Syllabus for ENVS 4600 Natural Resources Interpretation

Instructor

Dr. Lauren Mullenbach

Email: lauren.mullenbach@usu.edu

Office hours*: Fridays 1:00 - 3:00 pm MT

*Office hours refer to times when I am available on Zoom for questions or concerns related to the course.

Zoom Link for Office Hours (https://usu-edu.zoom.us/j/4038686665?pwd=L0xKVndIVEZXTTTJvVzFQUFMwL3pyUT09)

Course Description

This course examines the principles of interpretation from the perspective that environments and cultures interact, and will explore how to convey those interactions. By drawing on fundamental aspects of interpretive theory and related disciplines, students will examine the basis of interpretation. Through individual “lab” exercises and scenarios based in “real world” interpretive needs, students will gain practical experience in the art and science of interpretation. Topics will include the development and design of interpretive materials, delivery of interpretive programs, and specific exercises to enhance interpretive skills.

Although this course is designed to provide some universal concepts and skills, this course may be particularly applicable to:

- Students interested in a future career working with the public in an educational setting or management capacity (agency interpretive staff, non-profit, etc.)
- Outdoor professionals interested in working in a skill-based instructional setting (e.g., guiding)
- ENVS majors interested in investigating the topic of human-environment interactions through interpretation via public education/outreach programs

Course Learning Goals
1. Learn fundamental principles of interpretation, including traditional and contemporary conceptions of interpretation
2. Learn how to apply the principles of interpretation effectively in various settings
3. Develop specific skills, competencies, and perspectives essential for professional interpreters

Course Approach

This course is built on three primary components: (1) a foundation of theory and other important concepts, (2) “lab” exercises based on practical scenarios, and (3) independent projects for hands-on skill development. In this course, students will develop an understanding of interpretation, as well as learn to create interpretive materials for hypothetical clients. Part of this will include learning to develop interpretive materials with a variety of media, as well as learning one’s own interpretive style.

Course Readings

This course will make regular use of readings—textbooks, journal articles, and other print materials. The required textbooks are:

3. Other readings will be posted to Canvas in the assigned week.

Course Flow

You will get out of this course what you put into it. Through a substantial amount of reading and other material, students will be exposed to theoretical, conceptual, and practical information. Each of these require that students practice critical thinking. This is a course in which your participation in each component of the course is necessary and is a reflection of your respect for your education, your fellow classmates, and instructor. During a typical week, your responsibilities include the following:

1. Visit the week overview page in the module for that week
2. Read the required readings
3. Participate in the weekly discussion
4. Take the weekly reading quiz
5. Complete any other required assignments for the week (e.g., lab exercises)
Assignments

I have designed this course so that your grade does not depend on just a mid-term and final exam, or on just a final paper. This means there are a number of items which make up your grade. **All assignments will be due by Sunday at 10:00 pm each week**. The reason I chose 10:00 pm instead of the typical midnight deadline is because -- although I wish students would not procrastinate, I understand it happens sometimes -- I truly want you all to get enough sleep.

*The exception to this regular deadline is the final assignment (final interpretive project & reflection paper) which is due the last day of the semester, on 4/30.*

**Weekly Discussions:** Each week you will have to respond to prompts on that week's discussion board. Please do not wait until the last minute to post to the discussion. It is very hard to have a classroom discussion when everyone is trying to post and reply at 9:30 pm on Sunday. The first prompt is to introduce yourself. To start off with a quick easy 15 points, please tell me and your fellow classmates a bit about yourself on the "Introduce Yourself" discussion board.

**Weekly quizzes:** We will have quizzes each week which are due at the same time as every other assignment (Sunday at 10:00 pm). That said, I understand that sometimes we have “off” weeks. Therefore, I will only count your ten best quizzes at the end of the semester. These quizzes will be on content covered in the readings and will be multiple choice questions.

**Exams:** We will take two exams, a midterm and a final. These exams will generally only cover content from that unit (e.g., the midterm will cover the first half of the course, and the final will cover the second half of the course), and will not be cumulative. However, you will likely need foundational concepts from the first half to answer questions on the final. The exams will contain only short answer and essay questions. I will provide a study guide prior to each exam and the exams will be completely open-note. You will have the entire week to complete the exam during the weeks they are assigned.

**Lab exercises:** There will be five lab exercises designed to give you "hands-on" interpretive experience. More information about these exercises is below. Each lab exercise will have its own page in "Assignments" with more instructions and the rubric.

**Interpretive Project:** The largest part of your grade is to create interpretive material. You will be creating a product for a hypothetical client. This could be an interpretive talk, an exhibit, a guided tour, or other media of your choice. You will work on this project throughout the semester, as various parts of the project will be due throughout the semester.

### Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive project</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Lab&quot; exercises</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
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Final grades will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>73-76.9</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92.9</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>70-72.9</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89.9</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>67-69.9</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86.9</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>60-66.9</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82.9</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>59.9 or below</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79.9</td>
<td>C+</td>
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**Course Assignments**

**Canvas Discussions (5%)**

Online courses require a different mode of interaction, and this course will use the discussion forum feature of Canvas to participate in weekly discussions of course material. I expect you all to participate in all of the discussions in this course.

- Each week, I will give the class two prompts, and you all must supply a response to each.
- In addition, you must reply to at least two (2) of your peers' responses, to facilitate conversation and create collective understanding of course topics.
- Receiving full credit for discussion posts and replies will require more than replying to a peer with “I agree!” Genuine contribution to ideas presented by your peers does more to push the conversation forward than simple statements like this.

The general rubric for the grading of these discussion posts is available here (https://usu.instructure.com/courses/639309/pages/rubric-for-discussion-posts).

**Reading Quizzes (20%)**

Each week you will complete a reading quiz about the week’s readings. The quizzes will each have 5 multiple-choice questions, with the exception of the first week, which will have 8 questions (3 about the syllabus, 5 about the readings).

**"Lab" Exercises (10%)**

There will be five "lab" exercises this semester. These will be hypothetical scenarios meant to represent examples of “real-world” interpretation. Each lab exercise will be available in Canvas and should be uploaded, when complete, as a .doc or .docx file. In general I will grade your responses to lab exercise questions according to the following grading scheme:

| Did not provide complete answers, and did not engage in the assignment | 5 points |
Answered all questions, but barely provided the minimum  
Answered all questions fully and went beyond the minimum  

Not turning in the lab exercise or not finishing the lab exercise will result in no credit.

**Interpretive Project (25%)**

This project will give you the most hands-on experience with interpretation out of everything in this course. As noted above, this project is a significant portion of your overall course grade, and should be given appropriate attention.

Time frame:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Component</th>
<th>Date Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic selection</td>
<td>2/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospectus</td>
<td>2/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft</td>
<td>3/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>4/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection paper</td>
<td>4/30</td>
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Project components in more detail:

**Topic selection** – Your topic should offer an interpretive product for a hypothetical client. Example client types include: a nature center, a trail, a historical site, a school, a museum, etc. This should be in service of an actual location (i.e., not made up, but an actual place you identify), but you don’t need to make contact with that location. For example, if you live in Logan, your hypothetical client could be Stokes Nature Center; or, if you live in Blanding, you could choose one of the museums, the cultural center, or one of the parks. When you turn in your topic selection, please provide the name of your hypothetical client. Also, please provide a brief description of your interpretive product (1-2 paragraphs) and topic of content.

**Prospectus** – 2-3 typed (double-spaced) pages detailing:

- Title of project
- Scope of information to be developed
- Type of media employed
- Materials needed
- Audience addressed
- Educational outcomes

Your prospectus document should clearly articulate how you plan to complete the tasks above and your timeline for completing the tasks. Please cite references in your document, as you will need to justify your interpretive approach with sources. These can be readings from the course or outside sources you find yourself. Please use peer-reviewed academic sources, through the USU library (https://library.usu.edu/).

**Draft** – This will be a first draft of your project and should resemble what your final product will look like. It can be very “draft” in nature, but should show solid effort. I will provide feedback on this draft that I expect you to address in your final product.
**Final** – This will be the final interpretive product (e.g., presentation materials, display, other media). You should act as if this is being presented to an actual client, so it should be polished. You should show some creativity and effort, but don’t get overwhelmed to produce something that a trained, paid professional would produce.

**Reflection paper** – This 3-page minimum paper should include the following sections:

- Significance of the environmental, cultural, historical, or social issue addressed and why it is suitable for your client
- Details of your interpretive approach, based on interpretive theory. Why did you select the media you selected for this topic, audience, and intended educational outcomes?
- Details of how your project integrates with the client’s other offerings. How does it fit their organization? Their mission/purpose? Their site? Their other interpretive programs?
- Description of your project’s utility in the future, what improvements you’d make, and other interpretive services you could provide the client
- Must include 3 references at least
- What you got out of the project (1 paragraph minimum)

**Course Communication**

I will try to respond to all emails within 24 hours (excepting weekends), but please allow me 48 hours to respond to email before sending me a reminder. Email is the best way to contact me (lauren.mullenbach@usu.edu).

**Late Assignment Policy**

Assignments are due on the identified date on the syllabus and Canvas. Please note for this course that most assignments (including discussions, quizzes, and lab exercises) are due on Sundays at 10:00 pm MT. All assignments will be submitted ONLY through Canvas. No hard copies will be accepted. Please do not email your assignments. All late assignments, regardless of submission date, will lose half of the total points for each assignment. For example, if an assignment has a total of 100 points, after the due date, it will be graded over 50 points instead of 100 points.

**Student Support**

**Technical Support**

If you experience technical difficulties with this, or any other USU course, you may click on the "Help" icon in the blue bar to the left of the screen, then click on the IT Service Desk link. You will be redirected to the USU Information Technology page. Click on the "Service Desk" link to see their contact information.

**Academic Support**

For academic support (information about tutoring, study tips, and preparing for and taking tests) click on the "Help" icon in the blue bar to the left of the screen, then click on the "Academic Success Center" link.

**University Policy & Procedures**
Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities

Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. Faculty Code Policy #403 (http://www.usu.edu/hr/files/uploads/Policies/403.pdf) further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

Academic Integrity – "The Honor System"

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge:

"I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."

A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

Academic Dishonesty

The instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University’s Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- **Cheating**: using, attempting to use, or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity. Unauthorized assistance includes:
  - Working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done “individually;”
  - Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
  - Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;
  - Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
  - Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;
  - Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.
- **Falsification**: altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
- **Plagiarism**: representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one’s own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

For additional information go to: ARTICLE VI. University Regulations Regarding Academic Integrity (https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article6)

Sexual Harassment/Title IX
Utah State University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free from acts of sexual misconduct and discrimination and to fostering respect and dignity for all members of the USU community. Title IX and USU Policy 339 (http://www.usu.edu/policies/339) address sexual harassment in the workplace and academic setting.

The university responds promptly upon learning of any form of possible discrimination or sexual misconduct. Any individual may contact USU’s Office of Equity (https://equity.usu.edu/) for available options and resources or clarification. The university has established a complaint procedure to handle all types of discrimination complaints, including sexual harassment (USU Policy 305 (http://www.usu.edu/policies/305/)), and has designated the Office of Equity Director/Title IX Coordinator as the official responsible for receiving and investigating complaints of sexual harassment.

**Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy**

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the course work because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term ‘extenuating’ circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

**Students with Disabilities**

USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) (http://www.usu.edu/drc/) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, (435) 797-2444, drc@usu.edu (mailto:drc@usu.edu)). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

Students who are at a higher risk for complications from COVID-19 or who contract COVID-19 may also be eligible for accommodations.

**Diversity Statement**

Regardless of intent, careless or ill-informed remarks can be offensive and hurtful to others and detract from the learning climate. If you feel uncomfortable in a classroom due to offensive language or actions by an instructor or student(s) regarding ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, contact:

- Division of Student Affairs: https://studentaffairs.usu.edu (https://studentaffairs.usu.edu/), (435) 797-1712, studentservices@usu.edu (mailto:studentservices@usu.edu), TSC 220
- Student Legal Services: https://ususa.usu.edu/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-services (https://ususa.usu.edu/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-services), (435) 797-2912, TSC 326,
- Access and Diversity: http://accesscenter.usu.edu (http://accesscenter.usu.edu/), (435) 797-1728, access@usu.edu (mailto:access@usu.edu); TSC 315
- Multicultural Programs: http://accesscenter.usu.edu/multiculture (http://accesscenter.usu.edu/multiculture), (435) 797-1728, TSC 315
- LGBTQA Programs: http://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa (http://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa/), (435) 797-1728, TSC 3145
- Provost’s Office Diversity Resources: https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversity (https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversity/), (435) 797-8176

You can learn about your student rights by visiting:
The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University: https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode (https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/)
Grievance Process

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: Article VII (https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article7).

Full details for USU Academic Policies and Procedures can be found at:

- Student Conduct (http://www.usu.edu/studentconduct)
- Student Code (https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/)
- Academic Integrity (https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article6)
- USU Selected Academic Policies and Procedures (http://www.usu.edu/provost/faculty-life/syllabus.cfm)

Emergency Procedures

In the case of a drill or real emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate the building by the sound of the fire/emergency alarm system or by a building representative. In the event of a disaster that may interfere with either notification, evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., in an earthquake when shaking ceases or immediately when a fire is discovered). Turn off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairs.

Mental Health

Mental health is critically important for the success of USU students. As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Utah State University provides free services for students to assist them with addressing these and other concerns. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (https://counseling.usu.edu/).

Students are also encouraged to download the “SafeUT App” (https://healthcare.utah.edu/uni/programs/safe-ut-smartphone-app) to their smartphones. The SafeUT application is a 24/7 statewide crisis text and tip service that provides real-time crisis intervention to students through texting and a confidential tip program that can help anyone with emotional crises, bullying, relationship problems, mental health, or suicide related issues.