

# NRES 369/569 Interpretive Media

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Syllabus | Spring 2024 | Four (4) Credits

## Course Schedule

**Lecture:** Tuesday 1:00-1:50 p.m. – TNR 320

**Discussion:** Wednesday 3:00-3:50 p.m. – TNR 320

**Lab:** Thursday 3:00-4:50 p.m. – TNR 356

## Instructor

Chris McCart, Assistant Professor of Interpretation

**Office:** Trainer Natural Resource #182

**Email:** [cmccart@uwsp.edu](mailto:cmccart@uwsp.edu); Phone: 715-346-3307

**Email Policy:** Use your university email, identify which class you are in and what you have done prior to emailing to address your concern, such as checking the syllabus or assignment instructions in Canvas. You are welcome to send your email whenever it is convenient; I may take up to 24 hours to respond and typically do so during normal working hours to model professional work-life balance. Complex questions are best handled in person; feel free to visit with the instructor after class or to drop in during scheduled office hours.

**Office Hours:** Mondays from 1-2 @ Schmeeckle; Wednesdays from 9-10, Thursdays from 1-2, Fridays from 10-11 @ TNR 182.

## Course Overview

This course will provide students with a thorough understanding of the principles that guide the development of quality interpretive media such as signs, exhibits, publications, and digital media. Students will discover design theory, explore and evaluate media samples, develop interpretive writing skills, and create new interpretive media. Students will also use professional design software to produce interpretive media.

## Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Explain what interpretive media is and identify the design, writing, and accessibility factors that make interpretive media effective.
- Write interpretive messages that are creative, concise, and meaningful for a diversity of audiences.
- Use professional software and employ technical design skills to design a variety of interpretive media.
- Evaluate various types of interpretive media based on design principles and interpretive writing.
- Develop an interpretive media plan and media design for a client using the planning skills and knowledge gained in class.

## Required Textbooks

1. **Provided in class:** Gross, M., Buchholz, J., Zimmerman, R. (2006). *Signs, trails, and wayside exhibits: Connecting people and places* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). UW-SP Foundation Press.
2. **Provided in class:** Buchholz, J. (n.d.). *Interpretive Media Lab Manual*. UWSP Schmeeckle. You will receive a three-ring binder during the first lab session and a set of tutorial pages to add to the binder each lab session.
3. **Purchase** (available at UWSP Bookstore): Williams, R. (2015). *The non-designer's design book: Design and typographic principles for the visual novice*. Peachpit Press.

## Media Lab

The Interpretive Media Lab introduces you to professional software programs such as Adobe Photoshop and InDesign. You will design signs and publications, edit graphics, and develop digital media. The lab will develop practical skills that you can use to enhance interpretation at a natural or cultural history site. Tutorials will be handed out on paper each lab section with step-by-step instructions on how to use the software.

## Schmeeckle (S:) Share Drive

As part of this course, you will be using files on and saving files to a shared class folder called the **Schmeeckle (S:) drive**. This is loaded automatically in the Schmeeckle computer lab but must be “mapped” on other campus computers; instructions will be handed out during Lab 1. Files are stored in the “NR 369-Interpretive Media” course folder.

## Schmeeckle Interpretive Technology Lab

A private computer lab in the Schmeeckle Visitor Center is available for your use. Due to the amount of color printing required in this class, the Schmeeckle lab allows you to print color documents for free, without using up your annual printing allotment. The Schmeeckle Interpretive Technology Lab is located in the basement of the Schmeeckle Reserve Visitor Center as is available to use weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sundays from noon to 3 p.m. There are

nine computers, a flatbed scanner, a color laser printer, a large-format printer, and a paper cutter. A few guidelines will ensure that everyone has a positive experience at the Schmeeckle Interpretive Technology Lab:

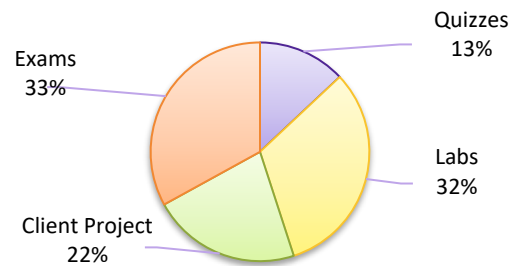
- The Schmeeckle lab was created specifically for students taking Environmental Education and Interpretation courses. You are welcome to use the lab at any time for other classes or projects. However, Interpretive Media and EE/I Practicum students have priority.
- **Only print documents required for this class at Schmeeckle.** Use another lab on campus for other classes or personal documents.
- **Food and drinks are not allowed in the lab** to protect the sensitive equipment. Water is allowed, but be extra careful not to spill it on the equipment.
- **Respect the technology equipment.** Schmeeckle purchases and maintains all equipment with outside funding.
- **Ask an instructor for help** if you have any issues using the equipment.

### Major Learning Activities

Project	Points
Canvas Quizzes	120
Labs & Projects	300
Client Media Plan + Design Project	200
Midterm Exam	150
Final Exam	150
Total:	<b>920</b>
Optional Extra Credit	20 points max

\* Graduate Students (500-level) complete a more robust project that is aligned with their interests and goals. Meet with the instructor prior to client visioning to discuss options.

### Grade Distribution



### Grading Procedure: Based on earned points.

A = 93-100%    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 = 60-66%    F = 59-0%

Borderline grades may be rounded up 0.5% for students with a record of on-time attendance and timely assignment completion.

### Attendance Policy

You have signed up for a face-to-face course, therefore in-person class attendance and active participation is expected so that you can develop effective communication and professional skills and do your part to support our learning community. We strive to establish a supportive environment in which we feel comfortable challenging ourselves, knowing that we will receive respectful, honest, and thoughtful input from classmates and instructors. To facilitate this learning, contribute to discussions, provide feedback, complete assignments on time, and participate in activities. You can be counted as absent for excessive personal technology use during class time. Zoom is not an option offered in this class. It is not feasible to provide individualized lessons or exam makeup for each absent student. Therefore, if you are absent, you will need to access materials from Canvas (or have a classmate pick handouts up for you) and get notes from a classmate; it is not feasible for the instructor to re-teach missed material. Absent students are still responsible for meeting assignment deadlines unless prior arrangements have made prior in writing (see late assignment policy). Research has shown that having an attendance policy with consequences for absences supports student learning and success. There are no consequences for the first three unexcused absences, and you are not required to email the instructor or provide documentation for these absences. After three absences, you are required to meet with the instructor in person within one week and provide documentation for any additional absences. Your overall grade may be reduced by 5% for *each* undocumented absence after three and you may be dropped from the course for excessive unexcused absences. You are responsible for dropping any of your enrolled classes. Any exceptions to the attendance policy require documentation or official accommodations and should be arranged in a timely manner and confirmed in writing.

### Late Assignment Policy

Assignments submitted late will be deducted 1% per hour and therefore earn a score of zero after four days. The score on the comprehensive final exam replaces a missed midterm. A missed final must be made up by May 22; there are no early finals. The three lowest scoring quizzes and one lowest scoring lab will be dropped. Files must be in specified file formats, accessible, and submitted per instructions. If the instructor cannot open your file, it will earn a zero; you can resubmit but late penalties will apply. Students are responsible for checking that their assignments are fully uploaded and accessible. Technical issues (except for widespread outages) are not acceptable excuses for late work. Plan for technical issues by finishing assignments at least a day before the due date and identifying on-campus resources if you have personal computer technical difficulties. Exceptions, although rare, are possible for serious extenuating circumstances with timely notification and written confirmation.

### Extra Credit Policy

Occasional extra credit assignments will be posted on Canvas. There is no individualized extra credit.

## Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is an expectation of each UW-Stevens Point student. Campus community members are responsible for fostering and upholding an environment in which student learning is fair, just, and honest. Through your studies as a student, it is essential to exhibit the highest level of personal honesty and respect for the intellectual property of others. Academic misconduct is unacceptable. It compromises and disrespects the integrity of our university and those who study here. To maintain academic integrity, a student must only claim work which is the authentic work solely of their own, providing correct citations and credit to others as needed. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and/or helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. Failure to understand what constitutes academic misconduct does not exempt responsibility from engaging in it.

*UWSP 14.03 Academic misconduct subject to disciplinary action:*

- (1) Academic misconduct is an act in which a student:
  - (a) Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
  - (b) Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
  - (c) Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
  - (d) Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
  - (e) Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or
  - (f) Assists other students in any of these acts.
- (2) Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:
  - Cheating on an examination
  - Submitting a paper or assignment as one's own work when a part or all is the work of another or artificial intelligence
  - Submitting a paper or assignment that contains ideas or research of others without appropriately identifying the sources of those ideas
    - If you use sources word-for-word, you must put those words in quotation marks and directly cite the source of those words, often including the page number.
    - If you paraphrase ideas, you still must give credit to the author of those ideas.
  - Stealing examinations or course materials, including “resources” provided without instructor permission on sites such as Course Hero, Chegg, or others
  - Submitting work previously presented in another course (a.k.a. “self-plagiarism”)
  - Knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above, including assistance in an arrangement whereby any work, classroom performance, examination or other activity is submitted or performed by a person other than the student under whose name the work is submitted or performed.

**Use of Artificial Intelligence:** Since developing good interpretive writing skills is a key outcome in this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

**Students suspected of academic misconduct will be asked to meet with the instructor.** If academic misconduct is evident, procedures and disciplinary sanctions will be followed as outlined in the [University System Administrative Code, Ch. 14](#).

## Professionalism and Student Conduct

Students in the College of Natural Resources are pursuing courses of study that prepare them for careers as natural resources professionals. Thus, CNR students and faculty/staff are expected to exhibit conduct and attitudes appropriate to professionals. The UWSP Student Affairs office provides guidelines for proper student conduct. See the following link for more information: <https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Student-Conduct.aspx>

## Recreational Technology Use in Class

Research shows having visual access to smartphones and other media diminishes your ability to participate and learn and impacts other learners in the class. Excessively checking smartphones during class or listening to media is unprofessional and disrespectful to our class community. Therefore, please avoid recreational and personal technology while in class.

## Equal Access for Students with Disabilities

**For accommodations,** complete the [application process](#) with the [Disability Resource Center](#). For assistance, contact them at 715-346-3365 or [datctr@uwsp.edu](mailto:datctr@uwsp.edu).

## Technology Support

For computer and software issues, please work with the [UWSP Information Technology Service Desk](#), located at 601 Division Street Room 101 (near Dunkin Donuts), at 715-346-4357 or [itsvdesk@uwsp.edu](mailto:itsvdesk@uwsp.edu).

## Student Support Services

Students at UWSP can access a wide variety of resources to support their academic and personal needs. This includes Academic and Career Advising, Campus Activities and Student Engagement, Diversity and College Access, Dean of Students, Information Technology Support, Libraries, Housing and Residence Life, Student Health Service, Tutoring-Learning Center, and Mental Health/Counseling Center. More information can be found at [www.uwsp.edu/student-resources](http://www.uwsp.edu/student-resources).

## Tentative Schedule for NRES 369/569: Interpretive Media

Last update 07Feb2024. Schedule subject to change; check Canvas for most current schedule.

Week	Dates	Lecture: <i>Tues. 1-1:50 p.m., TNR 320</i>	Discussion: <i>Weds. 3-3:50 p.m., TNR 320</i>	Lab: <i>Thurs. 3-4:50 p.m., TNR 356</i>	Assigned Readings/Assignments <i>See Canvas for due dates &amp; times</i>
1	Jan. 23-25	Intro to Interpretive Media	Digital Image Fundamentals	Working with Digital Images: Photoshop	<input type="checkbox"/> Syllabus <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Signs</i> Ch. 1 & 2 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Guidebook</i> Ch. 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz
2	Jan. 30- Feb. 1	Design Fundamentals	Design Elements: Typography & Color	Designing Posters: InDesign	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Design</i> pp. 11-13, 32, 54, 68, 84 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Signs</i> Ch. 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Week 1 Lab due
3	Feb. 6-8	The Message	Interpretive Writing	<b>Field Trip: Food + Farm Exploration Center:</b> Evaluating Media & Creating a Poster	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Design</i> Ch. 6, 7 & 9 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Signs</i> Ch. 4 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Interp Writing</i> , pp. 25-29 (Canvas) <input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Week 2 Lab due
4	Feb. 13-15	Interpretive Publications Graphic Design Standards & Branding	Exploring Effective Publications	Creating Layered Scenes: Photoshop	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Design</i> pp. 114-116 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Signs</i> pp. 99 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Env. Pubs.</i> Ch. 2, 4, 6 (Canvas) <input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Week 3 Lab due
5	Feb. 20-22	Interpretive Planning	Client Project Visioning Group Assignments	<b>Field Trips:</b> Amherst (Village Hall, 160 Mill St.) & Upper Whiting Park (2598 Currier St.) or Whiting Village Offices (3600 Water St.)	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Signs</i> Ch. 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Week 4 Lab due
6	Feb. 27-29	Sign Basics	Sign Materials	Designing Interpretive Signs: InDesign	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Signs</i> Ch. 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Week 5 Lab due
7	Mar. 5-7	Copyright & Legal Media	Midterm Review	Designing Newsletters & Booklets: InDesign	<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Copyright with Cyberbee</a> <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Media & Proper Citing (Canvas) <input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Week 6 Lab due <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Client Project: Visioning</b> (Wed)
8	Mar. 12-14	Universal Design & Accessibility	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	Preparing for Printing & Fabrication	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Interpretive Centers</i> , pp. 97-100 (Canvas) <input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Week 7 Lab due
-	Mar. 18-23	<b>Spring Break:</b> No Class			

Times

Week	Dates	Lecture: <i>Tues. 1-1:50 p.m. TNR 320</i>	Discussion: <i>Weds. 3-3:50 p.m. TNR 320</i>	Lab: <i>Thurs. 3-4:50 p.m. TNR 356</i>	Assignments <i>See Canvas for due dates &amp; times</i>
9	Mar. 26-28	Exploring Interpretive Social Media	Client Project: Assign Conceptual Media Project	Designing & Redesigning Brochures: InDesign	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Design</i> pp. 133-136 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Interpretive Social Media</i> (Canvas) <input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Week 8 Lab due
10	Apr. 2-4	Exploring Interpretive Exhibits Assign Sign Redesign Project	<i>NAI Heartland Region Workshop: Council Bluffs, IA</i>	Sign Redesign Project <i>NAI Heartland Region Workshop: Council Bluffs, IA</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Centers</i> pp. 160-184 (Canvas) <input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Week 9 Lab due
11	Apr. 9-11	Exploring Interpretive Audio	Client Project: Evaluate Conceptual Media Project; Assign Draft Plan/Media Project	Audio Interpretation and QR Codes	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Signs</i> , pp. 150-151 <input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Week 10 Lab <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Client Project: Conceptual Media</b> (Wed)
12	Apr. 16-18	Exploring Interpretive Video	Evaluate Sign Redesign Project	Developing Video Interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Legacy</i> article (Canvas) <input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Week 11 Lab due
13	Apr. 23-25	Exploring Interpretive Websites & Trails	Client Project: Assign Final Plan & Design; Evaluate Draft Plan/Media	Developing Interpretive Websites	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Signs</i> , pp. 109-119 & 139-149 <input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Week 12 Lab due <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Client Project: Draft Plan/Media</b> (Wed)
14	Apr. 30-May 2	Instructor meets w/ Client Teams; Prepare for Presentations	Instructor meets w/ Client Teams Prepare for Presentations	<b>Printing Media Plan &amp; Media</b> <b>Meet @ Schmeckle VC</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz (Review for Final) <input type="checkbox"/> Week 13 Lab <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Client Project: Final Media Plan</b> (Wed)
15	May 7-9	<b>Client Project: Presentations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amherst Project: in class</li> <li>• Whiting Project: 6:00-6:30 @ Whiting Town Hall</li> </ul>	Review for Comprehensive Final Exam	<b>Project Wrap Up</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Canvas Quiz <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Client Project: Presentations</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Client Project: Individual Media</b>
16	Finals Week	<b>Final Exam: Wednesday, May 15, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m., TNR 320</b>			