INFORMAL EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION (MA)

New Program Beginning Summer 2023

Program Director:

Degree: Master of Arts

INTRODUCTION

Not all education takes place in a formal classroom setting. Museums, zoos, aquariums, nature centers, and historic sites all aim to educate visitors. This unique masters program is geared towards those interested in education outside of the classroom. As a primarily online program, it is ideally suited to individuals working in the field who aim to enhance their qualifications and gain additional expertise. A week-long, on-campus intensive experience is required during the first summer of the program. All other coursework is online.

ADMISSION

Information about the admissions process will be forthcoming as this new program is launched. If you have questions at this point, please contact GradAdm@canisius.edu.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Informal Education & Interpretation graduate program focuses on the many locations where learning happens outside of classrooms and institutions of higher education. This interdisciplinary program provides a broad introduction to teaching and learning about topics of cultural, historical, and environmental importance in museums, galleries, zoos/aquaria, nature centers, visitor centers, parks, historical sites, tourist locations, and even through various forms of media and web content. The IEI program is particularly concerned with discourse and action around social and environmental justice, encouraging students to examine the interconnections of local and global movements. The IEI program is also highly adaptable. Students can tailor their coursework, internships, and research projects so that their own topics of interest can be explored in depth.

Curriculum

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IEI 500</td>
<td>Introduction to Informal Education and Interpretation</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEI 501</td>
<td>Foundations of Informal and Non-Formal Education</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEI 502</td>
<td>Natural, Cultural, and Historical Interpretation</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDT 506</td>
<td>Research Methods: New Literacies and Evidence-Based Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEI 699</td>
<td>IEI Capstone Experience</td>
<td>3-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEI 503</td>
<td>Non-Profit Leadership</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEI 504</td>
<td>Program Development &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEI 505</td>
<td>Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDT 503</td>
<td>Instructional Design and Emerging Technology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One specialization course based on interest:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ANZ 510</td>
<td>Animals in Humane Education</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IEI 520</td>
<td>Education in Museums and Galleries</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEI 525</td>
<td>Environmental Education &amp; Nature Interpretation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEI 530</td>
<td>Interpretation and Tourism</td>
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Electives

The remaining 3-6 credits (depending on capstone) would be chosen from amongst the following electives:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IEI 510</td>
<td>Grant-Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEI 515</td>
<td>Exhibit Design and Development</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>EDT 501</td>
<td>Learning with Technology</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>EDT 502</td>
<td>Instructional Design Theories and Models</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDT 508</td>
<td>Technology for Social Change</td>
<td>3</td>
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Total Credits: 31-37

Learning Goals & Objectives

Learning Goal 1

Students will demonstrate critical, interdisciplinary thinking in their understanding of the role of informal education and interpretation in society.

Students will:

- **Objective A:** Synthesize interdisciplinary research as it relates informal education and interpretation.
- **Objective B:** Articulate the role of informal education and interpretation in the promotion of social and/or ecological justice through written work.

Learning Goal 2

Students demonstrate proficiency in skills that are key to the successful integration of informal education and interpretation in diverse settings.

Students will:

- **Objective A:** Deliver an oral presentation on a topic related to their specific content area in informal education and interpretation.
- **Objective B:** Compose a research outline, grant proposal, exhibit (virtual or physical), or program plan that would serve the mission of a relevant organization through the use of informal education and/or interpretation.
Courses

IEI 500 Introduction to Informal Education and Interpretation  
This introductory, one-credit, on-campus course runs in the first summer of a student's program experience. Over this week, students will travel to Canisius where they will attend classes and workshops, hear from guest speakers, and take field trips to various museums, zoos, and historical sites. This introductory course helps students build community and familiarizes them with practical experiences and lessons on informal education and interpretation.  
Offered: every summer.

IEI 501 Foundations of Informal and Non-Formal Education  
This foundational course is taken in the first Fall semester in the program. Students will be introduced to history, theory, and contemporary research involving education in informal and non-formal settings. A variety of ways of thinking about the role of education in cultural, historical, and scientific institutions will be explored, including discussions and critical reflections on the role of education in addressing social, cultural, and ecological issues.  
Prerequisite: IEI 500.  
Offered: every fall.

IEI 502 Natural, Cultural, and Historical Interpretation  
This course will cover the role of interpreters and educators in narrating and describing natural history, cultural movements, and historical events in a range of contexts including museums, parks, zoos/aquariums, tourist attractions, nature-based settings, and beyond. Students will critically explore the role of oral traditions, narrative theories, messaging, interactive displays, and exhibit design as interpretive methods for diverse audiences.  
Prerequisite: IEI 500.  
Offered: every spring.

IEI 503 Non-Profit Leadership  
This course provides an overview and fundamentals of managing non-profit organizations. Topics will include organizational management, fundraising, program development and publicity, and membership recruitment. Students will connect these concepts to educational outreach and program development.  
Prerequisite: IEI 500.  
Offered: every summer.

IEI 504 Program Development & Evaluation  
Highlighting the importance of assessment strategies for cultural and environmental organizations, this course covers foundational theories and practices related to program design, implementation, and evaluation. A variety of evaluation strategies will be covered and their suitability for assessing learning outcomes, achieving organizational objectives, and securing funding opportunities will be explored.  
Prerequisite: IEI 500.  
Offered: every spring.

IEI 505 Lifelong Learning  
This course covers theories and research highlighting learning as a lifelong endeavor from birth through old age. With an emphasis on various cognitive, behavioral, affective, constructivist, and transformative learning theories, students will critically examine best practices in informal education and interpretation.  
Prerequisite: IEI 500.  
Offered: every summer.

IEI 510 Grant-Writing  
Students are introduced to the fundamental principles and strategies in researching, proposing, and securing small and large grants for education, research, and/or institutional support. Various types of grants will be covered and students will create a grant proposal as their culminating project.  
Prerequisite: IEI 500.  
Offered: every other year.

IEI 515 Exhibit Design and Development  
How does the space itself shape teaching and learning and what kinds of messages are conveyed in immersive experiences? With a focus on galleries, exhibits, and even digital learning spaces, this course highlights the ways storytelling and design can work together to achieve educational goals.  
Prerequisite: IEI 500.  
Offered: every other year.

IEI 520 Education in Museums and Galleries  
This course will introduce students to the many ways in which museums and galleries utilize education to shape visitor experiences. Students will learn about the evolving role of education in museum collections, exhibit and gallery design, presentations, guided tours, digital learning, and more.  
Prerequisite: IEI 500.  
Offered: every other year.

IEI 525 Environmental Education & Nature Interpretation  
This course provides an introduction to environmental education and interpretation of natural history, focusing on theoretical and practical applications. Students will examine models of environmental literacy at various scales and in diverse geographic settings. Environmental education programming in formal, non-formal, and informal contexts will be highlighted.  
Prerequisite: IEI 500.  
Offered: every other year.

IEI 530 Interpretation and Tourism  
This course focuses on both ecotourism and the growing field of heritage tourism. Students will learn about strategies for engaging diverse groups spanning a range of ages in experiential learning environments of natural, historic, and cultural significance.  
Prerequisite: IEI 500.  
Offered: every other year.

IEI 599 IEI Capstone Experience  
A 3-credit or 6-credit capstone experience will be required of students for the completion of their degree in Informal Education and Interpretation. The capstone can be conducted as an internship or research or service project under the supervision of program faculty.  
Prerequisite: IEI 500.  
Offered: every spring.