

Narrative
Department of Sociology (920:512:03)
Spring 2013
Rutgers University
Syllabus

Instructor: Professor Judith Gerson
Office: Davison room 139, Douglass Campus
E-mail: gerson@rci.rutgers.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 3 -5 and by appointment

Course Overview:

Narratives are the stories we tell one another. Narratives order and connect events, objects and processes in meaningful ways. They occur in a seemingly endless variety of forms including personal accounts, recorded histories, official documents, political campaigns, cultural myths, and course descriptions to cite a few examples. Many scholars would disparage the claim of a universal narrative, though some would insist that ideas about the individual self in modern life represent such a narrative. An emerging field of study within sociology, narrative scholarship crosscuts and intersects with every research area within the discipline, and simultaneously transcends the traditional chasm between the humanities and the social sciences. The course takes advantage of this intellectual complexity and makes the argument that all narratives are socially constructed and thus are important sources of knowledge of larger social processes and structures.

The learning goals of this seminar are reflected in its organization. The readings begin with a discussion about how best to define narratives. Are narratives and stories synonymous, or are there differences between the two concepts? Does genre or narrative form matter? What characteristics best define different narrative forms and narratives in general? Do narratives invariably represent a chronological or even orderly sequence? Are all narratives accounts and/or explanations? Does narrative description imply explanation? What do narratives allow scholars to understand about the self and about identity? Does the focus or substance of a narrative matter? For instance, are there important categorical differences among illness, trauma, and social justice narratives? How do empirically minded scholars analyze omission, silence, and trace in narratives? Are there occasions that are more likely to produce and/or reproduce the telling of stories, and some stories rather than others? In what ways are narratives shaped by the conditions and processes of their production; how do narrative production, communication, and circulation respond to socio-historical requirements, regulation, and audience response? 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? Are there limitations that narratives impose on researchers?

This seminar enables participants to develop the necessary theoretical, substantive and methodological tools to analyze narratives. The readings open with questions of conceptualization and epistemology, and then turn to a rich mix of theoretical and methodological issues often using empirical cases as evidence. The later weeks will concentrate on narrative analyses in several substantive fields of interest including political and trauma narratives, and which will also reference seminar participants' research interests.

The syllabus lists the required readings (noted by an asterisk following the citation) and unmarked optional resources for further exploration. Regular attendance and active engagement with the ideas and materials in the course are essential practices. Each week students should come to class with a one- to two-page analytic overview of the assigned readings, which they will post on the course website by the evening before class meets (i.e., by Tuesday, 6 pm), read the other statements, and be prepared to discuss them in the seminar. 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. In addition, every week one seminar member will facilitate our discussion and present a brief opening or closing statement. Carefully considered weekly papers and thoughtful participation in seminar discussions are important elements of the seminar's success.

The final paper, based on original research, 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 Friday, May 10th at noon. 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.

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(s).

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

January 23 Course Introduction

January 30 Foundational Issues

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

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

White, Hayden. 1978. "Introduction: Tropology, Discourse, and the Modes of Human Consciousness." Pp. 1-25 in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.*

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

Scott, Marvin and Sanford Lyman. 1968. "Accounts." *American Sociological Review* 41:838-49.*

February 6 Foundational Issues, Later Articulations

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

Maines, David. 1993. "Narrative's Moment and Sociology's Phenomena: Toward a Narrative Sociology," *Sociology Quarterly* 34: 17-38.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

February 13 Disciplining Narratives

Calhoun, Craig. 1998. "Explanation in Historical Sociology: Narrative, General Theory, and Historically-Specific Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 104: 846-71.*

Josselson, Ruthellen. 2006. "Narrative Research and the Challenge of Accumulating Knowledge." *Narrative Inquiry* 16:3-10.*

Cohn, Neil. 2012. "Visual Narrative Structure." *Cognitive Science: A Multidisciplinary Journal*. 1-40.*

Reed, Isaac. 2008. "Justifying Sociological Knowledge: From Realism to Interpretation." *Sociological Theory* 26:101-29.*

Polletta, Francesca et al. 2011. "The Sociology of Storytelling." *Annual Review of Sociology* 37:109-30.*

Reed, John Shelton. 1989. "On Narrative and Sociology." *Social Forces* 68:1-14.

Patterson, Molly and Kristen Renwick Monroe. 1998. "Narrative in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 1:315-33.

Hyvärinen, Matti. 2006. "Towards a Conceptual History of Narrative." *Studies across Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences* 1:20-41.

Disciplining Narratives, continued

Hemmings, Clare. 2005. "Telling Feminist Stories." *Feminist Theory* 6:115-39.

Norris, Stephen P. et al. 2005. "A Theoretical Framework for Narrative Explanation in Science." Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com 27 May 2005)

Merrill, John Bryce. 2007. "Stories of Narrative: On Social Scientific Uses of Narrative in Multiple Disciplines." *Colorado Research in Linguistics* 20:125- 42.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2004. "On the Social Construction of Moral Universals: The 'Holocaust' from War Crime to Trauma Drama. Pp. 196-263 in Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman and Bernard Giesen. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gubrium, Jaber F. and James A. Holstein. 1999. "At the Border of Narrative and Ethnography." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 28:561-73.

Gotham, Kevin Fox and William Staples. 1996. "Narrative Analysis and the New Historical Sociology." *Sociological Quarterly* 37:481-501.

Berger, Ronald J. and Richard Quinney. eds. 2004. *Storytelling Sociology: Narrative as Sociological Inquiry*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Polkinghorne, Donald. 1988. *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. Pp. 11-22, 157-184.

Harré, Rom. 1990. "Some Narrative Conventions of Scientific Discourse." Pp. 5-22 in Christopher Nash, ed. *Narrative in Culture: The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy, and Literature*. London and New York: Routledge.

McCloskey, Donald N. 1990. "Storytelling in Economics." Pp. 5-22 in Christopher Nash, ed. *Narrative in Culture: The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy, and Literature*. London and New York: Routledge.

Straub, Jürgen. 2005. "Telling Stories, Making History." Toward a Narrative Psychology of the Historical Construction of Meaning." Pp. 44-98 in Jürgen Straub, ed. *Narration, Identity and Historical Consciousness*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

February 20 Personal Narratives

Gubrium, Jaber F. and James A. Holstein. 1998. "Narrative Practice and the Coherence of Personal Stories." *The Sociological Quarterly* 39:163-87.*

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. [Pages to be assigned.] *

February 20 Personal Narratives, continued

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. *

Ochs, Elinor and Lisa Capps. 1996. "Narrating the Self." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 25:19-43.

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

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]

March 1 Collective Identities

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hankiss, Agnes. 1981. "Ontologies of the Self: On the Mythological Rearranging of One's Life History." Pp. 203-09 in Daniel Bertaux, ed. *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

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

March 6 Narrative Politics and Social Movements

Polletta, Francesca. 2006. *It Was Like Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [Pages to be assigned]*

Armstrong, Elizabeth A. and Suzanna M. Crago. 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. *

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

Jameson, Fredric. 1981. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

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

March 6 or March 13 Paper Topics

Post one-page descriptions of projects for discussion in class by March 6 or 13 (the earlier the better). Be as specific as possible and include citations to a few key reference works. If you remain undecided about your focus, provisionally post two possible projects.

March 13 Methodological Issues, Part 1

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

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.*

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

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

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

March 13 Methodological Issues, Part 1, continued

Labov, William and Joshua Waletzky. 1967. "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience." Pp. 12-44 in June Helm (ed.), *Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

March 27 Methodological Issues, Part 2

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

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. *

Philaretou, Andreas G. and Katherine R. Allen. 2006. "Researching Sensitive Topics through Autoethnographic Means." *The Journal of Men's Studies* 14:65-78.*

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

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

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.

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

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

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

Ricoeur, Paul. 1980. "Narrative Time." *Critical Inquiry* 7:169-90.

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

Darby, David. 2001. "Form and Context: An Essay in the History of Narratology." *Poetics Today* 22:

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

April 3 Erasure, Silence, and Trace

Hewitt, John and Randall Stokes. 1975. "Disclaimers." *American Sociological Review* 40:1-11.*

Gordon, Avery F. 2010. "The Prisoner's Curse." Pp. 17-55 in Herman Gray and Macarena Gómez-Barris, eds. *Toward a Sociology of the Trace*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.*

Gordon, Avery F. 1997. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. * [Pages to be assigned]

Moore, Henrietta L. 2010. "Forms of Knowing and Un-Knowing: Secrets about Society, Sexuality and God in Northern Kenya." Pp. 30-41 in Ryan-Flood, Róisín and Rosalind Gill. eds. 2010. *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process: Feminist Reflections*. New York and London: Routledge*

Wajnryb, Ruth. 2001. *The Silence: How Tragedy Shapes Talk*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Zerubavel, Eviatar. 2006. *The Elephant in the Room: Silence and Denial in Everyday Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

April 10 Catastrophe Narratives and Collective Memory

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

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

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

Erikson, Kai T. 1998. "Trauma at Buffalo Creek." *Society* 35:153-61.*

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

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

Browning, Christopher R. 2003. *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony*. Madison: the University of Wisconsin Press.

April 17 Narratives of Inequality and Difference [Select two additional texts—students' choice]

Bhabha, Homi K. 1990. "Introduction: Narrating the Nation." and "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation." Pp. 1-7 and 291-309 in Homi K. Bhabha, ed. *Narrating the Nation*. New York: Routledge.*

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

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

Gressgård, Randi. 2010. "When trans translates into tolerance—or was it monstrous? Transsexual and transgender identity in liberal humanist discourse." *Sexualities* 13:539-61.

Pascoe, C.J. 2005. "'Dude, You're a Fag': Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse." *Sexualities* 8:329-46.

Frank, Arthur W. 1995. *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pages 2-38.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2012. "Just Another American Story? The First Black First Family." *Qualitative Sociology* 35:123-41.

Hughey, Matthew W. 2012. "Show Me Your Papers! Obama's Birth and the Whiteness of Belonging." *Qualitative Sociology* 35:163-81.

Clark, Mary Marshall. 2011. "Herodotus Reconsidered: An Oral History of September 11, 2001, in New York City." *Radical History Review* 10:79-89.

Peek, Lori A. 2003. "Reactions and Response: Muslim Students' Experiences on New York City Campuses Post 9/11." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 23:271-83.

Ezzy, Douglas. 2000. "Fate and Agency in Job Loss Narratives." *Qualitative Sociology* 23:121-34.

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

Jacobs, Ronald N. 2001. "The Problem with Tragic Narratives: Lessons from the Los Angeles Uprising." *Qualitative Sociology* 24:221-43.

April 10, 17, 24, May 1 Workshops

Discussion of work in progress. Please post a partial, preliminary draft of your paper, present it briefly to the seminar with the goal of having a constructive discussion of your work in progress.

May 10 Final Papers Due