

Narrative Network Australia and Victoria University

presents

Narrative Research Methods *in the Social Sciences*

A course led by

Professor Catherine Kohler Riessman

Research Professor

Boston College, MA, USA

T H E C O U R S E

Narrative theory and practice is reshaping qualitative inquiry in virtually every area of social science and the professions. This is not surprising for stories are at the heart of human and social meaning making - and meaning making by individuals and communities, by organizations, institutions and nations can be insightfully explored by an analysis of these narratives.

This course will assist those with an interest in narrative inquiry to learn more about the development and significance of narrative as a research method and to explore for themselves how narratives might be harnessed as research data.

The course begins with a review of what has been called 'the narrative turn' in social science research. It then moves on to explore how participants might transform storytelling relevant to their own work into a research method. Four specific approaches to the analysis of narrative are explored: thematic, structural, dialogic and visual.

A major challenge for those exploring narrative enquiry is the development of an understanding and a commitment to the validity of narrative as a research method. Attention to this question and to the validity and trustworthiness of narrative research inquiry is an important aspect of this course.

The expectation is that participants will draw on specific readings and on class discussion to gain a deeper understanding of narrative research and that they will work with, critically analyse and present narrative text relevant to their own research during the course. The final two weeks will take the form of a 'master class' with participants presenting their work for supportive critique by Professor Riessman and by each other.

Participant numbers are limited to 25 to ensure students receive adequate personal attention. To apply, complete the registration form **AND** include a 300 word outline of the current status of your research project, and how this course will assist you.

Registrations close 7th January, 2008.

Professor Cathy Riessman:

For the first three months of 2008, Professor Cathy Riessman will be a visiting scholar of Victoria University, Melbourne, and of 'Narrative Network Australia'. Cathy is an acclaimed teacher as well as an internationally renowned researcher. She has been called the 'mother' of narrative research. In this course she brings together her expertise as teacher and researcher to assist Australian researchers and research students who are relatively inexperienced to explore and develop expertise in narrative as a social science research method.

Professor Riessman's own research examines interrupted lives, where events have disrupted expectations of continuity. Over a long career she has studied and compared the narrative accounts that women and men develop to make sense of biographical disruptions (chronic illness, divorce, and infertility). She examines personal accounts as stories that can illuminate the social sources of "private troubles" by drawing connections between biography and society, revealing how identities are constructed narratively. Her research builds on and extends recent interdisciplinary developments, and the burgeoning field of narrative theory in the social sciences and humanities. Professor Riessman has authored three books and numerous articles and book chapters. She teaches frequently in Europe and her research has taken her into Asia as well as across Europe and North America. Over the past five years has developed a relationship with colleagues in Australia and New Zealand and during 2006 she was a Visiting Professor at Curtin University, Western Australia.

Her much awaited new book, 'Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences', published by Sage, will appear late in 2007 and will be launched in February, 2008 during her visit to Melbourne.

Course Outline and Dates:

This is an intensive course with a strong practical aspect. Participants will meet for two and a half hours, twice a week for four weeks. During these four weeks it is also essential that participants take the time to read and reflect on a range of selected readings. There will then be a break of two weeks when participants will work on the analysis of their own work. The final four sessions will be the 'master' classes with participants presenting and getting supportive feedback on this work. A (free) cd with some core readings will be available prior to commencement of the course.

The sessions will run during February and March, 2008 on **Tuesdays and Thursdays 4.00pm - 6.30pm**. They will be held at the Queen Street, City Campus of Victoria University.

Week 1: February 5

Introduction

What is (and is not) narrative; the narrative "turn" in the human sciences; the functions of narrative; construction of identifies - individual, organizational, community, national/political; different approaches: the "told", "telling", dialogic encounters and visual sequences.

R e a d i n g s

Chase, S.E. 2005. 'Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices'. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, pp. 651-679.

Riessman, C.K. 1993. *Narrative Analysis*. Qualitative Research Methods Series, No. 30. Newbury Park, C.A.: Sage (Optional)*

Week 1: February 7th

Constructing narrative texts

An investigation and interpretation of some of the documents that take a narrative form also research interviews and transcription as interpretation.

R e a d i n g s

Gubrium, J.F. and Holstein, J.A. 2002. "From the individual interview to the interview society". In J.F. Gubrium and J.A. Holstein (eds.) Handbook of Interview Research. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, pp. 3-32.

Mishler, E.G. 1986. Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press.*

Week 2: February 12th

Thematic analysis

An introduction to seeking, interpreting and presenting 'themes' as the focus of narrative analysis.

R e a d i n g s

Cain, C. 1991. "Personal stories: Identity acquisition and self-understanding in Alcoholics Anonymous". Ethos 19(2): 210-253.

Ewick, P. and Silbey, S. 2003. "Narrating social structure: Stories of resistance to legal authority". American Journal of Sociology 108(6): 1328-72.

Rich, J.A. and Grey, C.M. 2005. "Pathways to recurrent trauma among young black men: Traumatic stress, substance use, and the 'code of the street'. American Journal of Public Health 95(5):816-824.

Williams, G. 1984/1997. "The genesis of chronic illness: Narrative re-construction". In L.P. Hinchman and S.K. Hinchman (eds.) Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences. Albany: SUNY Press, pp. 185-212.

Week 2: February 14th

Structural analysis

An introduction to seeking, interpreting and using structural analysis as the focus of narrative analysis.

R e a d i n g s

Edvardsson, D., Rasmussen, B.H., Riessman, C.K. 2003. "Ward atmosphere of horror and healing: A comparative analysis of narrative". Health 7(4):377-396.

Gee, J.P. 1991. "A linguistic approach to narrative". Journal of Narrative and Life History/Narrative Inquiry 1:15:39.

Labov, W. 1982. "Speech actions and reactions in personal narrative". In D. Tannen (ed.), Analyzing Discourse: Text and Talk. Washington D.C.: Georgetown Univ. Press, pp. 219-247.

Week 3: February 19th

Dialogic Analysis

An introduction to seeking, interpreting and presenting dialogic analysis as the focus of narrative analysis.

R e a d i n g s

Bell, S.E. 1999. "Narratives and lives: Women's health politics and the diagnosis of cancer for DES daughters". *Narrative Inquiry* 9(2):1-43.

Riessman, C.K. 2004. "A thrice told tale: New readings of an old story". In B. Hurwitz, T. Greenhalgh, and V. Skultans (eds.), *Narrative Research in Health and Illness*. London: British Medical Journal Book & Blackwell.

Skultans, V. 2003. "From damaged nerves to masked depression: Inevitability and hope in Latvian psychiatric narratives". *Social Science & Medicine* 56: 2421-2431.

Young, K. 1989. "Narrative embodiments: Enclaves of the self in the realm of medicine". In J. Shotter and K.J. Gergen (eds.), *Texts of Identity*. Newbury Park CA: Sage.

Week 3: February 21st

Visual Analysis

An introduction to seeking, interpreting and presenting visual analysis as the focus of narrative analysis.

R e a d i n g s

Becker, H. 1986. "Photography and Sociology", In H.Becker, *Doing Things Together* (Evanston, ILL: Northwestern University Press), pp. 221- 271 (originally published in *Studies in Visual Communication* 1:1974, pp.3-26).

Mishler, E.G. 2004. "Historians of the Self: Restorying Lives, Revising Identities". *Research in Human Development* 1:1&2,pp. 101-121. Please see 20 minute video ("Betty Tells Her Story") before you read Mishler.

Luttrell, W. 2003. *Pregnant Bodies, Fertile Minds*. NY: Routledge. (Preface, Chapter 1, Chapter 4).

Lykes, M.B. 2001. "Creative arts and photography in participatory action research in Guatemala". In P. Reason and H. Radbury (eds.), *Handbook of Action Research*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Week 4: February 26th

Validation and truth

An exploration of what counts as validation in narrative research.

R e a d i n g s

Estroff, S.E. 1995. "Whose story is it anyway?" In K.S. Toombs, D. Bernard, and R.A. Carson (eds.) *Chronic Illness: From Experience to Policy*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.

Langellier, K.M. 2001. "Personal narrative". In M. Jolly (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms*, Vol.2. London: Fitzroy Dearbon, pp. 699-701.

Mishler, E.G. 1990. "Validation in inquiry-guided research: The role of exemplars in narrative studies". *Harvard Educational Review* 60: 415-442.

Personal Narratives Group 1989. "Truths". In *Interpreting Women's Lives*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, pp. 261-264.

Riessman, C.K. 2002. "Doing justice: Positioning the interpreter in narrative work". In W. Patterson (ed.), *Strategic Narrative: New Perspectives on the Power of Personal and Cultural Stories*. Lanham MD: Lexington Books, pp. 193-214.

Week 4: February 28th

So What! & What's that again?

In this final session led by Professor Riessman. There will be reflection and comment on the future directions of narrative research as well as an opportunity for participants to revisit those areas where they seek further clarification before spending two weeks on individual analysis.

Weeks 5 & 6: Beginning March 3rd and 10th

Students work on their individual analysis and presentation.

Weeks 7 & 8: Beginning March 17th and 24th

Master classes - presentations & discussion of students work with some invited guests.

Cost and application

The cost of the course is \$400.

This is a subsidised rate with research students in mind. There are no reductions or special rates. Academic staff and research students who wish to seek further support with funding should do so through their own universities.

Application forms are available on line at:

narrativenetworkaustralia.org.au

or

contact: Nicole Drage - Victoria University,

email: nicole.drage@vu.edu.au

telephone: (03) 9688 4521

Narrative Network Australia and Victoria University

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REGISTRATION FORM & TAX INVOICE abn 83 776 954 731

Contact Details

Title _____ Name _____

Institutional Affiliation _____

Address _____

Town/City _____

Email/Mobile _____

Do you agree to have your email address distributed to the course participants? Yes No

Registration:

Narrative Methods Course: Begins week of 5th Feb 2008, ends week of 24th March 2008

Cost: \$400

(This registration cost is already substantially discounted. Unfortunately, we cannot offer further concessions)

Payment Method:

- Cheque Payable to Victoria University of Technology: Account Code 407-10-100-1819
- Master Card Visa Card Bank Card

Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____ Amount _____

Cardholder Name _____

Signature of Cardholder _____

Application letter included Yes No

**Considerable interest has been expressed in these events.
Since numbers will be limited to 25 people, it is highly
recommended that you register ASAP, to avoid disappointment.**

Please return completed form by
7th January, 2007

Nicole Drage

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