THR 260 Storytelling: Meet Me Halfway: Milwaukee Stories
A GER Arts/Cultures & Communities Course

Dates: January 25-May 10, 2016

Guidelines:
• Use your common sense and be compassionate to your self and others.
• Empathize: We can’t do this without you so let’s work together.
• Participate online frequently.
• Organize your work ahead of deadlines.
• Meet the deadlines.
• Be curious and communicate frequently.
• Feel free to ask questions (questions are encouraged) in private or during class.
• If you do have a problem do not panic. D2L sometimes breaks down. Computers don’t always work the way we want them too. Just keep in contact with Robin, which brings us to:
• Back up your data.
• Storytelling learning happens through feedback conversations, humane interactions, empathic listening, thoughtful reading and reflection, discussions, or creating works/projects.
• If you need a standing ovation, ask for it. We’ll send you a virtual one.

Expected time-investment for this 3-credit course:
• Working Online (including reading, posting, 
  & constructing assignments) 2 hrs x 15 weeks = 35 hrs
• Viewing videos and reading texts 2 hrs x 15 weeks = 35 hrs
• Service-Learning Project 35 hrs
• Final Video Storytelling Project 20 hrs
Total semester commitment 125 hrs
Weekly average (using 16 weeks) 7.8 hours

Instructor: Dr. Robin Mello, rmello@uwm.edu, Theatre 220, Office Hours are Tuesdays 2:30-4:30 or online by appointment.

What to do if you have an emergency? Email, call or text Robin’s cell: 414-469-9279 ASAP. IF YOU SEND ME A TEXT BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME IN THE TEXT.

Course description: Everyone tells stories. They help us explore and understand who we are, where we have come from, and where we are headed. This semester we will explore communication of, listening to, and performing stories and focus on the stories from our own neighborhoods.

Scope And Sequence of the course:
1. Story and language: Linguistics and communication.
2. Communication through stories: listening and speaking—negotiating relationships and building shared meaning.
3. Learning through stories: narrative and voice in our minds, making meaning from narrative, teaching through storytelling
5. Oral History/Service Learning: personal/life story; folk tales and world tales; myths and epics
6. Performing/telling a story.
Course Goals:

- Expose students to the storytelling art form;
- Impact students’ abilities to tell, communicate, and perform stories aloud;
- Examine stories from multi-cultural and diverse perspectives;
- Engage in Creative storytelling as a community building practice.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes:

Students will...

- Demonstrate storytelling and story listening fundamental communication skills.
- Collect, express, and reflect on personal stories from their lived experience.
- Reflect on pluralism and diversity as it relates to the stories they tell, hear, and collect.
- Practice storytelling in community settings and through service-learning.
- Hone their storytelling skills.
- Interpret and analyze their own and others’ storytelling performances.
- Craft story performances and devise theatrical or (in the case of online courses) performative presentations that integrate, incorporate, and reflect their own and others’ stories.

Scope And Sequence (Curriculum for this course):

Module #1 *Getting to Know You:* Examines individual personal stories and voices. It also focuses on story and language/linguistics/communication.

Module #2 *A Baker’s Dozen:* Examines communicating with and through stories as well as listening and speaking, negotiating relationships, and building shared meaning.

Module #3: *Meet Me Halfway:* Explores life story, oral history, the ways that place and circumstance impact your ideas and stories.

Module #4 & #5 *Sharing our Stories & Collecting stories from others:* Addresses developing reflectivity and critical perspectives by analyzing stories through a variety of lenses, the personal, socio-cultural, universal, and intra personal.

Module #6: *Service-Learning & Storytelling in Education/community:* Practicing and working in community to implement and explore how storytelling builds community and how it influences learning.

Module #7: *Performing Stories:* Requires students to develop skills for performing stories in face-to-face and virtual environments.

Required Texts:


All other required texts are provided as .pdf files, podcasts, or videos these are posted in D2L.

GER Learning: This course is approved as part of the GER Breadth requirement, satisfies the GER Arts credit requirement, and is an approved elective within the Cultures and Communities certificate program. These are assessed by the Final Performance Assignment and using the Final Performance rubric (at end of this syllabus).
This course addresses the Cultures & Communities Goals:

- Examine stories from multi-cultural and diverse perspectives (C&C Goal 1, 2, 6, & 7);
- Engage in Creative Storytelling techniques through engaged and/or service-learning-oriented experiences (C&C Goal 10).

This course meets the Arts GER Criteria because it:

- Focuses on the creation and participation of the storytelling art;
- Asks students to learn the basic approaches to and techniques involved in performing and collecting stories;
- Requires participants to interpret and analyze their own and others’ performances and written narratives.

This course addresses UW System Outcomes by focusing on:

SLO #1) Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Natural World: THR 260 focuses on storytelling—it’s practice and cultural significance in the lives of students and in the life of their community(s). It does so by infusing an exploration of cultural context and codes in stories worldwide. Also, students explore their own beliefs, conditions, and experiences in relationship to others. Reflecting and considering the conditions and perspectives of others is a core component of this course.

SLO #3) Effective Communication Skills: Exploring and learning about and from a storytelling presentation/performance so that students explore effective communication between listeners and speakers.

- Assignment: All of Module 8.
- Assessment: Included at end of this syllabus.

How to succeed (expectations): You will succeed if you do all the work in an exemplary fashion, explore the subject, actively participate, and post your work before on the deadline. Please note that ALL WORK IS REQUIRED.

Grades and Assessment:

All work is required. You can’t pass the course without doing all the work. You can, however, ask for an extension on any assignment. You are also invited to suggest alternative formats. But you must ask for extensions ahead of deadlines not after they have come and gone.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scavenger Hunt &amp; Survey</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baker’s Dozen response post</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module 3 reading response</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collecting stories</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written essay / poem</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service-learning project design &amp; set up</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storyteller’s Guide reading response</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service-learning project end report and reflection</td>
<td>30 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Performance</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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<td>Performance worksheet</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<td>200 points</td>
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University Policies: Please make yourself familiar with the following UWM syllabus policies: [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/news_events/upload/Syllabus-Links.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/news_events/upload/Syllabus-Links.pdf)
**Module 1—Getting to Know You**

*Why we do this module?* Because this is a course about storytelling first thing we want to do is 'exchange' our stories—identify ourselves—and explore the stories that we identify with. Communicating personal stories is probably one of the first things humans did when they developed language(s).

*What will we be doing?* Learning to communicate who you are and to listen to others’ stories is the first step toward reflecting and understanding how stories are used to build communities. In the class we are a learning community. We learn about each other by expressing stories.

*What are we learning?* Interpreting and expressing our own stories.

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<th>DATE</th>
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| Monday January 25, Ends @ 11:30 PM, February 8 | 1. Go to D2L. Look at the course site.  
2. Read directions for our first assignment/module  
3. Watch Chimamanda Adichie & Bill Harley’s TED talks  
4. Read syllabus  
5. Use the template in D2L and post:  
6. Find a photo of yourself you can upload  
7. Complete the assignment by posting it in Discussion Forum |

Due 2/8/16 “Getting to Know You” is due by 11:30 PM

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**Module 2—A Baker’s Dozen**

*Watching Storytelling*

*Why?* Now that we’ve got an idea of who we are as a group of storytellers we need to look at the breadth of storytelling performance (dramatized, aloud, and unscripted) that is being done. Here are multiple models for you to critique and also so you have a sense of the variety and diversity of storytelling communities.

*Doing?* Here is a wide variety of storytelling from singing songs for young people to ‘telling’ poetry.

*Learning?* Viewing and analyzing storytelling from diverse cultures and sources. Exploring cultural perspectives, myths and legends from diverse cultures and sources.

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| Monday January 25 through Monday February 15 Due by 11:30 PM at the latest | Choose at least 10 from the following Storytellers, (and yes, you get extra credit if you watch more than 10): create a response using the template as a guide. The template is in D2L. BTW, they videos themselves are posted in Module 2 in Content. If, for some reason you can’t access them paste the web addresses shown in Discussion into your browser.  
After you have watched them write a response. Spelling should be correct and writing mechanics should be correct as well. In your post include answers to the following:  
1. Short (2-4 sentences) review of what you thought of each teller.  
2. Storytellers that caught your interest.  
3. Storytellers you did not enjoy.  
4. Discuss in some depth variety of techniques and approaches you observed--how did the storytellers, on the whole perform and communicate the story? Were these techniques successful?  
5. If you could give these storytellers advice, what would it be?  
6. What, if any, of these videos/storytellers would you recommend to others? AND...if you want to really challenge yourself and go further for more bonus points add information about the extra stories such as the Navaho, Gullah, and Greek storytelling posted in the challenge section of Module 2.  
Due Feb. 15 by 11:30 PM |

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### Module 3—Stories of the Neighborhood

**Why?** This is an exploration of people's stories, their history, and perspective.

**Doing?** We are going to start with reading the *Heavy Lifting*, the first chapter of *Meet Me Halfway* and the chapters *How Do I Create Stories from True-Life Events* from *Storyteller's Guide*. Next, reflect on what you thought of the chapters. Also include a story from your own life experience that came to mind when you were reading the chapters. Also include a thoughtful response to someone else's post.

**Learning?** Reporting on personal stories of lived experience of others.

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<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday February 15 through Monday February 22</td>
<td>Read <em>Heavy Lifting</em>, from <em>Meet Me Halfway</em> and <em>How Do I Create Stories from True-Life Events</em> from <em>Storyteller's Guide.</em></td>
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<td>Post a clear and thoughtful reflection on what you thought of the chapters. Also include a story from your own life experience. (Due 2/15)</td>
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<td>Next, post at least one thoughtful response to someone else’s post. (Due 2/15)</td>
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<td><strong>You must post 2/22 by 11:30 PM</strong></td>
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### Module 4—Your Stories

**Why?** This is an exploration of your stories in relation to others’.

**Doing?** We are going to start with collecting stories by posting complete, clear, stories from your own experience and responding to the stories of others.

**Learning?** Telling our own personal stories and reflecting on the lived experience of others.

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<th>DATES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Starts Monday February 22 through Monday February 29th</td>
<td>The Module 4 Collecting forum has many questions/prompts. Post a minimum of 5 complete, clear, stories from your own experience. Make sure that the narrative is rich and descriptive. (Due 2/22)</td>
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<td>Next, respond to at least 5 other posts with appropriate comments, questions and/or stories of your own. (Sue 2/22)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUE</td>
<td>2/29 at 11:30 PM</td>
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MODULE 5—MAKING SENSE OF OUR STORIES

**Why?** We want to be able to make sense of our stories—so they have more meaning for us. We are using interpretation and narrative inquiry skills so that we can examine what our stories might mean and why they might be important.

**Doing?** This assignment is a reflective essay pertaining to stories, their cultural meaning, and what our stories say about our identities. Also, you are going to develop a theory about storytelling using these data.

**Learning?** Interpreting, expressing, and analyzing the stories of others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starts Monday February 29</th>
<th>Read all the stories in the first three topic forums. Then, choose two other topic forums to read.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through Friday March 11</td>
<td>Next, view at least 2 of the 4 TED talks posted for this module.</td>
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<td>Then, watch the Directions Ppt.</td>
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<td>Next create an life story, essay, poem, or other written narrative that incorporates the following components (900-2,000 words)—in the case of the poem word count doesn’t count:</td>
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<td>• Information from TED talks.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Information from at least 6 topic forums</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What you have learned about yourself and others from reading these stories.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Were there any themes running through the stories that you can identify?</td>
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<td>2. What do the stories tell you about the teller?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. What do our stories tell you about Milwaukee?</td>
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<td>4. Which stories seemed most compelling to you?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. What universal themes do you observe?</td>
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<td>6. What cultural assumptions do you observe?</td>
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No matter what form your narrative is in you must include your definition of storytelling. (DO NOT USE ANOTHER PERSON’S DEFINITION AND DON’T QUOTE A DICTIONARY). Make this an original definition. The important thing is not that you are right/wrong but that you have thoughtfully applied your ideas in this essay.

**Due Friday March 11 by 11:30 PM**
MODULE 6: SERVICE LEARNING: Teaching and Learning Stories in Our Communities
Plan due March 28 @ 11:30 PM
Report due April 18 @ 1130 PM

Why? Stories have been the primary way that people learn, build communities, and explore who they are. Now, apply this idea to a service-learning (S-L) project.

Doing? Service-Learning This assignment is a bit different from the ones we’ve done so far. But for those of you who have worked on service projects before you will feel right at home.

Starts Monday March 21 through Monday April 18

It is more open ended than many service-learning projects you might encounter in other courses. Not to worry. Explore, challenge yourself, and design something you want to do for YOUR learning.

A- FIND A SITE
You have three options for a S-L site:
1) Find your own: Look around and locate a learning community that you are a member of or that you are connected to. I STRONGLY suggest you think about a school, community center, library, religious group, preschool, coffee group, playgroup, your family dinner table, blog, online group, Boys & Girls Club, organization you are part of, family group you are part of, neighborhood group you are part of, etc.

The real trick is to look around your every-day life and figure out where there is a ‘classroom.’ Someplace where learning happens. Remember too: schooling and learning are different. Learning groups take place everywhere. It should be a) connected to you, b) a place where learning already happens, c) a group that will allow you to involve them in this assignment.

OR

2) Register in the S-L database at the Center for Community-based Learning at UWM. They will have a list of sites, some which may be virtual. (Links are in this module). The real trick is to look around your every-day life and figure out where there is a ‘classroom.’ Someplace where learning happens. Remember too: schooling and learning are different. It should be a place where learning already happens and a group that will allow you to involve them in this assignment.

B- REVIEW THE S-L PDF/PPT.

C- CREATE A PLAN. Work out how you will incorporate storytelling at this site. How can you best meet the needs of the organization and also weave in story? One of the simplest ways is to do an oral history collection, asking people to tell you the story of their lives or to respond to story questions. REALLY good story questions are posted at the Story Corps site (in the links section of the course). Report on this plan using the worksheet.

D- SUBMIT THE PLAN BY MARCH 28TH. WAIT for Robin’s OK / grade before you put the plan into action. Be ready to modify if necessary.

E- PUT THE PLAN INTO ACTION. Keep a log and a journal of what you did and how you did this. Keep the time sheet as well. Submit a report of what happened and the timesheet in the dropbox—due April 18th.
Module 8—Performing

4/25/16 Reading Response due
5/2/16 Worksheet due
5/9/16 Video due

Why? It’s a storytelling course—storytelling performance is one of the core skills this course explores.

Doing? The only way to learn more about performing and telling story is to do it.

Learning? Demonstration of fundamental communication skills. Crafting a story performance. Expressing a story that is personal and culturally connected.

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Worksheet Due: 5/2/16</td>
<td>Your assignment is to tell a story that you have prepared (there’s a series of steps and directions in the Module 8 in D2L Content). The story you tell should reflect something about your community and connect to Milwaukee. It is a Milwaukee story. Here are the steps: 1. Read Watch the <em>Telling A Story Directions PowerPoint</em>. (Deadline April 20). 2. Select a story you want to tell that expresses community and relates to Milwaukee. (Deadline April 25) 3. Rehearse often. Rehearse. (Rehearse every day if you can, three times a week minimum.) 4. Plan your audience and set up a time for recording your story with the audience. (Deadline 5/1/16) 5. Complete the worksheet—drop it in the dropbox (deadline 5/2/16) 6. Record the final version of your storytelling and create a digital file. The easiest way is to upload it into Course Media (see the menu bar at top of course) and then put it into the Discussion forum. Or you can create a private YouTube site. Make sure that Robin has permission to access it. Post it in the Discussion forum. (Deadline 5/9/16). YOU MUST CHECK TO SEE IF IT IS DOWNLOADABLE, READABLE, AND WORKS. IF IT DOES NOT WORK YOU WON’T GET A GRADE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video due: 5/9/16 at 11:30 PM</td>
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GER Assessment (for Final Presentation Assignment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exceptional A</th>
<th>Distinctive B</th>
<th>Successful C</th>
<th>Substandard D</th>
<th>Failing F</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full points</td>
<td>75% of points</td>
<td>65% of points</td>
<td>50% of points</td>
<td>0 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesive and clear</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Parts unclear</td>
<td>Unfocused</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Somewhat collaborative</td>
<td>Weak unfocused Collaboration</td>
<td>Little or no collaboration</td>
<td>No collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Work</td>
<td>Some original work</td>
<td>Limited original work</td>
<td>Little or no original work</td>
<td>No original work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative choices strong and clearly defined</td>
<td>Creative choices clear</td>
<td>Creative choices limited in scope</td>
<td>Creative choices unclear</td>
<td>Creative choices nonexistent or inappropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses all aspects of storytelling performance formats: narration, characterization, gesture, flow/timing, movement, voice,</td>
<td>Uses most aspects of storytelling performance formats</td>
<td>Uses some aspects of storytelling performance formats</td>
<td>Uses little of storytelling performance formats</td>
<td>Uses no storytelling formats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses all aspects of imagery and descriptive language</td>
<td>Interesting use of imagery and descriptive language</td>
<td>Little use of imagery and descriptive Language</td>
<td>Very little use of imagery and descriptive language</td>
<td>No use of imagery and descriptive language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterization is clear and delineated</td>
<td>Characterization is clear and somewhat delineated</td>
<td>Characterization is marginally delineated, choppy, or disjointed</td>
<td>Little characterization used</td>
<td>No characterization used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive 2</td>
<td>Involves audience</td>
<td>Limited use of audience</td>
<td>Little or no use of audience</td>
<td>No audience participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated use of movement or gesture</td>
<td>Some use of gesture and movement</td>
<td>Limited use of gesture and movement</td>
<td>Little use of gesture and movement</td>
<td>No use of gesture and movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated use of voice and vocal range</td>
<td>Some use of voice and vocal range</td>
<td>Limited vocal range and use of voice</td>
<td>Little use of vocal range</td>
<td>No use of vocal range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress made since first rehearsal</td>
<td>Some progress made since first rehearsal</td>
<td>Limited progress made since first rehearsal</td>
<td>No or little progress made since first rehearsal</td>
<td>No progress made</td>
</tr>
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1 When appropriate to assignment.
2 When appropriate to assignment.