



CM/LT 353 STORYTELLING
IES Abroad Barcelona

DESCRIPTION:

This course will examine Storytelling as a conceptualized discipline, a series of consistent techniques and a powerful communication resource. Storytelling will be explored through its applications across multidisciplinary and interconnected fields, from journalism to politics and communication studies, with the city of Barcelona as a privileged canvas. Diverse global voices are incorporated, as well as a critical reflection on how storytelling explores intersections of identity, power, and culture.

The role of biographical elements and real life stories for prompting emotional connection will be recognized and defined. Universal themes and narrative structures will be analyzed in order to understand the patterns behind successful communication. The fundamental features in crafting, writing, and presenting a story will be defined and integrated into practice: how to open and when to end, how to tell true stories and check information, why and how to change a preexistent narrative, the use of symbols and images, and the role of stories in shaping the city of Barcelona's global image. The course values diverse perspectives and encourages students to connect storytelling to their own cultural and personal experiences.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

INSTRUCTOR: Instructor Name

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

Lectures, class discussions, student presentations, video screenings of interviews, course-related trips and dialogues with guest speakers, critical reading and discussions of short stories, essays and articles published in newspapers and magazines.

Students will be required to read the texts, corresponding to each class, beforehand so that there will always be a common topic for discussion and collaborative learning.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course Participation - 10%
- Photo Project - 10%
- Video Project - 15%
- Oral Project - 15%
- Written Project - 20%
- 3 Blog Posts (5% each)- 15%
- Final Exam- 15%

Course Participation

Class participation is expected to stimulate and enrich class discussion; assessment will consider every aspect of the student's performance, including preparation, contributions, effort, and attentiveness. Students will bring to class their written reflections on the daily assigned readings to share them with the group, and practice storytelling in class. Group presentations on the readings and feedback will be required, as well.

Photo Project



Students will be required to create an autobiographical story with a three-word title, by using 10 photographs and a one-word definition for each photo. Projects will be posted on course blog for students to be able to get and provide feedback from and to their classmates.

Video Project

Students will create a one-minute video, displaying a day in Barcelona with one up to three characters, clearly using a flashback and a flash-forward. Videos will be posted on course blog for students to be able to get and provide feedback from and to their classmates.

Oral Project

Students will give a 10-minute talk (TED talk style) on “How to tell stories,” by putting into practice Storytelling techniques. Limited audiovisual support (up to 3 slides, with no videos) will be admitted.

Written Project

After writing a fictional short story (700-1000 words), based on a universal theme, using a distinctive symbol and a clear plot structure (exposition, climax, revelation and resolution), students will explore the possibilities of AI and fiction, and consider contributions and limitations in a critical way. By creating specific prompts based on their original story outline and analyzing AI’s generated version, there will be a critical reflection on the creative process and the comparison/contrast of both stories. Projects and reflections will be shared with the group in class.

Blog Posts

Students will be required to post three entries (500 words), structured as stories, on the course blog, as follows (topics may vary):

- Blog Post 1 - 5%: 250-500 words on course-related trip, considering the relationship between images, words and spaces, about perception and telling stories, analyzing the narrative aspects of the activity.
- Blog Post 2 - 5%: 250-500 words on planning, designing, and creating the Photo and Video Projects.
- Blog Post 3 - 5%: 250-500 words on collective stories, reflecting on the presentation by invited guest speaker/course-related trip.

Students are expected to deliver every assignment by the established due dates. For late assignments, there will be a reduction of 3 percentage points per day (for a maximum of 5 days). No submission will be accepted beyond 5 days.

Final Exam

The final exam will be structured as follows:

- Definitions: students will be asked to define specific vocabulary (three concepts), in order to assess full understanding of Storytelling-related terms.
- Two quotes short essays (200 words each): students will be required to analyze, interpret and elaborate on theoretical texts, for assessing their ability to identify the historical and cultural roots of contemporary storytelling.
- Scene commentary-Essay (500 words): after watching a 3-5 minute scene from a movie, TV series, or commercial, students will be asked to analyze and comment on specific storytelling techniques, in order to assess their capacity of examining cultural products.

Specific assessment rubrics and guidelines for each graded item will be provided by the instructor.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify the main storytelling techniques, as they are used in communication, advertising, journalism and management;
- Apply these techniques to their own written, oral and audiovisual productions;
- Develop consistent arguments in interpreting contemporary uses of storytelling;
- Demonstrate correct use of specific vocabulary;
- Outline the cultural and historical roots of contemporary storytelling;
- Interpret cultural products (literature, cinema, television) within the framework of narrative analysis.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

As a member of our class community, you are expected to be present and on time every day. Attending class has an impact on your learning and academic success. For this reason, attendance is required for all IES Abroad Barcelona classes, including course-related excursions. If a student misses more than three classes in any course without justification, 3 percentage points will be deducted from the final grade for every additional absence. Seven unjustified absences in any course will result in a failing grade. Absences will only be justified, and assessed work, including exams, tests and presentations rescheduled, in cases of documented medical or family emergencies.

CONTENT:

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 1	Once upon a time... - Introduction to the course - Assessment and evaluation - Once upon a time...: What is Storytelling?	
Session 2	Creativity and inspiration, originality and remix - Defining creativity - How to use biographical elements for creating emotional connection	- Calvino, I. Six memos for the next millennium, pp. 3-29 (essay) - Tompkins, A. <i>Aim for the Heart</i>, pp. 1-22 (essay) <i>Everything is a remix</i> (documentary. Duration: 50.20 minutes.)
Session 3	Top Universal Themes (I): Change, power and conflict Identifying themes: Lessons from political science and sociology	- Adichie Ngozie, C. <i>The danger of a single story</i> (video. Duration: 18 minutes) - Hashem Beck, Z. Standup Sonnet (poem) - Polletta, F. <i>It was like a fever</i>, pp. 1-31 (essay)
Session 4	Top Universal Themes (II): Ambition, love and time Identifying themes: Lessons from theatre and literature	- Borges, J.L. The garden of forking paths (short story) - Ferrari, G. <i>The messages we send</i>, pp. 1-12 (essay) - Shakespeare, W. <i>Macbeth</i>, Act V, Scene V (play)
Session 5	Crafting the narrative: Structures and patterns - Defining Plot: Exposition, climax and resolution - Analyzing patterns behind the Barcelona brand (1992-2022)	- Bal, M. <i>Narratology</i>, pp. 189-195 (essay) - Belloso, J.C. <i>The City Branding of Barcelona: A Success Story</i>, pp. 118-123 (book chapter) - Lodge, D. <i>The Art of Fiction</i>, pp. 215-218 (essay)

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 6	Course-related Trip/Guest Speaker Urban stories...	- Hourston Hanks, L. Writing Spatial Stories, pp. 21-35 (book chapter) - Wisniewski, D. City as Museum, Museum as City, pp. 130-144 (book chapter)
Session 7	Showing and telling How to show (emotions) and when to tell (facts)	- Alberts, <i>Showing and Telling</i>, pp. 4-15 (essay) - Lodge, <i>The Art of Fiction</i>, pp. 121-129 (essay) - Tompkins, A. <i>Aim for the Heart</i>, p. 137-148 (essay) - Blog Post 1 Due Date
Session 8	The opening and the point of view - How to open a story effectively - Options to show the point of view - Lessons from Catalan journalist Josep Pla	- Berlin, L. Point of view, pp. 51-55 (short story) - Ffion, L. <i>The Seven Pillars of Storytelling</i>, pp. 29-42. (essay) - Lodge, D. <i>The Art of Fiction</i>, pp. 3-8 (essay) - Pla, J. <i>The Gray Notebook</i>, pp. 20-36 (memoir)
Session 9	Narrative distance and suspense - Definition of narrative distance - How to incorporate suspense - Lessons from literature and cinema	- Poe, E. A. The Tell-Tale Heart, pp. 121-124 (short story) <i>Psycho</i> (film. Duration: 109 minutes.)
Session 10	Course-related Trip/Guest Speaker D-storytelling, games and collective co-participation	- Roig Telo, A. Participating in what? And for whose benefit?". Notes on collective participation and creation (journal article) - Photo Project Due Date
Session 11	The sense of place - Writing the space for news and advertising - Narrative and architecture at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona	- Bou, E. & Subirana, J. (Eds.), <i>The Barcelona Reader</i>, pp. 347-380 (book chapter) - Duncan, T. and McCauley, N. A narrative journey, pp. 312-324 (book chapter) - Gottschall, J. <i>The Storytelling Animal</i>, pp. 21-30; 101-109 (essay)
Session 12	The sense of time - Creating narrative rhythm and precision - Lessons from Ernest Hemingway	- Barthes, R. Introduction to the structural analysis of narrative, pp. 114-124 (essay) - Hemingway, Hills like white elephants, 229-232 (short story)

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 13	The title and the ending - How to start and when to close - Lessons from advertising and music	- Simmons, A. <i>The Story Factor</i>, pp. 1-25 (essay) - Simmons, A. <i>Whoever tells the best story wins</i>, pp. 175-182; 186-193 (essay)
Session 14	Find memorable characters: Who and Why - The process of character construction - The narrative behind FC Barcelona	- Forster, E. M. <i>Aspects of the novel</i>, pp. 100-125 (essay) - Hatun, A. & Silvestri, L. What makes FC Barcelona such a successful business (journal article) - Pont, R. The meaning of More than a Club (journal article) - Video Project Due Date
Session 15	Why pictures are so powerful - How to turn pictures into symbols - The story of the Catalan flag	Mathews, R. & Wacker, W. <i>What's your story?</i>, pp. 1-6 (essay)
Session 16	Writing the narrative Lessons from travel journalism	- Anderson, J. L. Barcelona tourists become terrorism's latest victims (magazine article) - Don, G. Lonely Planet's Guide to Travel Writing, pp. 12-32 (essay) - Blog Post 2 Due Date
Session 17	The 'true' narrative: the art of fact-checking The New Journalism: Storytelling lessons from Tom Wolfe and Gay Talese	- Goldfield, H. The art of fact-checking (newspaper article) - Harrison Smith, S. G. <i>The Fact Checker's Bible</i>, pp. 15-25 (essay) - Talese, G. <i>High Notes</i>, pp. 115-150 (article) - Wolfe, T. <i>New Journalism</i>, pp. 5-38 (essay)
Session 18	Course-related Trip/Guest Speaker Lessons from narrative journalism and history	- Guerriero, L. The Trace in the Bones (journal article) - Blog Post 3 Due Date
Session 19	Managing the narrative Storytelling resources to effectively communicate on a crisis	- Augustine, N. R. Managing the crisis you tried to prevent, pp. 1-31 (journal article) - Jordan-Meier, J. The four stages of highly effective crisis management, pp. 1-10 (essay) - Selected scenes from Shonda Rhymes, <i>Scandal</i> (TV series)

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 20	Oral Project Presentations	Presentations Due Date
Session 21	Oral Project Presentations	Presentations Due Date
Session 22	Framing the narrative How to tell the story with social media and online	- Halpern, D. & Potter, D. <i>Advancing the Story</i>, pp. 30-55 (essay) - Higgs, A. The importance of storytelling in the digital age (newspaper article) - Tompkins, A. <i>Aim for the Heart</i>, p. 255-279 (essay)
Session 23	The future of Storytelling - Expand on the future of Storytelling and the impact of current technology - Storytelling and the future of Barcelona	- Baudrillard, J. <i>Simulacra and Simulation</i>, pp. 94-102 (essay) - Gottschall, J. <i>The Storytelling Animal</i>, pp. 177-183 (essay) - Written Project Due Date
Session 24	What will your story be? Wrap up and course conclusions	Final Review
	Final Exam	

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- There will be different activities and guest speakers, from different fields, that will be confirmed each semester, depending upon their availability and the cultural offer of the city.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Adichie Ngozie, C. (2009 July). *The danger of a single story*. [Video]. TED Conferences
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story
- Alberts, L. (2010). *Showing & Telling: Learn how to show & when to tell for powerful & balanced writing*. Penguin. (essay).
- Anderson, J L. (2017) Barcelona tourists become terrorism latest victims, *The New Yorker*, 17 August.
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/barcelona-tourists-become-terrorisms-latest-victims>
- Augustine, N. R. (1995). Managing the crisis you tried to prevent. *Harvard Business Review*, 73(6), 147. pp. 1-31. (article)
- Bal, M., & Van Boheemen, C. (2009). *Narratology: Introduction to the theory of narrative*. University of Toronto Press.
- Barthes, R. Introduction to the structural analysis of narrative. In *Image, Music Text*. (1978). Text, trans. by Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang. pp. 114-124 (essay).
- Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation*. University of Michigan Press. (essay).
- Belloso, J. C. (2011). The city branding of Barcelona: a success story. In *City Branding* (pp. 118-123). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Berlin, L. (2022). *A Manual for Cleaning Women: Selected Stories*. London: Picador. (short stories).
- Borges, J. L. (1962). *Ficciones*. New York: Grove Press. (short stories).
- Bou, E., & Subirana, J. (Eds.). (2017). *The Barcelona Reader: Cultural Readings of a City*. Liverpool University Press. (short essays).

- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Harvard University Press. (essay).
- Calvino, I. (1988). *Six memos for the next millennium*. Harvard University Press. (essay).
- Don, G. (2013) *Lonely Planet's Guide to Travel Writing*. Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications. (essay).
- Duncan, T. and McCauley, N. (2012). A narrative journey: creating storytelling environment with architecture and digital media. Macleod, Suzanne (Ed.) *Museum Making. Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions* (pp. 312-324). New York: Routledge. (book chapter).
- Ferrari, G. R. (2017). *The messages we send: social signals and storytelling*. Oxford University Press. (essay).
- Ffion, L. (2015). *The Seven Pillars of Storytelling*. Bristol: Sparkol Book. (essay).
- Forster, E. M. (2005). *Aspects of the Novel*. London: Penguin. (essay).
- Goldfield, H. (2012). The art of fact-checking, *The New Yorker*, 9 February. <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-art-of-fact-checking>
- Gottschall, J. (2012). *The storytelling animal: How stories make us human*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. (essay).
- Guerriero, L. (2007). The Trace in the Bones. *Asymptote*. (essay). <https://www.asymptotejournal.com/nonfiction/leila-guerriero-the-trace-in-the-bones/>
- Harrison Smith, S. (2006). *The Fact Checker's Bible*. Anchor Books. (essay).
- Hashem Beck, Z. (2025). Standup Sonnet. *Academy of American Poets (#PoemADay)* (online), October 6. <https://poets.org/poem/standup-sonnet>
- Hatum, A. and Silvestri, L. (2015). What makes FC Barcelona such a successful business. *Harvard Business Review* (online), June 16. <https://hbr.org/2015/06/what-makes-fc-barcelona-such-a-successful-business>
- Helpert Wenger, D. H., & Potter, D. (2014). *Advancing the story: Journalism in a multimedia world*. CQ Press. (essay).
- Hemingway, E. (2013). *Hills like white elephants*. Harper Collins. (short stories).
- Higgs, A. (2014). The importance of storytelling in the digital age, *The Guardian*, 17 November <https://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/2014/nov/17/-sp-storytelling-digital-film-4>
- Hourston-Hanks, L. H. (2012). Writing spatial stories: textual narratives in the museum. In Macleod, S. et al. (Ed.) *Museum Making Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions* (pp. 42-54). (book chapter).
- Jordan-Meier, J. (2011). *The four stages of highly effective crisis management: How to manage the media in the digital age*. CRC Press.
- Lodge, David. *The Art of Fiction*. New York: Penguin Books, 1992 (essay).
- Mathews, R., & Wacker, W. (2008). *What's your story? Storytelling to move markets, audiences, people, and brands*. FT Press.
- Pla, J. (2014). *The gray notebook*. New York Review of Books. (memoir).
- Poe, E. A. (1984). The Tell-tale Heart. In *Complete Stories and Poems*, Doubleday, pp. 121-124 (short stories).
- Polletta, F. (2009). *It was like a fever: Storytelling in protest and politics*. University of Chicago Press. (essay).
- Pont, R. (2013). The meaning of 'More than a Club'. *Catalan International View*, 5, 66-69 (journal article).
- Roig Telo, A. (2016). Participating in what? And for whose benefit? Notes on collective participation and creation. *BiD: textos universitaris de biblioteconomia i documentació* 37 (December). (journal article)
- Shakespeare, W. (2007). *Macbeth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Simmons, A. (2002). *The story factor: Inspiration, influence, and persuasion through the art of storytelling*. Basic books. (essay).
- Simmons, A. (2015). *Whoever tells the best story wins: How to use your own stories to communicate with power and impact*. New York: Amacom. (essay).
- Talese, G. (2017). *High Notes. Selected Writings*, Bloomsbury. (collection of articles).
- Tompkins, A. (2018). *Aim for the Heart. Writing, Ethics, Reporting, Photojournalism for TV and Online*. Sage Press. (essay).
- Wiszniewski, D. (2012). City as museum, museum as city: mediating the everyday and special narratives of life. In *Narrative Space, an international conference* (pp. 119-131). New York: Routledge. (book chapter).
- Wolfe, T. (Ed.) (1973). *The New Journalism*. New York: Harper and Row. (essay).

FILMOGRAPHY:

- Alfred Hitchcock, *Psycho*, 1960 (film).
- Kirby Ferguson, *Everything is a remix*, 2023 (documentary).
- Shonda Rhymes, *Scandal*, 2012-2018 (television series).

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Andrews-Dyer, H. (2014). The real 'Olivia Pope', Judy Smith talks about her non-traditional career path. *The Washington Post*, 22 May. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/reliable-source/wp/2014/05/22/the-real-olivia-pope-judy-smith-talks-about-her-non-traditional-career-path/>
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Harvard University Press. (essay).
- Brown, J. S., Denning, S., Groh, K., & Prusak, L. (2005). *Storytelling in organizations: Why storytelling is transforming 21st century organizations and management*. Routledge.
- Corrigan, P. (2000). *Shakespeare on management: leadership lessons for today's managers*. Kogan Page Publishers.
- Denning, S. (2018). *Leader's guide to storytelling: mastering the art and discipline of business narrative, revised and updated*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Fernandes, S. (2017). *Curated stories: The uses and misuses of storytelling*. Oxford University Press. (essay).
- Fisher, M. (2014). Who cares if it's true? *Columbia Journalism Review*, 52(6), 14. (article)
- Gitner, S. (2015). *Multimedia storytelling for digital communicators in a multiplatform world*. Routledge.
- Handler Miller, C. (2008). *Digital Storytelling, A Creator's Guide to Interactive Entertainment*. Amsterdam, Paesi Bassi.
- Harrigan, P., & Wardrip-Fruin, N. (2009). *Third person: Authoring and exploring vast narratives*. The MIT Press. (essay).
- Hemingway, E. (1990) The Art of Short Story. In Smith P. (Ed.), *New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*: Duke University Press pp. 1-15 (essay).
- Manovich, L. (2002). *The language of new media*. MIT Press.
- Mittel, J. (2015). *Complex TV: The poetics of contemporary television storytelling*. NYU Press.
- Ochs, E., & Capps, L. (2009). *Living narrative: Creating lives in everyday storytelling*. Harvard University Press.
- Quiroga, A. (2013). *Football and national identities in Spain: The strange death of Don Quixote*. Springer.
- Reissner, S., & Pagan, V. (2013). *Storytelling in management practice: Dynamics and implications*. Routledge. (essay).
- Ryan, M. L., Ruppert, J., & Bernet, J. W. (Eds.). (2004). *Narrative across media: The languages of storytelling*. U of Nebraska Press.
- Salmon, C. (2017). *Storytelling: Bewitching the modern mind*. Verso books.
- Schank, R. C. (1995). *Tell me a story: Narrative and intelligence*. Northwestern University Press.
- Shook, F., Larson, J., & DeTarsio, J. (2015). *Television and Field Reporting (Subscription): A Guide to Visual Storytelling*. Routledge.
- Sullivan, J. (2006). Psycho. The music of terror. *Cinèaste* 32 (1), pp. 20-28 (journal article).