

**Writing ###: From Swannanoa to Stonehenge
Narrative as a Powerful and Poignant Tool for
Cross-Cultural Education
Excerpt of Syllabus – Fall Semester, 2009**

Meetings

Friday, September 18 - Sunday, September 20
and all Tuesdays of Term II 7-8:20 pm

Instructors

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What is Narrative?

Narrative is defined in The American College Dictionary, as a story of events, experiences, or the like whether true or fictitious. In the fields of education, literature, psychology and sociology, narrative represents schools of theory and practice. Students will investigate the nature of narrative and its role in presenting, shaping and affecting our world-view. In this course, we will examine, create and experience narrative through the windows of educational psychology and literature in a cross-cultural context.

Course Objectives

The first objective of this course is for students to examine narrative through a variety of genres and to experience the power of narrative as a tool for exploring what we know and how we know it both in our own culture and context and in the cultures and contexts of others. The second course objective is for students to then take this deeper understanding of narrative (its elements, role in experience and the interpretation of experience) to a cross-cultural learning and living experience and to use it as a vehicle for deeper understanding of people, place and posterity.

Course Description:

We will examine the roles of the senses, culture and experience in narrative through readings, oral presentations and multi media representations of narrative. Through the study of narrative, students will investigate the elements of narrative as seen through the lenses of educational psychology and cross-cultural education and experience. Our knowledge base is a compilation of layers of sensorial experiences, lived and imagined experiences, myths and truths and trial and error. All of these layers come together to support our current understanding or lack of understanding of the world around us – it is the “stuff” of narrative. As Toni Morrison aptly states in her acceptance speech of the 1993 Nobel Prize for Literature,

Members of the Swedish Academy, ladies and gentlemen,
narrative has never been merely entertainment for me. It
is, I believe, one of the principal ways in which we absorb
knowledge. I hope you will understand then why I begin
these remarks with the opening phrase of what must be the
oldest sentence in the world and the earliest one we remember
from our childhood, “Once upon a time.”