

# The Power of Storytelling

Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) 190

Draft Syllabus

Fall 2022

Tuesday/Thursday 1:00 – 2:25

Callaway S420



**"The stories we tell literally make the world. If you want to change the world, you need to change your story. This truth applies both to individuals and institutions."**

**--Michael Margolis**

## Instructors:

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## Course Description and Objectives:

Human beings are storytellers – whether of great myths and legends, heart wrenching dramas or heartwarming comedies, we all tell stories all the time. Stories *connect* us, *transform* us, and allow us to *express* our deepest understanding of ourselves and the world we live in. In this seminar, we will explore the world of stories – stories we tell about ourselves, stories we listen to told by the people around us, and stories we are surrounded by in our culture -- novels, movies and even tweets. Through scholarly reading and group research projects, we will learn what stories are and what they mean, how stories bring people together and tear them apart, and how we can all become more effective communicators by learning to tell our story.

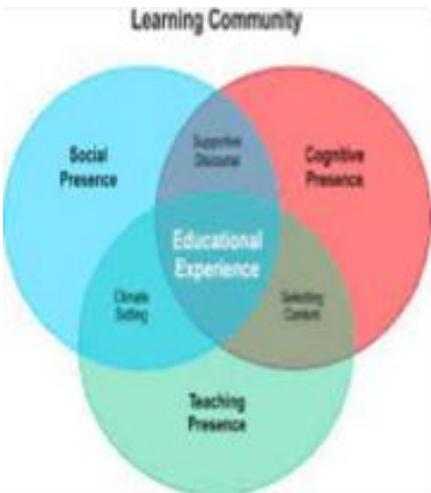
This course is among a group of FYS that are thematically linked through the idea of “flourishing” from multiple perspectives and touches upon three themes: connection, transformation, and expression.

- Connection: Humans are relational, dependent beings. Their well-being is dependent on those relations. What relations allows us to thrive and feel at home or to have a sense of belonging? What relations lead to experiences of alienation and dislocation? In its own way, each course will look at how "connections" are integral to the human experience.
- Transformation: Humans are creatures of action. They monitor their worlds and their welfare within it. They also adjust themselves and try to modify their worlds in an effort to find lives worth living. In its own way, each course will look at agency and how it navigates a world of connection, including situations that undermine the agency of people, whether through accidentally adverse conditions or socio-political histories of oppression.
- Expression: In multiple, diverse ways, humans give voice to their condition and their experience of it. They ask and reply to questions such as: who am I? What is happening to me? Who do I want to become? What do I want to see realized in my world? What would I remove? In its own way, each course will ask students to give expression to questions like these, and to reply from their own, developing point of view.

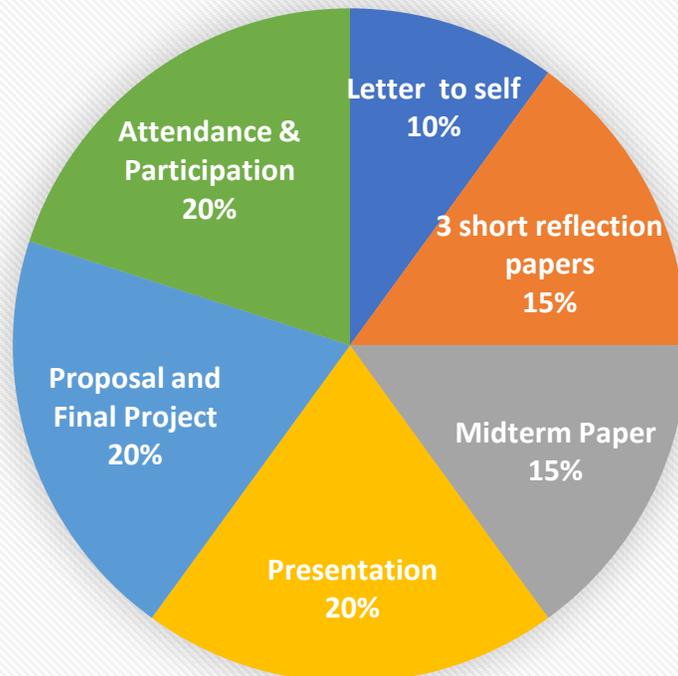
Stories are a central component in human flourishing, providing us with ways to understand all of these aspects of the human experience in deeper, often transformative, ways. In addition to the readings, activities and discussions in our FYS, we will connect with other FYS that will allow a broader perspective on both your own personal flourishing and scholarly perspectives on the human condition.

***Please note that as part of our course, you will be required to attend some activities outside of class time.***

## Creating a Learning Community

 <p>The diagram is a Venn diagram titled "Learning Community". It consists of three overlapping circles: a light blue circle on the left labeled "Social Presence", a light red circle on the right labeled "Cognitive Presence", and a light green circle at the bottom labeled "Teaching Presence". The intersections are labeled: "Social Presence" and "Cognitive Presence" overlap at "Social Presence"; "Social Presence" and "Teaching Presence" overlap at "Social Presence"; "Cognitive Presence" and "Teaching Presence" overlap at "Cognitive Presence"; and all three overlap in the center at "Educational Experience".</p>	<p>Throughout the course, we will engage in a series of assignments and activities in which each of you will reflect on, present and discuss your ideas in a variety of ways, written, verbal and visual. These exercises are geared towards helping you to better understand and communicate about what we are learning, thinking and analyzing. Throughout, we will engage in small group discussions and activities as well as full class discussions, learning to express our own ideas and to listen to others in ways that provide constructive feedback on each other's' work. All of us can learn to communicate more effectively and all of us have much to learn from each other. In all our class activities and discussions, we strive to create a caring yet rigorous community. Our goals are always to be constructive and to help each other learn and improve.</p>
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## Course Requirements



## Tentative Course Outline

Week/ Dates	Topic	Possible readings and activities
<b>Part I: Stories and Culture: <i>How stories are expressed</i></b>		
		
August 25	Introductions	
August 30 – Sept. 1	The power of stories: Why do we tell stories? What functions do they serve?	Ga Review article “The Danger of a Single Story”
Sept. 6 – 8	Listening to Stories	MOTH podcast StoryCorps First Story Circle
Sept. 13 -15	Coming into the world of stories: Childhood	Bettelheim reading “Where the Wild Things are”  Maybe also something here on the kinds of stories children tell --
Sept. 20 - 22	Fairy Tales	A fairy tale with Vincent?  Purnell, D., & Bowman, J. (2014). “Happily ever after”: Are traditional scripts just for fairy tales?. <i>Narrative Inquiry</i> , 24(1), 175-180.
Sept 27	The Princess Bride	Movie viewing party

Sept 29 Oct. 4	Stories as political	Hanne, Michael, <i>The Power of the Story: Fiction and Political Change</i> , Chapter 1: Narrative and Power
Oct. 6	First Workshop: How to create a story	<a href="https://narrativearts.org/story-guide/">https://narrativearts.org/story-guide/</a>
Oct. 11	Fall Break	

**Stories and You: How stories connect and transform us**



Oct. 13	The human evolution of stories	McAdams, D. P. (2019). "First we invented stories, then they changed us": The Evolution of Narrative Identity. <i>Evolutionary Studies in Imaginative Culture</i> , 3(1), 1-18.
Oct. 18 - 20	Narrative Identity and Life Stories	Eakin, P.J. (2008). <i>Living autobiographically: How we create identity in narrative</i> (Chapter 1, pp. 1-59). NY: Cornell University  <a href="https://ideas.ted.com/the-two-kinds-of-stories-we-tell-about-ourselves/">https://ideas.ted.com/the-two-kinds-of-stories-we-tell-about-ourselves/</a>

Oct. 25 - 27	Stories as a way to learn	<p>Andrews, M. (2012). Learning from stories, stories of learning. In <i>Explorations in narrative research</i> (pp. 33-41). Brill Sense.</p> <p>Something with Andy: Second Story Circle</p>
Nov. 1 - 3	Stories as therapeutic	<p>Baikie, K. A., &amp; Wilhelm, K. (2005). Emotional and physical health benefits of expressive writing. <i>Advances in psychiatric treatment</i>, 11(5), 338-346.</p> <p>Brockington, G., Moreira, A. P. G., Buso, M. S., da Silva, S. G., Altszyler, E., Fischer, R., &amp; Moll, J. (2021). Storytelling increases oxytocin and positive emotions and decreases cortisol and pain in hospitalized children. <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences</i>, 118(22).</p>
Nov. 8 - 10	Stories of the pandemic	Melissa Faye Green article and lecture
Nov. 15 - 17	The power of fiction	<p>Aciman, A (2000). <i>Arbitrage</i>. The New Yorker.</p> <p>Novel TBD</p>
<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>		
Nov 29 – Dec 1	Presentations	
Dec. 6	Reflections	