

RHETORIC AND STORYTELLING

Bachelor in Humanities BHUM SEP-2024 RHST-HUM.1.S.A

Area Humanities

Number of sessions: 30

Academic year: 24-25

Degree course: FIRST

Number of credits: 6.0

Semester: 2^o

Category: BASIC

Language: English

Professor: **REGINA LLAMAS**

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Regina Llamas holds a BA from Beijing University, an MA in Regional Studies East Asia (Harvard University), and a PhD in East Asian Languages and Cultures (Harvard University). Her earlier work, both in English and Spanish, focused on southern Chinese drama, dramatic historiography, modern ethnography and dramatic performance, and the later Qing commentarial dramatic tradition. She is currently working on a monograph on the historiography of Chinese drama and how the discipline was formed. She is the author of *Top Graduate Zhang Xie: The Earliest Extant Chinese Southern Play*, and co-editor with Patricia Sieber (Ohio State University) of *How to Read Chinese Drama: A Guided Anthology*. She has also published a number of papers on subjects related to the above interests.

Office Hours

Office hours will be on request. Please contact at:

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SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

Narrative Matters

Welcome to the course! This course is an exploration of stories and storytelling—essentially, the art of narrative. What constitutes narrative? When do we classify a narrative fictional or non-fictional? How is a narrative crafted, word by word, sentence by sentence? Must narratives exist solely in prose, can they be conveyed through images? What happens when a narrative is adapted to other genres? What is the difference, for example, between the story told in a novel and its representation on the screen? How has storytelling changed over time? This course will focus on various forms, genres, structures, and characteristics of narrative.

In this class we will engage in two primary types of readings: First will look into the technical aspects of narrative structure—examining plot and story, narrative voice, point of view, characterization, genre and form, and the use of time and space in narratives. This technical analysis will also encompass broader topics such as methods of storytelling and audience response. The second will focus on developing skills to read more deeply and critically. By the end of the course, I sincerely hope that gaining an understanding of how certain works of fiction work will enhance your appreciation for them, and will provide you with a deeper understanding of narratives work, and furnish you with a vocabulary that will help you navigate future discussions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this class you will learn to:

- To contextualize literary texts in historical, political, and cultural settings.
- To navigate complex texts through close analysis of language, dialogue, plot and story, narrative voice, point of view, characterization, genre and form—including the scale of narratives—and the use of time and space in narratives.
- To explore how narrative forms: long novels, short fiction, or its hybridized genres—shape reading experience.
- To write with critical clarity about difficult issues.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

IE University teaching method is defined by its collaborative, active, and applied nature. Students actively participate in the whole process to build their knowledge and sharpen their skills. Professor's main role is to lead and guide students to achieve the learning objectives of the course. This is done by engaging in a diverse range of teaching techniques and different types of learning activities such as the following:

Learning Activity	Weighting	Estimated time a student should dedicate to prepare for and participate in
Lectures	13.3 %	20.0 hours
Discussions	20.0 %	30.0 hours
Exercises in class, Asynchronous sessions, Field Work	20.0 %	30.0 hours
Group work	13.3 %	20.0 hours
Individual studying	33.3 %	50.0 hours
TOTAL	100.0 %	150.0 hours

AI POLICY

The success of this course will depend upon each student's having completed the reading by the time it is discussed. We will write weekly short reflections on paper on a specific issue. You will need to purchase the novels included in the bibliography. Other shorter readings will be included in our readings. There will also be a number of asynchronous assignments to be submitted through Turnitin as well as a midterm and a final paper.

PROGRAM

SESSIONS 1 - 2 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

What is narration: Introduction to the class and class methodology.

In this class we will look at the main vocabulary used on narratology and narrating. The aim is to acquire a vocabulary that will help us discuss the texts we are going to read. These are general useful terms. Monika Fludernik's *An Introduction to Narratology* chapter 1, 3, 4 and 5 are particularly useful.

SESSIONS 3 - 4 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Narration: Fact or Fiction?

We will read and discuss **Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Sharer***. The themes and characters of *The Secret Sharer* resonate with real human experiences which can make it feel plausible or relatable. We will look into Conrad's background, and explore the questions of identity, isolation, and moral dilemmas. Think about how the story is told.

Daniel Defoe, *A true relation of the apparition of one Mrs. Veal: the next day after her death: to one Mrs. Bargrave at Canterbury*. The 8th of September, 1705.

Reflection and discussion: What makes these two pieces factual? What makes them fictional?

Book Chapters: The Secret Sharer (Project Gutenberg)

Book Chapters: The Apparition of Mrs Veal (Project Gutenberg)

SESSION 5 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

The Classical Novel: Jane Austen, *Persuasion*

Please read Jane Austen's *Persuasion*. We will spend the next two weeks of class discussing Austen's very specific style. Austen may be one of the best-read and most widely discussed authors of Regency literature. Use this time to read the novel and to think about the novel in narratological terms: authorial voice, time, and memory.

Book Chapters: Persuasion (See Bibliography)

SESSIONS 6 - 7 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Classical Novel: Jane Austen, *Persuasion*

Volume I (Narrative Voice and Focalization)

Writing #1

Reflection and discussion: How does Austen's use of free indirect discourse in *Persuasion* influence the reader's perception of Anne Elliot's internal conflicts and emotions? Discuss specific scenes where Austen's narrative technique blends Anne's perspective with the narrator's, and analyze how this affects our understanding of Anne's character. Consider how the narrator conveys Anne's inner world and how this influences the reader's sympathy towards her experiences and choices throughout the story.

SESSIONS 8 - 9 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Classical Novel: Jane Austen, *Persuasion*

Volume II (Time and Memory/Retrospection)

Writing #2

Reflection and Discussion: Austen frequently uses retrospection to reveal Anne's past relationship with Captain Wentworth. Consider how Anne's past relationships with Captain Wentworth are gradually revealed to the reader. How does the use of these memories and shifts in time contribute to the novel's unfolding (and the development of Anne's character). How does it shape the novel's structure and deepen the themes of regret and second chances?

SESSION 10 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Watch Persuasion 1995: You can watch it on Netflix or you can watch it here with many ads.

Think about how the story is told in writing and what happens when it has to be told through a film. Think about point of view, the use of multiple narrators, and so forth. How do the narratives differ?

Writing #3

Other / Complementary Documentation: Persuasion (Youtube)

SESSIONS 11 - 12 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Experimental Narration: Italo Calvino. *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*

What made novels like Joyce's *Ulysses* or Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* different from novels at other times? Is it their innovations and detachment from the formal and contextual standards of other novels? Their challenges to norms of faithful representation? What is so ground-breaking about these novels? Are they completely autonomous or are they linked to the form and aesthetics of the past? And is there something about human life that is also integral to the reading and writing of novels?

Reflection and discussion: This novel plays with the role of the reader by making it a character in the story. It addresses the reader in the second person creating an experience where the reader becomes part of the narrative. 1. Think about what kind of reader are we faced with. Is the reader passive? Is the reader co-creating meaning with the author? To return to our second week of class, does the novel blur the boundaries between fiction and reality? How does this blurring of function change the reader's engagement with the text? How do stories intersect, and what is the effect of fragmentation on storytelling? And 2. The book is made up of the beginnings of different stories, with each story-fragment ending just as it becomes absorbing (Calvino is just brilliant!). This fragmented structure raises questions about narrative continuity and the nature of storytelling itself. What happens when a story doesn't reach a resolution? Can incomplete stories still convey meaning or impact readers as fully as complete ones? What does the novel's structure suggest: that stories are interconnected fragments rather than isolated, whole entities, or that the search for meaning may be as important as finding it or both?

Writing #4

SESSIONS 13 - 14 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Detective Fiction: A Comparative Perspective.

- Edgar A. Poe: *Tales of Mystery and the Imagination*. "Murders of the Rue Morgue."
- Dorothy L. Sayers, *Whose Body?*
- A Chinese Detective Story: Judge Bao Feng Menglong

Reflection and discussion: In detective fiction, the first question is "What crime?" and the last one should be "Who committed it?" But a good detective story layers additional questions and answers carefully to create complexity. For example, why did the crime happen, and what were the circumstances? How did it happen? Who is telling the truth, who can be trusted, and what is truth? In this class we will look at one of the very first detective stories and see how it is organized. We will then read *Whose Body*, perhaps the most interesting of Dorothy Sayers's stories, and we will conclude with a Chinese detective story. The point here is to understand their structure and compare them.

Writing #5

Book Chapters: Tales of Mystery and The Imagination: The Murders of the Rue Morgue (Project Gutenberg)

Book Chapters: Whose Body? (Project Gutenberg)

Book Chapters: Judge Bao Solves a Case through a Ghost That Appeared Thrice (Sanyan Stories: Favorites from a Ming Dynasty Collection)

Other / Complementary Documentation: Murders in the Rue Morgue (1932) (Youtube) (for your info)(Optional)

SESSION 15 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Hand in your final paper Topic and Outline. Meet with your professor. Catch up on your reading.

SESSIONS 16 - 17 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Journalistic Narratives : Gabriel García Márquez, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.

Reflection and discussion: In this class we will explore the non-linear structure and fragmented chronology of writing, and focus on the narrative voice of limited omniscience. In this novel, the narrativistic, journalistic, and detectivistic we have been exploring in previous classes all come together. How does Garcia Marquez do this?

Writing #6

Book Chapters: Chronicle of a Death Foretold (See Bibliography)

SESSIONS 18 - 19 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Close reading: A Chinese Short Story The Story of Yingying (In Ways With Words: Writing About Reading Texts from Early China, Pauline Yu et al. eds, University of California Press, 1997, pp173-182)

Reflection and discussion: Reflection and discussion: This is a short chuanqi story about a student Zhang who falls in love with a young woman called Yingying, thus the title of the story. It was a well-known and beloved story that eventually took a life of its own, becoming one of the best-known 14th-century plays (The Story of the Western Wing). What is interesting about this story? How is it constructed? Is it autobiographical? Are there lapses in the account? The story may be short, but there is much to discuss. Go back to Monika Fludernik's An Introduction to Narratology and explore any narratological aspect that spurs your interest (for example, voice), and let's discuss how it works. Think about what it means to do a close reading of a text?

Writing #7

Book Chapters: The Story of Yingying (An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911) (CED)

SESSION 20 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Other forms of story-telling. Think about what other forms of storytelling are out there, and write a short 300-500 word story on any form we have not touched upon.

Writing #8 (Final Reflection)

SESSIONS 21 - 22 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Metanarratives: The story within the story

* *The One Thousand and One Nights*, Translated by Richard Burton. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/58722/58722-h/58722-h.htm>

* Ted Chiang “The Merchant and The Alchemist Gate” in *Exhalation*, (Picador, 2019): 3-37

Reflection and discussion: A metanarrative is an type of narrative that self-consciously experiments, and explores the nature, structure, and limitations of storytelling itself. In a metanarrative, the narrative often reflects on its own creation, the process of storytelling, or the artifice behind the narrative. There are a number of ways in which this can be done, for example, by breaking the fourth wall, fragmenting the structure of narrative, or incorporating multiple perspectives. Calvino was an extreme example of this. But it originates closer to the One Thousand and One Nights. Please read these two stories and let's discuss how a metanarrative works. The focus needs to be on plot and story structure. Read Monika Fludernik.

Book Chapters: One Thousand and One Nights (Project Gutenberg)

Book Chapters: The Merchant and The Alchemist's Gate (IE Library)

SESSIONS 23 - 24 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

The Graphic Novel: Hugo Pratt, The Ballad of the Salty Sea. (A Corto Maltese Story)

We will discuss how this brilliant storyteller, Hugo Pratt, manages to create compelling characters, and a brilliant story through vignettes.

I will place the text in a separate folder.

SESSION 25 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

PAPER DUE: Submit your paper both to one peer and your teacher through Turnitin.

SESSIONS 26 - 27 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Paper Peer Review: Presentation and discussion.

SESSIONS 28 - 29 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Paper Peer Review: Presentation and discussion

SESSION 30 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Oral exam on your paper.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

There are eight short reflections. 5 points each; A midterm outline of your final paper, and a short final paper (5-7 pages excluding footnotes). Group presentations are extremely important, since they will lead the discussion during the second part of the class.

criteria	percentage	Learning Objectives	Comments
Final Exam	25 %		
Group Presentation	15 %		Organization of reflections and in-class discussions.
Individual Reflections	40 %		

Intermediate tests	20 %		
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RE-SIT / RE-TAKE POLICY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Compulsory

- Monika Fludernik. (2009). *An Introduction to Narratology*. First. London: Routledge, 2009. ISBN 0145450306 (Digital)
- H. Porter Abbott. (2021). *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*. Third. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 9781108823357 (Digital)
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- Joseph Conrad. (2015). *The Secret Sharer and Other Stories*. First. Norton Critical Editions. ISBN 9780393936339 (Digital)
- Dorothy L Sayers. (2023). *Whose Body?*. First. Hodder. ISBN 9781473621251 (Digital)
- Gabriel Garcia Marquez. (2014). *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. first. Penguin. ISBN 978024196862 (Digital)
- Ted Chiang. (2019). *Exhalation*. First. Picador. ISBN 9781529014495 (Digital)
- Italo Calvino. (1992). *If On a Winter's Night a Traveller*. First. Vintage Classics. ISBN 9780099430896 (Digital)

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