TRAL 493/593 – Environmental Interpretation

Fall Term 2022

Credits: 4

Instructor: Dave Stemper

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Course Description:

Environmental Interpretation (TRAL 493/593) is designed to reveal the effectiveness of interpretation as a communication strategy, exploring interpretation of natural, historical, and cultural features of parks, forests, nature centers, and similar settings. We introduce communication techniques applicable to a variety of disciplines – *including natural, historical, and cultural resource management* – and useful in engaging not only visitors to the above settings, but also users of digital media. The emphasis is on applying interpretive techniques to the development of programs, displays, activities, exhibits, and other media. The course targets individuals interested in engaging the visiting public, while working for natural resource agencies, heritage organizations, nonprofits, or private industry.

PREREQUISITES: None

Course Schedule:

Week	Topic	Reading	Action Items
Week 1 (*Extended:* September 21 – October 2)	a brief history of interpretation *Who's out there?* – understanding the setting & visitor <u>Assignment</u>: *contemplating planning*	Canvas reading: *evolution of interpretation*	Discussion Forums: *introduce yourself; share thoughts on interpretive settings*
Week 2 (October 3-9)	interpretation's guiding principles interpretive planning: *crafting a theme* <u>Assignment</u>: *display project (due end of week 9)*	Canvas reading: *interpretation's guiding principles*	*'contemplating planning'* assignment due on Canvas October 9
Week 3 (October 10 - 16)	thematic interpretive talks introduction to display design <u>Assignment</u>: *interpretive talk* Graduate Students: *graduate project details*	Canvas reading: *crafting interpretive talks*	
Week 4 (October 17-23)	interpretive talk: *an example* display design: **peer review #1**		
Week 5 (October 24-30)	interpretive writing: *crafting text for your display* display design: *visual balance & color schemes*	Canvas reading: *interpretive writing*	interpretive talk & write-up due October 30
Week 6 (October 31 – November 6: B**oo!**)	guided interpretation <u>Assignment</u>: *Quiz #1*	Canvas reading: *guided interpretation*	Quiz 1 due November 6
Week 7 (November 7-13)	guided interpretation, visitor interaction <u>Extra Credit Opportunity</u>: *'interpretive talk, take 2'* display design: **peer review #2**		
Week 8 (November 14-20)	self-guided interpretation; trail design *Did it work?* – importance of evaluation interpretive writing, revisited	Canvas reading: *interpretive trail design*	
Week 9 (November 21-27)	interpretive talk 'take 2': *upload to Canvas* interpretive displays: *final touches & upload to Canvas* optional discussion forum: *obtain feedback on your interpretive writing*		interpretive talk, 'take 2' (*extra credit*) and displays due on Canvas November 28
Week 10 (November 28 – December 4)	evaluation project (graduate students) summative evaluation of classmate displays <u>Assignment</u>: *Quiz #2*		grad student evaluation project due on Canvas December 4

CANVAS — Our course is delivered via the Canvas learning management system, where you interact with classmates and instructor. You will use Canvas to access presentations, readings & handouts; discuss issues; submit assignments; take quizzes; email classmates & instructor; and evaluate classmate projects. To see how online courses work, visit the Ecampus Course Demo: *http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/coursedemo* .
For technical assistance (Canvas or other), visit *http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/services/technical-help.htm* .

Measurable student learning outcomes:

- Students will explain how interpretation utilizes oral, visual and written techniques to enhance the visitor experience. Learning will be assessed through evaluation of thematic presentations, writing assignments, designed interpretive displays, peer reviews, and quizzes.

- Students will explain the idea of theme, and describe the process of thematic development. Learning will be assessed as students develop various interpretive products, and completed quizzes.

- Students will identify visitor information needs by completing a *front-end* audience assessment assignment and planning model critique.

- Students will demonstrate how to adapt information to meet the needs of various audiences. This will be assessed through completion of an interpretive presentations and an interpretive display.

- Students will apply evaluation principles to the development of interpretive products. Learning will be assessed as students gather feedback from peers via front-end, formative, and summative evaluation, use the feedback to develop effective interpretive products, and explain & describe evaluation principles via quizzes.

Slash Course Outcomes:

Students enrolled in TRAL 593 are expected to complete the same work as those enrolled in TRAL 493. These include a planning model critique, interpretive talk, modified interpretive talk (optional, extra credit), two quizzes, and design of an interpretive display. However, students enrolled in TRAL 593 will also carry out an additional display/exhibit development and/or evaluation project, worth an additional 40 points. Details on the graduate project will be provided via Canvas.

Learning resources: Readings will be available in PDF format on the Canvas site. Some will come
from the text shown below, *which you are NOT required to purchase*. As the course proceeds, your instructor will share additional materials via the Canvas site as well. *Students are expected to be conversant on all assigned readings.* There is no course packet to purchase for this course.

> **Course Text:** Sam H. Ham (1992). *Environmental interpretation: A practical guide for people with big ideas and small budgets*. Golden, CO: North American Press.
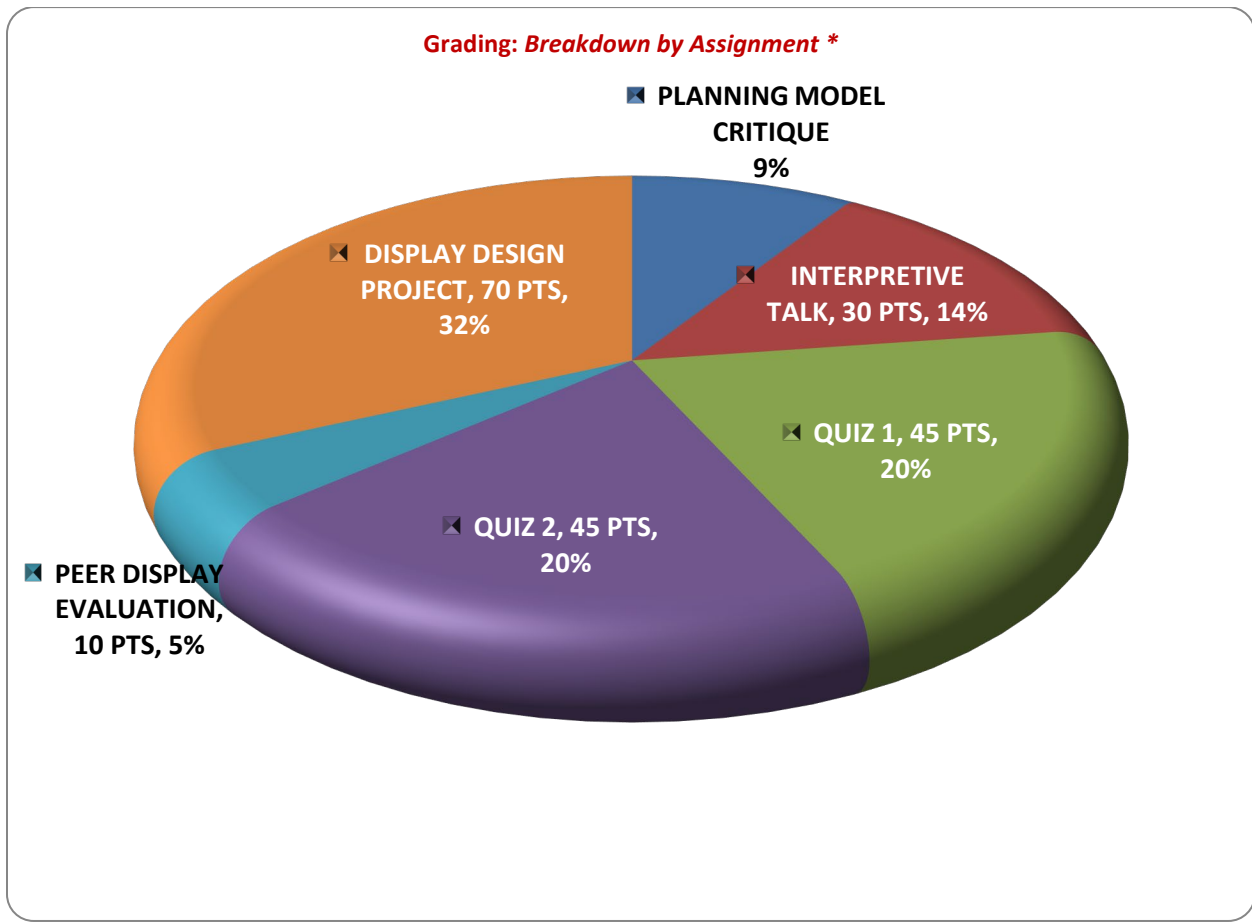
Evaluation of student performance:

Final course grades are based on completion of assignments summarized below. Graduate students taking the course are also expected to carry out an additional interpretive development and/or evaluation project, which may be accomplished in cooperation with other graduate students. Details on the graduate project and expectations will be provided via separate course content and announcements.

Undergraduate Point System:			**Graduate Point System:**	
Contemplating Planning	20		Contemplating Planning	20
Interpretive Talk	30		Interpretive Talk	30
Quiz #1	45		Quiz #1	45
Quiz #2	45		Quiz #2	45
Peer Display Evaluation	10		Peer Display Evaluation	10
Display Design	70		Display Design	70
Total	**220**		Graduate Project	40
			Total	**260**

Grading: *Breakdown by Assignment* *

- ■ PLANNING MODEL CRITIQUE 9%
- ■ INTERPRETIVE TALK, 30 PTS, 14%
- ■ QUIZ 1, 45 PTS, 20%
- ■ QUIZ 2, 45 PTS, 20%
- ■ PEER DISPLAY EVALUATION, 10 PTS, 5%
- ■ DISPLAY DESIGN PROJECT, 70 PTS, 32%

* Pertains to undergraduates only; graduate students are responsible for an additional 40-point development and/or evaluation project.

Grade Scale:

Letter Grade	Percent of Total Points
A	>94%
A-	90-94%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%

D+	67-69%
D	64-66%
D-	60-63%
F	<60%

Course Policies:

Assignments & Late Policy – All assignments are to be completed and uploaded to the course Canvas site by their due date. Failure to do so will result in a 20% point reduction for that particular assignment. Late assignments will not be accepted more than 3 days beyond their due date.

Quizzes – There are two quizzes administered in TRAL 493/593. Both quizzes will be available on the course Canvas site on a date indicated via Canvas announcement, and remain available for multiple days. Quizzes are to be completed by the date and time (Pacific Time) specified via course announcement. Late quizzes will receive an automatic 20% point reduction, and will not be accepted more than 2 days beyond their due date.

Incompletes – Students enrolled in TRAL 493/593 are expected to complete course tasks during the 10-week term. I will allow an "Incomplete" grade only in extreme cases (e.g., health reasons, military commitment). Please note that students receiving incompletes should not expect to receive an 'A' for the course over the long run, as all work will be submitted late.

Reach Out for Success – University students encounter setbacks from time to time. If you encounter difficulties and need assistance, it's important to reach out. Consider discussing the situation with an instructor or academic advisor. Learn about resources that assist with wellness and academic success at oregonstate.edu/ReachOut. If you are in immediate crisis, please contact the Crisis Text Line by texting OREGON to 741-741 or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – The need for direct, active and honest attention to equity, inclusivity and diversity is as urgent today as ever. Our world faces social, economic and environmental challenges of unprecedented complexity and scale. The College of Forestry is committed to addressing those challenges in the realm of forestry and natural resource management - whether it be through education, research or public engagement. We intend to draw fully and inclusively on the power and force of human imagination, experience and creativity to meet the needs of today's world.

Students with Disabilities:

Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability and Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098.

Expectations for Student Conduct:

Student conduct is governed by the university's policies, as explained in the Office of Student Conduct: information and regulations.

Academic Honesty:

Written assignments must be the product of original work and not copied from another individual's, or include verbatim material from another source without proper attribution. Failure to meet this requirement will be considered plagiarism and a violation of the University's policy on academic misconduct, resulting in severe penalties. The purpose of this policy is to enhance individual development and encourage students at Oregon State University to learn and develop professional standards of conduct. We want students to develop enough proficiency and self-confidence that they can be relied on to do their own work.

Conduct in the online classroom environment:

Students are expected to conduct themselves in TRAL 493/593 (e.g., on discussion forums, email postings) in compliance with OSU's Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected to treat others with the same respect they would want afforded themselves. Disrespectful, inappropriate, or disruptive behaviors in the course are unacceptable and can result in sanctions as defined by Oregon Administrative Rules within the Code of Student Conduct linked above.

Ground Rules for Online Communication & Course Participation:

- *Online threaded discussions* are public messages, and all writings in this area will be viewable by the entire class or assigned group members. If you prefer that only the instructor sees your communication, send it to me by email, and be sure to identify yourself and the course you are enrolled in.

- Posting of personal contact information is discouraged (e.g. telephone numbers, addresses).

- *Online Instructor Response Policy:* I will check email frequently and will respond to course-related questions as soon as possible.

- **Spelling and grammar are very important** in an online course. What you put into an online course reflects on your level of professionalism. Here are a couple of resources you may find useful…

    o OSU Writing Center: http://writingcenter.oregonstate.edu/

    The website shown above includes a link to the OSU Online Writing Center, a tremendous resource for Ecampus students!

    o netiquette: http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html.

    Includes valuable information and recommendations on interacting with others in the online environment.

- Please check all sections of the course Canvas site and syllabus before asking general course questions (e.g. *'when is that assignment due?'*).

Student Assistance:

Contacting the instructor — Students wishing to contact the instructor are encouraged to do so via email. Most issues or questions can be addressed in this manner. Depending of the type of question, it may be preferable to post a message in the TRAL 493/593 Canvas 'Discussions' area.

Technical Assistance — If you experience computer difficulties, need help downloading a browser or plug-in, need assistance logging into the course, or if you experience any problems while in your online course, contact the OSU Information Services (IS) Service Desk for assistance. You can call (541) 737-8787, or visit the OSU IS Service Desk online.

OSU Student Evaluation of Teaching —

Course *Student Evaluation of Teaching* (SET) results are extremely important, and are used to help me improve this course and the learning experience of future students. Results from SET multiple choice questions are tabulated anonymously and go directly to instructors and department heads. Student comments on the open-ended questions are compiled and confidentially forwarded to each instructor, per OSU procedures. The online SET form will be available toward the end of each term, and you will be sent instructions via ONID by the Office of Academic Programs, Assessment, and Accreditation. You will log in to "Student Online Services" to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted.