

syllabus updated as of October 19, 2004

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 10:00 – 11:00 am and Fridays, 12:30 – 1:45 pm

ENGL 376/476 Narrative Theory, Fall 2004

Course overview

Like all English courses, this one is about reading and writing—specifically the reading and writing of stories—and its primary aim is to help each of you become better readers and writers. On the other hand, because we will mainly be examining critical and theoretical texts rather than literary ones, the aims of the reading will be different than in the typical literature course and so perhaps will be the kind of writing you do.

By the end of the course everyone should have a hazy but reasonably thorough sense of the main concepts and controversies involved in understanding how narratives work, primarily but not exclusively literary and especially fictional narratives. You should also have a sharper grasp of some of these ideas, a quickened ability to read and analyze literary theory generally, and a quickened ability to identify the theoretical assumptions or issues at work in a story. Accomplishing all this will leave you with something less than total mastery. Not to worry. The course is meant to be comprehensive rather than intensive. Or rather, you can each feel free to select the ideas and issues you want to be intense about.

Required Texts

H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, Cambridge UP 2002, isbn 521659698.

Julia Gaunce & Suzette Mayr, eds., *The Broadview Anthology of Short Fiction*, Broadview 2004, isbn 1551116324. [abbreviated G&M on calendar; not on library reserve]

Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative*, Cornell UP 1986, isbn 801493552.

Robert Scholes & Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative*, Oxford UP 1966 [reprint to be published in fall 2004], isbn 195151763

Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, U of Texas P 1982, isbn 29271534X.

Susan Sniader Lanser, *The Narrative Act*, Princeton UP 1981, out of print, multiple copies available on library reserve and from instructor

Recommended Texts

- Willie Van Peer and Seymore Chatman, eds. New Perspectives on Narrative Perspective, SUNY 2001, isbn 79144788x, PN3383.N35N45 2002.
- David Herman, ed., Narratologies New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis, Ohio State UP 1999, isbn 814250246 [Includes Herman's introduction and articles by R. Ginsburg & S. Rimmon-Kenan, U. Margolin, J. Phelan & M. Martin, and G.S. Morson]
- David Herman, ed., Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences, Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications 2003, isbn 1575864681. [Includes articles by M. Turner, R. Gerrig & G. Egidi, H.P. Abbott on unnarratable knowledge, and M. Fludernik]

Available on library reserve

- Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller" in Illuminations, Hannah Arendt, ed. NY: Schocken, pp 83-109. .
- Paul de Man, "Semiology and Rhetoric" rept in Critical Theory Since 1965, Hazard Adams & Leroy Searle, eds., Tallahassee: Florida State UP, pp 222-230.
- D. [Donald and/or Deirdre]. McCloskey, "Storytelling in Economics" rpt. in Narrative in Culture: The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy, and Culture, Christopher Nash, ed., NY: Routledge, pp 5-22. .
- Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, introduction and chapter 1 of Between Men. NY: Columbia UP, pp1-27.
- Jerome Bruner, "The Narrative Construction of Reality," Critical Inquiry 18 (1991) 1-21.
- Rene Girard, "Delirium as System," in "To Double Business Bound." Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978, pp 84-120
- J. Hillis Miller, The Form of Victorian Fiction, Cleveland: Arete Press, 1-27
- Paul Ricoeur, "Narrative Time" Rpt. in Narrative Dynamics, Brian Richardson, ed., 35-46. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2002.

Blackboard.com

All of us will make extensive use of the course's Blackboard site, primarily in the discussion board (aka roundtable, chat room etc.) area. From the instructor you can expect to get regular prompts and suggestions about the current reading or the forthcoming writing assignments. Each of you will be asked to use this as our discussion area outside the classroom, a place to post questions, observations, and comments of any and all sorts. You should post at least three messages before fall break and at least three afterwards. One portion of your grade will depend on whether you contribute, but not on what. I.e. the contents and length of these messages are entirely up to you.

In addition to such comments and questions, please also post each of your writing assignments for the course. Try to post them on the day that they are due, but feel free to substitute any revisions you may later make.

Writing assignments

The first two assignments are the same for undergraduates and grad students, but the second two differ somewhat.

Assignment # 1, (2-4 page paper due Sept. 29). Applying ideas and tools from the Abbott, Martin, and Lanser readings on narratology, write a detailed description of the narrative discourse in a short story from the Broadview anthology. You may well want to focus on a representative passage rather than an entire story.

Assignment #2 (2-4 page paper due the week of Oct 4). Summarize the central ideas and claims in one of the articles to be read for the week.

Assignment #3 for 376 (2-4 page paper due Oct 29). Summarize the central ideas and claims in Bakhtin's "Epic and Novel."

For 476 (4-6 page paper, due at various points between late October and mid November). Write for the class a book review of one of the following: Georg Lukacs's Theory of the Novel, Ross Chambers's Story and Situation, Judith Roof's Come, As You are: Sexuality and Narrative, or J. Hillis Miller's Reading Narrative. Or propose a comparable substitute title for review.

Assignment #4 (due Dec. 10) For 376. With the approval of the instructor, select a novel that you already know well, then write a 5-8 page paper developing one or more theoretical issues raised by the novel. This could involve applying to the novel specific ideas and methods covered in the course.

For 476, the same assignment is available, but the resulting paper should be in the 10-12 page range. Graduate students may also choose instead to write a paper of the same magnitude directly on a theoretical topic. The preferable model here would be the analysis of some recent book on narrative theory, such as David Herman's Story Logic or Monica Fludernik's The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction.

Schedule of reading and assignments

week one		introduction to the study of narrative
Aug 23	If possible, read Jamaica Kincaid's "Girl" in G&M	
Aug 25	Read H. Porter Abbott, <u>Cambridge Introduction</u> , chapters 1-2	
Aug 27		
week two		interpreting (literary) narrative
Aug 30	Read Tim O'Brien, "The Things They Carried" in G&M	
Sept 1	Read Abbott, chapters 7-8	
Sept 3	Read Flannery O'Connor, "A Good Man is Hard to Find" in G&M	
week three		from novels to narratives
Sept 6	Labor Day Holiday	
Sept 8	Read Wallace Martin, chapters 1-2	
Sept 10	(Recommended reading: Abbott, chapter 3)	
week four		interpreting narrative
Sept 13	Read Abbott, chapters 4-6, 9	
Sept 15		
Sept 17	Read Herman Melville, "Bartleby" in G&M	
week five		classical narratology I
Sept 20	Read Martin, chapters 6-7	
Sept 22		
Sept 24	Read Susan Lanser, chapters 2-4	
week six		classical narratology II
Sept 27		
Sept 29	Due in 376 and 476: Analysis of a story from G&M	
Oct 1		
week seven		reports on narratology
Oct 4	(Recommended reading: Abbott, chapters 10-12) Due in 376 and 476: Report(s) on Margolin's article in <u>Narratologies</u>	

Oct 6	Due in 376 and 476: Report(s) on Ginsburg & Rimmon-Kennon's article in <u>Narratologies</u>	
Oct 8	Due in 376 and 476: Report(s) on the Prince & Martin article in <u>Narratologies</u>	
week eight		recent developments in narrative theory
Oct 11	Read David Herman's introduction to <u>Narratologies</u> [Recommended reading: Herman's introduction to <u>Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences</u>]	
Oct 13		
Oct 15	public lecture, probably on Thursday, and class visit by Theodore Mason, Jr., current president of the Society for Narrative Literature	
week nine		language theories
Oct 18	Fall Break	
Oct 20	Read Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel"	
Oct 22	Read Paul de Man, "Semiology and Rhetoric"	
week ten		teleological histories
Oct 25	(Recommended for the hardy: Lukac's <u>Theory of the Novel</u>); report by the instructor on Lukacs.	
Oct 27	Read Robert Scholes & Robert Kellogg, chapters 1-3	
Oct 29		
week eleven		form-giving principles
Nov 1	Due in 376: reports on Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel"	
Nov 3	Read Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, intro to <u>Between Men</u> and Rene Girard, "Delirium as System"	character, desire, motive
Nov 5	Read H. Porter Abbott "Unnarratable Knowledge: The Difficulty of Understanding Evolution by Natural Selection"	
week twelve		
Nov 8	Due in 476: report on Chambers	
Nov 10	(Recommended, the Prince-Phelan debate in Peer and Chatman's anthology)	
Nov 12	public lecture and class visit from James Phelan, the editor of <u>Narrative</u>	

week thirteen		time (and some space)
Nov 15	Read Paul Ricoeur, "Narrative Time" and Gary Saul Morson, "Essential Narratives: Tempics and the Return of Process"	
Nov 17		
Nov 19	Read J.Hillis Miller, chapter 1 of <u>Form of Victorian Fiction</u>	
week fourteen		non-literary narrative
Nov 22	Read D. McCloskey, "Storytelling in Economics" and Jerome Bruner, "The Narrative Construction of Reality,"	
Nov 23		
Nov 25	Thanksgiving	
week fifteen		
Nov 29	Tentative: visit by Mark Turner, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. (Recommended: Turner's "Double-Scope Stories")	cognitive narratology
Dec 1	Monika Fludernik, "Natural Narratology and Cognitive Parameters"	
Dec 3	376 and 476; drafts of final paper due	
Dec 6-7	Reading Days (paper workshops)	
Dec 10	376 and 476: final paper due, plus any revised versions of earlier papers	

Grading

20%	assignment #1 (final version)
20%	assignment #2 (final version)
20%	assignment #3 (final version)
30%	assignment #4
10%	participation in class and on the roundtable