**HNRS 305U Power of Storytelling Syllabus**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Seminar introduces students to the research in narrative and storytelling, familiarizes them with elements of effective narrative structure, and explores examples of narratives and their use to persuade through history. Students work throughout the semester to each complete a narrative account of their own lives, developing story-telling techniques while also self-reflecting on key events that have been transformative. In addition, as a class, they complete a literature review on the topic and share information. Fulfills general education issues and perspectives — humanities.

**WHO, WHAT, WHERE, HOW**

**Course Instructors:**

Roy Wenzl, roy@roywenzl.com, 316 992-3694

Polly Basore Wenzl, polly.basore@wichita.edu 316 993-8802

**Class Schedule:** Mondays, 5:35 p.m.-7:55 p.m., Shocker Hall Multi-Purpose Room

**Office Hours:** By appointment, meetup at Starbucks by Marcus Welcome Center. Instructors will also answer questions by text.

**Course Materials:** All reading assignments will be either uploaded to Blackboard or a url will be provided. While no books must be purchased, it is recommended you get a digital subscription to The Wichita Eagle. A 2-month trial subscription is $1. For in-class writing each week, you will need three composition notebooks for the semester, plus pen or pencils to write with. No laptops, please.

**Course Structure:** Each class period will be divided into three parts. In the first segment, the class will learn about the nature and structure of narratives. Students should come prepared to discuss assigned readings. In the second segment, the class will learn about the power of narratives to persuade and influence. Students will study scientific research in this area, learn to conduct a literature review, and take turns doing in-class presentations on articles about narrative research. In the third section, students will take part in an in-class writing workshop, responding to new writing prompts each week in their composition notebook journals. The accumulated weekly journal entries will provide preparation and material for their individual personal narratives.

**GRADING AND DEADLINES**

It is possible to earn a total of **700 points** in this class.

**Grading**

Up to **140 points** will be awarded for in-class journal entries. Students will do one entry each week. While students will not be graded on attendance, you will forfeit journal points if you are absent. No points will be awarded for journal entries written outside of class.

Up to **60 points** will be awarded for the in-class oral presentation on articles describing research into narratives and how they impact audiences and individuals. Presentations should be oral; supplementing with audio-visual presentations or handouts is optional. Students should be prepared answer questions and lead a discussion of their topic following their presentations.

Up to **250 points** will be awarded for the narrative research literature review, which should address 3-5 research articles on an approved topic. This paper should be formal, typed with footnotes and a bibliography.

Up to **250 points** will be awarded for the personal narrative. This will be a creative writing paper. Conversational writer's voice is preferred.

The following point ranges will be used to calculate grades:

**A**: 655-700 **A-:**630-654 **B+:** 606-629 **B**: 585-605 **B-**:560-584 **C+**: 536-559 **C**: 515-535 **C-**:490-514 **D+**: 466-489 **D**: 445-465 **D-**:420-444 **F**: <420

**Deadlines**

**September 17**: Literature Review Topic Due

**October 8:** Literature Review Due

**November 5**: Personal Narrative Topic Due  (Transformative Event(s) Identified)

**November 19**: Personal Narrative 1st Draft Due

**December 3:** Final Draft of Personal Narrative Due

**August 20, 2018**

**Why Tell Stories?**

Course instructors and students will introduce themselves. Polly will provide an overview of the syllabus and class format, grades and deadline. Roy will tell provide an overview on what the course will cover. Students will complete their first in-class writing assignment.

Assigned Reading: Syllabus.

**August 27, 2018**

**Stories With Impact**

Roy will discuss the experience of writing "Karen: Lost and Found" and the impact it had on Wichita. Polly will discuss the relationship between narrative and empathy and why it matters.

Reading Assignments:

Karen: Lost and Found, Parts 1-8 (A digital subscription to the Wichita Eagle may be required)

Part 1: https://www.kansas.com/latest-news/article1111972.html

Part 2: https://www.kansas.com/latest-news/article1111973.html

Part 3: https://www.kansas.com/latest-news/article1111974.html

Part 4: https://www.kansas.com/latest-news/article1111975.html

Part 5: https://www.kansas.com/latest-news/article1111976.html

Part 6:  https://www.kansas.com/latest-news/article1111977.html

Part 7: https://www.kansas.com/latest-news/article1111978.html

Part 8: https://www.kansas.com/latest-news/article1111979.html

*"Speaking from the heart: Why stories are important and why word choice matters,"* By Polly Basore, Kansas Leadership Journal, Fall 2010, pp. 34-37 (Provided)

"Empathy and the Novel," Suzanne Keen, Oxford University Press, 2007. pp vii-xxii (Provided)

**September 3, 2018 – NO CLASS -- LABOR DAY**

**September 10, 2018**

**Our Brains On Stories**

Roy will discuss how our brains are wired to respond to stories of all types, and what great thinkers have to say about this. Polly will go over how to conduct a literature review, which is essentially a summary of existing scientific research on a topic. Students will sign up for a date to give their in-class presentations.

Assigned Readings:

Steven Pinker on brain evolution: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/evolution/library/07/2/text_pop/l_072_03.html>

How gossip shaped human evolution:<http://blogs.unimelb.edu.au/sciencecommunication/2012/09/18/gift-of-the-gab-how-gossip-shaped-human-evolution/>

*"Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind,"* Yuval Noah Harari, Harper Collins, 2015. pp 1-62. (Provided.)

Introduction to Literature Review: http://libresources.wichita.edu/comm-research-strategies/literature-reviews

**September 17, 2018**

**How Narratives Define Us**

Roy will discuss the relationship between storytelling and mythology and how narratives shape the way cultures view themselves. Polly will discuss how cognitive dissonance causes us to reject factual information and review expectations for the literature review assignment. Students must submit their literature review research topic for approval by today. Students in-class presentations also begin.

Assigned Readings:

"The Hero With A Thousand Faces," 3rd Edition, Joseph Campbell, The Joseph Campbell Foundation, 2008. pp. 1-18. (Provided excerpt.)

"The Greek Way," Edith Hamilton, publisher, year, page numbers.

"Das Duetsches Volk." Martha Gellhorn,

"Why Facts Don't Change Our Minds," Elizabeth Kolbert, The New Yorker. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/02/27/why-facts-dont-change-our-minds

"How to Convince Someone When Facts Fail," by Michael Shermer, Scientific American. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-convince-someone-when-facts-fail/

**September 24, 2018**

**Stories We Tell About Ourselves**

Roy will discuss how people tell stories about themselves to give purpose and meaning to their own lives. Polly will discuss her own experience with writing memoir, and introduce concepts of narrative construction. Student in-class presentations continue.

Reading Assignments:

"All About Bob," Roy Wenzl, October 27, 1999, The Wichita Eagle. (Story provided.)

"What Made Me," Larry Wenzl, Recorded June 2018.

"A Love Story Was My Dad's Gift to Me," Roy Wenzl, The Wichita Eagle, June 20, 2010 https://www.kansas.com/news/local/article1036892.html

"What Heaven Left Behind," Polly Basore, Angelbooks, 2005. pp ix, 27-36.

**October 1, 2018**

**Ingredients of Narrative**

Roy will discuss the ingredients of narrative: plot, characters, setting, theme, turning points, sequencing and engine. Polly will discuss why these elements make narratives more relatable than stacks of facts. Student in-class presentations continue. Literature review is due in one week.

Reading Assignments:

TED talk. Filmmaker Andrew Stanton ("Toy Story," "WALL-E") shares what he knows about storytelling -- starting at the end and working back to the beginning. (Contains graphic language) <https://www.ted.com/talks/andrew_stanton_the_clues_to_a_great_story>

"Baby Oh Baby," Roy Wenzl, Wichita Eagle, July 1, 2004. (Provided.) .

"The Common Reader," excerpt, Virginia Woolf, 1925, (Provided)

"Reporter," Seymour Hersh, Knopf, 2018. pp. 100-138. (Provided)

"Empathy and the Novel," Suzanne Keen, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 92-99. (Provided.)