

Department of Sociology  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Sociology 715.05  
Narrative Analysis  
Block Week, Winter 2011

Course Outline

Instructor: Dr. A.W. Frank

Office: SS 916

Office Hours: By appointment only. Please note that the instructor will be on campus during Block Week *only*. After that, consultation will be by email.

Email: [arthurwfrank@gmail.com](mailto:arthurwfrank@gmail.com)

Course hours: M-F, January 3-7, 2011, 1:30-5:00 daily

Course Description and Objectives

This quarter course provides an intensive introduction to narrative analysis. The course is intended for students preparing to write a dissertation using qualitative methods--not necessarily narrative materials, but close enough to be able to generalize from the course's focus on narrative. The course will also discuss advanced issues in qualitative methods, such as appropriate criteria for validation and verification.

Daily seminars will have three parts: a lecture, discussion of common reading, and a presentation of narrative materials that students will make available to the class. These materials can be from the student's own research, other published research that interests the student, or other publicly available sources.

For purposes of choosing appropriate material to present in class and, eventually, to base term papers on, a *narrative* is any extended stretch of talk or text in which one thing happens after another. In a *chronicle*, there is no necessary connection between events, except sequential order. In *stories*, one thing happens in consequence of another. The course is particularly concerned with stories. Stories are distinguished by plots, characters, suspense, and the evocation of imagination.

Material presented in class and discussed in students' papers must either have University ethics approval (CFREB or CHREB) or else be publicly accessible.

Lecture topics begin by reviewing selected arguments from *Letting Stories Breathe* about what stories are--their capacities to affect humans. I then discuss what we can expect from a method and the limits of methods, questions of analysis, and finally narrative analysis as a *vocation*, including issues of ethics. The lectures use the ideas of William James to recast my earlier thinking about stories, method, and analysis. Their aspiration is to begin a pragmatist reconceptualization of method.

Assigned reading is from the instructor's published and in-press writing. Students are expected to use citations to expand their reading according to their individual interests and research plans.

Course objectives include:

- a working knowledge of the stages of narrative analysis and methodological issues involved in each;
- understanding the claims that distinguish a dialogical narrative analysis;
- sensitization to broader epistemological issues in qualitative methods;
- supervision in carrying out a limited narrative analysis.

### Course Requirements

The course grade will be based entirely on a research paper, to be submitted as late after the seminars as University rules allow. Students should submit a brief prospectus of their papers no later than Thursday, January 6. The paper should be 15-25 pp., with journal-standard citation style. Students are urged to use the writing of the paper as an occasion to experimentation with writing styles, but the more experimental the style, the more important that the student submit a draft for the instructor's comments.

The due date for papers will be Monday, February 28. Submission details will be provided in seminar.

Students receiving a grade lower than B+ will have an option of rewriting their papers, but only to a maximum grade of B+.

A guide to social-scientific writing will be posted on the course Blackboard site.

### Required Reading

Students should read: Arthur W. Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-narratology* (University of Chicago Press, 2010) in full. Other papers by the instructor will be posted on Blackboard. As stated above, students are expected to use the citations as the basis of further reading. Students should consult with the instructor as to what reading would best fit individual interests and research plans.

Because of the short duration of the course in days, students must do as much reading as possible in advance of the course. Students should definitely have read *Letting Stories Breathe* before the first seminar.

Additional core readings include Catherine Kohler Riessman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences* and James Holstein and Jaber Gubrium, *Analyzing Narrative Reality*, both published by Sage.

***Emergency evacuations:***

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by *[check link to find assembly point for your building:*  
[http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/node/75\]](http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/node/75)

***Deferrals:***

If at all possible you must provide *advance* notice to the instructor if you are unable to take a test or pass in an assignment or essay on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a “make up” test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a “make up” test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department.

Please note that requests to defer a final examination or to defer term work past the end of a term go through the Undergraduate Programs Office (UPO) and must be processed by the deadlines that are established in the U of C Calendar. You can find the forms you need online:

***Deferred Final Exam Application:***

[http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/APP%20FOR%20DF%20EXAM\\_0.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/APP%20FOR%20DF%20EXAM_0.pdf)

***Deferred Term Work Form:***

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>

You must submit these deferral forms to the Faculty of Arts Associate Dean (Students) through the UPO office: Undergraduate Programs Office, 4th Floor, MacEwan Student Centre. Only the Associate Dean approves requests for deferrals which extend beyond the end of a term. Instructors are not involved in such decisions. To make an appointment with the Associate Dean, phone (403) 220-8155.

***Ethics Research:*** Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

***Academic Misconduct:*** Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offences. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar which

presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

***The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)*** legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Written assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

***Safewalk:*** The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

***Academic Accommodation:*** Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, phone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

***Handing in papers outside of class, return of final papers, and release of final grades:***

1. When students are unable to submit papers in class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant. Papers will not be accepted in the main Sociology Department office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the main Sociology Department office. The Freedom of Information and Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place (i.e. outside an instructor's office, the department office etc.) Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will be available for pick-up only during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or at the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are available only online.