

INFORMAL EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION - IEI

IEI 500 Introduction to Informal Education and Interpretation 1 Credit

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 3 Credits

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 3 Credits

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 other year.

IEI 503 Non-Profit Leadership 3 Credits

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 other year.

IEI 504 Program Development & Evaluation 3 Credits

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 other year.

IEI 505 Lifelong Learning 3 Credits

This course covers theories and research highlighting learning as a lifelong endeavour 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 other year.

IEI 510 Grant Writing 3 Credits

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 3 Credits

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 3 Credits

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 3 Credits

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: IEI500.

Offered: Every other year.

IEI 530 Interpretation and Tourism 3 Credits

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 699 IEI Capstone Experience 3-6 Credits

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.