

SCHOOL FOR NEW LEARNING
COURSE SYLLABUS

STORYTELLING: AI 208 EXPLORING THE ORAL TRADITION IN OUR LIVES
SPRING 2009

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Location: Oak Forest Campus

Dates/Time: Saturdays
March 25-June 3
Class attendance is mandatory

Credit Hours: 4

Competencies offered:

A-1-X Can describe and analyze folk traditions through storytelling and can relate them to one's own experience.

A-2-X Can create and relate stories related to personal and/or historical issues and can describe the process of creation in artistic terms.

A-5 Can define and analyze a creative process.

H-3-E Can speak effectively in public settings.

Course Description

“What is storytelling? It can be said that it is the oldest form of observing, synthesizing and communicating feelings thoughts and information.”

-Temujin the Storyteller

Everyday we use stories to communicate. This course provides students with an overview of the art and practice of storytelling. Throughout the learning experience, students are encouraged to nurture their voices as writers and storytellers. Students will create and adapt tales focusing on both personal experience and traditional folklore. We will learn through participation and observation. The creative experiences in this course will enable students to further their skills in: oral presentation, story construction, performance, artistic critique and analysis. Students will develop and perform stories from at least three distinct areas of experience. This class will enhance the work of business

professionals, teachers, artists, and anyone who is interested in how stories help us to communicate.

Expected Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, learners will have:

- a general awareness of several forms of storytelling (personal, historical, folklore and interview/ethnographic)
- an ability to choose and develop stories for performance
- an awareness of how stories are translated from text to performance
- an ability to carefully observe and analyze artistic performance
- a greater understanding of how stories are connected to specific cultures
- an ability to successfully tell a story in a public setting

Learning Strategies:

Students will research, develop and perform stories.

- Students will examine their lives and identify significant memories. Students will create stories based on these memories.
- Students will survey a number of folktales. Students will adapt tales for performance.
- Students will research a historical period and develop stories that enliven the actual events.
- Students will create stories based on an interview process.

Students will move from reading texts to performing them. Students will generate skills in public speaking and presentation.

- Students will perform for the class. Course will conclude with a public performance.

Students will develop their skills in critique and analysis.

- Story performances will provide students with opportunities to develop their skills in observation and reflection.

- Students will participate in written critique of class performances.

Learning Tools:

Required text:

Birch, Carol L., and Melissa A. Heckler. *Who Says: Essays on Pivotal Issues in Contemporary Storytelling*. Little Rock, Arkansas.: August House Publishers, 1996.

In addition to this text, each student is required to create a bibliography of texts that they will use for the course. They will receive specific guidelines to facilitate this process (i.e. choose 3 collections of folktales, choose 2 books about a historical period that interests you, choose 2 works that include critical writing relevant to your interests.) This is the first assignment. It is critical for students to choose their texts because storytelling is specific to each individual. Students will use these texts as source material for storytelling assignments.

Evaluation Techniques and Criteria:

Each student will be evaluated on active participation in the following activities:

- A. Class discussions
- B. Story Performances
- C. Written Assignments
- D. Performance Critiques

Story Performances

Storytelling is an oral art form. Students will learn by actively participating in storytelling and critique of story performance. Each week half of the class will perform while the other half critiques. A form with specific performance criteria will guide this process.

Each student will present a total of four story performances. The performances will fit into the following categories: (Personal Story, Folktale, History or Ethnography, Final Performance)

Students will complete the following writing assignments:

- Response Journal-Students will use this space to examine their experiences with storytelling. In this space they will reflect on the creative process. They will also record ideas about the form, content and context of stories presented in class. Students will submit a MINIMUM of four (1-2pp.) journal entries.
- Story Review-Students will write a review of a story performance. Students may write on class performances but are strongly encouraged to review a performance outside of class. The performance may be on video or audio. (4-5pp.)
- Final Paper- Students are asked to write a final paper that carefully examines the development of one of their story performances. How/why was this story chosen? How did it move from text/oral to performance? (7pp.)

These outcomes will be assessed in terms of students' development throughout the class. Students will be assessed in terms of their growth in creative expression, performance and critical analysis. We will observe that students develop significantly in these areas.

Oral stories do not exist when separated from teller and community. In this course the classroom functions as the community for the teller. The stories will grow and change because of the response and development of the teller and the community.

We will use recorded stories and videotapes to help students to better conceptualize the art form.

Class Agenda:

Session #1

Wednesday 4/1/09

Introductions
Syllabus Review
What is storytelling?
Create Groups
Personal Story Development

HOMEWORK

Group A will prepare personal story performances (3-5 minutes in length)

Session #2

Wednesday 4/8/09

Personal Story Performances (Group A)
Discussion and Critique

HOMEWORK

Group B will prepare personal story performances (3-5 minutes)
All students will prepare annotated bibliography of texts to be used as story resources
Read Chapter 2 (pp.35-61) and Chapter 4 (pp. 91-105)

Session #3

Wednesday 4/15/09

Personal Story Performances (Group B)
Turn in bibliography
Introduction to Folktales and adaptation
Discuss readings

HOMEWORK

Group A will prepare folktales for performance

Read (pp. 141-154)

Session #4

Wednesday 4/22/09

Folktale Performances (Group A)

Discuss Reading

Introduction to Historical Storytelling

HOMEWORK

Group B will prepare folktales for performance

All students will prepare at least two journal entries for review

Session #5

Wednesday 4/29/09

Folktale Performances (Group B)

Continue introduction to Historical Storytelling

**Journal entries will be submitted.

HOMEWORK

Group A will prepare historical story for performance

Session #6

Wednesday 5/06/09

Historical Stories (Group A)

HOMEWORK

Group B will prepare historical stories for performance

All students will prepare performance review paper (3-5 pages)

Session #7

Wednesday 5/13/09

Historical Stories (Group B)

Introduction to ethnography

Submit Review paper

HOMEWORK

Group A will prepare ethnographic stories for performance

Session #8

Wednesday 5/20/09

Group A will perform ethnographic stories

HOMEWORK

Group B will prepare ethnographic stories for performance

Session #9

Wednesday 5/27/09

Group B will perform ethnographic stories

HOMEWORK

Students will prepare final writing assignments and final story performances

Session #10

Wednesday June 3, 2009

Final session

Public Performance each student will perform favorite stories

Students will submit a minimum of 4 journal entries

Students will submit story analysis paper