

Huron University College
Department of English and Cultural Studies
English 1027F 550: The Storyteller's Art I;
Narrating the Beginning
Dr. Adrian MIOC

Class: Tue: 8:30-10:30 Thu: 8:30-9:30 – W108

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Office Hours: Thu 9:30-10:30.

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General Course Description

Storytelling is essential to who we are and our relationships to our community, nation, and the world. In this course, we will explore the diverse traditions of storytelling, such as, oral tales, short stories, classic fiction, and graphic novels. Instruction is by lecture, and emphasizes developing strong analytical and writing skills.

Specific Focus:

Aristotle says that every good story has a beginning, middle and end. To his pronouncement from his *Poetics*, one could add that many stories are also about the beginnings, middles and ends of the people, places and things they tell about. In this course, we will examine stories about different forms of beginnings. This section will encourage us to read narrations that depict beginnings, rebirths, or revivals. Beside stories about genesis or cosmological myths (*Bible*, Aboriginal myths), we will examine fictions about births of civilization (*2001: A Space Odyssey*), and about utopian societies (Plato's *Republic*, Thomas Moore's *Utopia*) which also allude to class and gender-related issues (Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies*). A beginning can be thought of as an expression of human creativity (Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*) which can be performed by means of magic (*1001 Nights' story of Aladdin*). Beginnings may occur in the inner world of dreams (*Inception*), or mystical visions (Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love*). Finally, we will look at the contemporary political scene and discuss the story of Donald Trump (and Emanuel Macron) as scenarios of beginning.

Course Learning Objectives:

- Improve critical reading and writing in ways that will enable success in a wide variety of University courses.
- Further appreciation of diverse cultural productions and practices.
- Develop an interdisciplinary perspective on a variety of narrative media: for example, short story, novel or film.
- Become capable of identifying, analyzing and interpreting basic narrative elements, such as plot, character, point of view, theme, setting, imagery, diction, tone, figures of speech, and tropes
- Explore a wide range of forms of creative expression
- Write logically and persuasively in fluent, Standard English using the appropriate conventions for scholarly-critical writing

- Design strong thesis statements and structured arguments in persuasive essays
- Learn to document essays using MLA format
- Evaluate the relevance, reliability, and usefulness of research sources, including those obtained through the Internet
- Integrate outside research materials and references to the original text into an essay through use of quotations and paraphrases

Description of Class Methods

Classes will consist of lectures on - and discussions of - various narratives and related topics. Discussions regarding weekly readings and viewings will be customarily engaged. Students may expect improvised group work on specific passages in the readings and frames of the viewed movies. Thus, students should come to class with their readings in print or digital media, having read the work scheduled for that day, and prepared to participate in lectures and discussions.

Textbooks and Other Required Resources

Required Reading

King James Bible

Thomas King *The Truth About Stories. A Native Narrative*

The Epic of Gilgamesh

Plato *The Republic*

Thomas Moore *Utopia*

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

Karl Marx *Manifesto of the Communist Party*

Schedule of Readings and Lectures

Week 1:

Sept 6: Introduction

Week 2: Creation of the World

Sept 11: *The Bible: Genesis 1*- the Christian Story of Creation

Sept 13: Aboriginal Myths of Creation - Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories; a Native Narrative*. Ch.1 "You'll never Believe What Happened" Is A Great Way To Start."

Week 3: The World of Heroes

Sept 18, 20: *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

Week 4: Social Beginnings I

Sept 25, 27: Plato, *The Republic* (book 2, 7, 10)

Week 5: Social Beginnings II

Oct 2, 4: Thomas Moore *Utopia*

Week 6: Thanksgiving (no classes)

Week 7: Beginnings of Civilization

Oct 16, 18: *2001: A Space Odyssey* 1968 (dir. Stanley Kubrick)

Week 8: Romantic Creations

Oct 23, 25: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (scenes from *Frankenstein* (1931)
visit Comic Con London Oct 26-28

Week 9: Politics, Gender and Revolutions

Oct 31: Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848)

Nov 1: Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies* 1405) (excerpts)

Week 10: Beginnings in Thought

Nov 6, 8: *Inception* (2010) (dir. Christopher Nolan)

Week 11: Magical and Mystical Beginnings

Nov 13: *1001 Nights: The Story of Alladin*

Nov 15: Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love* (1395) (excerpts)

Week 12: Beginnings in Popular Culture: Superheroes

Nov 20, 22: *Batman Begins* (2005) (dir. Christopher Nolan)

Week 13: Superheroes II

Nov 27, 29: The Creation of: *Spider Man, The Fantastic Four, Harley Quinn, Doctor Strange, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, Captain America* etc. (excerpts from various movies)

Week 14: The Comic Beginning

Dec 4: *Groundhog Day* (1993) (dir. Harold Ramis)

Dec 6: Conclusion: discussion about contemporary political scene. The story of Donald Trump (and Emanuel Macron) as scenarios of beginning.

Method of Evaluation and Assessment

Assignment	Due	Weight
Character Analysis (250 words)	due Oct 18	15%
Presentation	Weeks of Sept 18 - Nov 29	15%
Term Research Paper (1200 words)	Nov. 29	25%
Final Exam	To be scheduled by the registrar	30%
Attendance & Participation	Ongoing	15%

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation multiply perspectives and enrich the educational experience for all. *If you miss more than nine hours of class meetings per term (the equivalent of two weeks of class meetings), your attendance & participation grade will be forfeited automatically.* Participation means having engaged the readings and being prepared to discuss them in class.

Late Policy

All assignments are due by the end of class on the due date and should be handed to the instructor personally. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the instructor receives the essay.

Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of 2 marks per calendar day until the instructor receives the essay. *Normally, late assignments will receive a grade but no detailed commentary.* **After 7 days, the assignment will not be accepted and a mark of 0/F will be awarded.**

Students must pass both term work and the final examination in order to pass the course. Students who fail the term work are not allowed to take the final examination. Students who fail the final examination (regardless of their term work) automatically fail the course.



The Appendix to Course Outlines is posted on the OWL course site.