***By the Blink of an Eye: Reading narrative and writing stories***

IDH 3931 0298

Tuesday, 6th period- 12:50-1:40

Location: Little 117

Instructor: Nina Stoyan-Rosenzweig, Communicore C1-21; [nstoyan@ufl.edu](mailto:nstoyan@ufl.edu); 352-273-8406

**Class description:**

This class focuses on two narratives of illness, change, and growth- The Diving Bell and the Butterfly; and A Blessing in Disguise. The class will investigate the lengths people go to tell their story, and how that process can help bring resolution and health, as well as helping to order and celebrate life. Through two books- The Diving Bell and the Butterfly; and A Blessing in Disguise, through skype sessions with one of the authors, and through pushing the boundaries of narrative, this course will explore how and why people tell stories. In reading and experiencing a range of narrative forms- graphic novels, games, video and others, it also will explore the impact of these stories on all of our lives.

**Class Schedule and Reading Assignments**

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| ***Date*** | ***Topic*** | ***Reading assignment*** | ***Topic/assignment due date/information*** |
| August 23 | Writing the spoken word or speaking the written word- talking about healing words! |  | Watch this performance before class: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/nov/04/darfur-poet-triumphs-in-international-poetry-slam>  Can words heal?  Watch excerpts from the PBS documentary “Healing words” in class <https://vimeo.com/137450337> |
| August 30 | Healing words: can writing heal? |  | Discussion of narrative medicine. Watch before class: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24kHX2HtU3o>  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZ3ucjmcZwY> |
| September 6 | Other forms of narratives |  | Visual narratives of healing- Cindy Craig , guest speaker  Watch below before class <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmAnbqze2BM> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6lsa-XIEbc> |
| September 13 | What can writing about illness do for you? | A Blessing in Disguise Pp. 1-48 | **Speak via Skype with Kristen Fox**  <http://www.mtv.com/news/2284712/kristen-fox-chronic-disease-personal-essay/>  “I was confused, frustrated and depressed by their diagnosis. In the midst of my confusion, **I attempted to convince myself that I had an eating disorder.** I thought maybe if I acted like I had one, then I would get better because I could then complete the therapy the doctors placed me in. However, since I didn't really have an eating disorder, the therapy didn't help me and only caused me to develop many deep and painful psychological and emotional wounds -- wounds that took years to heal from. Wounds I didn't realize I had sustained until I began writing.  Through my writing, **the pain and anguish I had felt for so many years came through on the paper**, and I began to realize how hard it had been on me to live with this invisible illness. How difficult it had been to receive comments from strangers and doctors about how it was my fault I was sick and that if I merely changed my thinking pattern, I would get better.  As I wrote my two books, "[A Blessing in Disguise](http://www.amazon.com/A-Blessing-Disguise-Kristen-Fox/dp/0990908402)" and "[Blessings in Hidden Places](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0990908429/ref=pd_lpo_sbs_dp_ss_1?pf_rd_p=1944687722&pf_rd_s=lpo-top-stripe-1&pf_rd_t=201&pf_rd_i=0990908402&pf_rd_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf_rd_r=0PYJMR1YB8V5V2WZ4FYV)," I began to feel peace settle over me as I let go of all the psychological and emotional pain that had accumulated over time. **I began to feel free.** So even though I may be sicker than I've ever been, I simultaneously feel more at peace with my life.”  Submit project or paper idea via the class website by class time. |
| September 20 | Stories and the brain | ABID, Pp. 49-95 | Examine the following sites/stories!  Wired for story?  <http://wrvo.org/post/neuroscience-shows-brain-wired-story#stream/0>  <https://hbr.org/2014/10/why-your-brain-loves-good-storytelling>  <http://bigthink.com/ideafeed/how-the-human-brain-became-hardwired-to-tell-stories>  Writing and healing- a process?  <http://writingandhealing.org/>  Podcast discussion. |
| September 27 | Other forms of narrative | ABID, Pp. 97-141 | Stories of illness- graphic medicine.  <http://www.graphicmedicine.org/>  In class writing. |
| October 4 | Stories that heal | ABID, Pp. 143-208 | Telling the story: Stories that heal. From Rachel Naomi Remen  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1xBjIHEhtg  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5FTuM3WrYc> |
| October 11 | Writing and PTSD | ABID P. 209-257 | Writing and PTSD- <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1348/135910707X250866/full>  <http://hpq.sagepub.com/content/10/2/211.short> |
| October 18 | Writing and recovery | The Diving Bell and the Butterfly Pp. 1-30 | **Writing and recovery** <http://hopeathandinc.cmail19.com/t/ViewEmail/t/C5909BF80091A723/6E2B6CAE69028968F6A1C87C670A6B9F>  Podcast discussion. |
| October 25 | Stories and culture | TDBATB Pp Pp. 31-60 | Why do we tell stories? Fairy tales, Harry Potter, Beedle the Bard, and Coyote… what do these stories do? Excerpt from Smoke Signals.  . |
| November 1 |  | TDBATB Pp. Pp. 61-90 | Cherokee story telling  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=othiWKn0trU>  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buiLxjyGFE0>  Quileute storytelling  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmfbQRclFf8>  Comanche storytelling  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvUGQF0FjLQ>  Turn in “submission” to “More Voices.” |
| November 8 |  | TDBATB Pp. Pp. 91-131 | Anansi stories- <http://myths.e2bn.org/mythsandlegends/origins11717-anansi-brings-stories-to-the-world.html> Watch making of Anansi masters <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UClTMBsFayJeZDUkwm2w8nWw> and read <http://www.culturalheritageconnections.org/wiki/Anansi_Masters>  In class writing. |
| November 15 |  |  | Storytelling in different cultures  <http://psycnet.apa.org/books/11422/007>  <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=l6uRAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA149&dq=storytelling+and+healing&ots=9JQoEFt1lV&sig=YQ6dFPCY_I9ZF-UB8ckUUdecnac#v=onepage&q=storytelling%20and%20healing&f=false>  <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/20193> |
| November 22 | Telling musical stories |  | **Words and music- song lyrics…**  **Excerpts from One Voice**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQtJ6UhVkfw>  Podcast discussion. |
| November 29 | Combining stories and dance |  | Telling the story: Story telling through dance-  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwtrQ27oG9A>  Hula and Kathak dancing <http://mag.amazing-kids.org/non-fiction/stories/storytelling-through-the-kathak-and-hula-dances/>  hula  Holo Ma Pele <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbIZYLaulwY>  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ck5rIVdSMZ0>  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fquGIojgtOs>  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Xr1Wd17w-g>  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sm2nDzlzhu0>  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePNwj8BgvIg>  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FL8NNZIWVY>  Indian dance  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvnBUpjvWGw>  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iDA_66fvlU>  <http://asiasociety.org/storytelling-through-dance> |
| December 6 |  |  | Discussion and open mike session. |
| Note that there are dates specified for in-class writing or podcast discussion. That does not limit these activities only to the specified dates, particularly if the class wants to write more often! | | | |

**Requirements:**

1. Complete reading as assigned and be prepared to discuss in class.
2. Attend a minimum of 13 classes.
3. Keep a journal- if you do not already or have a style of journaling you practice, use the suggestion of Rachel Naomi Remen: take 10 minutes to write down three things from your day: One thing that surprised you. One thing that moved you. One thing that inspired you. Be prepared to show your journal at the end of the semester.
4. Follow a podcast of stories- choose from podcasts here, or find one of your own <http://mashable.com/2014/11/26/storytelling-podcasts/#oy_Weav.ouq3> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/radio/podcasts/the-best-podcasts-for-stories-fiction-and-poetry/> Be prepared to discuss stories from your podcast.
5. Prepare a submission for More Voices- you don’t have to submit, but choose a piece of writing from the semester- journal, in-class and prepare as if you are submitting! <http://pulsevoices.org/index.php/more-voices>
6. Complete a project investigating some aspect of the material covered in class. This project can be creative- writing a literary narrative, creating a film, graphic novelette, song, dance; or it can be an academic research paper.

**Grading:**

Students will be graded on the following criteria:

1. Attendance and participation in class (35 points)
2. Formal piece of writing prepared as if to submit. (15 points)
3. Project (25 points)
4. Semester journal (25 points)

**\*Completion of all requirements is needed for grading**

**Attendance:** Attendance in this course is mandatory. One absence will be allowed without a deduction of points; every absence beyond one will result in a reduction of 10 points from the final grade. One additional absence documented by a doctor’s note can be made up through special write up.

**Academic Honesty:** All students sign the following statement upon registration at the University of Florida: “I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.” As instructors for this course, we fully support the intent of the above statement and will not tolerate academic dishonesty.

**Student Responsibility:** Students are responsible for understanding all course policies and for accessing all course materials on the UF E-Learning Website through the URL listed above. All assignments should be submitted through the website and in hard copy when requested. Students are also responsible for checking their UF e-mail account for course notifications and for communicating with the instructors related to any situation that may hinder his or her progress or participation in the course.

**Disabilities:** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the instructor when students request accommodation.

**Grade scale for class points awarded:**

A 93-100

A- 90-92

B+ 87-89

B 83-86

B- 80-82

**Criteria for academic research papers:**

* Focus on a specific topic/question
* Minimum of 400 words
* 5 sources- one of which may be from existing class material, 4 must be from sources you research. Make sure these other sources are relevant and help you focus on the question you are addressing. One of these sources can be a website with a .edu , .gov, or .org ending. If a source is an ebook or digitized older book that will not count as a website. We will discuss further, and I am happy to discuss ideas.