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

IDH 2930 1349

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:**

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly is a short novel, a story told by Elle magazine editor Jean-Dominique Bauby after a brainstem stroke left him almost completely paralyzed with locked in syndrome- he narrated the story by blinking his eye to an assistant who recorded the words letter by letter.

Telling stories is innately human and, as it turns out, innately healing. This 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 reading The Diving Bell and the Butterfly, exploring other stories of health and illness (each student will read a different narrative and report on that to the class), a self-guided field trip to the Harn Museum of Art and the Museum of Natural History (you will receive a guide for making the trip on your own or with a group), and through pushing the boundaries of narrative, this course will explore how and why people tell stories- particularly stories of illness. In reading and experiencing a range of narrative forms- graphic novels, music, song lyrics, dance, games, video and others-, it also will explore the impact of these stories on all of our lives. Ultimately it will address that question, “How does telling a story heal?”

**Class Schedule and Reading Assignments**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Date*** | ***Topic*** | ***Reading assignment*** | ***Topic/assignment due date/information*** |
| January 9 | Storytelling and the brain |  | Watch this performance before class: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/nov/04/darfur-poet-triumphs-in-international-poetry-slam>  Watch excerpts from the PBS documentary “Healing words” in class.  Can words heal?  Story telling and the brain  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> |
| January 16 | Healing words: how are stories used in healthcare? |  | Discussion of narrative medicine. Watch before class: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24kHX2HtU3o>  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZ3ucjmcZwY> |
| January 23 | Blink of an eye. | The Diving Bell and the Butterfly Pp. 1-30 | Discussion of Book- using clips from film, and locked in syndrome.  Choose narrative for report from list of narratives |
| January 30 | There are many ways to tell stories… | TDBATB Pp. 31-60 | Guest speaker- Cindy Craig  Submit project or paper idea via the class website by class time. |
| February 6 | Stories and the brain | TDBATB. Pp. 61-90 | 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. |
| February 13 | More stories that heal and more ways to tell stories… | TDBATB Pp. Pp. 91-131 | Telling the story: Stories that heal. From Rachel Naomi Remen  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1xBjIHEhtg  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5FTuM3WrYc>  Stories of illness- graphic medicine.  <http://www.graphicmedicine.org/> - explore the site!  <https://www.graphicmedicine.org/podcast-episode-conference-opening-night/> - Listen to these podcasts!  Also review this part of the site- <https://www.graphicmedicine.org/week-graphic-medicine-12-8-17/>  Inclass writing/drawing |
| February 20 | What can writing about illness do for you? |  | **Watch clips from interview 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.”  In class writing. |
| February 27 | Writing and  Memory, treating  PTSD and negotiating healing memories |  | Storytelling and memory  <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2012/jan/15/story-lines-facts>  Writing, recovery, and PTSD-  <http://hopeathandinc.cmail19.com/t/ViewEmail/t/C5909BF80091A723/6E2B6CAE69028968F6A1C87C670A6B9F><http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1348/135910707X250866/full>  <http://hpq.sagepub.com/content/10/2/211.short>  <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/nov/04/darfur-poet-triumphs-in-international-poetry-slam>  Watch excerpts from the PBS documentary “Healing words” in class.  Can words heal?  Podcast dicussion. |
| March 6  Spring Break |  |  |  |
| March 13 | Stories and culture |  | Why do we tell stories? Fairy tales, Harry Potter, Beedle the Bard, and Coyote… what do these stories do? Excerpt from Smoke Signals.  Narrative report. |
| March 20 |  |  | 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>  Narrative report. |
| March 27 |  |  | Self-guided trip to Harn and Natural history museum on your own (or class) time. |
| April 3 |  |  | 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>  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. |
| April 10 | Telling musical stories |  | **Words and music- song lyrics…**  **Excerpts from One Voice**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQtJ6UhVkfw>  Podcast discussion. |
| April 17 | 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>  Narrative report. |
| April 24 |  |  | 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! | | | |
| Spontaneity clause: Note that there are invited speakers who have not yet been scheduled- so the schedule is subject to change as they are added to the calendar. | | | |

**Requirements:**

1. Complete reading as assigned and be prepared to discuss in class.
2. Attend a minimum of 13 classes.
3. Oral Report on a narrative related to health- can be a book, movie, or graphic novel. See list at the end of the syllabus.
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 and, at the end of the semester, to write a brief description of the podcast, why you chose it and what you got out of it.
5. Complete self-guided museum tour and submit responses.
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. Podcast write up. (15 points)
3. Project (25 points)
4. Self guided museum tour. (15 points)
5. Review of book, bringing in other required reading/watching for the course. (10 points)

**\*Completion of all requirements is needed for receiving a grade in the class.**

**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.

**(Preliminary) List of narratives:**

Graphic novels-

*Mom’s Cancer* by Brian Fies.

*Cancer Vixen* by Marisa Acocella Marchetto

*Taking turns: Stories from HIV/AIDS Care Unit 371*. MK Czerwiec

*Can’t we talk about something more pleasant*. Roz Chast

*Hole in the Heart: Bringing up Beth*. Henny Beaumont.

Written narratives-

*Autobiography of a face*. Lucy Grealy.

*Cancer journals*. Audre Lord.

*Breathing for a living*. Laura Rothenberg.

*Girl, Interrupted*. Susanna Kaysen (book).

*Darkness Visible*. William Styron.

*Enjoy every sandwich*. Lee Lipsenthal.

*Intoxicated by my illness*. Anatole Broyard.

Movie/video-

*Canvas*.

*Murderball*.

*Yesterday*.

*Deej*.

*Key of G*.

*Shine*.

*One Flew over the Cuckoo’s nest*.