

**Huron University College**  
**Department of English and Cultural Studies**  
**English 1027F 551: The Storyteller's Art I;**  
**Narrating the Beginning**  
**Dr. Adrian Mioc**

**Class:** Wed: 18:30-21:30 – W8

**Office:** A20

**Office Hours:** Wed 17:30-18:30 or by appt.

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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 12: Introduction

### **Week 2: Creation of the World**

Sept 19: The *Bible: Genesis 1*- the Christian Story of Creation

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 26: *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

### **Week 4: Social Beginnings I**

Oct 3: Plato, *The Republic* (book 2, 7 10)

### **Week 5: Thanksgiving (no classes)**

### **Week 6: Social Beginnings II**

Oct 17: Thomas Moore *Utopia*

### **Week 7: Beginnings of Civilization**

Oct 24: *2001: A Space Odyssey* 1968 (dir. Stanley Kubrick)

visit *Comic Con London* Oct 26-28

### **Week 8: Romantic Creations**

Oct 31: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (scenes from *Frankenstein* (1931)

### **Week 9: Politics, Gender and Revolutions**

Nov 7: Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848)

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

### **Week 10: Beginnings in Thought**

Nov 14: *Inception* (2010) (dir. Christopher Nolan)

### **Week 11: Magical and Mystical Beginnings**

Nov 21: *1001 Nights: The Story of Alladin*

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

### **Week 12: Beginnings in Popular Culture: Superheroes**

Nov 28: *Batman Begins* (2005) (dir. Christopher Nolan)

### **Week 13: Superheroes II**

Dec 5: The Creation of: *Spider Man, The Fantastic Four, Harley Quinn, Doctor Strange, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, Captain America* etc. (excerpts from various movies)

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

### **Method of Evaluation and Assessment**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Character Analysis (250 words)	due Oct 17	15%
Presentation	Weeks of Sept 19 - Nov 28	15%
Term Research Paper (1200 words)	Nov. 28	25%
Final Exam	To be scheduled by the registrar	30%

Attendance & Participation	Ongoing	15%
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### **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.**