

SECTION 6: MASTER OF ARTS IN HERITAGE TOURISM & CONSERVATION

In August 2020, NWOSU began offering a Master of Arts degree in Heritage Tourism and Conservation. This 32-hour program is designed to increase the knowledge base for students who are already employed in a conservation/tourism-based position and for students who want to work or establish a business within the conservation/tourism industry. The curriculum includes multidisciplinary coursework in the areas of history, sociology, communication, and conservation that culminates in an individualized project in an area of interest to each student. The aim is to prepare students to serve as leaders in existing and emerging areas of conservation/tourism and to make them more valuable and marketable to current and potential employers.

According to the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation, tourism is the third-largest industry in the state, and tax collections have increased by over 20% since 2010. Spending on tourism has grown by 28% during that same time period. According to a recent article in the Tulsa World, the Oklahoma Department of Tourism reports that the tourism industry added almost nine billion dollars to the state's economy over the past calendar year alone. In Northwest Oklahoma alone, there are four (4) state parks: Little Sahara, Alabaster Caverns, Great Salt Plains, and Boiling Springs. There is also one National Wildlife Refuge at Great Salt Plains, and there are many conservation areas in Woods, Harper, Dewey, Ellis, and Woodward Counties. Agri-Tourism is a subset of a larger industry called rural tourism that includes resorts, off-site farmers' markets, non-profit agricultural tours, and other leisure and hospitality businesses that attract visitors to the countryside. Heritage Tourism is also a subset of the larger tourism industry. Heritage Tourism focuses on the history and culture of a given region and can include genealogy, traditional arts, story-telling, music, dance, customs, food, activities of daily life, and can incorporate museums (historical, archaeological, natural history, geologic) as part of the attraction (Travel Industry Association, 2003).

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Evaluate the environmental history of Oklahoma and the sustainable practices that the state currently employ (addressed in AMST 5163/Environmental History and Sustainable Practices for Oklahoma).

Objective 2: Apply principles of interdisciplinary research to create an individual, specialized project in heritage tourism and conservation (addressed in AMST 5113/Interdisciplinary Research in American Studies).

Objective 3: Employ various media of advertising and other business communication principles to a proposed business model in heritage tourism or conservation (addressed in MCOM 5033/Principles of Advertising and MCOM 5213/Business and Professional Communication).

Objective 4: Engage community members outside of academia by applying the historical concepts of historic preservation, museum studies, and public history to heritage tourism and conservation (addressed in HIST 5402/Historic Preservation, HIST 5412/Museum Studies, and HIST 5422/Public History).

Objective 5: Understand and confront the special problems facing rural communities and populations in northwest Oklahoma and the United States by exploring the global concept of culture (addressed in SOC 5113/Cultural Anthropology and

SOC 5133/Rural Sociology).

Objective 6: Apply skills and knowledge within a community-based, commercial, or governmental organization in order to understand the various ways in which heritage tourism and conservation can energize a region culturally and economically (addressed in SOC 5263/Public Service Leadership, UNIV 5190/Readings, and UNIV 5500/Practicum).

Notes:

MASTER OF ARTS IN HERITAGE TOURISM & CONSERVATION ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

(32-Hour Program)

REQUIRED COURSES*

EDUC 5010 Graduate Study Seminar (should be taken during the first semester of graduate study)

AMST 5163 Environmental History and Sustainable Practices for Oklahoma

AMST 5113 Interdisciplinary Research in American Studies

HIST 5402 Historic Preservation

HIST 5412 Museum Studies

HIST 5422 Public History

MCOM 5033 Principles of Advertising & Marketing

MCOM 5213 Business & Professional Communication

SOC 5113 Cultural Anthropology

SOC 5133 Rural Sociology

SOC 5263 Public Service Leadership

UNIV 5190 Readings I (one hour--topic: Cultural Heritage Tourism)

UNIV 5190 Readings II (one hour--topic of interest to student's career path)

UNIV 5500 Practicum (three hours)

*See the Graduate Studies website (nwsu.edu/graduate-studies/heritage-tourism-conservation) for the current course rotation for this program.

Notes: