

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Woodring College of Education

EDUC 309 – 4 credits - Spring 2007

Storytelling: Oral Narrative in History, Culture, and Society

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(also **MWF 8:30-8:55** in CF 203,) and by chance or appointment

Thoughtful, knowledgeable, and effective educators for a diverse society.

Catalogue Description:

Current trends and interdisciplinary applications of storytelling. Selection, adaptation and presentation of stories for various settings and audiences, with focus on the history of oral narrative traditions, cultural perspectives, and societal impact.

Instructional Methods:

Lecture, group activities, discussion, viewing of live and videotaped performances of student and professional storytellers, evaluation of storytelling performances, and individual coaching.

Course Objectives:

1. To develop an appreciation of storytelling as a communication art.
2. To explore the history of oral narrative, cultural traditions of storytelling in different ancient and modern people groups, and the roll of oral narrative in contemporary culture and society.
3. To discover the numerous applications of oral narrative in a wide variety of interdisciplinary areas: environmental education; public speaking; anthropology; counseling; education; creative writing; theatre/performance arts; business administration/leadership; and more.
4. To experience and evaluate the power of storytelling as a teaching and learning tool in educational settings: exposure to other cultures; connection to history; increased appreciation of literature, language and narrative forms; improved listening and comprehension effectiveness; community-building; enhanced imagination, creativity and memory; etc.
5. To find out how to work with different audience types and how to tailor their communication to engage and meet the needs of their listeners.
6. To develop a working knowledge of the print/multimedia/live sources of material suitable for storytelling and of the professional literature of the field.
7. To examine the roll of individual and family narratives in personal communication.
8. To learn how to choose, retell, or write appropriate stories, and discover the best methods of learning/preparing and performing/telling the story.
9. To increase the ability to communicate in public with more confidence, clarity, imagination, and animation. This will be gained through the improved use of movement, vocal dynamics, facial expression, characterization, audience contact, word choice, etc.

Teacher Education Performance Standards:

For those students in this class that are, or hope to be, education majors, the following standards are targeted in this course: Content Pedagogy; Student Development; Diverse Learners; Motivation and Management; Communication and Technology; Reflective Practice and Professional Growth.

Academic Dishonesty Policy: Western Washington University students are responsible for reading, understanding, and upholding the standards of academic dishonesty as set forth in the *WWU Academic Dishonesty Policy and Procedure* (see Appendix D of the University Bulletin).

Reasonable Accommodation Policy: It is the policy of Western Washington University to provide reasonable accommodation to the known physical, sensory, or mental limitations of qualified individuals except where such accommodation would impose undue hardship on the institution. To request accommodation, contact WWU Disability Resources for Students at 360-650-3844.

Assignments:

1. **Literature Review / Research Paper:** (15% of grade):

- There is no required textbook for this class; however there are numerous books on storytelling which address its application to a wide variety of fields. In place of textbook reading each student is expected to read *200-300 total pages* from *at least 5 different sources*. This reading may be from books, magazines, journal articles, internet resources, etc. These readings will concentrate on storytelling technique, skills learning, history, theory, cultural issues, interdisciplinary applications, etc. (The reading of stories is included in the next assignment.)
- In order to document and evaluate these readings, students will produce a 5-6 page report focusing on your *reactions and personal applications* of the material you are reviewing. Please include all the bibliographic details at the top of your discussion of each book, chapter, or journal article, including # of pages read. Alternatively, your report may be in the form of a topic-focused research paper containing citations and with a standard bibliography at the end.

2. **Story File:** (20% of grade)

- Throughout the quarter students will create a file of multicultural folktales they might wish to perform (some authored stories may also be included). This file will contain information on 15-20 printed, recorded, or live stories. These stories should come from at least 6 different sources and 10 different cultural origins. It is expected that students may read or listen to as many as 5-10 stories for every one that is chosen for this file. Stories should also be chosen with thematic or interdisciplinary areas in mind, e.g. environmental education, urban legends, Aboriginal pour quoi tales, audience participation stories, Greek myths, corporate narratives, etc.
- Your story file should include:
 - 1) a list of contents with stories listed by cultural origin
 - 2) a bibliography of sources used in your search for stories
 - 3) 15-20 story analysis entries (consistent format with your name on each sheet)
- Entries should be single-spaced, printed 2 sided, and should be about ½ page in length.
- At least 3 of these entries should be of greater detail including bibliographic information of multiple versions of a folktale with discussion of the traditional variations. (1-2 pgs.)
- For each story chosen students will provide the following information:

Title of Story:

Time Length:

Author (or) Reteller:

Cultural Origin: (applicable only to folklore)

Title of Anthology:

Age Range:

Editor:

Source: (including call # if source is a library)

Illustrator:

Theme:

Publisher:

Synopsis of Story: (paragraph)

Copyright Date:

Performance/Application Notations: (paragraph)

3. **Storytelling Performances:**

- Students will present several stories to the whole class in addition to small group story sharing, performance activities, practice/coaching sessions, and discussions.
- Presentations, including introduction, should be 4-6 minutes long.
- Performances will be videotaped in order for students to evaluate themselves more fully.
- No notes or written outlines will be used during performances. Students will learn to communicate by employing mental imagery and physical action to aid the memory process.
- A 1 page self evaluation is due after each story performance.

1st Performance - "Retold" Folktale: (10% of grade)

- In this performance, students will choose a story that comes from the oral tradition of a specific culture/country. These folktales should be retold in the student's own words. Some phrases, lines and sentences may remain the same as in the printed/recorded story, but for the most part the story should be paraphrased so that the storyteller can remain spontaneous during the telling. Students will study several versions of each story during preparation.
- Students will provide a one-page story analysis to hand out to the class.

2nd Performance – Personal Experience Story: (10% of grade)

- Students will tell a story from their own lives employing appropriate narrative structure and delivery techniques. This story may be a childhood story, or one of adventure, mischief, self discovery, etc. but the subject matter must be appropriate for a captive audience.
- Students will also provide:
 - 1) Text of your story. (Do not write out your story until it has been fully prepared orally) and
 - 2) A list of 10-12 other stories with titles and brief synopses (3-4 sentences).

3rd Performance - Tale with a Twist: (10% of grade)

For this performance, students may choose from the following options:

- Performance of a cultural folktale that includes additional performance elements, e.g.: audience participation, props, puppets, music/singing, tandem or bilingual telling, sign language, etc.
- Performance of literary or modern material (author identified): short story, poetry, monologue, tall tale, urban legend, etc. This option may require greater memorization of wording.
- Students will provide a one-page story analysis to hand out to the class.

4th Performance – Family History Story: (10% of grade)

- Students will tell a story from their own family history. This story could be an immigration story, a character study, an object story, an adventure, or some other type of “heirloom” story.
- Students will also provide:
 - 1) Text of your story. (Do not write out your story until it has been fully prepared orally) and
 - 2) A list of 10-12 other family history stories with titles and brief synopses (3-4 sentences).

4. **Storyteller Evaluation Report:** (10% of grade)

- In order to provide students with the opportunity to evaluate differing performance/presentation styles of storytellers, students will view or listen to at least 2 hours of storyteller performances. Students should view video of professional storytellers, listen to audiotapes of stories, and must arrange to see live storytelling performances sometime during the quarter.
- Students will submit a 3-4 page paper pointing out observations, analysis, and comparisons of the storytellers observed, as well as applications of what was learned from them.
- Similar evaluation criterion will be used as is used for class performances.
- At least 6 different storytellers should be evaluated and compared.

5. **Participation during class** (5% of grade): Participation grade is determined by:

- prompt attendance at all class meetings and contribution to class discussions/activities
- effort made by the student during storytelling sessions
- contribution to the evaluation of other class members' stories and presentations
- impromptu readings and tellings of stories, leading warm-ups, etc.
- You will create and submit a portfolio of all your work in this class.

This will consist of a 1” 3-ring binder divided into eight labeled sections:

1. Book Report	5. Original story information
2. Story File	6. “The Last 10%” information
3. Storyteller evaluation	7. Class notes and handouts
4. Retold story information	8. Other students' storyfile sheets

6. **The Last 10% Take your pick! (note...this is not extra credit!)**

- Participate in a community storytelling event (on campus, in town, or in a school or library) and evaluate your performance in 1-2 pages. **(5%)**
- Increase book report reading by 50 pages, 2 additional sources, and 2-3 write-up pages. **(5%)**
- Attend live storytelling events and evaluate performers in your storyteller evaluation assignment (see #4). **(2% each for you, 1% extra per friend. Max 4% per event total)**
- Other projects/ideas may be considered with instructor’s approval.

Dates to Remember (tentative schedule):

April 30-May7	* 1 st Retold Story	May 21-25	* Tale with a Twist story
May 11	* Book report due	June 1	* Storyteller evaluation due
May 18	* Portfolio check + ½ of storyfile	June 8	* Portfolio due
Feb 21, 23	* Personal Experience Story	June 4, 6	* Family History Story

Topics for Discussion and Learning:

- history and multicultural traditions of oral storytelling
- current trends and application of storytelling into interdisciplinary areas such as Education, Anthropology, Folklore, Business Administration, Environmental Education, Psychology, Healing Arts, Theatre, Creative Writing, ...and more
- resources for storytellers
 - storytelling guides for performers, educators, business professionals, etc.
 - critical/academic publications examining folklore, mythology, urban legends, organizational narrative, literary tales, cultural viewpoints, oral tradition, etc.
 - anthologies of folklore – Dewey system 398.2
 - internet resources, folklore motif index guides, storytelling organizations, periodicals, etc.
- choosing appropriate material
 - retelling multicultural folktales, fables, and mythology
 - examining multiple variations of folktales to determine plot parameters/options
 - creating original stories: family history (heirloom stories), personal experience tales
 - finding narratives for use in business and professional settings
 - use of literary tales, modern short stories and picture books
 - choosing poetry to incorporate into programs
- techniques for effective learning and rehearsal
 - using storymaps and storyboards vs. outlines or written notes
 - focus on listening, internal visualization, and sensory imagery to aid memory/learning
 - extemporaneous vs. memorized delivery
- techniques for effective storytelling delivery
 - using space, movement, gestures, simple props and costuming
 - enhancing facial expression, triggering, eye contact, sense of spontaneity
 - developing oral communication techniques; vocal expression, quality, diction
 - improving word choice and sentence structure
 - building sensory and emotive imagery, suspense, anticipation
 - using improvisation to enliven stories
 - incorporating audience participation techniques
 - adapting stories and performance styles for differing audiences, contexts, age groups
- how to incorporate storytelling into the classroom and curriculum
 - the teacher as storyteller
 - using storytelling across the curriculum; using stories to teach history, science, math, social studies, creative writing, multicultural understanding, etc.
 - improving language and vocabulary skills
 - enhancing listening and oral skills
 - encouraging cultural and emotive awareness
 - increasing children's interest in literature and independent reading
 - the student as storyteller
 - encouraging confidence in personal expression, reducing performance anxiety
 - increasing oral communication and public presentation skills
 - meeting Essential Academic Learning Requirement (EALR) for Oral Communication
 - boosting creative development, imagination, and creative writing
 - using group story-circles – group storytelling/story creation
 - dramatizing folklore and literary tales – group storytelling
- building a storytelling program
- copyright laws and acknowledgement of authors/retellers/cultures