

*AI 280 Traditions and Transitions: Profiles in Adult Learning*

*But in order to make you understand, to tell you my life, I must tell you a story. Virginia Woolf*

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Required Text: **Storytelling Sociology: Narrative as Social Inquiry**

Edited by Ronald J. Berger & Richard Quinney  
Lynne Rienner publishers, Inc.  
Boulder 2005

Optional Recommended Texts: **Dakota: A Spiritual Geography**

Kathleen Norris  
Ticknor & Fields  
New York 1993

**Composting A Life**

Mary Catherine Bateson  
Penguin Group  
New York 1990

**Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood**

bell hooks  
Henry Holt & Company  
New York 1996

**Someone Always Singing You**

Kaylynn Sullivan Twotrees  
University Press of Mississippi  
Jackson 1997

Donna has been a member of the Visiting Faculty for the School for New Learning since 1998. Her Certificate of Advanced Study is from Syracuse University in Education. She has a Master's degree in International Studies from the School of International Service at the American University in Washington, D.C. Her doctoral research is in the field of adult education and women's studies. Donna is the Coordinator of the Center for Service Learning at College of DuPage.

**Competencies A-3-B, F-X, H-1-F, H-3-C, L-7**

**Course Description**

This course is concerned with how adult learners make meaning of their experience. We investigate our perceptions, understandings, and feelings about the world. Through critical reflection we will examine the meaning, purpose, and values in our lives. WE will explore the meaning of taken for granted assumptions and begin to explore the values we hold as indisputable truths. We will learn that we are not isolated and that our experiences even though unique are layered with meaning and interconnection. Learning is a collective process involving the cultural formation and reproduction of symbols and meaning perspectives. It should not be understood or researched as if it were disconnected, idiosyncratic and wholly autonomous. The 'baggage' that we carry with us is loaded with ideas we gathered in passing through life. Some bags are heavy and difficult to move, while others are light and easily convertible to various situations. We stack our bags and use the contents to view the world. The contents sometimes change with the seasons of our lives and reflect new insights. The seasons of everyday life contain the stories that will become the personal and communal discourse of our study together. To understand adult learning we need to know of its connections to learning in childhood and adolescence and to the formation during these periods of interpretive filters, cognitive frames and cultural rules.

**Competencies**

**A-3-B Can explore a model of spiritual development and apply it to oneself or others.**

The whole notion of spirituality and its meaning in our lives may have deep connections to our past experiences. This course allows students to discover possible links to historical events and yield a better understanding of their current spiritual beliefs

**A-1-X Written by student/faculty**

**H-1-F Can describe and explore the roles of individuals, groups, societies, or states in history.**

Students who register for this competence will consider the roles of the individuals in light of the major historical developments of their times. We will explore the questions: To what extent are ordinary people's experiences historically significant? What roles do individuals play in historical change? In what ways can we generalize and draw historical understanding from individual lives? We will explore these questions in class discussions about the readings and we will discuss the practice of life history. To what extent are ordinary people's experiences described in the readings historically significant? What roles do individuals play in historical change? In what ways can we generalize and draw historical understanding from individual lives?

**H-3-C Can use theories or models of adult growth and development to understand one's own experience.**

It is during times of reflection when students will gain insight and understanding of diverse learning moments and be able to integrate them into a new sensibility and perspective.

**L-7 Can learn collaboratively and examine the skills, knowledge, and values that contribute to such learning**

Students will participate in a learning project with others and apply collaborative learning skills such as communication and group dynamics to the experience. Students demonstrate this competence by working with others to develop common understandings around a shared agenda that leads to a meaningful outcome. Collaborative learning is characterized by a willingness to explore the ideas and insights of others in an atmosphere of mutual respect, encouragement, and challenge. Essential to this competence is understanding the distinctions among collaboration, cooperation, and strategies of group dynamics.

**FX - Written by student with the help of the instructor if desired.**

**Course Requirements**

**1. Learning Activity #1-- Journal** A journal provides us with the opportunity to record and reflect on life experiences. From the outset keep a journal to record your experiences, reflections on the content, readings, and during our time together, our class discussions. Journals will be collected during the **eighth** meeting of our class. All journals will be kept in strict confidence and returned to the student. Please type/word process your journals. If it is not possible to type the journals, please make sure I can read what you have written or created. You may submit poetry, music or artwork if you prefer those mediums for your expression. My criteria for assessment include 1) the extent of reflection on the course content and process, 2) willingness to consider course content in light of personal experiences, 3) regularity of entries, and 4) the inclusion of reflection on your learning. The minimum requirement is for one journal entry per week as indicated on the assignment sheet for a total of **seven** entries. If you would prefer not to follow my guidelines for the reflective journals, please discuss your preference with me. Set aside a quiet time each week, light candles, play music, hide away in a coffee shop, but make sure the distractions are at a minimum. Reflect on your experiences and your reading.

**2. Learning Activity #2 --Class Participation** Students will be encouraged to take an active role in the class, not only in discussions, group work and exercises, but to help construct the assignments and criteria for assessment. Since the class will be conducted as a "seminar," students will be responsible for the readings and entering into discussion during our time together. This course will strive to help learners become on the one hand, interdependent and empathetic learners, and on the other hand, independent, critical and tough-minded thinkers.

"Cherish a sense of humor which may save you from becoming shocked, depressed or complacent. Let your excitement and passion show."

**3. Learning Activity #3 -- Collaborative Learning Project** "As does any pedagogical strategy, the collaborative model brings with it its own ideological assumptions. Just as a lecture format assumes that the teacher's role is to impart knowledge to 'spongelike' students, collaborative approaches assume that students should be involved not just in receiving knowledge but in constructing it. A collaborative structure gives as much value to the process as to its product" (Sandler, Silverberg, and Hall, 1996, p. 44). Students will be

working in small groups throughout the quarter to complete this project. Class time will be allotted to allow students to work on their project. The goal of this project is to have each group create a learning environment for a specific audience of adult learners. Each group will make a presentation on the last day of class. In this activity you can let your creativity shine through. You can use various mediums and it can include three dimensional objects. Try to let the models you develop reflect the model of adult learning you developed through collaboration.

**4. Learning Activity #4 - Document Your Learning History** Starting with ourselves as adult learners is a helpful way to understand the learning and our own development. Droeghamp and Taylor in the text, *Learning Environments for Women's Adult Development: Bridges toward Change*, encourage learners to write essays reflecting on their educational history. For this activity, think back over your adult years and try to remember your experiences in both formal educational settings and informal activities. What are your most significant memories? In what types of classes or activities did you participate? What motivated you? What barriers did you encounter? In what ways did your gender matter? Use the writings of Kathleen Norris and Mary Catherine Bateson to help you create meaning from your experiences and sense of place. Create a written history of your experiences and include your feelings and reactions. You will each have a chance to share your history with the class and we will use them as the basis for discussion in class.

**5. Learning Activity #5 -- Term Project** "Self-directed learners share responsibility with their educators for assuring quality in their classroom experiences; they are able to clarify their learning objectives and will explore alternative strategies for reaching them within the context of the education setting." (Fisher, 1993, p.124). This project provides students with the opportunity to design an assignment of their own which will meet their objectives and goals for the course. Prepare a final course paper, project or product, which will bring together the ideas we have read, your own personal experiences and the discussions from our time together. Students will prepare a one-page proposal outlining their assignment, the objectives and purpose and the criteria for assessment. This should be handed in during our course time together for discussion and approval. The final result of this project is typically a 5-25 page paper or product ( video, web site, poetry, painting, sculpture, collage, photographs, scrap book, music) submitted by the end of the time period allotted for course completion after the face-to-face meeting. The objective of this learning activity is to facilitate your carrying out in-depth study, acquisition, and comprehension of knowledge related to some aspect of the course's content area.

### Course Calendar

- Week One:** Change vs. Transition  
Identifying changes and transitional periods in our lives  
How do you want to be remembered?  
Who is your Master at the Art of Living? Your inspiration?  
In-class writing/discussion exercise:  
1. What is staying the same in your life?  
2. What is changing in your life?  
Required reading:  
Storytelling – Family and Place, Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-47
- Week Two:** Why we go through Transition  
What is the Future you want?  
Managing Uncertainty  
Required reading:  
Storytelling – Family and Place, Chapters 5-7, pp. 49-86
- Week Three:** The Way of Transition  
How to keep winning when the rules keep changing  
Required reading:  
Storytelling – The Body, Chapters 8-10, pp. 87-127
- Week Four:** Discovering One's Vocation: Career vs. Calling

Creating your Mission Statement for Work and Dealing with resistance and other “blocks” to creating personal change  
What is your life purpose today?  
Collaborative group project time.  
Required reading:  
Storytelling – The Body, Chapters 11-12, pp. 129-166

**Week Five: Life History Presentations**

Required reading:  
Storytelling – Education and Work, Chapters 14-17, pp. 167-214

**Week Six:** Beginning a New Life/The Gifts of Transition  
The Grand Adventure from Twenty to Ninety  
**Submit proposal for Final Paper/Project – Individual meetings as needed**

Collaborative group project time.  
Required reading:  
Storytelling – Education and Work, Chapters 18-20, pp. 215-266

**Week Seven:** Launching the Next Chapter of Your Life  
In-class writing/discussion exercise: writing your own mission statement  
Required reading:

Storytelling – The Passing of Time, Chapter 21, pp. 265-282

**Week Eight: Journals Due**

In-class writing/discussion exercise: What has meaning to you?

**Week Nine: Collaborative Group Presentations**

**Week Ten:** Evaluations and Assessments  
Embracing the Future: Empowerment and Final Thoughts  
Group Discussion: What are your next steps?  
**Final Papers/Projects Due**

Chliwniak, L. (1997). *Higher education leadership: Analyzing the gender gap*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report Volume 25, No.4, Washington, DC: The George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development.

Hayes, E., Flannery, D. D., Brooks, A.K., Tiskell, E.J., & Hugo, J.M. (2000). *Women as learners: The significance of gender in adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Chapters 1-4.

**Bibliography – Feminist**

Adams, M., Bell, L. A., Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1997). *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook*. New York: Routledge. (adult and higher education).

Aisenberg, N., & Harrington, M. (1988). *Women of academe: Outsiders in the scared grove*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press. (higher education)

Bateson, M. C. (1990). *Composing a life*. New York: Plume. (general)

Bateson, M. C. (1994). *Peripheral visions: Learning along the way*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers. (general)

Blackmore, J. (1999). *Troubling women: Feminism, leadership and educational change*. Philadelphia: Open University Press. (secondary education)

- Belenky, M. F., Clinchy, B. M., Goldberger, N. R., & Tarule, J. M. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind*. New York: Basic Books. (adult education).
- Border, L. L. B., & Chism, N. V. N. (Eds.). (1992). *Teaching for diversity*. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, #49, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (general)
- Chamberlain, M. K. (Ed.). (1988). *Women in academe: Progress and prospects*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. (higher education)
- Chliwniak, L. (1997). *Higher education leadership: Analyzing the gender gap*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 25, 4, Washington, DC: Graduate School of Education and Human Development, The George Washington University. (higher education)
- Conway, J. K., & Bourque, S. C. (Eds.). (1996). *The politics of women's education*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. (general)
- Curry, B. K. (2000). *Women in power: Pathways to leadership in education*. New York: Teachers College Press. (general)
- Dunlap, D. M., & Schmuck, P. A. (Eds.). (1995). *Women leading in education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. (secondary education).
- Gilligan, C. (1993). *In a different voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (general)
- Glazer-Raymo, J. (1999). *Shattering the myths: Women in academe*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press. (higher education).
- Hayes, E., & Flannery, D. D. (2000). *Women as learners: The significance of gender in adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (adult education)
- Hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress*. New York: Routledge. (adult education)
- Irwin, R. L. (1995). *A circle of empowerment: Women, education and leadership*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. (secondary education)
- Jamieson, K. H. (1995). *Beyond the double bind: Women and leadership*. New York: Oxford University Press. (general)
- Johnson, A. G. (1997). *The gender knot: Unraveling our patriarchal legacy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. (general)
- Klenke, K. (1996). *Women and leadership: A contextual perspective*. New York: Springer Publishing Company. (general)
- Maher, F. A., & Tetreault, M. T. (1994). *The feminist classroom: An inside look at how professors and students are transforming higher education for a diverse society*. New York: Basic Books. (higher education).
- Martin, J. R. (2000). *Coming of age in academe: Rekindling women's hopes and reforming the academy*. New York: Routledge. (higher education)
- Meadow Orlans, K. P., & Wallace, R. A. (1994). *Gender and the academic experience: Berkeley women sociologists*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press. (higher education).
- McCormick, T. M. (1994). *Creating the nonsexist classroom: A multicultural approach*. New York: Teachers College Press. (general)

- Mitchell, P. T. (Ed.). (1993). *Cracking the wall: Women in higher education administration*. Washington, DC: The College and University Personnel Association. (higher education).
- Neumann, A. & Peterson, P. L. (Eds.). (1997). *Learning from our lives: Women, research and autobiography in education*. New York: Teachers College Press. (general)
- Sadkar, M., & Sadkar, D. (1994). *Failing at fairness: How our schools cheat girls*. New York: Charles Scribners Sons. (general).
- Sandler, B. R., Silverberg, L. A., & Hall, R. M. (1996). *The chilly classroom climate: A guide to improve the education of women*. Washington, DC: The National Association for Women in Education. (general)
- Solomon, B. M. (1985). *In the company of educated women*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. (higher education)
- Statham, A., Richardson, L., & Cook, J. A. (1991). *Gender and university teaching: A negotiated difference*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. (higher education)
- Stone, L. (Ed.) (1994). *The education feminism reader*. New York: Routledge. (general)
- Tavris, C. (1992). *The mismeasure of women*. New York: Simon & Schuster. (general)
- Taylor, K., & Marienau, C. (Eds.). (1995). *Learning environments for women's adult development: Bridges toward change*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, #65, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (adult education)
- Tobias, S. (1997). *Faces of feminism: An activist's reflections on the women's movement*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. (general)
- Tompkins, J. (1996). *A life in school: What the teacher learned*. New York: Addison Wesley. (higher education).
- Toth, E. (1997). *Ms. Mentor's impeccable advice for women in academia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. (higher education)
- Turner, C. S. V., & Myers, Jr., S. L. (2000). *Faculty of color in academe: Bittersweet success*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. (higher education)
- Walton, K. D. (1996). *Against the tide: Career paths of women leaders in American and British Higher Education*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation. (higher education)
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- Golan, N. (1981). *Passing through transitions*. New York: The Free Press.
- Howe, N. and Strauss, B. (1993). *13th Gen*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Levinson, D. J. (1978). *The seasons of a man's life*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Levinson, D. J. (1996). *The seasons of a woman's life*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Sheehy, G. (1974). *Passages*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Sheehy, G. (1981). *Pathfinders*. New York: Bantam Books.

Sheehy, G. (1991). *The silent passage*. New York: Random House.

Sheehy, G. (1998). *Understanding men's passages*. New York: Random House.

Turner, J. S. and Helms, D. B. (1989). *Contemporary adulthood*. Chicago: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

### **THE ART OF LIVING**

Achieving Fulfillment During Life's Transitions

Bridges, William            THE WAY OF TRANSITION: Embracing Life's Most Difficult Moments  
(Perseus Books, 2001)

Hudson, Frederic M.  
& McLean, Pamela D.    LIFELAUNCH: A Passionate Guide to the Rest of Your Life (Hudson Institute  
Press, 2000)

Simmons, Philip            LEARNING TO FALL: The Blessings of an Imperfect Life (Bantam Books,  
2002)

Other recommended resource material that may be selected by the student for work related to this course or for future use includes:

Beck, Martha                FINDING YOUR OWN NORTH STAR: Claiming the Life You Were Meant to  
Live (Crown, 2001)

Bridges, William            TRANSITIONS: Making Sense of Life's Changes (Perseus Books, 1980)  
JOBSHIFT: How to Prosper in a Workplace Without Jobs (Perseus Books,  
1994)

Csikszentmihalyi,  
Mihaly                        FLOW: The Psychology of Optimal Experience (Harper Perennial, 1991)

Cameron, Julia             THE ARTIST'S WAY: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity (G.P. Putnam's  
Sons, 1992)

Dychtwald, Ken             AGE WAVE: How the Most Important Trend of Our Time will Change Your  
Future (Bantam Books, 1990)

Evans, Susan B. &  
Avis, Joan P.                THE WOMEN WHO BROKE ALL THE RULES (Sourcebooks Inc., 1999)

Fox, Matthew                THE REINVENTION OF WORK (Harper Collins, 1995)

Jones, Laurie Beth         THE PATH: Creating Your Mission Statement for Work and Life (Hyperion,  
1996)

Lewis, C. S.                 THE BUSINESS OF HEAVEN (Harcourt Brace & Co., 1984)

McKenna, Elizabeth P.     WHEN WORK DOESN'T WORK ANYMORE: Women, Work and Identity  
(Delta, 1997)

Peck, M. Scott                A WORLD WAITING TO BE BORN (Bantam Book, 1993)

Peck, M. Scott                THE DIFFERENT DRUM: Community Making and Peace (Touchstone, 1987)

Sher, Barbara                LIVE THE LIFE YOU LOVE (Delacorte Press, 1996)

Sinetar, Marsha DO WHAT YOU LOVE, THE MONEY WILL FOLLOW (Dell, 1987)

St. James, Elaine LIVING THE SIMPLE LIFE: A Guide to Scaling Down and Enjoying more (Hyperion, 1996)

Vaughan, Susan C. HALF EMPTY HALF FULL (Harcourt, Inc., 2000)