Course Description & Assignments

Comm 3260: Course Description & Objectives

Course Description:

In 1986, Walter Fischer argued that human beings are essentially *homonarran*s- or storytelling creatures. His claim places the act of storytelling at the center of human experience. The purpose of this course is to help you understand the centrality of narrative to human culture and the everyday lives of human beings.  It is also designed to help you understand and enjoy the everyday practice of storytelling, to enhance your performance skills, to help you learn the mechanics of narrative, and to sharpen your critical thinking skills.  While many of the stories we encounter circulate through the spoken word and in face­ to-face interaction within our communities, we also encounter stories through a variety of media that usually reinforce our identities but, on occasion, challenge them. In this course, we will examine a variety of ways that stories and narrative structure shape our personal and cultural identities, and how the acts of storytelling that are central to our daily lives are, in fact, grounded in the narrative structure of everyday life.

Course Objectives:

* To develop critical understanding of the relationship between stories and identities;
* To sharpen awareness of the significance of narrative in personal and cultural contexts;
* To enhance a performer's responsive and expressive abilities
* To enhance communication skills through analysis and presentations of and about narratives
* To come to an understanding of human beings as both storytellers and *story-livers*

Required Text:

Bernard, Emily. *Black Is the Body: Stories from My Grandmother's Time, My Mother' s Time, and Mine*. Thorndike Press, a Part of Gale, a Cengage Company, 2019.

Additional Readings will be provided via Canvas

Grading Summary:

Your final grade is based on a 1000 point scale. The total point value of all assignments is 1050 points.  **THIS MEANS THERE ARE 50 POINTS OF EXTRA CREDIT BAKED INTO THE CLASS.**

**Course Assignments:**

Reading Responses: *Black is the Body*:  **250 Points Total** (10 @ 25 points each)

* There are 11 reading responses from assigned readings & *Black is the Body.*You may drop 1.

Application Assignments: **200 Points Total**

* Post 1: Stories & Storytellers We Can't Get Enough Of- 15 points
* Post 2: Narrative Paradigm Applied- 35 points
* Post 3: On Vulnerability - 75 Points
* Post 4: Digital Storytelling Applied- 75 points

Storytelling Project 1: **200 Points Total**

* Personal Narrative Performance- 150 points
* Reflection & Evaluation- 50 points

Storytelling Project 2:  **200 Points**

* Digital Storytelling Project- 150 points
* Reflection & Evaluation- 50 points

Project Planning & Daily Assignments: **100 Points Total**

Attendance-  **100 Points Total**

Instructor Contact Info & Email Protocol

Professor: Dr. Holley Vaughn (she/her)

* + Email: [holley.vaughn@unt.edu](mailto:holley.vaughn@unt.edu) **\* Please email me and your TA directly from your MYUNT email account. Canvas' messaging function is not as reliable as it should be.**

Course Questions & Email Protocol:

We are happy to assist you with any questions you have. However, given the large number of students both your TA and I have across our various classes, we need you to be conscientious of several things ***before*** you email us with a question about the class:

1) First and foremost,  please... *Please...****for the love of god,******PLEASE,***double check the Syllabus & Canvas before emailing us about general course/assignment questions. We have put a TON of time into making the Syllabus & Canvas as detailed and comprehensive as possible for you.

2) Be sure you are emailing the appropriate person:

* Your TA is your primary point of contact for the class.  They handle all of your grading and attendance. If you are going to miss class or if you have a question about your grade, *then you should email your TA*.
* If you have a general question about course content or if you are encountering a problem in Canvas, then you should email Dr. Vaughn.

3) Please email us directly from your MYUNT email account. Canvas' messaging function is not as reliable as it should be.

4) Use a descriptive subject line that includes your course section.

* We receive a ton of emails and a descriptive subject line that includes the course section helps us identify student inquiries more efficiently.

5) We will strive to respond to your email within 24 hours on weekdays. Please do not expect a response over the weekend.

# Meeting Times & Locations

**Class Meeting Time: T/Th 12:30 pm-1:50pm**

**This course is taught in a lecture/recitation format.**This means that some days you will be in the lecture classroom and some days you will be in your recitation classroom.

In lecture, all students will meet in Gateway 137with Dr. Vaughn.  She will introduce course concepts, discuss major assignments, and facilitate class discussions over course readings.

Your recitation sections is where you apply the course content introduced in lecture and work with your TA & Classmates to complete the major assignments in the course.

The schedule lays out exactly which days you will meet in the lecture and the days you will meet with your TA in recitation.

# Office Hours

Your TA's and I are dedicated to your success in this class! We are more than happy to help you with your performances and assignments outside of class time.

Both your TA & I have set up weekly office hours for you to come by our offices, or drop into to our Zoom rooms, for any assistance you may need.

Collectively, your TA & I dedicate 6 hours a week, outside of class time, to help you out.  This means that, over the course the semester, we dedicate an additional ***96 hours,***outside of class time, specifically to help you.  If our office hours don't align with your schedule, then we will try to find another time to meet with you.

* If you are intrigued by things we are talking about in class, then DROP IN and talk to us about it! We love this stuff!

* If you are confused about an upcoming assignment, then DROP IN and talk to us about it! We are happy to help and sometimes a quick conversation is WAY WAY WAY more efficient & productive than a string of emails.

* If you are nervous about an upcoming performance, then DROP IN!  We totally understand public speaking anxiety and stage fright. Trust us, it is totally normal and we get anxiety & stage fright too!  We will help you practice and give you pro-tips on dealing with the nerves.

* If you are feeling overwhelmed or are experiencing major hardship, then DROP IN. We are all living through incredibly difficult times. Sometimes life stuff gets in the way of school stuff- for you and for us. The best advice I can give you is:
  + **Instead of checking out, check in- the sooner, the better.** Our primary concern is for your safety and well-being. As a UNT student, you have access to a wealth of resources and a vast team of incredibly capable professionals whose entire job is to help you navigate college life and the crises that often come with it.  The Comm 3260 teaching team can help you access those resources and then make contingency plans for your progress in this class if need be.

Again, we have dedicated an additional 96 hours this semester, in addition to our 48 hours of in-class meetings, to ensuring your success in this course, BUT... IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SHOW UP.   We are not mind readers. You have to check in with us so that we can help you accomplish your goals for this class.

## Office hours are:

#### **Dr. Vaughn:**

* Monday & Wednesday 11-12:30  via Zoom [https://unt.zoom.us/j/5575888314  Links to an external site.](https://unt.zoom.us/j/5575888314)or FTF by appointment in GAB 320f

#### **Teaching Assistants: Office GAB 322**

# Course Policies and Grading Criteria

### ****Class Structure & Participation:****

This class is heavily oriented toward discussion and requires you to actively participate every time we meet in class. In order to make our time together meaningful, I expect the following:

* **Be on time.**
* **Be fully present.**I expect you to fully engage with me/your TA/your classmates during class. I understand that laptops are helpful for note-taking and participation. However, you are expected to use technology for class-related purposes.
* **Read.** In order to be successful in this course you will need to come to class prepared, readings completed, and ready to engage in discussion. Make no mistake, your active participation is expected.
* **Participate.** Participating in class discussion is vital. Your voice and your perspective is important. Your story matters. Your classmates' voices and perspectives are important. Their stories matter. It is important that everyone engages with course content and that we all sincerely and respectfully attend to each others stories with care.
  + ***You will receive participation points every time you are scheduled to be in class.***Participation points can only be earned by attending the entire class period & completing the in-class assignment for that day. If you are more than 15 minutes late to class, then you cannot earn the points. If you leave class early, then you cannot earn the points. If you spend the class time scrolling on your phone, you will not receive the full points. Contribute to the class in a meaningful way to receive full points. The only way to make up the points for missing class is by doing extra credit assignments.

### ****Grading Scale for Performances and Major Assignments****

In order to ensure fairness and avoid grade inflation, we use the following guidelines for assessment:

* **A: 90-100%-** Excellent, demonstrably outstanding work. The student demonstrates mastery of the material. The work submitted is significantly distinguished above the work of their peers. The student performs well above the minimum criteria for the assignment in a creative, innovative, and academically rigorous way.
* **B: 80-89%-** Good, impressive work. The student demonstrates mastery the material. The student performs above the minimum criteria for the assignment in an insightful and thoughtful way.
* **C: 70-79%-** Solid, thoughtful, college-level work. The student demonstrates mastery the material. A grade of C  indicates that the student has met the minimum requirements for the assignment.
* **D: 60-69%-** Below average work. The student has not demonstrated mastery of the material and/or fails to meet minimum criteria of the assignment
* **F: 59% and below-** Failing grade. Sub-par work. The student has not demonstrated mastery of the material, fails to meet two or more of minimum criteria of the assignment, and/or does not complete the assignment.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

* Your enrollment in this course ***does not*** entitle you to an A.
* A’s are reserved for exceptional work.
* Completing the minimum criteria on a major assignment represents average, satisfactory, C level work.
* It is imperative that you pay close attention to due dates, assignment descriptions, and grading rubrics for all assignments and performance projects. Willful ignorance or haphazard attention to all of the information provided to you on Canvas does not "magically" preclude you from the grading criteria. It is**your**responsibility to thoroughly read through each unit overview, each assignment description, and pay close attention to each due date. It is **your** responsibility to seek clarification regarding grading criteria, due dates, or course concepts you may be struggling with well before an assignment is due.

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#### **Grading Criteria for Outlines/Participation/Homework/Discussion Posts. A.K.A. the half-assed/B.S. Policy**

I do not assign readings, homework, discussion posts, or in-class assignments erroneously. Each assignment is designed to help you learn about course content and prepare you for upcoming major assignments. We understand that sometimes life stuff gets in the way of completing class stuff. Sometimes, you may need to make the executive decision to forgo a daily assignment/outline/homework/discussion post and make up the points with extra credit so that you can focus on a major assignment. Again, that is totally okay.  We have soooo many ways for you to earn extra credit for exactly this reason.

***However***, it is unacceptable to turn in half-assed/b.s. attempts at outline/discussion posts/ in-class assignments. If you have not read thoroughly, prepared a detailed outline, and/or thoughtfully composed a discussion post or homework assignment, then we expect you to act like a responsible adult and exercise a relatively basic level of integrity by owning up to the fact that you are not prepared. This is not our first rodeo. We know half-assed/b.s. work when we see/read it. More importantly, you know half-assed/b.s. work when you write/do it. Please do not waste our time with half-assed/ b.s. work.

#### **Late Work**

You will have a 48 hour grace period for assignments that are submitted through Canvas. For example, if an assignment is due by 11:59 PM on Friday and you need some extra time, then you can turn in that assignment by 11:59 PM on Sunday with no penalty. After the 48 hour grace period has expired, we will not accept your submission. All work turned in after 48 hours of the due date will receive a grade of zero. **Please note that this only applies to assignments submitted through Canvas and does NOT apply to any in class assignments such as workshops or performances.**

#### **Turnaround Time**

We aim to return graded work to you within two weeks of the due date. When this is not possible, we will send an announcement to the class.

#### **Grade Disputes**

You are required to wait 48 hours before contacting us to dispute a grade. Within that time, we expect that you will review the assignment details and reflect on the quality of the work you turned in. If you would still like to meet, email me to set up a meeting (we cannot discuss grades over email). You should come to our scheduled meeting with specific examples that demonstrate that you earned a higher grade than you received. If you miss your scheduled meeting, you forfeit your right to a grade dispute. If you do not contact me to schedule a meeting within seven days of receiving your grade, you also forfeit your right to a grade dispute.

#### **Extra Credit**

You may earn up to 50 TOTAL extra credit points in the course. I provide numerous extra credit opportunities throughout the semester and I offer a variety of ways for you to achieve those points. The 50 possible points you can earn through extra credit extends to you a surefire way to move your grade in the course up a letter grade (i.e. from a C to a B or from a B to an A).  In short, if you are on the cusp of a letter grade shift, the extra credit opportunities allow you to increase your total grade in the class by 5%.  **No final average will be rounded up unless the student has completed all possible 50 extra credit points.**

#### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

One fundamental goal of achieving a university degree is betterment of self; upon obtaining your degree, you should be a more skilled writer and a more analytical thinker. To accomplish this goal and realize your true potential, all work should be uniquely your own in both word and thought. You should document all words and ideas belonging to others according to APA guidelines. Otherwise, you will not only fail yourself, but the course as well. All students must adhere to the Code of Student Conduct regarding academic dishonesty, including acts of cheating and plagiarism. Please check out the following website for definitions of plagiarism, cheating, and FAQ’s regarding plagiarism.

[http://plagiarism.org/ (Links to an external site.)](http://plagiarism.org/)

Depending on the severity of the infraction, punishments for cheating or plagiarism range from a grade of ZERO points on the assignment in question, to failure of the course or expulsion.

#### **Academic Conduct**

This is a communication course, which means you are required to communicate. I expect you show up prepared and participate in class discussions.  I do not shy away from controversial topics in class and neither should you. Remember, the primary goal of this course is to facilitate critical thinking about performance and through performance; therefore, I expect and encourage rigorous debate. Feel free to make robust arguments but you must respect your classmates.  Ideas can be debated, but people may not be defamed. Overtly ethnocentric, racist, sexist, homophobic, and transphobic comments will not be tolerated. At all. Ever.If you choose to engage in hateful or violent discourse, you will be asked to leave class immediately and I will follow the proper procedures for reprimand according to the Student Code of Conduct.

#### **Consent Policy**

The benefit of face-to-face lecture is that you are in the room participating in the discussion of ideas and engaging in the content in ways that are contextualized and made relevant to/for the learning objectives of the class. For this reason, I ask that you do not take photographs of slides or other learning tools, or record any portion of our lectures, as such practices can lead to the fragmentation of content and the distribution of inaccurate information.

Class recordings are reserved for use only by students in this class for educational purposes. Any recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

Anything you to do someone’s body OR the image of someone’s voice/body, requires explicit, enthusiastic, affirmative, consent. If you would like to record any lecture or recitation content, you must receive permission from both the instructor AND the folks who might be filmed, prior to class. **Under no circumstances are you allowed to post ANYTHINGthat goes on during class online without the explicit, WRITTEN, consent of both the instructor and the folks being filmed.** Failure to adhere to this policy will be interpreted as a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

UNT Policies

Important Academic Dates

* [Registration Guides by Semester (Links to an external site.)](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration-guides-by-semester)
* [Online Academic Calendar (Links to an external site.)](https://calendar.unt.edu/event-calendar/categories/academics)
* [Final Exam Schedule (Links to an external site.)](https://registrar.unt.edu/exams/final-exam-schedule)

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences

According to UNT Policy 06.003, [Student Academic Integrity (Links to an external site.)](https://vpaa.unt.edu/fs/resources/academic/integrity), academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the [Code of Student Conduct (Links to an external site.)](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct). The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

The [Dean of Students Office (Links to an external site.)](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) enforces the [Code of Student Conduct (Links to an external site.)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012). The Code explains what conduct is prohibited, the process the DOS uses to review reports of alleged misconduct by students, and the sanctions that can be assigned. When students may have violated the Code they meet with a representative from the Dean of Students Office to discuss the alleged misconduct in an educational process.

ADA Accommodation

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an  
accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the [ODA website (Links to an external site.)](https://disability.unt.edu/). You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Important Notice for F-1 Students Taking Distance Education Courses

Federal Regulation

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please visit the [Electronic Code of Federal Regulations  (Links to an external site.)](http://www.ecfr.gov/)website. The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G).

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

University of North Texas Compliance

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student’s responsibility to do the following:

* (1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.
* (2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office.  ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he should contact the [UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (Links to an external site.)](https://international.unt.edu/content/international-student-scholar-services) by telephone 940-565-2195 or email [internationaladvising@unt.edu](mailto:internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

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Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship  
violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at [SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu](mailto:SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu)or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648. Visit [Title IX Student Information (Links to an external site.)](https://edo.unt.edu/title-ix-student-information) for more resources.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called [Eagle Alert (Links to an external site.)](https://www.unt.edu/eaglealert) to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.