

MANLEY COLLEGE

Narratives of Identity

FRPG 187K Fall 2009

T/Th 10:10-11:40, Hepburn 019

W 8:00-9:30 Hepburn 19 (Becht)

Th 8:30-10:00 Richardson 204 (Rivers)

**“I will tell you something about stories...They aren’t just
entertainment. Don’t be fooled.”** **-Leslie Marmon Silko**

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COURSE OVERVIEW

One of the goals of the First Year Program is to help you “consider new perspectives on the world and your place in it”. As you begin college and adult life, you enter an intense period of defining and shaping your identity, even as, at the same time, the particulars of your class, race, gender, and sexuality continue to shape you. This course offers you a unique opportunity to reflect on who you are and where you are coming from, and to explore who you would like to become, through readings, writing, and discussion that may shed light on your own experiences and development.

Throughout the semester, we will focus on the role of narratives, or stories, in the formation and expression of identity. For example, how and why do we “rewrite” family histories? In what ways do we “tell stories” everyday? How can stories heal, and how can they hurt? Through a range of narratives, we will analyze the writers’ expressions of their identity, and consider ways to construct our own narratives. **The objective of this course is to facilitate reflection, exploration, and critical analysis in a challenging and supportive community, while building your thinking, reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills.**

First-Year Program Philosophy and Goals 2009-10

A residentially-based, interdisciplinary first-year program is an ideal environment for beginning the four-year process of developing the complex intellectual and social skills that are at the heart of a liberal education and the habits of considered values and engaged citizenship that such an education should produce. The First-Year Program (FYP) and First-Year Seminar (FYS) are the core of our institutional commitment to improving your ability to engage in critical inquiry and research, to design and deliver written, spoken and/or visual texts that demonstrate rhetorical sensitivity, and to be sophisticated readers, listeners, and viewers of the texts of others. We believe that these same competencies can help develop your ability to communicate across differences (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, political views) as you find ways to live and learn together in the residence halls and as engaged and ethically reflective citizens both during and after your college years. These goals should be understood as the first step in our work with you over a four-year process of helping you to meet the University's Aims and Objectives.

We hope to help you see that writing, speaking, research, and interacting with others are rhetorical endeavors. Effective communicators are, by definition, rhetorically sensitive. Rhetorical sensitivity means understanding that all communication, whether formal or informal, involves having to make choices about your messages, whether written, spoken, or visual. To become an effective communicator, you need to recognize that the creation of a meaningful and powerful message involves both a creator and an audience, and that therefore the voice you adopt in your communication, and the audience you imagine yourself communicating to, matter a great deal in creating your message. The choices you make in writing and speaking are central in determining how people read and hear your voice. Becoming conscious and reflective about those choices, and their ethical dimensions, is a central goal of the FYP and FYS.

Working with you so that you become more rhetorically sensitive means that you should be increasingly able to assess the requirements of a particular task and make intentional decisions about which mode or modes of communication and inquiry would be most effective in addressing it. To do so, you must develop specific writing, speaking, research, and technological competencies. To accomplish these goals, the FYP and FYS will present you with assignments that ask you to engage in a process that involves **recognizing** the rhetorical situation, **planning** communication strategies to address the task at hand, **composing and presenting** the message, and then engaging in **critical assessment** of your own work and that of others. The results of that assessment process will allow you to rethink, restructure, and revise your work. We further recognize that this process is not linear and that the effective creation of texts requires that you move back and forth among these four elements of the message creation process. This is why we require that your writing and speaking assignments be "projects" that include preparatory exercises and multiple drafts or rehearsals, all of which ask you to continue to reflect critically on the choices you have made in constructing your message.

This process of increased rhetorical awareness and skill development is at the heart of the philosophical and pedagogical perspectives that inform the work of the FYP and FYS. Because this process both transcends and integrates a variety of specific skills, the program has a philosophical commitment to designing assignments that ask you to integrate various modes of communication in furtherance of the higher-level rhetorical goals in which they are situated. To ensure that the program is meeting its stated goals, all FYP and FYS syllabi are read by other faculty in the program to determine if they include a variety of assignments that forward the writing, speaking, research, and literacy goals of the program. All FYP and FYS courses have to be approved by faculty in the program before they are offered.

TEXTS

- Bastard Out of Carolina, Dorothy Allison
- Dreams from My Father, Barack Obama
- A Pocket Style Manual, edition 5e, Diana Hacker
- All other readings will be posted on Angel

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

| Assignment (weight) | Due date |
|--|----------|
| My Passions Presentation (5%) | 9/1 |
| “Who Am I Now?” Paper (5%) | 9/10 |
| Family Narrative Paper (10%) | 9/29 |
| Race/Class/Gender/Sexuality Paper (15%) | 10/27 |
| Identity as a Work in Progress Paper (10%) | 11/19 |
| Creative Personal Narrative Presentation (15%) | 12/3 |
| Reading Introduction Presentation (10%) | TBA |
| Smaller Written Assignments (15%) | ongoing |
| Reading Checks (15%) | ongoing |

For each of the above assignments, you will receive an assignment sheet with clear directions and expectations, and a rubric (chart that assigns points for various aspects), so that you know how assignments will be graded.

- **Writing Assignments (45% total)**

This semester you will write four papers, two shorter ones and two longer ones. Since this class is a place for you to **learn and practice** college level writing skills, you will have the opportunity to revise longer papers more than once before submitting a “final” draft to be graded. For these papers, your first drafts will be assessed with some very basic criteria (do you address the topic, do you meet the length requirement, etc.), and this assessment will count as 25% of your overall grade for that paper. The remaining 75% comes from an assessment of your final draft. Shorter papers will have only one graded version.

The “Who Am I Now?” Paper (Paper #1, 2 pages) will ask you to reflect on your identity as you enter college. As we’ll discuss in class, identity encompasses a range of things that you are and do. This paper will also ask you to reflect on who you *want* to be.

The Family Narrative Paper (Paper #2, 3-5 pages) will ask you to briefly recount a family story (in which you may or may not be a “player”) that has shaped the way you see yourself or the way others see you (which, as we’ll discuss, often shapes the way you see yourself). After you recount the story, you’ll analyze it: are there different versions of this story? What has shaped them? How has this story helped to build your identity? Are there connections between your story and an identity-shaping narrative in one of the texts we’re reading?

The Race/Class/Gender/Sexuality Paper (Paper #3, 3-5 pages) will ask you to focus on one of these four aspects of your identity, and discuss the extent to which you feel you have personally defined what it means to you to be, for example, male, or gay, or middle class, and the extent to which you feel society has shaped your identity through this aspect.

The Identity as a Work in Progress Paper (Paper #4, 2 pages) will connect back to Paper #1, in that it will ask you to reflect on how your identity has changed after a semester of college life, and how these changes have come about. It will also ask you to reflect on whether you are any closer to being the person you want to be.

- **Speaking (35%)**

Although there will be opportunities for presentation (of projects or writing plans, for example), much of the speaking you do in this class will happen in large and small group discussion. As with writing, this class is a place for you to learn and practice speaking skills, and we will support you in this through instruction about speaking and by doing our part to create an atmosphere that encourages thoughtful participation from each member of the classroom community. **Our expectation of you is that you arrive each day prepared (by having done and annotated the reading) and ready to contribute thoughtfully to class discussion.**

You will also have three opportunities to practice speaking in front of a group in a more formal way:

For the **“My Passions” Presentation**, you’ll share three things that you are passionate about, and why, and explain how these passions help add up to the person that you are.

The Reading Introduction Presentation will involve presenting a summary and some background for the day’s reading and beginning our discussion, and will be done with a partner. We’ll assign the partners and readings.

The Creative Personal Narrative Presentation will come at the end of the semester, and give you the opportunity to share a story (maybe a family one, maybe not) that has shaped your identity. You’ll have a variety of mediums to choose for your telling: a performance piece in which you or a group act out your story, a visual art piece that tells your story, a dramatic retelling, a reading from a conventional written narrative, or other options. You’ll accompany this piece with a short written statement that explains how the story you share has shaped your identity.

These three assignments are designed to build your speaking skills (such as diction, eye contact and body language, but also planning, co-presenting, incorporating the use of technology smoothly, etc.) and for the second two you will be able (in fact, required ☺) to rehearse with the mentor or WORD studio, so that you have feedback to help you improve, and hopefully feel a little more comfortable.

- **Smaller Written Assignments (15%)**

In addition to major papers, you will complete several shorter writing assignments, independently in and out of class and with small groups, which will be graded for both substance and use of conventions. A Smaller Written Assignments Rubric will make explicit how your work will be evaluated. **Smaller assignments must be turned in as a typed hard copy the class they are due to receive credit.**

- **Reading Checks (15%)**

Another skill we seek to build in the FYP is that of critical reading, which we’ll demonstrate and practice in class and expect you to do as you read independently. An important part of critical reading is annotating, or underlining/writing in a text, and you’ll be expected to do this for all class reading. We will do reading checks for annotation throughout the semester. **To receive credit for a reading check, you must have annotated each page of the assigned reading by the class it is due.**

- **Attendance policy**

You are expected to attend every class and arrive on time. Missing a class FOR ANY REASON will mean not receiving credit for Reading Checks or Small Writing Assignments done during that class. Papers turned in late will lose significant credit.

SUPPORT

In addition to your professors, two other important resources for this course are our mentor, Emma Biederman, and the WORD Studio.

Our Mentor: Emma Biederman is the Manley College mentor. As a mentor, Emma is trained to assist you in writing, oral communication, and research. Emma can help you brainstorm about ideas for an assignment, rehearse a presentation, narrow your thesis for a paper, strengthen your argument and organization in an essay, or work on stylistic and grammatical problems. Her job is *to help you learn how to do these things yourself*. She is a tutor, not your personal editor. You are free to consult with [mentor name] during [his/her] office hours and at her convenience. You must schedule tutorials with Emma in advance: she should not be expected to accommodate last-minute requests before an assignment is due. Your advisor may decide that you would need assistance from Emma, and she will ask you to schedule a conference with her. It is your responsibility to make the appointment with Emma and to appear at the time you have reserved.

The WORD Studio: The Munn Center for Rhetoric and Communication maintains The WORD Studio in ODY Library—a place to get feedback from peers on assignments in Writing, Oral communication, Research, and Design of visual projects. You can come for a consultation to plan a paper or presentation (you don't need anything but a blank piece of paper!); to find ways to improve the ideas, organization, and style of a draft; to videotape and review a presentation rehearsal; to practice a PowerPoint presentation, and more. Peer tutors are not proofreaders or editors who silently “fix” your work for you; instead, they are trained to have a conversation with you about ways you can fix problem areas yourself and become a better overall communicator. You may use The WORD Studio for consultations on assignments for any of your courses, although for FYP assignments you should first seek out Emma during her office hours.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The table beginning on the next page outlines class topics, readings (*italics*) and assignments (**bold**) due for each class. It is certainly possible that the order of events on this syllabus and due dates for assignments may change as the semester progresses. We will make every effort to notify you about such changes as soon, and as frequently, as possible. However, it remains your responsibility to be aware of such changes. **Attendance in class and reading your email at least once every day will ensure that you always know of any changes.**

Manley College Schedule Fall 2009

| Week | Week of (Monday) | Plenary Tuesday 10:10-11:40am | Seminar Weds. 8:30-10am or Thurs. 8:30-10am | Plenary Thursday 10:10-11:40am |
|------|---------------------|--|--|---|
| 1 | August 24 | (This first class is on Monday from 8:30-10:00) -SLU Aims and Objectives -FYP Goals -Class Practices -Syllabus | No seminar this week | - "I Like Guys" - "What is a Narrative?" - How do we define identity? |
| 2 | August 31 | - <i>Reading The World: "Annotating and Pre-Reading"</i> - "A Dimensional Approach to Narrative" (print for in class reading) - Oral Presentation skills | - Oral Presentation skills, cont. - Writing Mini-workshop 1 - <i>Ways of Knowing</i> (handout) - <i>Reading the World: "Reading Critically"</i> | - <i>Reading the World: "Patterns and Summarizing"</i> Assignment due: My Passions Presentation |
| 3 | Sept 7 | Assignment due: My Passions Presentation - "The Sociological Imagination..." | - "The Sociological Imagination..." cont. - "Notes of a Native Son" | Assignment due: Who I Am Now paper - "Stories for the Crossroads" (print for in class reading) |
| 4 | Sept. 14 | - <i>Bastard</i> ch. 1-3 - Discussion Skills | - <i>Bastard</i> ch. 4-8 - Writing Mini-workshop 2 | - <i>Bastard</i> ch. 9-10 |
| 5 | Sept. 21 | - <i>Bastard</i> ch. 11-15 | - <i>Bastard</i> ch. 16-17 - Writing Mini-workshop 3 | <u>FYP-Program-wide meeting</u> |
| 6 | Sept. 28 | Assignment due: Family Narrative Paper Peer Review (draft #1) | No Seminar - "Two or Three Things I Know for Sure" | Assignment due: Family Narrative Conferences (draft #2) |
| 7 | Oct. 5 | Assignment due: Family Narrative Paper Final Draft - "Two or Three Things I Know for Sure" cont. - "Professions for Women" | - <i>Three Narratives by Women</i> - "Talking with our Brothers" excerpt - Writing Mini-workshop 4 | - "In the American..." - "Because My..." - Writing Mini-workshop |
| 8 | Oct. 12 | - "Universal Freckle..." - <i>On Point</i> : "The Skin You're In" (audiorecording) | No Seminar | <u>Fall Break</u> |

| | | | | |
|----|---------|---|--|--|
| 9 | Oct. 19 | <i>-Dreams ch 1-6</i> | <i>-Dreams ch7-10</i> <i>-Writing Mini-workshop 5</i> | <i>-Dreams 11-14</i> |
| 10 | Oct. 26 | Assignment due: Race/Class/Gender/ Sexuality Paper Peer Review (draft #1) | No Seminar <i>-Dreams 15-18</i> | Assignment due: Race/Class/Gender/ Sexuality Paper Conferences (draft #2) |
| 11 | Nov. 2 | <i>-Dreams 19-epilogue</i> | <i>-What is a Myth?</i> <i>-Myths and Archetypes</i> <i>-Writing Mini-workshop 6</i> | Assignment due: Race/Class/Gender/ Sexuality Paper Final Draft <i>-“The Mask” (audiorecording)</i> |
| 12 | Nov. 9 | <i>-“Jason and the Golden Fleece”</i> <i>-In Search of Myths and Heroes: “The Quest”(film)</i> | <i>-“Coming Into Awareness”</i> <i>-Guest Lecture: The Philosophy of Identity</i> | <i>-The Powers of Ten (film)</i> <i>-Lecture: Intro to quantum physics and human physiology</i> |
| 13 | Nov. 16 | <i>-What the *Bleep* Do We Know? (film)</i> | <i>-What the *Bleep* Do We Know? (film) Discussion</i> | Assignment due: Identity as a Work in Progress Paper <i>-“Consider the Stars”</i> |
| 14 | Nov.23 | <u>BREAK</u> | <u>BREAK</u> | <u>BREAK</u> |
| 15 | Nov. 30 | <i>-Lecture: The myth of science?</i> <i>-Anima Mundi: The Search for Gaia</i> | <i>-“Paradise beach”</i> | Assignment due: Creative Personal Narrative Presentation |
| 16 | Dec. 7 | Assignment due: Creative Personal Narrative Presentation | <u>No Seminar This Week</u> | Assignment due: Creative Personal Narrative Presentation |

From the Academic Honor Cards

THIS SECTION PERTAINING TO THE ACADEMIC HONOR COUNCIL is *not confidential*. Your signed acknowledgment of the code will be placed in your permanent student file. The Academic Honor Code cited below was designed by students and approved by the elected student government, the Thelomathesian Society, on February 26, 1992.

All students at St. Lawrence University are bound by honor to maintain the highest level of academic integrity. By virtue of membership in the St. Lawrence community, every student accepts the responsibility to know the rules of academic honesty, to abide by them at all times, and to encourage all others to do the same.

Responsibility for avoiding behavior or situations from which academic dishonesty may be inferred rests entirely with the students. Students should be sure to learn from faculty what is

expected as their own work and how the work of other people should be acknowledged.

Academic Dishonesty, according to the *Student Handbook*: includes any dishonest conduct in connection with any academic (including research) course, program, or work.

1. It is assumed that all work submitted for credit is done by the student unless the instructor gives specific permission for collaboration.
2. Cheating on examinations and tests consists of knowingly giving or using, or attempting to use unauthorized assistance during examinations or tests.
3. Dishonesty in work outside of examinations and tests consists of handing in for credit as original work that which is **not** original, where originality is required.
4. Falsifying research methods, data, and/or results constitutes academic dishonesty.

The following constitute examples of academic dishonesty:

a) *Plagiarism*: Presenting as one's own work the work of another person—words, ideas, data, evidence, thoughts, information, organizing principles, or style of presentation — without proper attribution. Plagiarism includes paraphrasing or summarizing without acknowledgment by quotation marks, footnotes, endnotes, or other indices of reference (cf. Joseph F. Trimmer, *A Guide to MLA Documentation*).

b) Handing in false data, reports or results in connection with any research project or experiment.

c) Handing in a book report on a book one has not read.

d) Falsification of attendance records of a laboratory or other class meeting.

e) Supplying information to another student knowing that such information will be used in a dishonest way.

f) Submission of work (papers, journal abstracts, etc.) which has received credit in a previous course to satisfy the requirement(s) of a second course without the knowledge and permission of the instructor of the second course.

g) The above list is not exhaustive. In the event there is a question as to whether alleged conduct falls within the scope of the Academic Honor Code, the vice president and dean of academic affairs' determination shall be final.

Claims of ignorance and academic or personal pressure are unacceptable as excuses for academic dishonesty. Students must learn what constitutes one's own work and how the work of others must be acknowledged." (*St. Lawrence University 2008–2009 Student Handbook*, pp. 148–153.)

All intentional and unintentional acts of academic dishonesty may result in disciplinary action. Recommendations of disciplinary action may include a failing grade on the work in question, a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, suspension from the University, or expulsion from the University.

More information on academic integrity, including the Academic Honor Council's Constitution, can be found at: http://www.stlawu.edu/acadaffairs/academic_honor_policy.pdf. For information about academic integrity or the Academic Honor Council issues, contact the Dean's Office at x5993.