

Narratives
Department of Sociology (920:571:01)
Fall 2015
Rutgers University
Syllabus

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Office Hours: Wednesday 1:30 – 2:30 and by appointment

Course Overview:

Narrative study in sociology is an emerging field of inquiry. While some scholars have identified a narrative turn in sociology, many others find it difficult to define this as an area of concentration, and stumble when trying to cite key texts and major contributions of this subfield. This seminar begins at this epistemological moment when do not yet have a fully codified account of narrative sociology, and seeks to excavate and chart its development, identify core ideas, and consider the myriad of ways its conceptual analyses and methodological interventions enhance sociological scholarship.

Narrative sociology is steeped in the understanding that people construct meaning through the stories that define their everyday lives. Simply stated, narratives are the stories we tell one another. They order and connect events organizing them into meaningful patterns. Stories or narratives (for the moment these terms are interchangeable) occur in a seemingly endless variety of forms including personal accounts, recorded histories, political campaigns, cultural myths, and course descriptions to cite a few examples. As we'll discover, narrative sociology has had an uneven engagement with more established subfields in sociology. It promises to bridge the humanities-social science divide, yet that potential has yet to be fully realized.

The readings begin with an epistemological roadmap of the field's development and a discussion of its early texts. We grapple with how best to define narratives. Are narratives and stories synonymous, or are there systematic differences between the two concepts? What characteristics best define different narrative forms and narratives in general? Do narratives invariably represent a chronological sequence of events? Are all narratives also accounts or explanations? What do narratives allow scholars to understand about the self and about identity? We also consider the circumstances that shape the telling of stories. Are there occasions, for example, that are more likely to produce and/or reproduce the telling of stories, and some stories rather than others? Are there conditions that are more likely to generate silences? How do narrative production, communication, and circulation respond to socio-historical requirements and audience needs? How do repetition and emphasis, omission and silence, translation and transferability operate to define the narratives we write, tell, depict, read, see and hear? And what can the structure of a narrative—its order and disruption, its beginning and ending tell us? Finally, how can we best analyze narratives given our interests in comparison, generalization and applicability, and the analytic tools available to us?

The syllabus lists required reading and optional resources for further exploration. I expect regular attendance and active engagement with the ideas and materials in the course. Each week no later than Sunday at 7 pm, students should write a one- to two-page analytic overview of the assigned readings. These informal papers should highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the materials read, identify points of confusion, questions meriting further discussion, and ideas in conflict or contradiction with one another.

Carefully considered weekly papers and thoughtful participation in seminar discussions are important elements of the seminar's success. Eight short papers are required throughout the term and six must be completed before the Thanksgiving break.

The final seminar paper is relatively open-ended. It must be based on original research and can take a variety of forms, with . . . , enables students to select a group of narratives and analyze the context of their creation and distribution, patterns of meaning, and contributions to understanding larger social, cultural and political formations. Research papers are due without exception on Thursday, December 10th and intermediate deadlines for work in progress are noted below in the weekly schedule. Final grades will rely on a composite evaluation of your weekly written and oral contributions, and your final paper. Though weekly work and the research paper are of equal value, if either facet of the work is less substantial than the other, I reserve the right to adjust this percentage in determining final grades in students' favor.

This class strives to create and sustain an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, (dis)ability, region/country of origin, and political orientation. Everyone must conduct themselves with complete respect for all class members and for the learning process. We will not tolerate any deliberate or unthinking violations of these principles, and will actively seek ways to correct and resolve all such infractions.

All seminar participants with special needs will be accommodated. Students are encouraged to speak with the instructor early during the term. To make appropriate arrangements, please contact the Office of Disability Services at the Kreeger Learning Center, located at 151 College Avenue or access their office through <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu>.

Except under the most extreme circumstances, I will not give incomplete grades. Instead the work completed during the term will be the basis of the evaluation. All work for this course must adhere to the specific practices and ethos of the University's policy on academic integrity, which should be read in its entirety at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml> . This requirement includes the practice of not using written work for this seminar completed in other venues without explicit permission of the instructor.

Required Readings

Two books are available for purchase at the New Jersey Books, 39 Easton Avenue, New Brunswick. All other readings are available on the Sakai website for our seminar.

Frank, Arthur W. 2010. *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. 10-226-00483-X

Polletta, Francesca. 2006. *It Was Like a Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. 0-226-67376-6

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

September 8 Course Introduction and Overview

September 17 Foundational Issues, Part 1 (N.B. Rescheduled class)

Benjamin, Walter. 1955. "The Storyteller," Pp. 83-109 in *Illuminations*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

White, Hayden. 1980. "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality." *Critical Inquiry*. 7:5-27.

Brockmeier, Jens and Rom Harré. 1997. "Narrative: Problems and Promises of an Alternative Paradigm." *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 30:263-83.

Kreiswirth, Martin. 2000. "Merely Telling Stories? Narrative Knowledge in the Human Sciences." *Poetics Today* 21:293-318.

Whooley, Owen. 2008. "The Political Work of Narratives: A Dialogic Analysis of Two Slave Narratives." *Narrative Inquiry* 16:295-318.

September 21 Foundational Issues, Part 2

Labov, William. 2006. "Narrative Pre-Construction." *Narrative Inquiry* 16:37-45.

De Fina, Anna and Alexandra Georgakopoulou. 2008. "Analysing Narratives as Practices." *Qualitative Research* 8:379-87.

Tilly, Charles. 2002. "The Trouble with Stories." Pp. 25-42 in *Stories, Identities, and Political Change*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Scott, Joan. 1991. "The Evidence of Experience." *Critical Inquiry* 17:773-97.

Bruner, Jerome. 1991. "The Narrative Construction of Reality." *Critical Inquiry* 18:1-21 [optional]

Steinberg, Marc. 1999. "The Talk and Back Talk of Collective Action: A Dialogic Analysis of Repertoires of Discourse among Nineteenth Century English Cotton Spinners." *American Journal of Sociology* 105:736-80.

September 28 Narrative Accounting

Orbuch, Terri L. 1997. "People's Accounts Count: The Sociology of Accounts." *Annual Review of Sociology* 23:455-78.

Mills, C. Wright. 1940. "Situated Actions and Vocabularies of Motives." *American Sociological Review* 5:904-13.

Jacobs, Ronald N. and Sarah Sobieraj. 2007. "Narrative and Legitimacy: U.S. Congressional Debates about the Nonprofit Sector." *Sociological Theory* 25:1-32.

Benhabib, Seyla. 1990. "Hannah Arendt and the Redemptive Power of Narrative," *Social Research* 57: 167-96.

Zussman, Robert. 2000. "Autobiographical Occasions: Introduction to the Special Issue." *Qualitative Sociology* 23:5-8.

October 5 The Self in Narrative Sociology

Bertaux, Daniel and Martin Kohli. 1984. "The Life Story Approach: A Continental View." *Annual Review of Sociology* 10:215-37.

Somers, Margaret R. 1994. "The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach." *Theory and Society* 23:605-49.

Arduser, Lore. 2014. "Agency in Illness Narratives." *Narrative Inquiry* 24:1 -27.

Maynes, Mary Jo, Jennifer L. Pierce, and Barbara Laslett. 2008. *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History*. Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press. [Chapters 1 and 5]

Fischer, Wolfram and Martina Goblirsch. 2006. "Biographical Structuring: Narrating and Reconstructing the Self in Research and Professional Practice." *Narrative Inquiry* 16:28-36.

Heimer, Carol A. 2001. "Cases and Biographies: An Essay on Routinization and the Nature of Comparison." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27:27-76. [read lightly]

Gergen, Kenneth J. and Mary M. Gergen. 1983. "Narratives of the Self." in Theodore R. Sarbin and Karl E. Scheibe, eds. *Studies in Social Identity*. New York : Praeger. [optional]

October 12 Storytelling Research

Preliminary statements of proposed final papers due

Frank, Arthur W. 2010. *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Frank, Arthur W. 1995. *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness and Ethics*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. (recommended)

Andrews, Molly, Corinne Squire, and Maria Tamboukou, eds. 2103. *Doing Narrative Research*, 2nd edition. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage Publications. (recommended)

Mishler, Elliot G. 2014. "Historians of the Self: Restorying lives, Revising Identities." *Research in Human Development* 1:101-21. (recommended)

Elliott, Jane. 2005. *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. (recommended)

Riessman, Catherine Kohler. 2007. *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. (recommended)

October 19 Collective Action, Part 1

Polletta, Francesca. 2006. *It Was Like a Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Somers, Margaret R. 1992. "Narrativity, Narrative Identity, and Social Action: Rethinking English Working-Class Formation." *Social Science History* 16: 591-630.

October 26 Collective Action, Part 2

Armstrong, Elizabeth A. and Suzanna M. Crage. 2006. "Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth." *American Sociological Review* 71:724-51.

Stokes, Randall and John P. Hewitt. 1976. "Aligning Actions." *American Sociological Review* 41:838-49.

Bearman, Peter S. and Katherine Stovel. 2000. "Becoming a Nazi: A Model for Narrative Networks," *Poetics* 27: 69-90.

Smith, Tammy. 2006. "Narrative Boundaries and the Dynamics of Ethnic Conflict and Conciliation." *Poetics* 35:22-46.

De Fina, Anna and Alexandra Georgakopoulou. 2008. "Analysing Narratives as Practices." *Qualitative Research* 8:379-87.

Mayer, Frederick W. 2014. *Narrative Politics: Stories and Collective Action*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. (recommended)

November 2 Everyday Life, Social Identity and Narrative Evidence

Loeske, Donileen R. 2007. "The Study of Identity as Cultural, Institutional, Organizational and Personal Narratives: Theoretical and Empirical Integrations." *Sociological Quarterly* 48:661-88.

Kraus, Wolfgang. 2006. "The Narrative Negotiation of Identity and Belonging." *Narrative Inquiry* 16:103-11.

Sewell, William. 1992. "Introduction: Narratives and Social Identities," *Social Science History* 16 (3): 479-87.

Fuentes, Marisa J. 2010. "Power and Historical Figuring: Rachael Pringle Polgreen's Troubled Archive." *Gender and History* 22:564-84.

Zussman, Robert. 2012. "Narrative Freedom." *Sociological Forum* 27:807-24.

Bruner, Jerome. 1987. "Life as Narrative." *Social Research* 54:11-32.

November 9 Methodological Issues

Franzosi, Roberto. 1998. "Narrative Analysis—Why (and How) Sociologists Should Be Interested in Narrative." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24:517-54.

Abell, Peter. 2004. "Narrative Explanation: An Alternative to Variable-Centered Explanation?" *Annual Review of Sociology* 30:287-310.

Abbott, Andrew 2007. "Against Narrative: A Preface to Lyrical Sociology." *Sociological Theory* 25: 67-99.

Ospina, Sonia M. and Jennifer Dodge. 2005. "It's About Time: Catching Method Up to Meaning—The Usefulness of Narrative Inquiry to Public Administration Research." *Public Administration Review* 65:142-57.

Griffin, Larry J. 1993. "Narrative, Event-Structure Analysis, and Causal Interpretation in Historical Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 98:1094-1133.

Stewart, Julie. 2012. "Fiction Over Facts: How Competing Narrative Forms Explain Policy in a New Immigration Destination." *Sociological Forum* 27:591-616.

Atkinson, Paul and Sara Delamont. 2006. "Rescuing Narrative from Qualitative Research." *Narrative Inquiry* 16:164-72.

Cerulo, Karen. 2000. "The Rest of the Story: Sociocultural Patterns of Elaboration." *Poetics* 28:21-45.

Roth, Paul. 1989. "How Narratives Explain." *Social Research* 56:449-78. (recommended)

Czarniawska, Barbara. 2004. "The Uses of Narrative in Social Science Research." Pp. 649-66 in Melissa Hardy and Alan Bryman, eds. *Handbook of Data Analysis*. London, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. (recommended)

Chase, Susan. 1995. "Taking Narrative Seriously: Consequences for Method and Theory in Interview Studies." Pp. 1-26 in Amia Lieblich and Ruthellen Josselson eds. *The Narrative Study of Lives*. vol. 3. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. (recommended)

Passerini, Luisa. 1992. "A Memory for Women's History: Problems of Method and Interpretation," *Social Science History* 16 (4), 669-94. (recommended)

Mishler, Elliot G. 1986. *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (recommended)

Brownlie, Siobhan. 2006. "Narrative Theory and Retranslation Theory." *Across Languages and Cultures* 7: 145-70. (recommended)

November 16 and 23 Workshop Presentations of Works in Progress

Please email all class members with a preliminary and partial overview statement of or introduction to your project. Include questions and issues you want your colleagues to consider when reading your work. Are you looking for sources and need suggestions? Are you encountering problems not easily resolved? Now is the time to seek advice without penalty or prejudice. Statements should be emailed at least two days prior to your presentation.

November 30 Trauma Narratives

Nespor, Jan. 2014. "Discursive Geographies: Politics and Public Narrative of Immigration in a Midwestern US City." *Journal of Language and Politics* 13:490-511.

Brant, Daniel. 2014. "Traumatic Encounters: Negotiating Humanitarian Testimony in Post-earthquake Haiti." *Journal of Haitian Studies* 20:43-63.

Langer, Lawrence L. 2006. "Hearing the Holocaust." *Poetics Today* 27:297-309.

Glassner, Barry. 2004. "Narrative Techniques of Fear Mongering." *Social Research* 71:819-26.

Wertsch, James V. 2008. "Collective Memory and Narrative Templates." *Social Research* 75:137-56.

Gordon, Avery F. 1997. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. [Chapters 1 and 5]

Wieviorka, Annette. 2006. *The Era of the Witness*. Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press. (recommended)

Kushner, Tony 2006. "Holocaust Testimony, Ethics, and the Problem of Representation." *Poetics Today* 27: 275-95. (recommended)

Schiff, Brian, Chaim Noy, and Bertran J. Cohler. 2001. "Collected Stories in the Life Narratives of Holocaust Survivors." *Narrative Inquiry* 11:159-94. (recommended)

Kraft, Robert N. 2006. "Archival Memory: Representations of the Holocaust in Oral Testimony." *Poetics Today* 27: 311-30. (recommended)

Clark, Mary Marshall. 2005. "Resisting Attrition in Stories of Trauma." *Narrative* 13:294-98. (recommended)

December 7 The End: Unfinished Business
Readings to be assigned

December 10 Final Papers Due

Additional Recommended Resources:

Alexander, M. Jacqui. 2006. *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Andrews, Molly, Corinne Squire and Maria Tamboukou eds. 2008. *Doing Narrative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bell, Susan E. 1999. "Narratives and Lives: Women's Health Politics and the Diagnosis of Cancer for DES Daughters." *Narrative Inquiry* 9:347-89.

Centre for Narrative Research. <http://www.uel.ac.uk/cnr/> .

Clandinin, D. Jean. ed. 2006. *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Clandinin, D.J. and M. Connelly. 1999. *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Daiute, Colette and Cynthia Lightfoot, eds. 2003. *Narrative Analysis: Studying the Development of Individuals in Society*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Davis, Joseph. 2005. "Victim Narratives and Victim Selves: False Memory Syndrome and the Power of Accounts," *Social Problems* 52:529-48.

Ellis, Carolyn. 2004. *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Narrative about Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, MD: Alta Mira Press.

Gates, Henry Louis Jr. (1987). 2012. *The Classic Slave Narrative*. New York: Signet.

Goffman, Erving. 1974. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Social Organization of Experience*. New York: Harper.

Jacobs, Ronald. 1996. "Producing the News, Producing the Crisis: Narrativity, Television and News Work." *Media, Culture and Society* 18:373-97.

Mattingly, Cheryl. 1998. *Healing Dramas and Clinical Plots: The Narrative Structure of Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mikdashy, Maya. 2013. "What Is Settler Colonialism? (for Lo Delano Ames, Jr.)." *American Indian Culture*

and *Research Journal* 37:23-34.

Norrick, Neal R. "2008. "Negotiating the Reception of Stories in Conversation: Teller Strategies for Modulating Response." *Narrative Inquiry* 18:131-51.

Lieblich, Amia, Rivka Tuval-Mashiach and Tamar Zilber. 1998. *Narrative Research: Reading, Analysis, and Interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Polkinghorne, Donald. E. 1988. *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. (See especially pages 13-22, 157-184)

Rawick, George P. 1977 - 1979. *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing.

Riessman, Catherine Kohler. 2003. "Performng Identities in Illness Narrative: Masculinity and Multiple Sclerosis." *Qualitative Research* 3:5-33.

Steinberg, Marc W. 1998. "Tilting the Frame: Considerations on Collective Action Framing From from a Discursive Turn." *Theory and Society* 27:845-72.

Tamboukou, Maria. 2003. *Women, Education and the Self: A Foucauldian Perspective*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ticktin, Miriam. 1999. "Selling Suffering in the Courtroom and Marketplace: An Analysis of The Autobiography of Kiranjit Ahluwalia." *The Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 22:24-41.

_____. 2014. "Transnational Humanitarianism." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43:273-89.

N.B. My thanks to Robert Zussman for his wisdom about narratives and his numerous insightful reading recommendations. The Fall 2015 Narrative seminar participants also provided excellent reading suggestions, which have enhanced this syllabus.