

# ENC1145: Politics of Storytelling in Minority Literature (7401)

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Office Hours: W 5 (11.45-12.30) and F 3 (9.35-10.25), and by appointment

## Course Information

### Course Description

Stories, whether fictional or true, are never told in a vacuum. Each story is shaped by the interests of those who tell it, the expectations of the audience, and the context in which the story is told, among other things. This suggests that there is always a political and social dimension to storytelling. In this course, we will explore that dimension as we consider to what extent the stories we tell both reveal and create ideas about American society as a whole. Paying particular attention to minority literatures, we will primarily examine “storytelling” through the lenses of autobiographical and cultural theory and look at two main aspects: first, the way we “narrate” ourselves, and second, the roles of certain fictional and nonfictional stories in American society. What is “American” about so-called “American” stories? Does the language in which we tell these stories matter? Which stories have staying power (either on a personal or political level) and why? How do different aspects of our identity (for example, race, gender, sexuality, disability) influence the extent to which we can(not) tell our own stories? By thinking critically about writing and storytelling, students will gain the skills necessary to closely read and analyze a wide range of texts, while touching on themes such as ideology, privilege, and intersectionality (the interconnectedness of social categorizations such as race and gender). Throughout the course, students are encouraged to reflect on how their own stories or “self-narratives” are shaped by cultural and literary representations of American identities and differences.

This is a General Education course providing student-learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1314/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

### Course Objectives:

By the end of ENC1145, you will (be able to):

- Plan, draft, revise, and edit a paper;
- Summarize, analyze, and synthesize academic sources;
- Read critically and ask critical questions;
- Accurately cite and incorporate sources according to MLA-format;
- Explain how language, authorship, and format affect a text’s message;
- Gain an understanding of the concept of ideology and its impact on literature;
- Explain how our identities are affected by the stories we tell and are told;
- Explain what kind of role(s) texts play in society.

## **Course Texts**

### Required:

- Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell. *The Pocket Wadsworth Handbook*. Stamford, CT: Cengage Advantage Books, 2009. Print. ISBN: 9781285426617 .

You may purchase any version – hardcover, paperback, or electronic – as long as it is complete. Additional readings will be provided via course reserves (ARES).

## **Course Assignments - Overview**

- Summary
- Analysis #1
- Analysis #2
- Revised + expanded essay
- Research proposal
- Creative final project & presentation
- Final essay
- Participation (online + in class)
- Writing portfolio

## **Explanation of assignments**

### **Summary**

It is important to be able to summarize scholarly sources concisely and accurately because it will help improve your own understanding of those sources, and because it allows you to fairly represent other scholars' arguments in your own work. To this end, you will summarize a critical article provided by your instructor (*500 words*).

### **Analyses**

In a critical analysis you briefly summarize and then analyze one of our main readings. You can think about the way certain things are represented in the text, for example, or consider the consequences or the limitations of an argument. Because textual analysis forces you to read the text closely and examine underlying beliefs, ideas, and values, it improves your critical thinking skills. Such close readings may also help you find points of interest that you could explore further in your final essay (*700 words each, 1400 words total*).

### **Revised essay**

For this essay, you will revise and expand one of your analyses. Your revisions should be substantial; that is, rather than copy-editing your previous paper, you should make changes in the style/organization/evidence of your argument, or in anything else that requires attention in your writing. This is an opportunity for you to practice self-assessing your work and really improving your own writing, creating a longer piece of work in the process (*1500-1800 words*).

## **Research Proposal**

You will write a brief proposal accompanied by a works-cited list of at least five sources (two of which can be articles that we have read in class) in which you present a research question and outline your final paper. The proposal serves two purposes: it is meant to help you narrow down your topic and come up with a potential line of argument, and it helps you to position your research in conversation with other scholars' works by becoming aware of additional lines of argument and controversies related to your topic (*600 words*).

## **Final Project + presentation (creative)**

How is your own story (your "self-narrative") shaped by cultural and literary representations of American identities and differences? For this assignment, you are expected to explore this question in any way you choose: write a poem, song, story, or paper / make a collage / create a video / draw something...it does not matter, as long as you answer the question. You are expected to present your project to the class near the end of the semester.

## **Final Paper**

As the culmination of the course, your final paper will engage with one of the main texts we have read in class as well as some of the major issues and themes we have discussed. The paper should make a clear and thoughtful argument about the text(s) (articulated in a clear thesis statement), and should be informed by at least 3 outside critical sources. To make sure you are well-prepared, you will hand in a detailed outline before starting the paper. The research paper will allow you to put into practice the skills you have refined over the course of the semester (close reading, analysis and synthesis). See Sakai for more detailed instructions (*2000-2500 words*).

## **Participation (40% of your final grade)**

In this course, participation consists of two elements: online and in-class participation. Both are crucial.

Expectations for in-class participation:

- Completing the readings, assignments, and reflections prior to class
- Participating in class discussions
- Attending class and being on time

Expectations for online participation (weekly):

- Post a reflection and discussion question prior to class
- Reply to one of your classmates' posts
- Post a "wild card" (picture, news item, article, clip, etc. related to reading or theme).

Please see Canvas files for more information about the purpose and goals of (online) participation and detailed Tumblr instructions. The Tumblr itself can be found under Canvas pages.

## **Writing Portfolio (60% of your final grade)**

At the end of the semester, I will ask you to submit a portfolio containing three pieces of your best writing (including the final paper), and a self-evaluation essay. In this essay, you will also explain

which grade you think you deserve (for both your writing and for participation) and why. See Canvas assignments for more detailed portfolio instructions.

### Assessment

In order to create a safe writing environment, I will not be grading individual assignments. Instead, I will be giving you feedback, we will have writing workshops and peer reviews, and we will meet to discuss your writing several times throughout the semester. All of this allows you to write extensively and improve your writing without fear of “messaging up.”

At the end of the semester, YOU will create a portfolio consisting of three essays (including the final essay) written for the course that you consider your best work. You will also write a reflective letter evaluating your own work (both your written work and your participation in class), telling me what grade you believe you deserve. Of course, you will need to provide evidence that shows you deserve that particular grade. In our final conference of the semester, we will try to come to a consensus.

Your final grade will be determined by your writing portfolio (60%) and participation (40%).

For more information on Grading Policies at UF, see

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

### UF grading scale

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599

### Course schedule

All assignments and readings are due the day they are listed. Make sure to check your UF e-mail and Canvas regularly for announcements, updates, and minor changes in schedule.

[WH = The Pocket Wadsworth Handbook](#)

### Week 1 (Jan 6, 8)

**W** Syllabus & introductions

**F** Bring in a text you really enjoyed reading (any genre)

Read “English” by Ken Macrorie (Canvas files)

Module 1 : Official Stories - What/Who Tells the Story of “America”?

**Week 2 (Jan 11, 13, 15)**

**M** Read excerpt “The Banking Concept of Education,” Paulo Freire (Canvas files)

**W** Read “Introduction” to *Narrative Politics* by Frederick W. Mayer (course reserves)  
Read WH pp. 55-58

**F** Mandatory conferences (course goals and expectations)

**Week 3 (Jan 18, 20, 22)**

**M** MLK Day, no class

**W** Read *From Letter III: What is an American* by Crèvecoeur (Canvas files)  
*From Letter IX: Thoughts on Slavery* by Crèvecoeur (Canvas files)

**F** Summary due

In class: What is an “American”?

**Week 4 (Jan 25, 27, 29)**

**M** In class: practicing analysis

Read “City upon a Hill” speech by John Winthrop (Canvas pages)

**W** Read “Black Matters” by Toni Morrison (course reserves – library)  
Watch “The Danger of Telling a Single Story” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (YouTube)

**F** Writing workshop: reading critically & thesis statements

Read handout “Thesis Statements” (Canvas files)

Read WH pp.2-9 and 16

Module 2: Concealed Stories - Race, Ethnicity, Culture

**Week 5 (Feb 1, 3, 5)**

**M** Read “Snakes” Danielle Evans (course reserves)

**W** “Snakes” – continued

Analysis #1 due

**F** Writing workshop: organization

Read “Topic Sentences” (Canvas pages)

Read WH 30-34 and 60-64

**Week 6 (Feb 8, 10, 12)**

**M** Read “Recitatif” by Toni Morrison (Canvas files)

**W** Continue discussion Toni Morrison

**F** Writing workshop: using evidence effectively  
Read: WH 94-103

**Week 7 (Feb 15, 17, 19)**

**M** Analysis #2 due

Read “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” by Gloria Anzaldúa (Canvas files)

**W** Read “The Achievement of Desire” by Richard Rodriguez (Canvas pages)  
Continue discussion Anzaldúa

**F** Writing workshop: revisions  
Read WH 19-22

**Week 8 (Feb 22, 24, 26)**

**M** Read “Growing up Cuban in Miami” by Myra Mendible (course reserves)

**W** Read “Drift” by Jennine Capó Crucet (course reserves)

**F** Mandatory conferences revised essay

**Week 9**

**\* SPRING BREAK \***

**Week 10 (Mar 7, 9, 11)**

**M** Revised essay due

Read “The Cold War Origins of the Model Minority” in *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture*, by Robert Lee (course reserves)

**W** Read “How to be Chinese” by Celeste Ng (Canvas pages)

**F** Writing practice: doing research/writing a proposal  
Read handout “Writing a Research Proposal” (Canvas pages)  
WH CH 7 & 8 + WH pp. 44-54

Module 3: Writing Back - Intersectionality and Self-Definition

**Week 11 (Mar 14, 16, 18)**

**M** Read “Age, Race, Class, and Sex” by Audre Lorde (Canvas files)

**W** Read “LGBTQ Storytelling and Social Change” by Alison Byrne Fields (Canvas pages)  
Read “LGBT Storytelling” by Paul VanDeCarr (Canvas pages)

**F** Mandatory conferences research proposal

**Week 12 (Mar 21, 23, 25)**

**M** Research proposal due

Read “Intersectionalities” from *Finding Out* by Gibson, Alexander, and Meem (course reserves)

**W** Read “We Came All the Way from Cuba So You Could Dress Like This?” Achy Obejas  
(Canvas pages)

**F** Continue discussion Obejas  
Writing practice (topic of choice)

**Week 13 (Mar 28, 30, Apr 1)**

**M** Read “The Visual-Verbal-Virtual Contexts of Life Narrative” by Sidonie Smith (course reserves)

**W** Continue discussion Smith

**F** Writing practice (topic of choice)

**Week 14 (Apr 4, 6, 8)**

**M** Read “Serial and the Power of Storytelling” (Canvas pages)

**W** Final projects / presentations due

**F** Final projects / presentations due

**Week 15 (Apr 11, 13, 15)**

**M** Reflections - what have we gained/learned/discovered?

**W** Peer-reviews final paper

**F** Mandatory conferences final paper/portfolio

**Week 16 (Apr 18, 20)**

**M** Evaluations and wrap-up

**W** Portfolio (including final essay) due at MIDNIGHT

**Course Policies Participation and Attendance**

Regular attendance and active participation are crucial. Class participation includes contributing to class discussions; coming to class on time, prepared with books and homework; preparing for in-class activities; collaborating and participating in group activities; and overall working and paying

close attention to the lectures and activities of the classroom. In general, students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session.

In this course we will follow a strict attendance policy. **If you miss more than six periods during the term, you will automatically fail the entire course.** The university exempts from this policy only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with me prior to the date that will be missed. Absences, even for extraordinary reasons will result in missing work that cannot be made up; therefore, you can expect absences to have a negative impact on grades.

**Please Note:** If you are absent, it is your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates and required work. If absent due to a scheduled event, you are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

**Tardiness:** Being late is disruptive, so try to always be on time. Being late three times will count as one absence.

### **Classroom Conduct**

Keep in mind that UF students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class. Any use of electronic devices not related to classroom learning (phones, iPods, etc.) are disruptive and will not be tolerated. Please turn them off and keep them out of sight.

### **Assignment Maintenance Responsibilities**

You are responsible for maintaining copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, marked work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of marked papers, it is your responsibility to have and to make this material available.

### **Late Work Policy and Mode of Submission**

I do not accept late work. All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) documents to E-learning/Canvas before class on the designated due date. I may consider extenuating circumstances, but you must contact me at least twenty-four hours before the assignment is due. All assignments and postings should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced with 1-inch margins and numbered pages.

### **Final Grade Appeals**

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant in Department of English. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

### **University Policies General Education**

This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

### **Statement of Composition (C) and Humanities (H) Credit**

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

### **Statement of Writing Requirement**

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-and-math-requirement.aspx>

### **Students with Disabilities**

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>. The office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

### **Statement Concerning Sexual Harassment**

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>

### **Statement Concerning Course Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open.

Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

### **Statement Concerning Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the [Student Honor Code](#). The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

a.) Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.

b.) Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student. (University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 15 Aug. 2007

<<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>>)

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>