Readers and writers both struggle to interpret and perform within a common language shareable imaginative worlds. (Toni Morrison)

**Calendar Description:**
Narrative is a primary way of making sense of the world. It can enable us to make connections between creative and intellectual work, personal experience and social history. This course draws on literature, film, autobiography, personal stories and popular culture as well as more traditional theoretical texts to examine the role of the narrative imagination in teaching, learning and research. Teaching and learning are broadly defined and the course may be useful to anyone with an interest in education, theories of narrative, life history, autobiography, media or cultural studies. Research is also broadly defined as any reflective practice that helps us understand our lives and work. Course participants will explore some of the socio-historical, cultural and personal narratives they bring to their work, and examine some possible ways of gathering and interpreting their own stories or those of others.

**Preliminary questions:**
What is the relationship between the stories we tell and our experience?
How do the stories we tell reflect and shape their historical, social, cultural and political context?
Can telling stories transform lives?
How do we hear stories that others tell?
What does interpretation do to stories?
What makes a good research story?
What does it mean to imagine or tell a story from a position of social or cultural difference?

**Course Evaluations:**
*Assignment 1:* Weekly writing assignments (35% - 7 assignments worth 5% each). 2-3 pages of informal exploratory writing per week as explained on the syllabus. Writing assignments are suggested for each week on the syllabus. Choose seven.

*Assignment 2:* Interview project (35%) Due Mar. 20. With a partner, outside class time, you will take turns interviewing each other (20-30 minutes each). The interviews will be recorded. Each interviewer will transcribe the interview s/he has conducted and write a short (3-5 page) analytical piece based on the interview. The theme of the interview and the analytical approach to the written piece are up to the interviewer and interviewee but remember that the interviewee's identity will not be confidential. The interviewee should read the interviewer's analytical piece
and then give a short (1-2 page) written response to the interviewer regarding the following points: significance of interview setting and context, relevance of interview questions, relationship between the interviewer's written text and the interviewee's understanding of his or her own story, as well as anything else that seems relevant.

Assignment 3: Final paper or project (30%) Due April 10. A 10-15 page formal paper, following a recognized style guide such as APA or MLA, in which you explore one or more of the issues raised in the course. This paper may incorporate your own personal narrative but it is not required to do so. It may also be written in relation to one or more of your weekly response writings and/or your thesis. If you do include a personal narrative in your paper, you must also go beyond the story through a) analysing it theoretically, and b) situating it in a broader socio-historical context. You may experiment with any of the analytical approaches presented in the class.

If anyone would like to do an alternative to assignment 2 and/or 3 in the form of a film, video or audio documentary, website, blog, podcast, multimedia piece, etc. I am open to possibilities. If you wish to do this, you should give me a fairly detailed proposal and meet with me to discuss it by the end of January.

Course Readings:
There will be no textbook for this course. Rather, a variety of articles on topics of current interest will be read and discussed. The readings are outlined on the syllabus. Bibliographies on the various analytical approaches are available on request.

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Notes: As the calendar description notes, education is defined very broadly to include popular education, informal education and any of the ways we learn about the world and inscribe ourselves and others into it. These include books, media, stories, songs, museum displays and so on. All of these provide stories or narratives that we engage with in various ways. The course explores both how stories "work" - how we understand and use them – and the process of creating them through storytelling, creative writing and so on. The course is divided into two parts. In the first part, "Forms", various narrative forms such as cinema, fiction, museum
displays, media reports and autobiography are explored. The focus of these explorations is on how such forms educate us about what we call reality and, more specifically, how they contribute to our understanding of what it means to teach and what it means to learn. The second part of the course, "Methods" presents a range of narrative approaches to research and curriculum. The research methods discussed include cultural studies, interviews, oral and life history, ethnography, personal narrative, and narrative inquiry. Curriculum is discussed in terms of life as curriculum, and teaching as storytelling. There will be various short handouts in addition to the readings listed on the syllabus.

**Forms:**

*Jan. 10:* Introductions.
Film and discussion: Fleck, R. & Boden, A. Half Nelson.

*Jan. 17:* (Cinema)
Readings:

Weekly assignment: Watch and write a response to a film about teaching such as Freedom Writers (2007), Not One Less (Yi ge dou bu neng shao) (1999) or one of the films Dalton discusses in “The Hollywood model”. In your response, consider issues of identification as discussed by Perez.

*Jan. 24:* (Fictionalized accounts)
Readings:

Weekly assignment: Write a short fictionalized piece based on an experience of your own as a teacher or a student. You can decide to what extent you want to fictionalize it and what kind of writing style to use. We will read and discuss these in class.

*Jan. 31:* (Media reports)
Readings:

**Weekly assignment:** Choose a media story on any topic that interests you and try to analyse it using concepts and strategies from this week's readings. Consider in particular what the public learns from it.

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**Feb. 7: (Museums)**

**Readings:**

**Weekly assignment:** Visit a museum or public display or memorial of some kind and write about the stories it tells and doesn't tell. (If you are short of time, you could visit the series of panels recounting the history of education in Newfoundland and Labrador on the second floor of the Education building.)

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**Feb. 14: (Autobiography)**


**Weekly assignment:** Mid-term course evaluation. This week's assignment is not for a mark and it may be anonymous if you wish but please write something about how you feel about the course so far. Suggestions are welcome, along with any other comment or feedback you may wish to offer.

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**Methods:**

**Feb. 21: (Memory and testimonial)**

New York: SUNY Press.
   (Semiotics and textual analysis)
Weekly assignment: Write an informal response to the readings, developing any themes you wish.

Feb. 28: (Oral and life history)
Weekly assignment: Write an informal response to the readings, developing any themes you wish.

Mar. 6: (Cultural Studies)
Readings:
Weekly assignment: Choose one of the exercises on either pp. 46-47, or p. 65 of the assigned readings.

Mar. 13: (Narrative inquiry)
Weekly assignment: Write an informal response to the readings, developing any themes you wish.
Mar. 20: (Ethnography and personal narrative)
Weekly assignment: Write an informal response to the readings, developing any themes you wish.

Mar. 27: Break.

Apr. 3: (Narrative and Curriculum)
Readings:
Film: Media Education Foundation, Mickey Mouse Monopoly
Weekly assignment: Write an informal response to the readings, developing any themes you wish.

Final papers due one week after last class.