Title: The Power of Storytelling: Narrative Theory and Practice

Description: We begin understanding stories as early as we begin understanding language itself. Storytelling, or narration, is a distinctly human endeavor created to satisfy the need to remember and interpret past and present, and to prepare for a sustainable future. This course combines narrative theory and writing exercises to examine the art of storytelling in its many forms. Students explore the humanistic value of storytelling through the composition of personalized projects that are both critical and creative and through the analysis of narrative use across different genres and texts. (Offered as needed.) 3 credits. Prerequisite: acceptance to the University Honors Program, or consent of instructor and Honors Director.

Learning Objectives: By the end of the course students will:

• understand how storytelling is used to negotiate social, educational, and intellectual relationships in various contexts, to a range of audiences.
• engage in regular writing practice and complete a revised portfolio of work.
• develop an understanding of major narrative theories and apply them to various texts.
• develop an understanding of the principles of storytelling (plot, structure, setting, character, etc.).
• learn about different ways in which storytelling techniques manifest in different genres (fiction and non-fiction) and media.
• apply storytelling craft knowledge to their own writing with attention to the ways in which techniques channel and alter the significance of one’s narratives.

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Content:
• Rhetorical uses of narrative
• Core concepts in narrative theory
• Elements of storytelling (character, perspective, plot, setting, structure, stylistic modes)
• Forms of fictional and non-fictional storytelling (i.e. memoir, fable, graphic novel, film, etc.)
• Types of narratives (i.e. historical narratives, narratives of space and place, autoethnography, visual narratives, etc.)
• Media-based composing and delivery

Readings:


Excerpts from:
Roland Barthes, “Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives”
Booth, Wayne. The Rhetoric of Fiction
Hildick, E. W. *Thirteen Types of Narrative*
John Yorke. *Into the Woods: How Stories Work and Why We Tell Them*
Bettelheim, Bruno *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*

Sample texts such as:
*Thousand and One Nights*
Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*
Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*
Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*
Pico Iyer, *The Open Road*
Q.M. Zhang, *Accomplice to Memory*
Woolf, Virginia, “The Mark on the Wall” and “Street Haunting: A London Adventure”
Jean Dominique Bauby, *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*
Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, *Dear Ijeawele or a Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*
Carolyn Forché, “The Colonel”
Art Spiegelman, *Maus*
Orson Welles, *Citizen Kane*
Tim Burton, *Big Fish*

**Instructional Strategies**
- Interactive lectures
- Seminar-style discussions
- Student-facilitated discussions of selected texts
- Regular writing practice
- Media-based composition practice
- Peer review and writing workshops
- Faculty-student individual conferences
- Guest speakers

**Methods of Evaluation**
- Writing projects across different types of narratives
- Critical analysis of narrative texts
- Reading responses
- Individual and group presentations
- Class discussions

Prepared by Julie Jenner, Spring 2019