

HON H238— Politics and Communication: Knowledge and Community

Spring, 2012  
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and by appointment

This course is designed to examine how knowledge and community are intertwined in many cultures. The course is also designed around a community service project, providing an opportunity for a “hands on” learning experience. This project will help to extend your understanding of cross-cultural knowledge as well as show first hand how oral traditions, like storytelling, help strengthen a sense of what it means to be a community member. (See H228 home page on [mypage.iu.edu/~eder](http://mypage.iu.edu/~eder).) In short, storytelling will be the vehicle through which we will be learning about a variety of themes including ethical explorations, holistic teaching, and cross-cultural values.

We will begin by contrasting a mainstream approach to learning with models of local knowledge. We will then examine models of learning from specific non-Western cultures including Mexican, Native American, and African cultures. This will be followed by a focus on the role of storytelling as a means of teaching both ethical and social beliefs, emphasizing the role of oral practices. We will then look at how children can learn about different cultures through storytelling. This section will end by considering how START (Storytelling as Reflecting Time) provides a vehicle for strengthening communities and the cross-cultural lessons to be gained.

The second half of the course will focus on learning outside of the classroom. At this point all students will be actively engaged in START, either telling stories to young children or facilitating storytelling activities. During this half we will also be looking more closely at Bloomington as a source of local and cross-cultural knowledge as well as at learning practices that emphasize process drama as well as forming caring connections with others. By the end of the course you should understand the way oral traditions pass on life lessons and help children explore ethical issues. You should also have a conceptual and real-life understanding of the importance of storytelling for building community.

### **Course Requirements**

We will be using the city of Bloomington as a site for learning, service, and research throughout this course. **All students will do a service learning project which will take an average of 2-3 hours per week.** Because of the extensive service component, there will be fewer readings during the second half of the course and the main written assignments will be a series of journal reflections, culminating in a final report.

The class will be divided into three groups, each of which will focus on two cultural traditions (e.g. Nigerian, Chinese, Korean, Indian, Mideastern, Central American, Mexican, American, etc.) After researching stories and storytelling practices of this tradition, students will either prepare to tell stories to elementary students or prepare to

facilitate community-building activities based on the stories told. (See the START Project description and Students' comments about the course and project—both on the web page.) Students write journal reflections (2-3 double-spaced pages per reflection), give a group class presentation, and write a final report (8-10 pages) on these projects. This final report will be due on April 26. Students are also expected to attend all class sessions and do all reading prior to class. There will be one take-home essay covering the readings, discussions, and guest speakers.

The course grade is based on:

25% Take home essay

20% Service learning journal reflection assignments

10% Group assessment of your participation in the project

30 % Service learning paper

15% Attendance and professionalism\*

\*Since students will be meeting with their groups during class time and guest speakers will be providing necessary learning, it is critical that you attend class as well as your service learning sessions.

**Required readings on Oncourse include:**

Bella, Robert (1985, 1996) *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, ch. 11.

Berry, Wendell (1993) *Sex Economy, Freedom, and Community*, ch. 8.

Valenzeula, A. (1999). *Subtractive Schooling: U. S. Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*, ch. 1&3. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Eder, Donna and Regina Holyan (2010) *Life Lessons Through Storytelling: Children's Exploration of Ethics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Silko, Leslie Marmon (1997) *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*, pp. 48-59. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Palmer, Parker, (1998). *The Courage to Teach*, ch.5. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Montejo, Victor (1998) "The Stones will Speak Again" in *Speaking for the Generations: Native Writers on Writing*, (ed.) Simon Ortiz, Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Anaya, Rudolfo (2004) *Serafina's Stories*, ch.1, 8, 9 & epilogue. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico

Cajete, Gregory (2000) "Indigenous Knowledge: The Pueblo Metaphor of Indigenous Education," ch. 14 in *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, (ed.) Marie Battiste. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Sanders, Scott (2007, 1983). *Wilderness Plots*, pp.13-14, 26-27, 93-94,104-106.

Madison, James (2002). "Old Times and New Times in Bloomington," in *Bloomington: Past and Present*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Welstek, Gustave and Carmen Medina (2007), "In Search of the Global Through Process Drama," in *Literacy Research for Political Action and Social Change*, (eds.) Mollie Blackburn & Caroline Clark. New York: Peter Lang.

## COURSE OUTLINE

Week	Topic	Readings
Jan. 12	Orientation to Diverse Ways of Learning <b>Select Cultural Areas</b>	Bellah, Berry
Jan. 19	Diverse Models of Learning Guests: Storytellers <b>Orientation with service site</b> <b>Assign START groups</b> <b>Set up schedule for START</b>	Valenzeula, Ch.1&3
Jan. 26	Indigenous Models of Learning Guest: Mentoring Youth <b>Select first story</b> <b>Visit site</b>	Eder and Holyan, Ch.1-3
Feb. 2	Storytelling and Ethics <b>First Journal Entry Due</b> <b>Practice first story</b> <b>Visit site</b>	Eder and Holyan, Ch. 4-5
Feb.9	Storytelling and Diversity <b>Submit reflection on storytelling</b> <b>START begins</b>	Eder and Holyan, Ch. 6-7
Feb. 16	Storytelling as Reflecting Time <b>Select second story</b> <b>Second Journal Entry Due</b>	Silko
Feb. 23	Cross-Cultural Lessons <b>Midterm Exam due</b> <b>Practice second story</b>	Eder, Ch. 9
Mar. 2	Communities of Truth <b>Select second cultural region</b>	Palmer
Mar. 9	Storytelling in other Cultures <b>Third Journal Entry Due</b>	TBA

Mar. 23	Stories and Colonization of the Southwest <b>Select third story</b> <b>Fourth Journal Entry Due</b>	Anaya, Ch.1, 8, 9 & epilogue
Mar.30	Dynamics Post-Colonization <b>Facilitators provide third activity plan</b>	Cayette
Apr. 6	Local Knowledge Video: Wilderness Plots Reports on Bloomington in class <b>Fifth Journal Entry Due</b>	Sanders
Apr. 13	Local Knowledge Reports on Bloomington in class	Madison
Apr. 20	The Use of Drama in Teaching <b>Sixth Journal Entry Due</b>	Welstek and Medina
Apr. 27	Class Reports <b>Final Report is due</b>	



Role-Specific Reflections (Ungraded)

**Storytellers:**

Feb. 9 Reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of your storytelling skills by viewing yourself in a mirror or having a friend take a video of you. Submitting the video is optional. (1-2 pages)

**Journal Reflection Themes**

Due	Theme
Feb. 2	What are some unique aspects of the content and/or process of learning in the culture your group is focusing on?
Feb. 16	What are some important aspects of this classroom's learning environment based on your observation?
Mar. 9	How are these children acting in ways that challenge or support your preconceptions? Reflect on challenges you and others are

having with keeping their attention and/or helping them get involved.

- Mar. 23                    What did you learn about Bloomington's efforts at cross-cultural awareness from your field trip? Is this activity/group helping to strengthen a sense of community?
- Apr. 6                     Evaluate the START experience of your group in terms of how much it has increased your appreciation of different perspectives on learning and community-building? Of how much it has increased the children's appreciation of cultural differences and community values?
- Apr. 20                    Reflect on changes in your awareness of the role of oral learning as a result of readings and class discussions? As a result of your experience with START?



### Final Project

The final project should demonstrate an understanding of oral learning as a means for strengthening community **conceptually** by relating the START experience to class readings and **procedurally** (by showing how this was applied within your working group as well as within the classroom.) Analyze the START experience, looking at differences over times and across cultural areas. How did your self-knowledge change throughout the semester in terms of expectations about others, the learning process, group processes, etc. Are there any changes you can suggest for a future START project?