

PUR 4932: The Science of Storytelling

Instructor: Ann Searight Christiano, MPAP

Office Hours: Mondays 12-1 and 5-6 pm, or by appointment

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Course Overview

What makes one story more memorable or moving than another? In this class, we'll explore the science behind compelling, memorable, inspiring stories. We'll look at the science of emotion, counter-narratives, memory, narrative transportation, and the ethics behind telling true stories.

Learning Objectives

1. You'll learn to identify story and plot structures and styles from cultures around the world.
2. You'll learn how to invoke emotion with intention.
3. You'll understand the ways in which stories can contribute to or undo harmful, pervasive narratives.
4. You'll learn the elements of creating counternarratives.
5. You'll learn how stories can reinforce or change culture.
6. You'll learn how stories resonate differently with people with different moral values, identities and worldviews.
7. You'll develop a set of ethics around story sharing.
8. You'll learn to tell stories about systems.
9. You'll learn to diagram compelling, complex stories.
10. You'll learn to apply these principles to your own storytelling

Course Format

Our course will include brief lectures, discussions, reflection, exercises, guest lectures, quizzes and student presentations.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Required Reading, Viewing and Listening

Writing, reading, viewing and listening assignments are listed on the syllabus. There is no textbook for this course. I will add readings and assignments over the course of the semester.

January 8

Introduction

About the course

Seven principles of great stories

Reading: [The Science of Story Building, Medium](#)

January 22

NO CLASS

January 29

Story Structures

Reading:

<https://kimyoonmiauthor.com/post/641948278831874048/worldwide-story-structures>

<https://themillions.com/2018/04/the-moon-is-beautiful-how-and-why-east-asian-stories-generate-plot-without-conflict.html>

February 5

The Ethics of Storytelling

February 12

Harmful Pervasive Narratives, Dominant and Counter-narratives

Listen: [“The Original Welfare Queen” Code Switch](#)

February 19

Empty Space and Full Space

February 26

Verisimilitude, Authenticity, Worldviews and Moral Values

March 4

Why Surprise Matters

March 18

The Science Emotion

March 25

Finding Our Stories

April 1

Stories and Systems and Diagramming Great Storytelling

April 8

Week 12: Storytelling in the Wild

April 15

Week 13: Putting it All Together, The BROKE Project

April 22

Week 14: Final Project Presentations

GRADING

The evaluation of coursework will be based on your performance in four major areas, each of which constitutes a proportion of the final grade. Your grade will be calculated by the following:

In-Class Attendance & Participation: 20%

Attendance and active participation are mandatory. Absences count from the first class following drop/add. After due warning, I may prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a lower or failing grade for excessive absences; more than two unexcused absences during the semester will be considered “excessive absences.” You are responsible for notifying Professor Searight before your absence and, if it is due to illness, provide a note from your medical provider.

Participation means you are fully engaged in the classroom discussion and not using cell phones or laptops except when directed to as part of classroom activities. It means you arrive to class early or on time, ready to learn and engage.

Requirements for attendance and other work in this course follow UF policies:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Assignments: 30%

The class will include readings, videos, podcasts et al. and there will be written assignments for some of them. You will also be assigned to identify your own examples of some of the ideas we discuss in class. You are required to complete these assignments at the direction of the instructor. In-class assignments may not be made up if you miss class.

Final Project: 25%

You will present your final projects in class on April 22.

Quizzes: 25%**I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE ASSIGNMENTS****The grading scale for the course is:**

A 92-100%

A- 90-91.99%

B+ 88-89.99%

B 82-87.99.99%

B- 80-81.99%

C+ 78-79.99%

C 72-77.99%

C- 70-71.99%

D+ 68-69.99%

D 62-67.99%

D- 60-61.99%

E below 60.99%

Follows current UF policies

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

Accessibility

Students requiring reasonable access to services and resources required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other applicable federal and state regulations, please access UF Accessibility for all options available to you. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Please register early!

Contact Information

For ADA questions:

Dr. Russ Froman,
rfroman@ufl.edu
Phone: 352-273-1094

Disability Resource Center: Gerry Altamirano,
galtamirano@ufl.edu
Phone: 352-392-8565

Electronic Information Technology & Communication Accessibility:
Anne Allen,
alallen@ufl.edu
Phone: 352-871-2707

For persons with hearing or speech-related accessibility needs:
When trying to access an office on campus that does not list a TDD/TTY number
contact the Florida Relay Service at 800-955-8771 (TDD) or 711 (V/TDD).

Accessibility Resource Center
University of Florida
PO Box 114085
Gainesville, FL 32611
Phone: 352-392-8565
accessuf@dso.ufl.edu

Address
Environmental Health and Safety Administrative Offices
916 Newell Dr
Gainesville, FL 32603

For more information, see UF's
Electronic Information Technology Accessibility (EITA) Policy

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Availability

Please feel free to speak with me during the semester about any questions or concerns you have during my office hours or by appointment. (You can also reach me by email and I'll do my best to get back to you within 24 hours.)

Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

I'm committed to creating an environment of inclusion and belonging that respects and affirms the fundamental dignity, value, and distinctiveness of all individuals and their perspectives. My teaching will reflect the understanding of the complexity of identity and the mutuality of our global community. It is my responsibility to help promote and maintain a community of compassion, embracing the rich depths of diversity, while facilitating opportunities for equity and inclusion.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/.

Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

The Honor Code (sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel.

If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with me.

A Note on Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course.

A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Land Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that for thousands of years the area now comprising the state of Florida has been, and continues to be, home to many Native Nations. I also recognize that the main campus of the University of Florida is located on the ancestral territory of the Potano and the Seminole peoples. The Potano, of Timucua affiliation, lived here in the Alachua region from before European arrival until the destruction of their towns in the early 1700s. The Seminole, also known as the Alachua Seminole, established towns here shortly after but were forced from the land as a result of a series of wars with the United States known as the Seminole Wars. I acknowledge our shared obligation to honor the past, present, and future Native residents and cultures of Florida.

College of Journalism and Communications Objectives

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation all students should be able to:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the United States

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles, and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity
- Think critically, creatively and independently
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style, and grammatical correctness
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work and to understand the digital world.

Guidelines for Assignment Grades:

Assignments that receive As:

- Draw on the frameworks you've learned in class
- Are interesting
- Compare favorably with the best examples of work I share in class
- Are clearly organized
- Rely heavily on stories and visual language
- Are free of grammatical, spelling, fact or typographical errors
- Show an understanding of both the lecture and the assignment
- Include strong transitions
- Are concise but complete—not overwritten or puffy, but include relevant messages and information
- Are consistent with your message
- Are free of fact errors
- Meticulously cite source materials
- Where appropriate, include 5 or more credible sources of information
- Encourage me to keep reading with use of flow and narrative
- Are truthful and accurate
- Demonstrate a strong understanding of the client and their needs, as well as an understanding of issues and opposition the client faces
- Clearly support arguments with research

Points Off:

I take 2 points off for each of the following:

- Grammatical, spelling or typographical errors
- AP style errors
- Badly organized paragraphs
- Puffy language

I take 10 points off for:

I take 10 points off for:

- Misspellings of any proper name
- Missing citations
- Fact errors
- Using the wrong format
- Failing to include or address something I specifically request in an assignment
- Not using page numbers

Papers will receive an F if:

- They are late
- They don't include necessary citations
- They are generated by using ChatGPT or other AI Tools
- There is evidence of plagiarism

CAMPUS RESOURCES

U Matter, We Care

If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit umatter.ufl.edu/ to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Visit counseling.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services. Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit shcc.ufl.edu/.

University Police Department

Visit police.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies). UF Health Shands

Emergency Room / Trauma Center

For immediate medical care call 352-733- 0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center.

E-learning Technical Support

Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Hitchcock Field and Fork Pantry

Field and Fork provides food at no charge to any member of the UF community. Their hours are posted here: <https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>

Career Connections Center

Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services career.ufl.edu/. Library Support: cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. teachingcenter.ufl.edu/ Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/ Student Complaints On-Campus: sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-codestudent-conduct