

**EVS 525 Foundations of Environmental Education and Interpretation**  
Spring Semester 2012: Wednesday 11:00 am – 2:50 pm in Friday Hall 2052

***Instructor/Facilitator:***

Dr. Jeffery Hill  
Friday Hall 2067  
Hours: Wednesdays 3:00-4:00 pm and by appointment

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This syllabus will answer questions that you may have about this course. It explains what material will be covered, what is expected from you and how you will be graded. And most importantly, it will provide guidance throughout the course.

***What will I learn in this course?***

Upon completion of this course you should have an in-depth understanding of, as well as experience in developing, implementing, and evaluating environmental education and interpretation programs for environmental and cultural resources.

***What are the objectives?***

Upon successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- distinguish between environmental education and interpretation, and utilize this distinction in analysis of programs
- evaluate and appropriately apply foundational theories of environmental education and interpretation to real-world settings
- understand and apply the principles of environmental education and interpretation in the development and implementation of programs
- utilize foundational evaluative approaches to analyze the success of environmental education and interpretation programs
- develop and implement an effective, professional quality interpretive/educational master plan

However, the topics which we will cover in this course can be guided by you, as well. If you have a particular interest, bring it up. We can attempt to spend more time on it if it is included among our existing topics, or include it if it is not. Remember, this course is for you. By helping to guide our structure, you can ensure that you get the most out of it, as well as help to make this a better course.

***What textbook will I need?***

Ward, C. W., & Wilkinson, A. E. (2006). *Conducting Meaningful Interpretation*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

*Additional readings will be placed on reserve on Blackboard as needed.*

***Course web site***

We will use Blackboard for the course syllabus, grades and supplementary readings. You can access the Blackboard site for this course at <http://learn.uncw.edu>

### ***How many exams will there be?***

There will be two exams in the course, each exam worth 20% of your final grade. Both exams will be based primarily on application of material discussed during class, off-site trips, and readings. The final exam will not be cumulative.

*The instructor reserves the right to modify or change assignments during the semester.*

### ***What should I do if I must be absent for an exam?***

If you have a legitimate excuse for missing an exam, you can take a make-up essay exam. Legitimate excuses include death in the family or severe (documented) illness. Excuses which are not legitimate include forgetfulness or oversleeping. To legitimize your excuse, you must provide your instructor with documentation (e.g. doctor's note). Make every effort to contact me beforehand so that I know you will be absent. If your excuse is not legitimate, you will receive 0 points for the exam you missed.

### ***What assignments will I do?***

There are four assignments to be completed. A brief description of each is given below. Additional details will be discussed in class.

#### **Program analysis**

You will visit a site where environmental education and/or interpretation programs or exhibits are available, participate in the program/exhibit and provide a four to five page cited critical analysis of the program/exhibit. The program/exhibit should be environmentally-related, but may include other elements (e.g. history, literature, art). It can be either a program conducted or performed by an individual or an exhibit which is self-directed.

Your cited analysis should include what the program/exhibit was, where it was offered, when you participated, what happened, a critical evaluation of the program/exhibit (i.e. good points and bad points) specifically referencing at least five scholarly articles supporting your critique, and what you would do to improve it. Your grade will be based upon the appropriateness of the programs/exhibits you chose, and the quality and thoroughness of your analysis. All citations should be in APA format. (due February 8: 15% of final grade)

#### **Environmental education/interpretation activity**

You will develop a lesson plan for an interpretive or environmental education activity lasting 15 minutes. Some activities already have lesson plans developed for them. You are free to adapt those, but be sure you cite the original source. You will then lead the class through the activity. Interactive programs are highly recommended.

Following your activity, you will have 5 minutes to implement an evaluation. You will then analyze these data and provide a one page summary detailing the level of success of your activity and suggestions for improvement within one week. Your grade will be based upon the quality of your presentation in both subject matter and presentation style, depth and quality of your analysis, and feedback from the other students in the class. (activity/lesson plan due March 28, analysis due April 4: 15% of final grade)

#### **Interpretive master plan**

The final project for the course will be to develop an interpretive master plan. As competing consulting groups, each group will analyze the proposed site and develop a realistic interpretive master plan proposal. The proposal will then be presented to the students in the class, who will select the winning project team. (due April 25: 30% of final grade)

## Workshop participation

It is important for students new to environmental education and interpretation to get as much experience as possible with different types of services. Therefore, each student will be required to successfully complete at least one out-of-class, day-long environmental education workshop. Examples include Project WILD, Project WET, and Project Learning Tree. These workshops are typically held in the Wilmington area several times per year and are usually free of charge. Although there is no class credit for attending a workshop, it is a requirement of this course. Make every effort to sign up for these early, as they do tend to fill up quickly. If you should be unable to attend a workshop during the semester, you will be assigned a course grade of “Incomplete” until you are able to meet this requirement.

## ***What do I need to know about my written work?***

Writing skills are critical components of your professional communication skills. Your ability to present your thoughts clearly and concisely reflects not only upon you, but upon your employer as well. Therefore, to give you a head start, ground rules for written work in this class are:

1. All written work should be presented in a professional manner. One of the easiest ways to ensure this is to proofread your work. Even better is to have someone else read it. General sloppiness is easy to recognize and correct, but look deeper. Is your presentation complete? Is it well organized? Does it present the necessary information? Does it come to a logical conclusion? Overall, imagine that your employee just handed you the formal report that you have in your hand. As a manager, would you be satisfied with it?
2. All written assignments must be word processed on a computer and printed. Handwritten and/or typed papers will not be accepted. The reasons for this are many. Using a computer improves the quality of your work by allowing you to easily experiment with structures, correct errors, update previous drafts, and provides you with an abundance of tools at your fingertips, such as a thesaurus and grammar checker.
3. Since you are already using a word processor, use the spell checker. Spelling errors will severely affect your grade, as will typos, hand corrections and other evidence of carelessness.
4. Grammatical errors in papers will negatively affect your grade, as well. However, problems in grammar are more involved, yet can frequently be resolved by a combination of perseverance and assistance. I will do my best to highlight areas which may need work when I see them. If your grammatical problems are severe, I will recommend that you seek assistance from the Writing Center.
5. All references and citations must follow APA 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (see owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/).

## ***What if I turn in an assignment late?***

Assignments will be penalized 10% for every day in which they are late. Nonetheless, alternative arrangements may be made for legitimate, documented excuses. Please make every effort to contact me beforehand if an emergency will interfere with your coursework.

## ***What about attendance?***

This is a hands-on class. You can't master the course content without being here. We will be doing exercises, activities and discussing material outside the readings during class that will be critical in mastering the course content. Additionally, we'll be taking trips off-site that will be very important to understanding real-world applications of course content. Therefore, attendance will be taken during each class. You are allowed 2 absences. No questions asked. After that, 10% will be deducted from your final grade for each absence, regardless of reason.

Religious observance policy: In accordance with NC SL 2010-211, you are entitled to two excused absences for religious observances per academic year. You must inform me in writing the first week of class if you will be

missing any classes due to religious observance and using one of the two permissible absences for the academic year. In addition, please inform the Registrar the first week of class, who will then confirm your intentions to miss class with the course instructors. Any absence for religious purposes will be considered unexcused unless you submit the request in writing the first week to either me or the Registrar.

### ***What do I need to know about being prepared for the classroom?***

One of my goals is to help prepare you for the profession into which you will be entering, as opposed to providing a purely academic curriculum. As such, together, we are developing:

- professional knowledge
- the ability to apply this knowledge in a professional capacity
- professional behavior

To this end:

1. Part of my role is a disseminator of information. But more importantly, I am here to help you understand and apply ideas and concepts related to the environmental education and interpretation. I will provide you with explanations, clarifications, guidance and suggestions for further study. In other words, I am here to provide you with a basis for your own learning and direct you when needed (that's what education should be about). I will do my best to be clear, organized and fair.
2. Your responsibility is to participate actively in the educational process by attending class sessions and off-site trips, being prepared and attentive, participating in activities, completing assignments on time, learning on your own beyond the class content and expressing yourself creatively in your work. Participation makes the class much more fun and interesting for everyone, including me.
3. This course in many ways resembles what happens in the "real world." You are given open-ended assignments which do not have specific step-by-step instructions and then you are expected to complete them within a specific time period. You have complete latitude in many areas of the assignments. This can be very empowering (and allow you to be creative), but it can also lead to confusion and/or procrastination. For this reason, it is critical that you ask questions if you are unclear, and most especially, that you stay on task.

### ***What about travel to off-site locations?***

This course will require off-site travel, both during class time and on your own. You are responsible for all travel arrangements. Carpooling is highly encouraged.

### ***Academic expectations***

In choosing UNCW, you have become part of our community of scholars. We recognize that the UNCW learning experience is challenging and requires hard work. It also requires a commitment to make time available to do that hard work. The university expects you to make academics your highest priority by dedicating your time and energy to training your mind and acquiring knowledge. Academic success in critical thinking and problem solving prepares you for the changes and challenges you will encounter in the future. Our faculty and academic support resources are readily available as partners in this effort, but the primary responsibility for learning is yours.

### ***Academic integrity***

All members of UNCW's community are expected to follow the academic Honor Code. Please read the UNCW Honor Code carefully (as covered in the UNCW Student Handbook). Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated in this class. Please be especially familiar with UNCW's position on plagiarism as outlined in the UNCW Student Handbook. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty in which you take someone else's ideas and represent them as your own. Here are some examples of plagiarism:

- a. You write about someone else's work in your paper and do not give them credit for it by referencing them.

- b. You give a presentation and use someone else's ideas and do not state that the ideas are the other person's.
- c. You get facts from your textbook or some other reference material and do not reference that material.

***Disability accommodation***

Students with diagnosed disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (962-7555). Please give me a copy of the letter you receive from Office of Disability Services detailing class accommodations you may need. If you require accommodation for test-taking please make sure I have the referral letter no less than one week before the test.

***Diversity in the university community***

As an institution of higher learning, the University of North Carolina Wilmington represents a rich diversity of human beings among its faculty, staff, and students and is committed to maintaining a campus environment that values that diversity. Accordingly, the university supports policies, curricula, and co-curricular activities that encourage understanding of and appreciation for all members of its community and will not tolerate any harassment or disrespect for persons because of race, gender, age, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, or relationship to other university constituents. Students with Disabilities information and resources is available at <http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/disability/>

***Violence and harassment***

UNCW practices a zero tolerance policy for any kind of violent or harassing behavior. If you are experiencing an emergency of this type contact the police at 911 or UNCW CARE at 962-2273. Resources for individuals concerned with a violent or harassing situation can be located at <http://www.uncw.edu/wsrc/crisis.html>

***Course grades***

There are 100 possible points:

Program analysis:	15 pts.
Activity:	15 pts.
Interpretive plan:	30 pts.
Midterm exam:	20 pts.
<u>Final exam:</u>	<u>20 pts.</u>
Total:	100 pts.

Final letter grade by total points:

A	93 - 100 pts.
A-	90 - 92
B+	87 - 89
B	83 - 86
B-	80 - 82
C+	77 - 79
C	73 - 76
C-	70 - 72
D+	67 - 69
D	63 - 66
D-	60 - 62
F	0 - 59

*As instructor, I maintain the right to adjust grades as I best see fit in order to maintain fairness and consistency.*

### *Tentative EVS 525 Schedule*

Note that this schedule is tentative. We will deviate from it in order to accommodate your interests, current events, the natural flow of the course, the consulting project and other related circumstances.

<i>Topics and readings by week</i>	<i>Assignments, exams and notes</i>
<p><b><u>Week 1: January 11</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the course</li> <li>• What are environmental education and interpretation?</li> <li>• The history and philosophy of environmental education and interpretation</li> <li>• The roles and functions of environmental education and interpretation</li> <li>• North Carolina Environmental Education Certification</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward and Wilkinson, Ch. 1, 2</li> <li>• “<i>Educator preparation- six themes</i>”</li> <li>• “<i>Environmental education and environmental interpretation: The relationships</i>”</li> <li>• <i>Gaskill: Ch. 12</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Week 2: January 18</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theoretical foundations of environmental education and interpretation</li> <li>• What makes a good environmental educator or interpreter?</li> <li>• Developing the skills for environmental education and interpretation programs</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward and Wilkinson, Ch. 3, 6, 7, 9</li> <li>• “<i>Changing learner behavior through environmental education</i>”</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Week 3: January 25</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating and implementing effective environmental education programs</li> <li>• Writing environmental education lesson plans</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward and Wilkinson, Ch. 4, pp. 179-183</li> <li>• “<i>Elements of effective environmental education programs</i>”</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Week 4: February 1</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing goals and objectives</li> <li>• Developing and implementing evaluation</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward and Wilkinson, Ch. 13</li> <li>• “<i>Designing evaluation for education projects</i>” (pp. 1-17), Appendix A, B</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Week 5: February 8</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental education in a formal educational context</li> <li>• The North Carolina Standard Course of Study</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i>, pp. ix-xix and browse “Science” section</li> <li>• “<i>Closing the achievement gap</i>”</li> <li>• “<i>North Carolina Environmental Literacy Plan (draft)</i>”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program analysis due</li> <li>• Guest: Dr. Dennis Kubasko</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Week 6: February 15</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental education and the interpretive planning process</li> <li>• Developing educational messages: a thematic approach</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ham: Ch. 2</i></li> <li>• Ward and Wilkinson, Ch. 5</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Week 7: February 22</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Learning Tree: Forests of the World mini-workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guest: Dr. Pat Curley</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Week 8: February 29</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning for education and interpretive projects</li> <li>• Site analysis for “interpretiveness”</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Veverka: Ch. 3</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exam 1</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Week 9: March 7</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of interpretive project</li> <li>• Accessibility in interpretive planning</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Veverka: Ch. 4</i></li> <li>• <i>“The widening circle”</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet at Smith Creek Park</li> </ul>
<p><i>March 10-18: No class, Spring Vacation</i></p>	
<p><b><u>Week 10: March 21</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing interpretive trails</li> <li>• Effective media, exhibit, and sign design</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Veverka: Ch. 5</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Week 11: March 28</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student activities</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Week 12: April 4</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental education teacher workshop</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Best practices in marine and coastal science education”</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet at the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher</li> <li>• Activity analysis due</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Week 13: April 11</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation and education within a nature center, museum, or historical setting</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Change and complexity in the 21st-century museum”</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet at Moore’s Creek Battlefield</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Week 14: April 18</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work day</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Week 15: April 25</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final exam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretive master plans and peer evaluations due in my office by 5:00 pm</li> </ul>
<p><b>Presentations: Wednesday, May 2, 11:30-2:30</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet at Smith Creek Park</li> </ul>