

# IDS 1468: Why Tell Stories? (Honors)

## Quest 1: Identities

### I. General Information

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#### Class Meetings

- Spring, 2024
- MWF 5 (11:45-12:35)
- MCCA 1142

#### Instructor

- Alison Reynolds, PhD
- Turlington 2215
- MW Period 4 and by appointment
- [ali.reynolds@ufl.edu](mailto:ali.reynolds@ufl.edu)

#### Teaching Assistant

Matthew Vekakis  
Turlington 2215  
W  
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#### Course Description

Through art, philosophy, literature, and film, we will examine how the creation and sharing of stories is a universal experience, one that is central to our existence and our humanness. Stories help us see lives through the eyes of others and lead us to consider our own place in this world.

This multidisciplinary Quest 1 course examines how people use stories to share the human condition and their histories, which serve to establish their cultural identities. It is through stories that people can connect with the lives of others, understand what it means to be a child trying to understand the world of adults, what it means to be an immigrant, and what it means to be looking for a family history. Stories of all shapes will frame this exploration of accounts of life from childhood through adulthood. Ultimately, we will explore how our understanding of the world we inhabit has been reflected in and is shaped by these diverse and multidisciplinary texts.

By looking inward and outward and backward and forward, we will consider how stories have and will influence them, and we will ask the following questions to explore how storytelling provides humans with the means to find compassion, to connect, and to share their own lives: How do our own lives correlate with the stories we read, see, and watch? Do stories provide a way of teaching us all lessons that help us navigate and understand the world and its occupants? Do we learn to be human because of stories? Can stories provide links to people like us?

## Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 1
- Humanities (H)
- Diversity (D)
- Writing Requirement (WR) 4000 words

This course accomplishes the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

## Required Readings and Works

### Purchase the following texts (hardcopy or e-books)

Acevedo, Elizabeth. *The Poet X*.

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice in Wonderland*. (free on *The Project Gutenberg* website)

Lahiri, Jhumpa, Lahari. *The Namesake*.

Thompson, Craig. *Blankets*.

### The following readings will be provided in Canvas

Butler, Judith. "What Value Do the Humanities Have?"

Cisneros, Sandra. "My Name."

Oates, Joyce Carol. "Where are You Going, Where Have You Been?"

Lui, Ken. "Paper Menagerie"

Storr, Will. *The Science of Storytelling*

### Films (will be provided)

*Spirited Away (2002)*

*Moonlight (2016)*

*Past Lives (2023)*

Recommended writing handbook: Either *Writer's Help* or *The Little Seagull*

Materials and Supplies Fees: n/a

## II. Graded Work

### Description of Graded Work

Assignment	Assignment Description	Purpose	Words	Grade
My Story	In four personal narratives, connect the texts we have studied in the unit to your own identity and life experiences and reflect on why stories matter: *A childhood story (50) *Life as a teen (50)	Develop and present clear and effective questions and responses to essential questions	Do not count towards WR	200

	*Adulthood (50) *Reflecting on life (50)			
<b>In-Class Examinations</b>	In-class essay examination (3 x 100)	Identify, explain, and describe theories and methodologies		<b>300</b>
<b>Analytical Essay</b>	Write a 2,000 (minimum)-word analysis that describes and analyzes the part of your identity that you most relate to—tell (and analyze) its story. Have a strong thesis and incorporate 5 scholarly sources (books or peer-reviewed articles) to support each of the points. <i>Essay feedback provided before the end of finals week.</i>	Analyze and evaluate essential humanities questions	<b>2000</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Portfolio and Reflection</b>	In an e-portfolio, present the work completed during the semester and write a reflective letter that summarizes the learning during the semester and addresses the way stories inform us about the human condition.	Connect course content to own lives		<b>100</b>
<b>Think Pieces</b>	Four Think Pieces thesis-driven responses that demonstrate engagement with readings, self-reflection, and critical thinking relating to the texts, storytelling, and diversity. (500-word <i>minimum</i> )	Reflect, engage, and consider how the stories change	<b>2000</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Total Points</b>			<b>4000</b>	<b>1000</b>

## Grading Scale

In this class, students can earn up to 1,000 points. For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	940 – 100		C	740 – 769
A-	900 – 939		C-	700 – 739
B+	870 – 899		D+	670 – 699
B	840 – 869		D	640 – 669
B-	800 – 839		D-	600 – 639
C+	770 – 799		E	<600

## Grading Rubrics

### Writing Assessment Rubric and Statements

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off-topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

- The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.
- The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback before the end of the course on all of the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.
- WR course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

### Rubric for Grading Think Pieces

- Think Pieces are an opportunity for students to synthesize, reflect upon, and begin to analyze materials and experiential activities assigned for this class. They also provide an opportunity to engage with the class materials in a critical and personal way. The following rubric will be used for grading Think Pieces:

Rubric	Points
Thorough on-point, thoughtful take on the materials.	Full credit (40)
Competent and complete but may lack clarity, specific detail, and/or development of thoughts.	Partial credit (20-39)
Incomplete, poorly written, shows little involvement with the materials.	Some credit (1-19)
No submission	0

### III. Annotated Weekly Schedule

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Schedule is *tentative*. Check Canvas modules each week for any changes. All reading assignments are due on the **first day** of class that week.

An increasing number of studies have shown that laptop computer use in class hinders learning. Even more alarming is that this effect carries over to students seated nearby. This article links to many of these studies: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2014/09/25/why-a-leading-professor-of-new-media-just-banned-technology-use-in-class/>

Given these findings, I ask that you take notes with pen/pencil and paper. If you absolutely must bring a laptop, you should sit behind non-computer users so as not to disturb other students with your screen. For those choosing this option, please do not use your computer for anything other than note taking.

Week	Activity	Topic (Question/Subject)	Assigned Work Due
<b>1</b>		Module 1: Introduction	
	Summary	An introduction to the humanities and Quest 1. Why do stories matter?	
	Reading	<a href="#">“What Value Do the Humanities Have?”</a> Judith Butler (2 pp.) <i>The Science of Storytelling</i> (12 pp. to 1.4)	
	Assignment	<b>Complete “About You” Canvas</b>	1/12
<b>2</b>			
	Summary	How do stories help explain childhood? Introduction to narrative theory. Why is Liu’s story so impactful? Practice close reading techniques.	

	Reading	<i>The Science of Storytelling</i> (12 pp.) “Paper Menagerie” Ken Liu (17 pp. Canvas Files)	
	Assignment	<b>Think Piece 1</b>	TP 1/19
<b>3</b>		<b>Module 2: Childhood</b>	
	Summary	Why is life for a child a <i>Wonderland</i> ? How is the Japanese Chihiro’s experience like the British Alice’s childhood experience? Group discussion <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> and practice interpretation of a text.	
	Reading	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> I-V (67 pp. novel)	
	Assignment	<b>My Story 1</b>	MS 1/26
<b>4</b>		<i>Alice</i>	
	Summary	Why is the story of Alice timeless? How is Alice depicted in art? What influence has Alice had on culture? Image analysis. Synthesize the film, photography, and the story to prepare for first examination.	
	Reading	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> VI-IX (63 pp. novel) Photography—Kristy Mitchell	
	Film	<i>Spirited Away</i> (165 min.) (Watch part in class and screen rest outside of class)	
	Assignment	<b>Think Piece 2</b>	TP 2/2
<b>5</b>		<i>Alice</i>	

	Summary	Synthesize the film, photography, and the story to prepare for first examination.	
	Reading	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> X-XII (46 pp. novel)	
	Assignment	<b>Examination I</b>	2/9 Exam 1
<b>6</b>		<b>Module 3: Adolescence</b>	
	Summary	How is teenage life a universal experience? How is a teenage life in Harlem like a teenage life in Miami or anywhere else? Analyzing slam poetry.	
	Reading	<i>The Poet X</i> Part 1 and 2 (short poetry) “My Name” Sandra Cisneros (1 p. Canvas Files)	
	Assignment	<b>My Story 2</b>	MS 2/16
<b>7</b>		<i>The Poet X</i>	
	Summary	How do we learn about fitting in? How important are groups to life? Group discussion and practice poetry and film analysis. How does religion influence teen lives?	
	Reading	<i>The Poet X</i> Part 2 and 3 (short poetry) “Where are You Going, Where Have You Been?” Joyce Carol Oates	
	Art	My home and graffiti	
	Assignment		

<b>8</b>		<i>Blankets</i>	
	Summary	How is the relationship to the world formed? How do we use art to make a mark on the world? Synthesize the film, art, and the poetry to prepare for examination.	
	Reading	<i>Blankets</i> (300 pages-graphic novel)	
	Film	<i>Moonlight</i> (111 min.) (Watch part in class and screen rest outside of class)	
	Assignment	<b>Think Piece 3</b>	TP 3/1
<b>9</b>		<i>Blankets</i>	
	Summary	How do we decide who we are? How do stories expose the complex lives of others? How much of our lives are determined by outside forces? Group discussion and practice film analysis.	
	Reading	Finish <i>Blankets</i> (300 pages-graphic novel)	
	Assignment	<b>Examination 2</b>	Exam II 3/8
March 11-13		SPRING BREAK	
<b>10</b>		Module 3: Adulthood	
	Summary	How important is the immigrant story? Why are names so important to fitting in? Examine the narrative structure of the story. How important are relationships to our adult lives? Do we see ourselves in the story? Finding reflections of self in art. Can we see and understand other's lives in art?	
	Reading Art	<i>The Namesake</i> 1-4 (71 pp. novel) Hahn museum. What images depict you and others?	
	Assignment	<b>My Story 3</b>	MS 3/22
<b>11</b>		<i>The Namesake</i>	
	Summary	Why is it important to share our family histories? What influence do those histories have on lives? Introduce Final Critical Analysis and brainstorm topics.	
	Reading	<i>The Namesake</i> 5-7 (116 pp. novel)	
	Assignment		
<b>12</b>		<i>The Namesake</i>	
	Summary	How are families important to creating identities? What do we lose when we leave our countries? What do we gain? Why are memoirs important stories? Practice visual analysis. Write outline of final paper.	
	Reading	<i>The Namesake</i> 8-12 (103 pp. novel)	
	Film	<i>Past Lives</i> (106 min.) (Watch part in class and screen rest outside of class)	

	Assignment	<b>Think Piece 4</b>	TP 4/5
<b>13</b>		<i>The Namesake</i>	
	Summary	How are gender roles important in the story? Do they reflect what is understood as a gender role? Synthesize the film, art, and the poetry to prepare for examination.	
	Assignment	<b>Examination 3</b>	Exam III 4/12
<b>14</b>		Module 4: My Story	
	Summary	Why do stories matter? Reflecting on materials. In-class work on final paper (lessons on structure, incorporation sources, and format). Peer review in class.	
	Assignment	<b>Final Critical Analysis (FCA)</b>	FCA 4/19
<b>15</b>		Reflections	
	Summary	Writing a reflection and building a portfolio.	
	Assignment	My Story 4 <b>Portfolio</b>	My Story 4 4/22 Portfolio 4/24

## IV. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) learning outcomes as follows:

### Course SLOs

	Students will be able to...	Assessment
<b>Content</b>	<b>Identify, describe, and explain</b> the means by which stories in art, poetry, literature, and film provide perspectives, connections, and beliefs regarding one's own identity and the identities of others.	Class participation, in-class examinations, Think Pieces, and final analytical essay.
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<b>Analyze, evaluate, and reflect critically</b> on how stories can expose complex lives, can teach about the lives of others, and can foster empathy and compassion. <b>Apply</b> key concepts in narrative theory. <b>Synthesize</b> materials and life experiences in classroom discussions and examinations.	Class participation, examinations, Think Pieces, portfolio and reflections, and final analytical essay.



<b>Communication</b>	<b>Develop and present</b> clear, organized, supported, and effective oral and written responses to class prompts and discussions, examinations, and other assignments.	Think Pieces, examinations, portfolio and reflection, and final analytical essay.
<b>Connection</b>	<b>Connect</b> own experiences with the stories of others, examine own intellectual development, reflect on the implications of the course materials as the materials pertain to past, current, and future lives and professions.	Think Pieces, experiential activity, reflection and portfolio, and final analytical essay.

## Diversity (D)

Students in this course will ...	Objectives will be accomplished by...
<b>Introduce, describe, and explain</b> how narrative theory and close textual analysis can be used to examine and characterize stories of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and identity.	Class discussion, group work, in-class examinations, Think Pieces, and final analytical essay.
<b>Analyze and evaluate</b> how stories in texts, film, and art can provide narratives of social inequities and cultural beliefs and practices. <b>Reflect</b> on the experiences of others and how their own lives fit into these narratives.	Practicing close reading skills of diverse authors and visual texts. Viewing and critical analyses of diverse art and films.
<b>Analyze and reflect</b> on diverse stories by completing assignments and producing responses that demonstrate use of clear, organized, well-supported, and thoughtful and inclusive language.	Think Pieces, reflection and portfolio, and final analytical essay.

# V. Quest Learning Experiences

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## 1. Details of Experiential Learning Component

Students will visit the Hahn Museum to find images that represent themselves and then search for a new image, someone or a family that is very different from themselves. The students will be asked to reflect on how the art has exposed them to a culture and a story that is very different from their own. This activity will be completed out of class.

## 2. Details of Self-Reflection Component

Self-reflection is built into the class through Think Pieces and in the final portfolio where students will be asked to provide a reflective letter that addresses how they have accomplished the General Education, Quest, and Diversity SLOs for the course. The students will be asked to reflect on how the texts have changed the way they understand themselves, others, and the world.

## VI. Required Policies

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### Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken at every class meeting. Students will be allowed **two** unexcused absences. Each unexcused absence after those will incur a 25-point (out of 1,000) deduction from the final grade in the class.

**All** unexcused late work will receive a **10% per day** penalty. Students must have an excused absence to make up for in-class examinations.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

### Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

### UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

## **Counseling and Wellness Center**

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

## **The Writing Studio**

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.