Interpretive Planning  
FORS 6372 Stephen F. Austin State University  
Spring 2024

Course Virtual Class Hours: Tuesday 1:00 PM CST

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Virtual Office Hours:
Contact anytime by email and we’ll arrange phone calls or Zoom as needed. Tues 2-4 pm Thurs 12:30-3:00 pm

Catalog and Course Description:
Three semester hours. Web course. Examines significant aspects of interpretive planning, plan development and potential participation on a planning team. Assignments will lead to the development of a final interpretive planning project.

This is a project-based course, meaning it is based on the Constructivist Approach for you to construct meaning and knowledge through experiential learning.

Course Objectives:
To provide opportunities for students to:
- Learn about the depth and breadth of interpretive planning;
- Work with professionals on learning about the concepts and processes associated with interpretive planning;
- Exhibit the knowledge they are obtaining through authentic and service-learning experiences in plan development.
- Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
• Discuss the context of interpretive planning.
• Demonstrate the knowledge/skills required to evaluate the quality of interpretive plans and the interpretive planning process.
• Discuss the significant trends and events associated with development of interpretive planning.
• Demonstrate their knowledge and ability to conduct a public involvement process consistent with agency standards and requirements.
• Develop the knowledge and skills necessary to develop an interpretive plan.

Course Texts:

Interpretive Planning: The 5-M Model for successful Planning Projects by Lisa Brochu, and selected readings.

Course Technology:

All course work will be conducted through D2L and Zoom. If this is your first class in MSRC DON’T PANIC – working with the technology side is a learning curve that first semester aZnd sheer tolerance every semester after. Glitches ARE going to happen – we know that – once again – don’t panic!!!

Course Requirements:

Class Participation:

This is a graduate course. As such, it requires students to assume responsibility for analyzing class readings and other course content, identifying the implications for resource management, and applying those insights to class discussions and assignments.

Because this is a graduate level course it differs from undergraduate course format. As graduate students you will be expected to participate as professionals in the field, meaning that your opinions will be expected and valued. In addition, the class format is based on a workshop/seminar design.

Class participation includes, but is not limited to:

• Becoming familiar with and using D2L as the primary course delivery mechanism.
• Completing assigned readings.
• Completing and participating in assigned writings.
• Participating in online seminar discussions.
• Working with peers (in pairs or small groups) to complete assignments as required.
• Providing peer review comments for drafts of classmates’ projects.
• Submitting assignments online.
• Participating in instructor/student conferences as needed.

Readings:

Course readings should be completed before the class session listed that week. Course readings are taken from the assigned texts and a variety of supplemental readings. All supplemental readings are available in the D2L site. The Course Schedule provides an outline of required course readings. Please feel free to provide additional resources as the need and occasion arises.

Workshop/Seminar/Discussion:

Each week students will have the opportunity to participate in an online seminar. Blogging and Discussion are required as your form of contact for this fast-paced course.

Once again, this is a graduate course so BE PREPARED to discuss topics that include application of the current readings.

Project Assignments:

Submitting Assignments

Assignments will be submitted through Dropbox on D2L. The specific process for submitting assignments is as follows:
• Prepare assignments and upload or paste through the Assignments.
• Assignments are due by the date and time indicated in the syllabus and on the website.
Grading:

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<tr>
<th>Discussion/Participation/Blogging</th>
<th>300 points</th>
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<tr>
<td>PhD Students must develop a working database for Interpretive Plans and Guides in Interpretive Plans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment #1</td>
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<td>Assignment #5 – Plan and Presentation</td>
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All assignments must be submitted in order to receive a passing grade in the class!!!!

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

- 1000 - 900 points = A
- 899 - 800 points = B
- 799 - 700 points = C
- 699 – 600 points = D
- 599 and under = F

Social Justice:

Stephen F. Austin State University and the Arthur Temple College of Forestry are committed to social justice. Every effort will be made to assure a positive learning environment based upon open communication, honest expression of ideas, and mutual respect. Tolerance for divergent backgrounds and ideas will be strongly encouraged, whether based on race, ethnic origin, gender, physical challenge, age, or religion. Suggestions to help foster an environment of academic freedom and social justice are welcome.

Professional Ethics Statement
Students in the graduate program are considered to be professionals, as well as students, and we expect that you will reflect professionalism in your work. As representatives of Stephen F. Austin and members of the graduate program of the Arthur Temple College of Forestry, you are held to the responsibility to conduct yourselves, your academic work, and your research in a professional and ethical way. This means that you abide by the rules of conduct stated in the student handbook, agree to a no cheating and no plagiarism policy, and follow the guidelines for ethical research set forth by the university.

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will be treated as such. Cheating can be defined as unethical use of another’s information to complete an assignment or test. Plagiarism can be defined as using someone else’s words or ideas without giving proper credit for their use. Be sure to cite your sources if in doubt. Behavior related to cheating or plagiarism may cause immediate failure of the course, and/or, at the very most, cause academic expulsion from the program.

**Schedule will be provided once class meets for the first time**

*For Discussion First Class*

"Interpretive Planning for Public Spaces: Parks, Museums, Zoos, and Nature Centers"

Course Description:

This course provides a comprehensive overview of interpretive planning in various public settings like national and state parks, museums, zoos, and nature centers, and many other work places. Interpretive and Curriculum techniques may be applied to any ANY situation!. Students will learn how to create engaging, educational, and sustainable interpretive programs and exhibits that effectively communicate the significance and stories of these places to the public.

Course Objectives:

1. Understand Interpretive Planning: Explore the principles and practices of interpretive planning in various settings.
2. Audience Engagement: Learn techniques to engage diverse audiences effectively.
3. Content Development: Master the art of developing compelling and accurate content.
4. Design and Implementation: Gain skills in the design and implementation of interpretive projects.
5. Sustainability and Accessibility: Understand how to incorporate sustainable and accessible practices in interpretive planning.
6. Evaluation and Adaptation: Learn methods to evaluate and adapt interpretive programs and exhibits.

Course Modules:

1. Foundations of Interpretive Planning
   • Principles and history of interpretive planning.
   • Role of interpretation in public education and engagement.
2. Understanding the Audience
   • Audience analysis and engagement strategies.
   • Creating inclusive and accessible interpretive experiences.
3. Content Development for Interpretive Programs
   • Research and content development.
   • Storytelling and thematic interpretation.

4. Designing Interpretive Exhibits
   • Design principles for exhibits in parks, museums, zoos, and nature centers.
   • Use of technology and interactive elements.

5. Implementation and Project Management
   • Planning, budgeting, and managing interpretive projects.
   • Collaborations and partnerships.

6. Sustainability in Interpretation
   • Incorporating sustainability and environmental consciousness.
   • Long-term maintenance and updating of exhibits.

7. Evaluation and Adaptation
   • Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of interpretive programs.
   • Strategies for continuous improvement and adaptation.

Assessment Methods:

• Project Work: Design a mock interpretive plan for a chosen site.
• Written Assignments: Essays and case study analyses.
• Presentations: Oral presentations of interpretive project proposals.
• Participation: Involvement in discussions and group activities.

Required Reading:

• A selection of books and articles on interpretive planning, audience engagement, and exhibit design.

Additional Resources:

• Guest lectures by professionals in interpretation and exhibit design.
• Field trips to parks, museums, zoos, or nature centers.
• Access to online resources, including case studies and current industry standards.
For University Assessment Purposes Only:

Program Learning Outcomes

1. The student will demonstrate proficiency in research design, relative to their field of study.
2. The student will demonstrate proficiency in the process of reviewing scientific literature pertinent to their field of study.
3. The student will demonstrate proficiency in basic statistical analysis; relative to their field of study.
4. The student will demonstrate preparation to pursue a professional career and/or Ph.D. degree in subject
5. The student will demonstrate competency in oral and written communication skills.
6. The student will demonstrate competency in comprehensive interpretive planning and design of interpretive products.

Please list each course in the program and indicate how it supports the Program Learning Outcomes for the identified program.

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N/A – Not Applicable; B- Basic; I- Intermediate; A- Advanced; M- Mastery

**Definition of Rating Categories:**

1. **N/A** – Not Applicable – course does not support the Program Learning Outcome.
2. **B** – Basic – course supports Program Learning Outcome by providing students with fundamental information, definitions, concepts, and lab activities relative to the expected outcomes.
3. **I** – Intermediate – course supports Program Learning Outcome by providing students with topic-specific information, concepts, applications, and lab activities that increase the students’ skills in making tactical implementation decisions relative to the expected outcomes.
4. **A** – Advanced – course supports Program Learning Outcome by providing students with transitional, high level topic-specific information, activities, and opportunities that enable the students to apply their critical thinking and tactical skills to resolved increasingly challenging strategic situations.
5. **M** – Mastery – course supports Program Learning Outcome by providing students with opportunities to independently apply tactical and strategic planning skills to successfully accomplish real-world, non-academic management objectives. Completes students’ preparedness for entry-level professional activity accomplishment.