

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
STOR5200
Contemporary Issues In Storytelling: Telling History Stories

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Office Hours: 12:30-4:00pm June 14-18, June 22-26 and June 29-July 2, except for Wednesdays. Other times by appointment.

TEXT REQUIREMENTS: *Tales as Tools: the Power of Story in the Classroom* (National Storytelling Association, 1994). *Many Voices: True Tales from America's Past* (National Storytelling Association, 1995). *Many Voices: True Tales from America's Past, Teacher's Guide* (National Storytelling Association, 1995). Each of these titles is available from the office of the National Storytelling Network in Jonesborough, Tennessee. Your instructor has made arrangements for each of them to be sold to you at a discount. Be sure to identify yourself as a student in this class. Loren Niemi and Elizabeth Ellis, *Inviting the Wolf In: Thinking about Difficult Stories* (August House, 2001). This title is available from your instructor at a discounted price.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: This course addresses current issues and developments in the discipline of storytelling. Subjects range from artistic and practical aspects of performance to specialized uses of storytelling in the professions. The focus is on advanced performance techniques, technological advances and/or the uses of storytelling in various venues such as education, business, health occupations, etc.

Telling History Stories will use history as a template for examining storytelling in the school curriculum and its use in public performance. This class will focus on the skills of performance, research and story crafting necessary to tell fact-based stories in a relevant and compelling manner.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. The student will learn good story delivery skills. Memory techniques, overcoming stage fright and building a relationship with the listener will be taught, as well as effective use of the voice and the body.
2. The student who plans to work in school settings will learn integration of story within the school curriculum and educational objectives.
3. The student who plans to use fact-based storytelling in public performance will study how fact-based stories can be delivered in a compelling and entertaining manner to appeal to the general public.

COURSE TOPICS:

1. **Research skills**, such as the uses of primary and secondary documents, will be explained.
2. **Oral history** collection techniques will be examined.
3. **Narrative skills** will be utilized for story crafting. Plotting, characterization, point of view, emotional arc, dialogue, conflict and resolution will be employed for compelling story design.
4. **Performance skills** will be taught through classroom exercises and peer coaching. Emphasis will be on physicality, voice and the audience-teller relationship. Persona telling will be discussed.
5. **Educational objectives** will be observed and methods of curriculum integration will be investigated.
6. **Special issues** of racism, sexism and classism inherent in historical material will be acknowledged and scrutinized. Censorship and political correctness will be examined.
7. **Techniques for facing fear and performance anxiety** will be shared and utilized.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Fact-Based Story/Performance Skills	100
Fact-Based Story/Research Skills	200
Fact-Based Story/Narrative Skills	200
Oral History Interview Response	100
Critical Response to Fact-Based CD	100
Critical Response to Fact-Based CD	100
Peer Coaching Experience	100
Classroom Discussion	100

Grading Scale:

A: 930-1000, A-: 900-929, B+: 870-899, B: 839-869, B-: 800-829, C+: 770-799, C: 730-769, F: 729 or lower.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is crucial in an oral communication course. Therefore, all students are required to be in class every time class meets. Under extenuating circumstances, students will be able to make up missed work, if time permits. However, you are still penalized for excessive absences. 3 absences will result in a drop of one letter grade. Subsequent absences will receive a letter grade drop. Arriving or leaving more than 30 minutes early or late will be considered an absence.

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS

Fact-Based Story/ Performance Skills

Learn and tell a story, which is under ten minutes in length that has been made ready for telling by someone else. Make changes you feel will make the story more tellable.

Choose a story from *Many Voices: True Tales from America's Past*. If you prefer to tell a story from some other source, please contact your instructor. Due Thursday, June 18th.

Oral History Interview Response

Read the background material on oral history *Step by Step Guide to Oral History* at http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html#BIB1 and *Making Sense of Oral History* at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/>. Conduct a short oral history interview with someone in your class. Follow the guidelines presented on the websites. Write a two-page response to the experience. What did you learn that will be useful to you as a storyteller? Or as a teacher? **Due Tuesday, June 23rd**.

Fact-Based Story/ Research Skills

Present the raw research you have done for your narrative story to a group for peer review. Be prepared to answer questions about the types of source documents used and the scope of your investigation. **Due Thursday, June 25th**.

Fact-Based Story/Narrative Skills

Tell your historical narrative to the class. Utilize the story crafting elements covered in your readings and in class discussion. **Due July 1st and 2nd**.

Critical Response to Fact-Based CD or DVD

Watch or listen to two CDs or DVDs storytellers who deal with fact-based topics. Write a two-page response to the product. Speak to the Performance, Research and Narrative skills present. How effective is the product as information? How effective is it as entertainment? What did you learn that would be useful to you as a teller of fact-based stories? **First response due Monday, June 22nd. Second due Monday, June 29th**.

Peer Coaching Experience

Storytelling is a skill-based activity. The best way to tell is by telling. Therefore, you will be telling stories each day that class meets. Your willing participation in this part of the class is essential to its success. Please be kind in dealing with the stories of your fellow students. But, remember you can maintain a positive tone and still be honest in your assessment of their work. **Due everyday class meets.**

Classroom Discussion

Please come to class prepared to discuss the ideas and issues involved in Fact-Based Storytelling. Outside readings are an important part of coming to class prepared.

Tuesday, June 16th *Tales as Tools* p.19-35.

Wednesday, June 17th *Tales as Tools* p. 115-130.

Thursday, June 18th *Tales as Tools* p. 131-144.

Monday, June 22nd *Inviting the Wolf In* p. 79-90.

Wednesday, June 24th *Inviting the Wolf In* p. 116-130.

Monday, June 29th *Inviting the Wolf In* p. 158-182.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask!

