

STORYTELLING LIS 409A Spring, 2007 Betsy Hearne

The goal of LIS409 is to explore story sources, selection, absorption, and narration. Ultimately, the practical aspects should lead to a deeper theoretical understanding of the nature of story and its place in society. Background in folklore and its dissemination, along with awareness of ongoing controversies over the meaning and interpretation of tales, is as essential to a storyteller as practice in oral interpretation and planning programs. Most important is an appreciation of the enormous range and depth of story, from myth to anecdote, and the confidence that each person is already a storyteller with the potential to become a better one.

The course is organized along the lines of a workshop/seminar. At least half of every session will involve students telling stories and the class responding with critical insights into the story itself and its telling. Other discussion will center on assigned readings and projects selected by students according to their own interests in subject and age range. If possible, plan to observe a school or public library story-hour program sometime during the semester; and try to present at least one story outside of class.

Ja. 22 The folktale & other stories: Intro. to sources, resources, and approaches
Discussion of motifs, tale types, and cross-cultural traditions
An exercise in oral transmission
Tips on selecting and learning stories
Assign (for 1/29): Read Schimmel pp.2-42; MacDonald pp.9-106
Browse in the Center for Children's Books collections; note the stories you'd like to tell in a Future File, with title/source/age group.
Start your Story Diary (family stories, jokes, anecdotes you hear).
Designated students: prepare to tell stories next session.

Ja. 29 Oral narrative: theory and practice
Impact of global media on local traditions
The role of story in children's and other humans' lives
Stories & critiques; story diary/personal anecdote
Assign (2/5): 12 tales from *Beauties & Beasts* (Hearne) starting on p.3, 18, 25, 32, 41, 66, 109, 115, 131, 145, 151, 154)
Two chapters on "Folktales" & "Fables/Myths/Legends" in Sutherland
Designated students: prepare to tell stories next session

Feb. 5 Discussion of "Beauty and the Beast" variants, folk & literary
Ethnic variation and structural commonality in folk traditions
Stories & critiques; story diary and personal anecdote
Assign (2/12): Select & evaluate a collection of folktales (post title, author, brief evaluation in outline format on webboard)
Read MacDonald pp.107-200; Schimmel pp.43-56
Designated students: prepare to tell stories next session

Feb. 12 Collections and anthologies, sources & resources
Stories & critiques; story diary and personal anecdote
Assign (2/19): Critique an essay interpreting fairy tales or folklore (post

title/author and main points in outline format)
Designated students: prepare to tell stories next session

- Feb. 19 Tricksters, heroes/heroines, fools, and formulae: what do they mean?
Interpretation, censorship, & social issues in changing traditions
Stories & critiques; story diaries & personal anecdote
Assign (2/26): Compare picture-book/mass market versions of a tale
Five articles by Hearne: 2 in *SLJ*, 1 in *Library Trends*, 2 in *Horn Book*
Finish your Story Diary
Designated students: prepare to tell stories next session
- Feb. 26 Picture books, literary tales, spoofs, mass market, and cartoons
Discussion of possible Final Project topics, form/content of proposal
Stories & critiques; hand in Story Diaries
Assign (3/5): Select & bring to class a poem or song with narrative aspects
Write a brief (one-paragraph) Final Project proposal
Designated students: prepare to tell stories next session
- Mar. 5 Storytelling through music and poetry
Discussion of Final Project proposals
Stories & critiques
Assign (3/12): Design a story hour program (specifying theme & age)
Article by Shimojima in *Story: From Fireplace to Cyberspace*
Designated students: prepare to tell stories next session
- Mar. 12 Discussion of public & school library story-hours
Programming for toddlers through young adults; practical advice
Sign up for Final Project presentations
Stories and critiques
Assign (3/26): Final Project work
Designated students: prepare to tell stories next session
- Mar. 19 —No class (spring break)
- Mar. 26 Storytelling in hospitals and programs for children with special needs
Storytelling in nursing homes and programs for the elderly
Family stories and autobiographical narrative
Stories and critiques
Assign (4/2): Final Project work
Read Morgan's "Tangled in the Web"/explore a storytelling web site
Designated students: prepare to tell stories next session
- Apr. 2 Discussion of Final Project progress
Exploring cyberlore
Stories & critiques
Assign (4/9): Final Project work

Designated students: prepare to tell stories next session

Apr. 9 Storytelling: national and international networks; contemporary issues
Bards, librarians, and books: an ongoing tradition
Stories & critiques
Assign (4/16, 4/23, 4/30): Final Project work
Designated students: prepare to tell stories each session

Apr. 16 Guest Storyteller(s)
Early final Project presentations & discussion,+ stories & critiques

Apr. 23 Final Project reports & discussion + stories & critiques

Apr. 30 Final Project reports & discussion + stories & critiques

Final Projects and Future File due last day of class

NOTE: If the class is large, we may need to schedule time during final exam week to wrap up storytelling and final project presentations.

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Requirements

1. Readings in the following books, available in the U of I bookstore:
 - Just Enough to Make a Story*, by Nancy Schimmel (Sisters Choice, 1992)
 - Beauties and Beasts*, by Betsy Hearne (Oryx, 1993); or selections online reserve
 - The Storyteller's Start-up Book*, by Margaret MacDonald (August House, 1993)
2. Readings from other publications on online reserve or at www.lis.uiuc.edu/~hearne/
 - a. *Children and Books* (Chap. on "Folktales"; Chap. on "Fables, Myths, and Epics"), by Sutherland and Arbuthnot (HarperCollins, 8th ed. or later)
 - b. "Folklore Research Tools" (5-page intro.), *World Folktales* by Clarkson/Cross
 - c. Hearne articles: (1) "Cite the Source" and "Respect the Source," in *School Library Journal*, July and August, 1993; (2) "Swapping Tales and Stealing Stories: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Folklore in Children's Literature," *Library Trends*, Winter, 1999; (3) "Disney Revisited, Or, Jiminy Cricket, It's Musty Down Here!" in *The Horn Book Magazine*, Mar/Apr.1997; and (4) "Once There was and Will Be: Storytelling the Future" in *Horn Book* Nov/Dec. 2000
 - d. "Storytelling in the School Library Media Center," by Anne Shimojima in *Story: From Fireplace to Cyberspace* (GSLIS, 1998)
 - e. "Tangled in the Web: Storytelling, Communication, & Controversy," by Karen Morgan in *Story: From Fireplace to Cyberspace* (GSLIS, 1998)
3. Folktales and fairy tales, as many as possible from various genres and cultures. Keep a file of stories you'd want to tell, including folk and fairy tales, myths and legends, and selections from contemporary literature. Each entry should include the name of the story;

the source (author, title, publisher, date of collection); a brief description of the story, its type, tone, and possible context; and forecasts of age or audience level

4. Storytelling sessions, as assigned; and BB posts on folktale collections, cyberlore, folk/fairy tale essays, picture book folktale comparisons, programs, song/poem stories

5. Paper or report on any relevant aspect of individual interest (see list of sample projects)

Grades will be based on the following percentages: Final project/presentation, 40%; class participation (including both discussion and storytelling), 40%; story-hour design and other class assignments, 10%; Future File and Story Diary, 10%. Students taking the course for 2 credits are not required to do the Final Project or Story diary, though you will want to keep a Future File for your own future use, & I will want to see a copy of it at semester's end.

My office is in Room 23B (in the southwest corner of the Center for Children's Books, Room 24) at 501 E. Daniel; phone is 244-7451; email is ehearne@uiuc.edu. Office hours (online & on-campus) will be announced the first day of class; it's best to make an appointment so you don't have to wait.