive signs and exhibits. | Lectures, discussions and readings, field trips, assignments | Class participation, homework assignments, group project, and exams |
| Evaluate a variety of interpretive programs and mediums. | Lectures, discussions and readings, field trips, assignments | Class participation, homework assignments, group project, and exams |

**University Policies:**

By enrolling in this course, you agree to the University Policies listed below. Please read the full text of each policy by going to [www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs](http://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs) and clicking on “Marshall University Policies.” Or, you can access the policies directly by going to <http://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/?page_id=802>

Academic Dishonesty/ Excused Absence Policy for Undergraduates/ Computing Services Acceptable Use/ Inclement Weather/ Dead Week/ Students with Disabilities/ Academic Forgiveness/ Academic Probation and Suspension/ Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Students/ Affirmative Action/ Sexual Harassment

**Attendance Policy and Make-up Work:**

In-class participation is an essential component of this course and students will be expected to attend each class unless they have a valid excuse (see university excused absence policy). I will be happy to meet with students who miss class with a valid excuse to discuss course material and how missed work can be made up. However, I will not re-lecture to students who miss class during office hours, and it will be the students’ responsibility to catch up on missed material (e.g., readings, in-class exercises, etc.).

**Academic Dishonesty Policy:**

Academic Dishonesty will not be tolerated in this or any other course at Marshall University. As a member of this class, it is your responsibility to read and abide by rules set forth in the official Marshall University Academic Dishonesty Policy. Acts of academic dishonesty include cheating, fabrication/falsification, plagiarism, bribes/favors/threats, and complicity (i.e., helping others to commit dishonest acts). Anyone found to be cheating, plagiarizing the work of others, or violating this policy in any other way will be subject to serious penalties including failure of the course. In extremely flagrant cases, additional sanctions may be pursued through the Office of Judicial Affairs. Please refer to the Marshall University Undergraduate Catalog for a full definition of academic dishonesty.

**Course Requirements / Grading Policy:**

Students will be evaluated in this course based on their performance in the following categories:

* Class Participation – Students will be required to attend and actively participate in each class throughout the semester. Students will earn participation points by showing up for class, asking relevant questions during lectures, and contributing to classroom discussions and assignments. Contrarily, participation points will be deducted from students who make a habit of skipping or disrupting class (e.g., arriving late or leaving early, using cell phones or other distracting devices, intentionally distracting other students, etc.). Individual class participation grades will be awarded at the discretion of the instructor. Attendance may be taken at random throughout the semester.
* Assignments – Students will be required to complete individual and group homework assignments throughout the course of the semester. The content and format will vary and will be specified for each assignment. Grading of written assignments will be based both on what is presented as well as the style and adequacy of the presentation. Written assignments should be neat, clear, and appropriate for the specified audience. All homework assignments must be handed in at the **beginning** of class on the date the assignment is due (see Late Policy for more detail).
* Interpretive Talk / Presentation – Students will be required to prepare and present an interpretive talk on an environmental or cultural topic of their choice (topics must be preapproved by instructor). Each student will research an appropriate topic and deliver an oral interpretive presentation for the class. This is the final assignment in this course, and will be completed in lieu of a final exam.
* Examinations – There will be two mid-term exams during the semester to assess comprehension of course material.
* Extra Credit:  MU PROS Participation – The Marshall University Park and Recreation Organization for Students (MU PROS) was created to promote active involvement in park and recreation related events on campus and in the community.  Students in this course may earn up to three percentage points of extra credit by participating in MUPROS meetings and events (0.5 points per meeting and 1.0 points per event).

The aforementioned evaluation categories will contribute to your overall course grade as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Class Participation | 10% |
|  | Individual Assignments (2 at 10% each) | 20% |
|  | Group Assignment | 15% |
|  | Oral Interpretive Talk | 15% |
|  | Examinations (2 midterms) | 40% |
|  | **Total** | 100% |

This class will employ a weighted grading system. To determine your grade in this course, fill in your percentage score for each evaluation category below, multiply each score by its weight, and then add the values in the final grade column to find your overall grade out of 100. In addition to handing graded assignments back to you in class, I will post grades for individual assignments and exams on blackboard. However, please remember that you **must** use the weighted grading system shown below to accurately calculate your overall course grade. I am happy to meet with you to discuss your course progress/grade during office hours throughout the semester.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation Category** | **Your Score**  **(out of 100)** |  | **Weight** |  | **Contribution to**  **Final Grade** |
| Participation | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | X | .10 | = | \_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Assignment #1 | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | X | .10 | = | \_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Assignment #2 | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | X | .10 | = | \_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Exam #1 | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | X | .20 | = | \_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Exam #2 | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | X | .20 | = | \_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Group Project | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | X | .15 | = | \_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Oral Interpretive Talk | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | X | .15 | = | \_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **Final Grade (out of 100)** | | | | = | **\_\_\_\_\_\_** |

Final letter grades are determined based on the following grading scale:

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|  | 90-100% | A |
|  | 80-89% | B |
|  | 70-79% | C |
|  | 60-69% | D |
|  | Below 60% | F |

The instructor reserves the right to change these values depending on overall class performance and/or extenuating circumstances.

**Assignment Submission and Late Policy**

All assignments must be turned in **at the beginning of class** on the specified due date. Except under special circumstances with written justification, assignments turned in after the due date will be penalized with a 10% reduction in points for each day late, including Saturdays and Sundays (i.e., one day late = 90% highest possible score, two days late = 80% highest possible score, etc.). University excused absences do not excuse the student from turning in course assignments on time (email them if you have to, or in cases where it is absolutely impossible to get your assignment to me, call me and leave a message explaining the situation).

**Make-up Exams:**

Make‑up exams will not be given except under unusual circumstances with satisfactory written justification. Any student who misses an exam due to an unexcused absence will receive a grade of zero for that exam with no opportunity for make-up or substitution. Students who miss an exam because of a genuine emergency or university excused absence will be granted a make-up exam (provided that the reason for the absence is given prior to missing the exam – call and leave a message if you have to). Make up exams must be taken within one week of the original scheduled date. The decision of whether to give a make-up exam rests with the instructor.

**Communication:**   
I will post course content on Blackboard (e.g., syllabus, assignments, readings, etc.), so be sure to check for new materials regularly. Your MU e-mail address will be used to make any general announcements, last minute schedule changes, etc. I recommend that you monitor your MU email and Blackboard accounts at least once a day.

**Classroom Learning Environment:**   
To maintain the best possible environment for learning, the following standards for acceptable behavior will be followed by all students in this class:

* Turn off all cell phones and pagers before entering class.
* Be on time for class and don’t leave early.
* Don’t have conversations during class that distract others.
* Don’t disparage other students – treat all class members respectfully.
* Don’t use profanity in class.
* Don’t use tobacco in class.

Students who violate these standards and policies will be asked to leave class and will lose participation points.

**Policy for Students with Disabilities:**

Marshall University is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with physical, learning and psychological disabilities.  University policy states that it is the responsibility of students with disabilities to contact the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS) in Prichard Hall 117, phone 304 696-2271 to provide documentation of their disability.  Following this, the DSS Coordinator will send a letter to each of the student’s instructors outlining the academic accommodation he/she will need to ensure equality in classroom experiences, outside assignment, testing and grading.  The instructor and student will meet to discuss how the accommodation(s) requested will be provided.  For more information, please visit <http://www.marshall.edu/disabled> or contact Disabled Student Services Office at Prichard Hall 11, phone 304-696-2271.

**Course Schedule and Due Dates:**

Please note this is a tentative schedule and it may change as the class progresses.

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| **Date** | **Topic** | **Assignment** |
| 8/26 | Course introduction, syllabus overview |  |
| 8/28 | Interpretation – what is it and how did it come to be? | Chapter 1 |
| 9/2 | Types and providers of interpretation | Chapter 2 |
| 9/4 | Values to people and society | Chapter 3 |
| 9/9 | Values of interpretation for management | Chapter 4 |
| 9/11 | Understanding clients of interpretative programs, **Introduce assignment #1** | Chapter 5 |
| 9/16 | Principles, challenges and applications | Chapter 6 |
| 9/18 | Learning theories and information processing | Chapter 7 |
| **9/20** | **Field Trip to Carter Caves State Park - Saturday** | |
| 9/23 | Interpreting to the masses | Chapter 8 |
| 9/25 | Review | **Assignment #1 due** |
| 9/30 | **Midterm #1** |  |
| 10/2 | No Class – Make up for Carter Caves Trip |  |
| 10/7 | Writing for interpretation, **introduce assignment #2** | Chapter 9 |
| 10/9 | Museums and visitor centers | Chapter 10 |
| 10/14 | **Field trip to Huntington Museum of Art** |  |
| 10/16 | Exhibits | Chapter 11 |
|  |  |  |
| 10/21 | Self-guiding, non-personal interpretation, **introduce group project** | Chapter 12, **Assignment #2 due** |
| 10/23 | Performance interpretation, **introduce oral presentation assignment** | Chapter 13 |
| 10/28 | **Three Rivers Avian Center or Other Guest Lecture** |  |
| 10/30 | Interpreting history | Chapter 14 |
| 11/4 | **Group project progress report**, arts in interpretation | Chapter 15 |
| 11/6 | Review |  |
| 11/11 | **Midterm #2** |  |
| 11/13 | Interpretive planning | Chapter 16 |
| 11/18 | **Group presentations and discussion** | **Group project due** |
| 11/20 | Managing Interpretation | TBD |
| 11/25 | No class – Fall Break! |  |
| 11/27 | No class – Fall Break! |  |
| 12/2 | **Oral Interpretive Presentations** | **Oral Interpretive Presentations** |
| 12/4 | **Oral Interpretive Presentations** | **Oral Interpretive Presentations** |

Every student is responsible for all materials presented in class, including lectures, notes, and handouts. In case you are not present for a class, you should contact me to receive information about the material presented in that class. Class attendance is extremely important.