

Hamline University

WSTD 3980: Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program

Fall 2018

Monday evening, 6:30-9 PM

Minnesota Department of Corrections-Shakopee

1010 West Sixth Avenue

Shakopee, Minnesota 55379

Professor: Colleen Bell, PhD
Teaching Assistant: Ericka Yang

Course Dates: September 10-December 17, 2018

Course Focus & Overview: The Power of Stories, Stories to Empower

This course examines the role of personal narrative and storytelling in the processes of human survival, meaning-making, community building, self-understanding, and personal as well as collective transformation. We have designed learning experiences to deepen students' grasp of these processes through reading, discussing, writing informal and more formal reflections and working on a collaborative project. Inspired by Inside-Out Prison Exchange founder Lori Pompa, we anticipate that this course will be an opportunity "for social change to happen one person at a time" through studying the power of story and writing stories to empower.

Course Structure: Turning Learning Inside-Out

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange program brings together university students (outside) and correctional students (inside) to study as peers behind prison walls. Students in this course will meet on Monday evenings from 6:30 to 9, except for Week 1, Week 3, and Week 15 when we hold separate class meetings to allow for briefing and debriefing the process and reflecting on our experiences.

Course Objectives:

- Introduce students to the role of story in developing whole personhood, facing pain and healing trauma, building community, and understanding our lives in new ways
- Create an environment that facilitates honest exchange of ideas in intergroup dialogue
- Develop students' capacity to respond to differing worldviews and values expressed in stories
- Develop students' ability to apply concepts and theories in the process of analyzing story
- Deepen students' understanding of the complexities of the art of storytelling

Required Texts / Readings to be completed prior to class meetings, as listed in the schedule:

- I. Broker (1983). Night Flying Woman: An Ojibway Narrative. MN Historical Society Press.
- S. Burton & C. Lynn (2017). Becoming Ms. Burton: From Prison to Recovery to Leading the Fight for Incarcerated Women. New Press.

- J. Gottschall (2012). The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

- Instructor-created reader including a few additional essays and personal narratives:

C. N. Adiche (2009). *The Danger of a Single Story* (TED talk transcript)

L.A. Bell (2010). Storytelling for Social Justice. Routledge. (storytelling project excerpt)

N. Birkla (2003). “Three Steps Past the Monkeys.” Pp. 113-141 in W. Lamb (ed.) Couldn’t Keep It to Myself. Harper Collins.

B. Foreshaw (2003). “Faith, Power, and Pants.” Pp. 185-209 in W. Lamb (ed.) Couldn’t Keep It to Myself. Harper Collins.

M. Jessamy (2003). “Motherlove.” Pp. 245-265 in W. Lamb (ed.) Couldn’t Keep It to Myself. Harper Collins.

J. Kincaid (1992). “Girl.” Pp. 3-5 in J. Kincaid, At the Bottom of the River. Plume Publishing.

M. Polk (2017). “Eulogy for Nonsense.” Chattahoochee Review 37 (1), pp. 100-110.

K. K. Yang (2016). “Dark Trees in the Landscape of Love.” Pp. 145-155 in S.Y. Shin (ed.) A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota. Minnesota Historical Society Press.

- TED talk to be viewed in class: *The Danger of a Single Story*, Chimanda Ngozi Adiche (2015)
- Documentary to be viewed in class: *What I Want My Words to Do to You* (2003, Borrowed Light Productions)

Attendance & Participation:

Because of the interactive nature of this course and the centrality of dialogue in our learning, attendance is an absolute requirement. Even one unexcused absence can result in a withdrawal from the course. In addition to being present, each of us must participate actively. We will confront many issues, some of which will be challenging for the group as well as for individuals, and it is our expectation that everyone will share responsibility for the direction and depth of our discussions. Active participation includes listening with an open mind, responding thoughtfully and honestly, engaging all voices in conversation, and being fully involved throughout each session.

Grading Policy:

Reflecting the emphasis on learning through dialogue, a third of the course grade will be based on your presence and active participation in class sessions. The remaining two-thirds of the course grade will be based on informal and formal reflections, a brief personal narrative paper and contributions to a group project.

Classroom Environment:

We believe that each participant in this course has something to teach and something to learn. We will be able to make the most of this opportunity only if we establish and maintain an environment that is respectful and supportive for each of us. Early in the term, we will develop specific guidelines for ourselves—that is, discussion ground rules that are relevant for the people in this class based on their prior discussion-based experiences—and we will revisit our ground rules weekly to assess the climate in our shared space. Gathering weekly feedback will guide us in refining our learning environment so that we make the most of every person’s gifts and questions.

Confidentiality is a fundamental ground rule, one that is not negotiable. More specifically, small or large group conversations as well as individual comments belong only to those present in the classroom. None of us will disclose the specifics of others’ life experiences or our discussions to anyone outside the circle of learners in this course. One of our guiding principles that supports confidentiality is using first names only throughout the semester.

Academic Honor Code:

Given the focus of this course on personal narratives, we do not expect plagiarism issues to arise. Still, because we are engaged in a Hamline University learning experience, it is important that we share an understanding of how academic integrity is defined.

It is Hamline policy that “every member of the Hamline University community—students, faculty, administrators, and staff—is responsible for upholding the highest standards of academic integrity at all times. The assumption that academic work is an honest reflection of one’s knowledge and skills is fundamental to the integrity of Hamline University.”

Quoting further from Hamline’s Honor Code Policy, “academic dishonesty includes any act that has the effect, or intention, of giving one student an unfair advantage over others in the completion or evaluation of academic work and/or inaccurately representing one's academic work.”

Prohibited conduct under the Code includes, but is not limited to, cheating (submitting work that is not your own); plagiarizing (using ideas and information from any source, published or unpublished, without crediting the author of a book, journal, newspaper, report, speech, media broadcast, interview, or the internet); and fabricating information (e.g., citing non-existent sources).

Sanctions for students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty may include failing or receiving a lower grade on an exam, paper or assignment, or failing/receiving a lower grade for a course.

Course Assignments (in addition to reading and participating in discussions):

- 1) **Informal reflections** written in your journal, both in- and out-of-class. Your journal is as important as any course text and must be with you in each class. We will prompt in-class free writing; these reflections will support discussion and provide material for formal reflections. We will ask to review each student’s journal writing in class but will not collect journals. The basic expectation is three entries per week, at least one of which will be written between class sessions.
- 2) **Formal reflections** are short papers that capture your perspective on three aspects of the prior week’s reading and discussion. The three elements are Observations, Connections, and Reflections. More detailed guidelines are included at the end of the syllabus. Length: four to six hand-written pages or two to three typed double-spaced pages (500-750 words). Hand-written and typed papers

are equally acceptable. Five formal reflections are required; they are due in Weeks 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 (see class schedule).

- 3) **A personal narrative** (due at the beginning of class in week 11) is the story of one powerful moment or experience that has shaped your life. You will be capturing examples in your journal in the early weeks of the course. To be written in your own voice, from your own perspective, the focus of this creative work is up to you and should be something you are willing to share with others in the class. Length: four to six handwritten pages or two to three typed double-spaced pages (500-750 words). Hand-written and typed papers are equally acceptable.
- 4) **Group projects** are a way for class members to move our discussions into action. We will work as a whole group to develop an overall focus, then break into sub-groups (four or five people in each) to tackle various elements of the larger focus. More detail on group projects will be provided after the course mid-point.
- 5) **A final reflection** will be due at the end of the semester (week 15). This is an opportunity for you to pull together your entire experience in the course, reflect on the learning process (your own and that of the group), and further analyze issues we addressed. The paper will be at least 8 pages long, typed, double-spaced, with at least 15 relevant quotes with citations. More detailed guidelines (including a rubric) for this reflection will be distributed midway through the course.

Points Allocated to Assignments & Course Grades:

Your course grade will be determined by three major activities: participation in class (30%), seven papers (30%), informal writing in your journal (10%), and a group project (30%).

Assignment	Points Possible	Percentage of Grade
Class participation (10 points/week x 15 wks)	150	30%
Informal reflections (10 points/review x 5 reviews)	50	10%
Formal reflections (20 points each)	100	20%
Personal narrative paper	25	5%
Group project	150	30%
Final reflection	25	5%
TOTAL	500	100%

Individual grades in the course will be determined by final point accumulations as follows:

GRADE	Percentages	Points at final
A	93-100%	465-500
A-	90-92%	450-464
B+	87-89%	435-449
B	83-86%	415-434
B-	80-82%	400-414
C+	77-79%	385-399
C	73-76%	365-384
C-	70-72%	350-364
D+	67-69%	335-349
D	63-66%	315-334
D-	60-62%	300-314
F	59% or less	0-299

Course Schedule:

WK / DATE	SESSION FOCUS	READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS DUE
1 / Sept 5 or Sept 10	<p>Briefing & Orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions, briefing & agreements (outside students 9/5) • Introductions, briefing & agreements (inside students 9/10) 	
2 / Sept 17	<p>First Full Group Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions & ice breakers • Guidelines for dialogue • Chimananda Adiche TED talk 	<p>Browse course texts to get a sense of each writer & story.</p> <p>Read Establishing Brave Spaces and Bell, Storytelling for Social Justice (in reader).</p>
3 / Sept 24 or Sept 26	<p>Debriefing & Moving Forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on last week, looking ahead to next week (inside students 9/24) • Reflections on last week, looking ahead to next week (outside students 9/26) 	
4 / Oct 1	<p>We Are Story People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Humans are creatures of story, so story touches nearly every aspect of our lives. (Gottschall, 15).</i> 	<p>Read Gottschall, preface & chapter 1 and Foreshaw, Faith, Power and Pants (in reader)</p>
5 / Oct 8	<p>Stories for Survival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stories universally focus on the great predicaments of the human condition...[which] suggests that the human mind was shaped for story, so that it could be shaped by story. (Gottschall, 52-53).</i> 	<p>Read Gottschall, chapters 2 & 3.</p> <p>Read Kincaid, Girl (in reader).</p> <p>Read Broker to page 50</p> <p>Submit formal reflection #1.</p>
6 / Oct 15	<p>Night Story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Every night of our sleeping lives, we wander through an alternate dimension of reality. (Gottschall, 69).</i> • What I Want My Words to Do to You (in-class film screening) 	<p>Read Gottschall, chapter 4. [HEADS UP: animal experimentation on pp 76-79].</p> <p>Read Broker (pp. 51-131)</p> <p>Submit formal reflection #2.</p>
7 / Oct 22	<p>Stories Make Meaning & Connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Story—sacred and profane—is perhaps <u>the</u> main cohering force in human life... Story is the counterforce to social disorder, the tendency of things to fall apart. Story is the center without which the rest cannot hold. (Gottschall, 138).</i> 	<p>Read Gottschall, chapters 5 & 6; Birkla, Three Steps Past the Monkeys (in reader); and Burton chapters 1-9</p> <p>Submit formal reflection #3.</p>

8 / Oct 29	<p>Stories Change People & Influence History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>People can be made to think differently about sex, race, class, gender, violence, ethics, and just about anything else based on a single short story or television episode (Gottschall, 152).</i> 	<p>Read Gottschall chapter 7; Jessamy, Motherlove (in reader); and Burton chapters 10-18</p> <p>Submit formal reflection #4.</p>
9 / Nov 5	<p>We Are Our Personal Stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Until the day we die, we are living the story of our lives. And...our life stories are always changing and evolving... (Gottschall, 176).</i> 	<p>Read Gottschall chapter 8; Yang, Dark Trees in the Landscape of Love; and Burton chapters 19-27</p> <p>Submit formal reflection #5.</p>
10 / Nov 12	<p>Storytelling Animals Forever</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The real threat isn't that story will fade out of human life in the future; it's that story will take it over completely (Gottschall, 198).</i> 	<p>Read Gottschall chapter 9; Read Polk, Eulogy for Nonsense; and Burton chapters 28-39</p>
11 / Nov 19	<p>Introduction to Group Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Project Meeting #1: working session to develop overall focus and conceptualize sub-group contributions. 	<p>Submit personal narrative.</p> <p>Develop and submit group project outlines in class.</p>
12 / Nov 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Project Meeting #2: working session to continue/refine sub-group contributions and to discuss as whole class. 	<p>Submit group project summaries.</p>
13 / Dec 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Project Meeting #3: working session for presentation practice and draft of ceremony program. 	<p>Submit group project documents to be printed.</p>
14 / Dec 10	<p>Closing Ceremony & Group Presentations (first half of class, with guests)</p> <p>Closing Circle (second half class, no guests)</p>	<p>Deliver group project presentations.</p>
15 / Dec 17	<p>Debriefing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (inside students, 12/17) • Discussion (outside students, TBA) 	<p>Submit final reflection paper.</p>

Detailed Guidelines for Written Assignments

Formal Reflection Papers

Your five formal reflections (as described on page 3 above) will follow this specific format: three sections with headings for Observations, Connections and Reflections. Each section should be roughly a third of the paper's total length.

Observations will include three things that caught your attention: one content-related observation (what we discussed), one group dynamics-related observation (how we interacted), and one other observation of your choosing. Identify each observation specifically. Then speak to the importance of each idea or interaction you noticed. Explain why each observation stood out to you.

The Connections section is a place to integrate readings and discussion, from your own perspective. Begin by reflecting on questions and issues explored in class—refer to your journal, make a list—and identify one you found most engaging. Focusing on that one issue/question/theme, examine how the readings addressed it, how our discussion addressed it, and how you personally understand the issue. Incorporate *at least three relevant quotes* from the reading. Paraphrase authors' ideas and/or use specific excerpts from our texts (with citations) to support your analysis. Be very clear about (1) how you understand one particular theme or question from the week as it connects with readings and discussion; and (2) how you arrived at that understanding.

In the final section, Reflections, review your experience during the prior class meeting in as much detail as possible. "Experience" includes feelings, memories evoked, emotional triggers, questions that came to mind, views you would like to explore further, inspiration, and insights. What surprised you? What disturbed you? What affirmed you? Was there someone who seemed to understand your experience? Do your best to complete this part of the formal reflection as soon as possible after each class session ends and remember to draw on informal reflections in your journal.

Here is the rubric we will use to evaluate your formal reflections, each of which is worth 20 points:

	Does not meet expectations	Approaches expectations	Meets expectations
1) Observations	Does not include three observations; does not address significance of observations [0-1]	Includes three observations but does not cover content and group dynamics both; significance not addressed [2-3]	Includes 1 on <u>what</u> we discussed, 1 on <u>how</u> we interacted, 1 of <u>own choice</u> ; addresses significance of each [4-5]
2) Connections	Unfocused (covers more than one issue or question) not connected to reading and discussion and/or does not highlight own analysis or understanding of the issues or questions [0-1]	Unfocused. Covers more than one issue or question; examines three connections with reading and discussion; highlights own analysis or understanding of the issues or questions [2-3]	Focuses on one specific issue or question; examines three connections with reading and discussion; highlights own analysis or understanding of issue or question [4-5]

3) Reflections	Reports on what happened in class without connecting it to own experience [0-1]	Reports on experience or ideas from class without detail, in a limited way [2-3]	Captures—with some detail—feelings, insights, questions, other people’s views, memories evoked in class [4-5]
4) Follows format guidelines—three sections with headings; cites text pages; 500-750 words	Paper uses headings for sections; does not cite page # for quotes; is less than 500 words [0-1]	Paper uses headings for sections; does not cite page # for quotes; paper is less than 500 words [2-3]	Paper uses headings for each of three sections; paper cites page # for specific quotes; paper is 500-750 words long [4-5]

Personal Narrative

The purpose of this assignment is twofold: (1) to identify and capture one significant moment from your life, and (2) to deepen your appreciation for work like the authors of our texts have done as you experience the process of committing one moment of your life story to paper.

To begin, examine the list of possible life moments you have already generated. Knowing that each experience on your list could become this assignment, **choose one**. Keep in mind that you will share your paper (orally) with a small group of classmates.

Begin by “free-writing” around the experience (taking various aspects of it one at a time) or launch into it with a bird’s eye view. Write early and often. Revise at least once.

When you have drafted what you believe is your final version, write a single paragraph to convey what you discovered about storytelling while doing the assignment. Specifically, describe how any authors of our course texts have inspired your storytelling and/or your choice of the experience you wrote about. This paragraph is where you will draw connections between our texts and their authors (on the one hand) and the experience of narrating your own life story (on the other). Make at least two connections visible and explain each.

This paper is a personal narrative. Write in your own voice and from your own perspective. Work at capturing details of people, places, feelings, conflict embedded in your experience. A few suggestions follow.

Aim for four to six hand-written pages or two to three typed pages, with a word count **between 500 and 750 words**. Please make a note of word count in the story itself. Do not count the words in your reflective paragraph in your total.

Personal narratives are worth up to 25 points of the 500 total points in the course (5% of the course grade). The objectives of this writing assignment are much more important than the points earned.

A rubric we will use when scoring personal narrative assignments follows.

	Does Not Meet Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Meets Expectations
Captures one moment	Covers many moments generally [0-1]	Focal moment not clear or description is general [2-5]	Conveys details of one specific experience [6-7]
Connects course texts/authors & own writing	Does not identify a connection between course texts & own writing; or names but does not explain [0-1]	Explains one connection between course texts/authors and own writing [2-5]	Highlights two or more ways course texts/authors relate to writing personal narrative; explains connections [6-7]
Shares personal narrative with classmates	Does not share personal narrative with peer(s) [0-1]	Shares personal narrative with at least one peer [2-5]	Shares personal narrative with peers in class, orally [6-7]
Format	Much shorter than 500 words [0-1]	Much longer than 750 words [2-3]	Between 500 & 750 words in length [4]

A Few Ideas, Suggestions, Prompts for Writing Personal Narratives

I. From Richard Stone's Healing Art of Storytelling: A Sacred Journey of Personal Discovery, a brief summary of an appendix titled *The Spoken Autobiography: A Questionnaire*:

Each of the six categories below could trigger questions, memories and associations.

In the Beginning: family names, geographic locations of family, ancestors, family history

Family Legends: parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts/uncles/cousins

Growing Up: birth, home, looks & feelings, early schooling, first job, friends, ups & downs, losses, loves, belonging

Coming of Age: mentors, teen years, dreams, high school and later studies, work, faith, politics

Making a Home: dating, marriage, children, transitions & endings

Taking Stock: war, accidents, good times & bad times, achievements & failures, challenges, journeys, fondest memories

II. From Akash Karia's (2015) TED Talks Storytelling, a few notes:

- The one thing all great TED speakers have in common is that they're master storytellers.
- Dive into the story right from the start. Grab your audience in the first few moments.
- Recognize that conflict makes stories irresistible. Conflict engages reader/listener emotions.
- Personal stories are powerful because they are new (to audience) and authentic (to you).
- Create a visual image. Use sensory details to do that. Show rather than tell.
- Details help audiences see what you are saying. Provide specifics about people, scenes, dates.
- Positive-message stories leave your audience on an emotional high, inspired.
- Use dialogue, not narration.
- Strong stories contain the spark that allowed you/your character to overcome the conflict.
- Show the change in yourself/your character.
- Leave readers/audience with your key takeaway message (and make it short, memorable).

III. Note what you found most amazing in the personal narrative writing in our course readings. Analyze why those particular points or stories or ways of telling meant so much to you.

- What grabbed you about Chimamanda Adiche's TED talk? (Was it in the transcript too?)
- What did you appreciate in the Kincaid essay?
- In Susan Burton's memoir, what did you find most compelling, most engaging?
- In what ways did you connect with Kao Kalia Yang's essay? How did she hook you?
- What appealed to you in the Polk piece? What was the appeal?
- How did each of the essays from Couldn't Keep It to Myself touch you?
- Finally, though they are not personal narrative, were there segments of the Lee Bell article and the Gottschall book that seem especially important in your grasp of the power of story?