

REC 434: Interpreting America's National Parks

Summer 2022

Course Syllabus

Western Kentucky University
College of Health & Human Services
School of Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport

Instructor: Eric Knackmuhs, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

Office Hours: By appointment. We can meet via Zoom or phone.

Office Location: Diddle Arena, Room 2023

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Office Telephone: (270) 745-4680

Classroom: N/A

Class Meetings: No live class meetings. Course runs May 9 – June 10.

“What do I do for a living? I talk.”

-Interpreters everywhere (also from the movie *Thank You for Smoking*)

Catalog Description

Explores interpretive approaches to natural, cultural, and historical resources in national parks and other leisure settings. Emphasizes evolution of the national park system. Students are responsible for their own transportation to off-campus meetings (not applicable in online format).

Course Goals

By the end of this course you should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the history, principles, theories, and methods of heritage interpretation in national parks and other settings.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course each student should be able to:

1. Define interpretation in terms of professional standards AND personal philosophy.
2. Research, design, and present interpretive programs using appropriate skills and techniques.
3. Exhibit proficiency in peer coaching and evaluation.
4. Explain interpretation's role as a management tool.
5. Analyze how the national park system evolved.
6. Compare the study of individual park units to the analysis of the entire national park system.
7. Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.

This course also addresses WKU's Quality Enhancement Plan:

Evidence & Argument, WKU's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), articulates a single student learning goal, namely that WKU students will bring evidence and argument to life through written, oral, and visual means. Students will apply and adapt this learning to their professional, social, and personal lives.

This goal is linked to three student learning outcomes:

1. WKU students will demonstrate the ability to gather sound and relevant evidence to address an issue (*Evidence-Gathering*)
2. WKU students will demonstrate the ability to analyze and synthesize the assembled evidence. (*Sense-Making*)
3. WKU students will demonstrate the ability to articulate a logical and supported argument based on this analysis. (*Argumentation*)

Course Readings

All **required readings** are posted to Blackboard and listed in the Course Schedule.

Recommended, but optional

Tilden, F. (2008). *Interpreting our heritage* (4th ed.). Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Manning, R., Diamant, R., Mitchell, N., and Harmon, D. (2016). *A thinking person's guide to America's National Parks*. New York: George Braziller, Inc.

Course Policies and Expectations

Class Meetings

There will be no live class meetings this term. The course is asynchronous so it is up to each student to stay up to date with all assigned work.

Course Format

This course will be delivered using Blackboard, EdPuzzle, and FlipGrid. Check Blackboard frequently as this is where the syllabus (with course schedule) is posted, where announcements are shared, where you can access links to EdPuzzle and FlipGrid activities, and where you will submit assignments. It is your responsibility to check Blackboard on a regular basis for updates.

If you ever encounter difficulty using Blackboard contact the IT Helpdesk at <https://www.wku.edu/it/chat/> or 270-745-7000.

- **EdPuzzle:** At the start of the semester you will be invited to join a REC 434 group in EdPuzzle. You will create a free account if you do not already have one. You will watch videos posted by your instructor each week. There will be quizzes embedded in each video. These will be added to your engagement grade at the end of the semester.

- **FlipGrid:** At the start of the semester you will be invited to join a REC 434 group in FlipGrid. You will create a free account if you do not already have one. You will respond to question prompts here throughout the semester. The goal is to make the class more interactive and have a connection to your fellow students, even though the course is fully online.

Syllabus Check

This is to check if you are reading the syllabus. Email me a picture of Professor Frink, a character from my favorite TV show, *The Simpsons* and you will get five extra credit points. Due May 15 at 11:59 pm.

Professionalism

A major part of college is preparing to enter the full-time workforce. Each course you take should equip you with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to secure a good internship, a good job, and a fulfilling career. Therefore, it is important you be professional in all you do. This includes, but is not limited to, attendance, punctuality, preparation, attitude, attention, body language, communication, and digital citizenship.

Engagement

In life, there are no points for just showing up. In this class, “engaged students” will watch the weekly video(s), complete assigned readings and activities, and turn in all assignments by the due date. They speak up by asking questions to the instructor or fellow students through our online platforms. They pay attention, actively listen, and read critically to complete assignments and share insightful comments in online discussions.

Communication

The best way to get in touch with me is via email (eric.knackmuhs@wku.edu). In communicating via email remember our focus on practicing professionalism. While others may use email similarly to texting I expect your emails to be more like formal letters. Emails that use informal language or slang, have spelling and grammar errors, are missing subject, salutation, and signature, will not be taken as seriously as those that are professionally written. **Please include REC 434 in the subject line.**

Statement on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Recognition and respect are core aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The way we value and respond to facets of DEI is critical to our personal, academic, and professional growth. Every person in this class contributes to its diverse composition. We each contribute to the class by way of our being, values, thoughts, and experiences. While we may not always agree with or understand these factors and constructs, we are all responsible for maintaining a respectful environment for sharing and learning. I am committed to providing a teaching and learning environment conducive to fostering this recognition and respect.

Assignments

Detailed instructions and guidelines for each assignment will be given in EdPuzzle and posted to Blackboard throughout the semester. Below is a brief overview of each.

EdPuzzle (100 pts): Videos will be posted each week on course content. Quizzes will be embedded in each of these videos to ensure student understanding.

FlipGrid (20 pts): We will use FlipGrid to learn and practice effective interpretive presentation techniques. I think you will find these to be fun, low stakes exercises that will help you build skills. We will also use FlipGrid to deliver your final interpretive program.

Interpretive Program (150 pts)

A major project this semester will be researching, developing, and delivering your own original interpretive program. This project will include a theme planning worksheet, a program outline, and the delivery of the program.

Program Outline (50 pts)

The program outline is a planning and organizational tool designed to demonstrate your preparedness to deliver your interpretive program.

Program Delivery (100 pts)

At the end of the semester each student will present their interpretive program “in-class” via FlipGrid.

ProValens Web Course (50 pts)

Students will complete a ProValens Web Course: Foundations of Interpretation that is offered online for free.

National Park Report (300 pts)

At the start of the term you will select a National Park Service unit to use for this report. There are 423 individual NPS units you can choose from but only one student will be allowed per unit. See <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/national-park-system.htm> for a complete list. The report consists of three sections.

Section 1 will be a written analysis of how the National Park System evolved from the earliest designations of federally protected land, to the designation of the student’s chosen park unit, to the present day. Section 2 will explain how the student’s chosen park came to be part of the system and the role it plays. Section 3 will be a reflection on how the student’s interpretive program (a separate assignment) and interpretation in general could succeed in creating future stewards of the national parks, thus sustaining the system itself. Details on each assignment will be provided in Blackboard.

Grading

EdPuzzle	100 pts
FlipGrid: TIU Demonstration and Practicing Interpretive Skills (10 pts each)	20 pts
ProValens Web Course	50 pts
NPS Site and Program Topic Selection	10 pts
National Park Report	300 pts
Interpretive Program (Outline 50 pts, Program Delivery via FlipGrid 100 pts)	150 pts
TOTAL	630 pts

Grading Scale

A 90% B 80% C 70% D 60% F 59% and below

Late Assignments

All assignments are due in Blackboard (except in-class activities). Late assignments **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**. We are on a tight timeline this semester. Don't fall behind! If you are having difficulty with a deadline, please discuss the matter prior to the assigned due date. If you are having difficulty submitting an assignment via Blackboard contact the IT Helpdesk at <https://www.wku.edu/it/chat/> or 270-745-7000.

Writing-style Requirements

All formal written assignments requiring citations should follow APA (6th edition) guidelines for writing. The APA Publication Manual (6th edition) is available at the library or on Amazon. A good online resource for APA guidelines can also be found at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>.

University Policies / Information

ADA Accommodation

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) at <https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf> and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf.

Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-512. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are “Responsible Employees” of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU’s Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU’s Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

Academic Integrity

The maintenance of academic integrity is of fundamental importance to the University. Thus, it should be clearly understood that acts of plagiarism or any other form of cheating will not be tolerated and that anyone committing such acts risks punishment of a serious nature.

Academic Dishonesty

Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in a course without possibility of withdrawal. The faculty member may also present the case to the Office of Judicial Affairs for disciplinary sanctions. A student who believes a faculty member has dealt unfairly with him/her in a course involving academic dishonesty may seek relief through the Student Complaint Procedure. <https://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-dishonesty.php/>

Writing Center Assistance

The Writing Center will be available for online consultation this semester. See their website for details. The Writing Center has locations in Cherry Hall 123 and in the Commons at Cravens Library. The Writing Center also offers online consultations for students who live at a distance or who cannot visit during our operating hours. Our writing tutors have been trained to provide helpful feedback to students at all phases of a writing project: they can *help you* brainstorm ideas, structure your essay, clarify your purpose, strengthen your support, and edit for clarity and correctness. But they will not revise or edit the paper *for you*. See instructions on the website (www.wku.edu/writingcenter) for making online or face-to-face appointments. Or call (270) 745-5719 during our operating hours (also listed on our website) for help scheduling an appointment.

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Week	Date	Topic(s)	What’s Due This Week? (Complete tasks in order.)
1	5/9 to 5/15	Course Overview Introduction to the National Park Service Introduction to Interpretation	1. EdPuzzle: Week 1 Video(s) 2. Read: TPG, Ch. 1 3. Web Course: Foundations of Interpretation, Part 1: What is interpretation? http://provalenslearning.com/courses/foundations -of-interpretation 4. FlipGrid: TIU Demonstration
2	5/16 to 5/22	What the National Park System Provides – and Protects	1. EdPuzzle: Week 2 Video(s) 2. Read: TPG, Ch. 4, Ch. 8, Ch. 9, and Ch. 15 3. Blackboard: National Park Report, Section 1 4. Blackboard: NPS Site and Program Topic Selection 5. Web Course: Foundations of Interpretation, Part 2: Why do we do interpretation?
3	5/23 to 5/29	National Park System: Exploring Individual Units Interpretive Skills	1. EdPuzzle: Week 3 Video(s) 2. Read: TPG, Ch. 3 and Ch. 6 3. Blackboard: National Park Report, Section 2 4. Web Course: Foundations of Interpretation, Part 3: What skills do interpreters need? Part 4: How do you do interpretation? (Blackboard: Submit Certificate of Completion)
4	5/30 to 6/5	Creative Interpretive Techniques	1. EdPuzzle: Week 4 Video(s) 2. Read: Buchholz et al., Ch. 4 and 5, pp. 72 -115 3. Blackboard: Interpretive Program Outline 4. FlipGrid: Practicing Interpretive Skills

Week	Date	Topic(s)	What's Due This Week? (Complete tasks in order.)
5	6/6 to 6/10	Putting It All Together: Interpreting Your National Park	1. EdPuzzle: Week 5 Video(s) 2. Read: TPG, Ch. 23 3. FlipGrid: Interpretive Program 4. Blackboard: National Park Report, Section 3