Theme Park & Attraction Management

HFT 4755| Class #26739 | 3 Credits | Spring 2025

Course Info

INSTRUCTOR	**Brian D. Avery** Office: Florida Gym 302 Office Phone: (352) 294-6922 Email: brianavery@ufl.edu Preferred Method of Contact: **email (please include: Name, course, you have read the syllabus and referred to Canvas, and provide question), remind app (Text 81010 @brianavery)**
OFFICE HOURS	M/W 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM or by appointment (F2F or scheduled Zoom)
MEETING TIME/LOCATION	**Online:** asynchronous through Canvas on UF e-Learning (https://elearning.ufl.edu/) & the Canvas mobile app by Instructure

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An in-depth study of the theme park and attraction industry focused on historical considerations, industry resources, and organizational and management functions related to the operation of both employee and patron-based core functions.

1. Familiarization with the global theme park and attraction industry, including its characteristics, economic impact, volume, industry structure, and historical considerations;
2. Evaluation of the concept of theming and its role in tourism and hospitality operations;
3. Evaluation of the role authentic/inauthentic environments play in themed settings;
4. Evaluation of the planning phases in the development and design processes of theme parks and attractions;
5. Analysis of the managerial aspects of theme park and attractions; and,
6. Familiarization with the selection/sourcing process of the theme park product offerings.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

None

MINIMUM TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

The University of Florida expects students entering an online program or program with online components to acquire computer hardware and software appropriate to their degree program. A student's computer configuration should include webcam, microphone, broadband access, and Microsoft Office suite.

MINIMUM TECHNICAL SKILLS

To complete your tasks for this course, you will need a basic understanding of operating a computer and using word processing software. You will also be training an AI bot this term, which will require the ability to read and follow basic technical directions.

COURSE TECHNOLOGY

For technical assistance with the course, please contact the UF Help Desk or call (352) 392-HELP - select option 2.

MATERIALS/SUPPLY FEES

Please consult the course schedule at ONE.UF for more information on specific supplies and fees for the course.

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED MATERIALS:

All necessary materials for this course will be provided to you. This includes required readings, case studies, multimedia resources, and access to specialized software where applicable. You are encouraged to utilize these resources extensively to enhance your learning experience. Additional recommended materials, which may offer further insights into the course topics, will be made available throughout the semester. Stay tuned for periodic updates on supplementary resources that could be beneficial for your studies.

COURSE FORMAT

- **Lectures:** Traditional lectures will provide foundational knowledge and theoretical frameworks necessary for understanding crisis management within the hospitality and tourism industries.
- **Discussions:** Class discussions will encourage critical thinking and allow students to explore different perspectives on crisis management issues.
- **Guest Speakers:** Industry professionals will be invited to share real-world experiences and insights, bridging the gap between theory and practice.
- **Case Studies:** Students will analyze real-life crisis management scenarios, identifying effective strategies and lessons learned.
- **Simulated Exercises:** Interactive simulations will be used to replicate crisis situations, giving students the opportunity to apply their knowledge in a controlled, risk-free environment.
- **Group Work:** Collaborative projects will foster teamwork and allow students to tackle complex crisis management challenges together.
- **Additional Methods:** Other instructional techniques, such as multimedia presentations, role-playing, and problem-solving exercises, may also be utilized to enrich the learning experience.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- **Understand the Global Theme Park Industry**: Analyze the characteristics, economic impact, volume, structure, and historical development of the global theme park and attraction industry.

- **Examine Theming in Tourism and Hospitality**: Evaluate the concept of theming and its influence on operations within tourism and hospitality settings.
- **Critique Authentic and Inauthentic Environments**: Assess the role of authentic versus inauthentic environments in the creation of themed attractions.
- **Understand Theme Park Development Processes**: Evaluate the planning phases involved in the development and design of theme parks and attractions.
- **Apply Managerial Concepts**: Analyze key managerial functions and organizational strategies critical to theme park and attraction operations.
- **Assess Product Selection Processes**: Understand and evaluate the selection and sourcing processes for theme park product offerings to meet organizational and patron needs.

INSTRUCTOR TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND ROLE

Teaching Philosophy

My learning philosophy is that integrating interactive, real-world applications with collaborative exploration transforms theory into practice, fostering lifelong growth and professional excellence. In line with those ideas, my teaching philosophy has four key tenets:

Student-Centered Learning: This approach is essential in fostering an interactive and engaging classroom environment. It's not just about delivering content; it's about encouraging students to actively participate and share their ideas. Recognizing each student's unique strengths and needs is vital. By providing multiple methods of learning, I want to ensure that every student can succeed.

Practical Application: Integrating real-world examples into the curriculum is one way to bring theory to life. Drawing from my extensive industry experience, I want to show students how concepts apply in real-life situations. Emphasizing hands-on learning allows students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings. This experiential LEARNING is invaluable in preparing students like you for future career challenges.

Critical Thinking & Problem Solving: Encouraging the development of critical thinking and analytical skills is crucial. I achieve this through engaging case studies and best practices that challenge students to think deeply and critically about real-world scenarios. Promoting problem-solving abilities is another key focus. I do this by assigning projects and assignments that address complex industry issues, enabling students to apply their knowledge and develop practical solutions.

Collaborative Learning: Teamwork is a fundamental aspect of this approach. I promote collaboration through group projects and discussions, allowing students to learn from one another and develop essential teamwork skills. Valuing and incorporating diverse perspectives are also critical. I foster an inclusive environment where every student's viewpoint is respected and considered, enriching the learning experience for all.

My Role

As your instructor, I'm here to guide you through the complexities of crisis management in the hospitality and tourism industry, with a focus on practical application and theoretical knowledge. Expect to engage with a curriculum that blends lectures, hands-on projects, and insights from informative videos. This course is crafted to not only educate but also inspire you to think creatively and critically about challenges and opportunities in hospitality/tourism management.

What I Will Do

Be available: I am committed to supporting you throughout this course. I am available during office hours for questions and discussions. Don't hesitate to reach out if you need assistance.

Provide clear structure: I will start lectures with the most difficult concepts and work backward, using examples to illustrate key points. This structured approach will help you grasp complex topics more effectively.

Encourage interaction: Active participation and preparedness are expected in all classes. It's crucial to let me know if you don't understand something. Your engagement and feedback are essential to your learning and help create a dynamic and interactive classroom environment.

What I Will Not Do

Repeat information: Please understand that I will not respond to emails or texts asking questions that have already been answered in the syllabus or in Canvas. It's crucial to review these resources thoroughly before reaching out with questions.

Tolerate dishonesty: I will not entertain dishonesty or unethical behavior. Honesty is fundamental to our academic integrity and goes a long way with me. Let's commit to maintaining a high standard of honesty and ethics throughout the course.

Adjust grades unfairly: I will not change grades or accept late work based on last-minute requests or personal appeals. It's essential to manage your time effectively and adhere to deadlines. Fairness in grading ensures that everyone is evaluated on an equal footing.

Course & University Policies

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Active participation is key to success in this course, and attendance is assessed through engagement in assignments, projects, presentations, and exams. You are expected to complete all coursework during the period in which it is assigned or administered. Failure to do so, whether due to absence, tardiness, or early departure, will result in a zero for that work without exception. It is your responsibility to obtain any missed information from classmates. Please note that our class attendance practices align with the University's policies, which can be found here.

PERSONAL CONDUCT POLICY

Students are expected to exhibit behaviors that reflect highly upon themselves and our University. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obliged to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult the instructor. *Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action.*

MAKE-UP POLICY

A student experiencing an illness should visit the UF Student Health Care Center or their preferred healthcare provider to seek medical advice and obtain documentation. If you have an illness, family emergency or death,

please contact the Dean of Students Office (www.dso.ufl.edu) and follow the DSO Care Team procedures for documentation and submission of a request for make-up assignment (https://care.dso.ufl.edu/instructor-notifications/). The DSO will contact the instructor. Do not provide any documentation to the instructor regarding illness or family emergency. This is your personal and protected information. The DSO is qualified to receive and verify the documents you provide. The instructor will follow the recommendations from the DSO. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog.

ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting their Get Started page. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via the Gator Evals home page. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students.

Getting Help

HEALTH & WELLNESS
- U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575
- Counseling and Wellness Center: https://counseling.ufl.edu/, 352-392-1575
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS) - Student Health Care Center, 392-1161
- University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies) http://www.police.ufl.edu/

ACADEMIC RESOURCES
- E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu. https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml
- Career Connections Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. https://career.ufl.edu/
- Library Support, http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/
- Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/
- Student Complaints On-Campus: https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/ On-Line Students Complaints: http://distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process/

Grading

Student performance is the bedrock of the grading system in this course. Assessment includes, but is not limited to, examinations, assignments, discussions/in-class activities, presentations, class participation, and projects. Your final grade will reflect the sum of points collected over the semester, translated into a letter grade

according to the fixed grading scale provided in the syllabus. Please note that the grading scale is applied rigorously and will not be modified. Requests for grade alterations based solely on dissatisfaction with overall academic performance will not be entertained. For transparency and tracking, grades will be regularly updated and can be accessed through the CANVAS platform.

Assessments (1000 points total)	Points	Grade %
Assignments (6)	110	21%
Discussion (8)	90	17%
Yellowdig	120	22%
Midterm	50	9.5%
Project & Presentation	115	21%
Final	50	9.5%

Assessments

Throughout the semester, your understanding and application of course materials will be evaluated through a variety of assessments:

INTRODUCTORY

This category comprises the opening assignments for the course.

ASSIGNMENTS

Five (5) assignments will be given during the semester based on the course content. Assignment details are posted in Canvas.

Assignments	Points
Syllabus Contract	5
Six Flags Case Study	25
Status Report 1	20
Status Report 1	20
Status Report 1	20
Status Report 1	20

DISCUSSION

One (1) discussion will be given during the semester based on the course content. Discussion details are posted in Canvas.

Discussion	Points
Module 0	5

Introductions	5
Module 1	10
Module 2	15
Module 4	15
Module 5	15
Module 6	10
Module 9	15

YELLOWDIG

Yellowdig is a social learning platform to encourage engagement and assist with casual conversations, exchange of ideas, or occasional debates. For each module, I will post a continuation of a lecture or pick up on a topic that requires additional discussion. Students are also encouraged to create their own discussion based on the topics being covered in class or share related news, etc., relevant to the class on the platform. Additional details regarding the use of the platform can be found on Canvas.

PROJECT & PRESENTATION

Theme park and attraction design/development project and presentation (students will design and develop a theme park with a signature attraction and provide a management plan accompanying that attraction): Students are responsible for designing and developing a theme park/attraction for the purpose of a new theme park. Students will present/pitch their design to an industry executive. Upon completion, each theme park/attraction will be merged into a collective document for students to reference.

MIDTERM

The mid-term exam will be administered during the semester and will assess your understanding of the material covered in lectures, discussions, guest speaker presentations, case studies, simulated exercises, group work, and supplemental readings. This cumulative exam will include multiple-choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer questions designed to evaluate your grasp of the concepts discussed up to this point.

FINAL

The final exam will be a comprehensive, applied assessment centered around a detailed case study. Students will analyze the case by responding to a combination of short-answer and essay-style questions. This exam will require students to integrate and apply the concepts, theories, and practices discussed throughout the semester, culminating in well-supported conclusions and recommendations tailored to the specific case.

For more detailed information on assignments, grading, and additional course components, please check the relevant sections on Canvas.

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
100-94	93-90	89-87	86-83	82-80	79-75	74-70	69-67	66-63	63-60	59-55	54-0

Outstanding - 4.0-3.67 GP	Good - 3.33-2.67 GP	Average - 2.33-1.67 GP	Below Average - 1.33-.67 GP	Fail - 0 GP
The assignment is well above the minimum requirements, well organized, analytical rather than descriptive, and includes excellent grammar and spelling.	The assignment is somewhat above minimum requirements, organized, more descriptive than analytical, and contains minimal grammar and spelling issues.	The assignment meets most of the criteria with average organization, is descriptive rather than analytical, and includes poor grammar and spelling.	The assignment does not meet the minimum criteria.	The assignment does not meet the criteria.

GRADING SCALE

In our course, grading is conducted with careful attention to detail and fairness. You can expect a grading turnaround time of approximately **7 business days** for all assignments, during which either I or a graduate assistant will review your submissions. Once completed, your grades will be posted on Canvas. If you believe there's an error in your graded work, don't hesitate to reach out to either of us for a review. It's important to note that we adhere to a strict no-rounding policy for grades; the marks you receive are final as per the assessment criteria.

For a comprehensive understanding of the grading system, including how numerical scores translate to letter grades, please refer to the University of Florida Grading Policies and the scale above. These resources will offer you detailed information on the university's grading standards and procedures. More detailed information regarding current UF grading policies can be found here.

Any requests for additional extra credit or special exceptions to these grading policies will be interpreted as an honor code violation (i.e., asking for preferential treatment) and will be handled accordingly.

Weekly Course Schedule

Our course is structured into seven comprehensive modules that will be covered throughout the 8 week semester. Each module is designed to build upon the last, culminating in a paper and presentation. Detailed information about each module, along with related assignments and due dates, can be found on Canvas. This structure is intended to provide a progressive learning experience that will not only educate but also engage you in practical applications of the course material.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (see Canvas for due dates)

Modules	Topics
Module 1 (2-weeks)	Introduction and history of theme parks and attractions
Module 2	Typology of parks & attractions
Module 3	Industry stakeholders, organizational structures, management cultures
Module 4	Destination mgmt. considerations
Module 5	Industry regulations, standards, and practices
Module 6	Guest experiences & expectations / Theming and design characteristics
Module 7	Consumables, environmental impact
Module 8	Theme Park metrics / Associations / Marketing and sales

Module 9	Workforce (engineering, maintenance, ops., talent, govt., accounting, etc.)
Module 10	Crowd management & control / Security & loss prevention
Module 11	Emergency preparedness and response & Legal considerations & exposures
Module 12	Student led discussions /presentations
Module 13	Course review / Conclusions / Future of the industry

SUCCESS AND STUDY TIPS

Welcome to a journey of learning where enthusiasm meets dedication. As your guide, I am highly approachable and value honesty above all. My teaching style is animated and enthusiastic—and sometimes, I can be overwhelming and quick, but I firmly believe that by reviewing the lectures and actively participating, you will set yourself on a path to success.

Remember, there are no bad questions—only missed opportunities to understand better. If there's something you're unsure about, I encourage you to ask. Debate and challenge are not just welcomed but expected; they are the crucible in which we forge a deeper understanding.

We all have unique insights to offer, and I anticipate learning from you just as much as you do from me. Let's collaborate to make this learning experience one where the exchange of knowledge is mutual. My aspiration for you is high—I hope to see you surpass my achievements by using this course to advance beyond the learning curves I encountered in my career and educational journey.

Let's make the most of this academic term by engaging fully, staying informed, and embracing the collective wisdom of our class.

Course Flexibility: Please note that, when necessary, I reserve the right to make modifications to the syllabus, including changing examination and assignment dates, as well as updating the course content. Any changes will be clearly communicated in class and posted on the course website. You are responsible for staying informed about and adapting to these updates.

Copyright Acknowledgement: All materials provided for this course are protected by copyright. They are for educational purposes within this course and must not be shared or used beyond the scope of our classroom without permission.

Legal Disclaimer: It's important to understand that the information we discuss in class does not constitute legal advice. Should you require legal counsel, I encourage you to utilize the campus legal resources available to you or consult with a professional attorney.

Class Demeanor or Netiquette: All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in email messages, threaded discussions, and chats. UF has provided a netiquette guide.

Privacy: Our class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer back to and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who unmute during class and participate orally agree to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments

live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

For in-class recording, the following statement related to Florida's House Bill 233 is suggested but not mandatory:

> Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.
>
> A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.
>
> Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code & Student Conduct Code.

PRIVACY AND ACCESSIBILITY POLICIES FOR COURSE TOOLS

Adobe
- [Adobe Privacy Policy](#)
- [Adobe Accessibility](#)

CogU
- [CogU Privacy Policy](#)
- [CogU Accessibility](#) (contact with questions)

Feedback Fruits
- [Feedback Fruits Privacy Policy](#)
- [Feedback Fruits Accessibility](#)

Instructure (Canvas)
- [Instructure Privacy Policy](#)
- [Instructure Accessibility](#)

Microsoft
- [Microsoft Privacy Policy](#)
- [Microsoft Accessibility](#)

Sonic Foundry (Mediasite Streaming Video Player)

- Sonic Foundry Privacy Policy
- Sonic Foundry Accessibility (PDF)

YouTube (Google)

- YouTube (Google) Privacy Policy
- YouTube (Google) Accessibility