



Instead of paraphrasing *what* stories mean, we will focus on learning and applying vocabulary and concepts for understanding and analyzing *how* narratives produce meaning and other effects. As we build our repertoire for identifying semiotic and narratological features of fiction and understanding how they work, we will return anew to the more typical expectation of analysis of what stories mean. We want to reach a point where we are competent in analyzing and articulating not only what we think our readings mean, but also addressing the larger question of how “stories structure the meanings by which a culture lives.”

The theories and methods studied in this course will provide you with a deepened appreciation for the complexity of narrative as a formal and social structure, through studying how language and narratives encode and structure not only our understanding of what we read but also how linguistic and narrative conventions establish the very possibilities and limits that shape our understanding of narrative as a form. The course also studies theory and method applicable to analysis beyond literary forms of signification and narrative: we will consider narratives in visual and aural forms from time to time. Successful students really do finish this course with a whole new way of reading stories (in book, film, and other cultural forms).

*Telling Stories: A Theoretical Analysis of Narrative Fiction* is core to the course: it requires a willingness to engage in abstract, conceptual thinking about every-day interpretive practices. Reading this textbook requires time, which is one of the reasons why there are so few books required for this course. Be prepared for re-reading both this theory textbook and the short stories and novel assigned. Re-reading is imperative for developing and refining your understanding of and facility with the narrative theory studied in this course. *Engagements with Narrative* is a much more accessible introduction to narrative theory, which also broadens the range of types of narrative theory that have recently emerged and not accounted for in our other theory text.

As much as possible, teaching and learning will occur by facilitated discovery, application, and practice in class, with mini-lectures for concepts and examples followed by discussion and other forms of in-class work. In the main, we will *learn by doing* in this course, and methods of assessment will correspond to the means by which teaching and learning occur during class time. The weight and length of assignments start small: as we build knowledge of narrative theory over the term, and hone our analytical reading and writing skills through hands-on work in the classroom, writing essays out of class and getting feedback on out-of-class work, the weight and length of assignments will increase.

The structure of the course and individual classes will provide as much opportunity as possible for:





Accommodation