

SYLLABUS
ANTH 163: ORIGINS OF STORYTELLING

Instructor: Dr. Michelle Scalise Sugiyama
Email: mscalise@uoregon.edu

Office: Condon 374
Office Hours: Thurs 11:30-1:30 & by appt

GTF: Alicia DeLouize
Email: adelouiz@uoregon.edu
Office Hours: Tues 11:30-12:30 & by appt
Office: Pacific B008

GTF: Tobin Hansen
Email: thansen2@uoregon.edu
Office Hours: Tues 12:00-2:00 & by appt
Office: Condon 366C

“We must assume that storytelling is as old as mankind, at least as old as spoken language.”
(Oates 1992:8)

“But if it’s a story, even in my head, I must be telling it to someone. You don’t tell a story only to yourself.” (Atwood 1985:52)

Course Content: Why do humans tell stories? We will address this question by exploring the hunter-gatherer context in which storytelling emerged. To a greater degree than other species, humans depend for their survival on social learning—i.e., on information acquired from others. Drawing on evolutionary theory and related disciplines, this course explores the origins of storytelling in terms of the information demands of ancestral human environments. The first part of the course outlines the social and ecological conditions under which storytelling emerged, and the adaptations that make social learning and storytelling possible. The second part examines cross-cultural themes in hunter-gatherer oral traditions—e.g., tricksters, monsters, warfare, mating—in relation to recurrent problems of forager life and the kinds of information required to solve them. Course readings include scientific articles and hunter-gatherer folktales.

Format: The course will consist of lectures and discussion

Course Goals: By the end of the term, students should be able to

- 1) understand and apply the scientific method as a critical thinking tool
- 2) describe the processes of natural selection and adaptation
- 3) describe key cognitive adaptations that make storytelling possible
- 4) describe the key components of narrative and what they tell us about its function
- 5) outline the evidence that enables us to date the emergence of storytelling
- 6) describe basic features of the socio-economic context in which storytelling emerged
- 7) outline key adaptive problems faced by our hunter-gatherer ancestors and the information sets needed to address these problems
- 8) explain the role that storytelling plays in transmitting these information sets
- 9) analyze stories from forager oral tradition in terms of these information sets

Course Canvas Site: You are responsible for checking the course Canvas site regularly for updates and other information. The syllabus, course readings, lectures, and announcements will be posted there.

Academic Honesty: Academic misconduct is a violation of the UO Student Conduct Code, which prohibits the “act of cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism. Examples: looking at another person’s exam, making up lab results, and failing to cite sources in a paper.” All work submitted for this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this class. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty risks failing the class.

Students With Disabilities: Appropriate accommodations will be provided for students with documented disabilities. If you anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements with me asap. Please send a notification letter from Disability Services outlining your accommodations.

Copyright--Do Not Post Class Materials for Sale: Materials written by your instructor are the instructor's (or in some cases the UO's) intellectual property. It is important that everyone respect each other's rights. For instance, you should not copy and redistribute course materials without the instructor's permission. The instructor may also post other copyrighted materials on the course site. It is the instructor's responsibility for ensuring that such posting does not violate copyright law, but you should be aware that you do not have the right to make additional copies or redistribute these materials.

Copyright warning: The Canvas site for this class contains copyrighted works that are included with permission of the copyright owner, or under exemptions provided by U.S. Copyright Law (Sections 110, and/or 107). Copying of any of these copyrighted works is prohibited.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required Texts: Dylan Evans & Oscar Zarate, *Introducing Evolutionary Psychology: A Graphic Guide, 3rd ed.* Available at UO Bookstore. All other readings are posted on Canvas (see Schedule of Readings, below).

Readings: To access the readings, go to the home page on the course Canvas site. Readings are organized by week (see **Schedule of Readings**, below). The readings are scientific articles and stories from forager oral tradition. Most of the articles you read will be primary scientific research presented by those who conduct it, as opposed to a broad overview that might be found in a textbook. Because lectures are designed to explicate and review key points of the assigned texts, you are expected to do the reading before you come to class.

Discussion Sections: Since this is a science-credit course, the discussion sections are organized as labs, in which the objects you examine are texts. Each week you will be presented with several story passages, which you will analyze in terms of the foraging knowledge they contain (each week we will cover a different type of foraging knowledge). **You must bring paper and a writing implement to discussion section with you.**

Grading: Your course grade will be based on the total points you earn on the labs, midterm, and final exam. Labs are designed to review and apply important course concepts, and prepare you

for exams. Exams are multiple-choice and will cover lectures, readings, and films. The midterm will cover weeks 1 through 5; the final will be cumulative but will primarily focus on material from weeks 6 through 10. You will need a #2 pencil for each exam. Exams and assignments must be taken/turned in at the scheduled time—**under no circumstances will make-up exams or assignment extensions be given without a documented excuse** (e.g., signed note from your doctor). If you will not be able to take an exam or turn in an assignment at the scheduled time, you **must** notify me or your GTF in advance.

Grading Rubric: Grading is done on a straight percentage scale.

A+ = 99-100%	A = 93-98.9%	A- = 90-92.9%
B+ = 87-89.9%	B = 83-86.9%	B- = 80-82.9%
C+ = 77-79.9%	C = 73-76.9%	C- = 70-72.9%
D+ = 67-69.9%	D = 63-66.9%	D- = 60-62.9%
F = < 59.9%		

Expected levels of performance:

A+: Quality of student's performance significantly exceeds all requirements and expectations required for an A grade. Very few, if any, students receive this grade in a given course.

A: Quality of performance is outstanding relative to that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at the highest level.

B: Quality of performance is significantly above that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at a high level.

C: Quality of performance meets the course requirements in every respect; demonstrates adequate understanding of course content.

D: Quality of performance is at the minimal level necessary to pass the course, but does not fully meet the course requirements; demonstrates a marginal understanding of course content.

F: Quality of performance in the course is unacceptable and does not meet the course requirements; demonstrates an inadequate understanding of course content.

Schedule Of Readings

Week 1: Origins

TUE Scalise Sugiyama (2005) "Reverse-engineering narrative" (optional)

THR Evans & Zarate (pp. 3-60)

Boyd et al. (2011) "The cultural niche"

Week 2: Cultural Transmission

TUE Boulton & Smith (1992) “The social nature of play fighting and play chasing: mechanisms and strategies underlying cooperation and compromise”

THR Hewlett & Cavalli-Sforza (1986) “Cultural transmission among Aka pygmies”

Film: *The Human Spark, Episode 2*

Week 3: Cognitive Foundations of Storytelling

TUE Evans & Zarate (pp. 87-95)

Onishi et al. (2007) “15-month-old infants detect violations in pretend scenarios”

“Tugtoväk the moose, who duped the kayak man”

THR Evans & Zarate (pp. 96-104)

Schacter et al. (2007) “Remembering the past to imagine the future: the prospective brain”

Film: *The Human Spark, Episode 3*

Week 4: Cooperation & Conflict Management

TUE Evans & Zarate (pp. 61-77, 143-150)

Boehm (1993) “Egalitarian behavior and reverse dominance hierarchy” (p. 227 to top of p. 236 only!)

“Why Kwanyip never lacked guanacos”

“A tale about stingy reindeer-owners”

“Siligtigkê who murdered the women of the village”

THR Marshall (1976) “Sharing, talking, and giving: relief of social tensions among the !Kung”

“Coyote and the seven buffalo”

“Coyote marries the chief’s daughter”

“Coyote kills Deer with his ceremony”

“Coyote and the expanding meat”

“Coyote loses the power to obtain food”

“Sendeh overeats and clings to a grape vine”

Week 5: Mating

TUE Evans & Zarate (pp. 105-132)

“Puan takes a lover”

“The rival husbands”

“Two women”

“A Wasco woman deceives her husband”

“The Grizzly Bears and the Black Bears”

THR Evans & Zarate 2005 (pp. 81-86)

Apostolou (2007) “Sexual selection under parental choice: the role of parents in the evolution of human mating”

“Coyote marries the chief’s daughter”

“How a poor boy won his wives”

“The dog and the girl” (pp. 62-63)

“Double-Face tricks the girl” (pp. 49-50 only)

Week 6: Warfare

TUE **MIDTERM**

In-class, closed book; bring #2 pencil

THR Wrangham (1999) “Evolution of coalitionary killing”

Biocca (1970) “The Karawetari attack” (pp. 31-37)

“A Cree, caught alone, is killed by the Beaver”

“Wonyoni escapes from the Cree”

“Those people”

“Mavaranaq”

“The girl who was stolen by an inlander”

“Clever Kaskoyuk”

“The origin of the Kiowa Apache”

“Kunuk the orphan boy” (pp. 132-135 only)

Week 7: Heroes & Hunters

- TUE Jobling 2001 “The psychological foundations of the hero-ogre story”
“The birth of Killer-of-Enemies and Child-of-the-Water” (pp. 47-77)
“Öeöemë, the child warrior”
“The Tale of La-la”
“Clever Kaskoyuk”
“How Bear Woman got her name”
“The old woman and the polar bear”
- THR Barrett (2005) “Adaptations to predators and prey”
Evans & Zarate (review pp. 50-56)
Hill & Hurtado 1995
“A stubborn fisherman”
“Armadillo and Jaguar exchange teeth”
“Leopard-hunting: the fatal adventure of !Kwai-kwa and his companion”
“How Bear Woman got her name”
“The crocodile they couldn’t kill”
“Adventures with buffalo”
“Wild Man” (#48)

Week 8: Subsistence

- TUE Blurton-Jones & Konner (1976) “!Kung knowledge of animal behavior”
“Coyote visits the Red Ants”
“Hunting experiences” (first story only)
“Tugtoväk the moose, who duped the kayak man”
“Enemy sorcerers turn into coatis”
“Pine Squirrel criticizes Deer”
“Tapir tries to hide”
“Day and night”
- THR Evans & Zarate (review pp. 57-60)

“Caterpillar’s tobacco and the kernals of wild fruit”

“Red Brocket and the false palm fruits”

“The war of the fishes with the Okanagon”

“Fish Hawk invents implements” (pp. 72-74)

“Theft of fire”

Week 9: Subsistence Stress

TUE Sobel & Bettles (2000) “Winter hunger, winter myths: subsistence risk and mythology among the Klamath and Modoc”

“An entire band is killed by the Cree”

“Starving Beaver visit the Rocky Mountains”

“The bitter fruit: the lala myth”

“The famine” (pp. 500-501)

“A woman hides bear meat from her starving husband”

“Story of Big-Horned Owl”

“A famine at the Cascades”

THR Holiday

Week 10: Wayfinding & Environmental Hazards

TUE Tonkinson (1978) “The Spiritual Imperative” (pp. 14-19), “Myth, Ritual, and Songline” (pp. 88-94)

“Qoa’qlqal”

“How the land was distributed” (pp. 65-67 only)

Tennant & Bitar 1981 “Training for survival”

Ludwin (1999) “Cascadia megathrust earthquakes in Pacific Northwest Indian myths and legends”

Dubois 1932 “Tidal Wave”

“Oral history saves island from tsunami”

“Crater Lake 1865”

“The big fire”

“The story of the dolphins”

THR Evans & Zarate (pp. 77-80)

Tooley et al. (2006) “Generalising the Cinderella Effect to unintentional childhood fatalities”

“Some neglected children are transformed into birds”

“Two boys stranded on the ice”

“Wild Woman” (#45)

“The little girl who was kidnapped”

“Two children escape from an At!at!a’lia” (pp. 274-276)

Week 11: Final Exam

8:00-10:0 a.m. Monday, December 3rd. Multiple choice; closed book; bring #2 pencil.