

COURSE: WGST 4812A/5902A (ANTH 4225D, ANTH 5708): *Feminism and Storytelling: Theory and Praxis*

SCHEDULE: In person, Thursdays 8:35am-11:25am

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Brittney Anne Bos (she/her)

CONTACT: Email: Brittney.Bos@carleton.ca

Virtual Office Hours: Online, By Appointment Only

*If you are experiencing technological difficulties accessing any of the content in this course, you should contact the Brightspace Support page: <https://carleton.ca/brightspace/students/>.

Course description

"You got to make your own worlds. You got to write yourself in." ~Octavia E. Butler

Storytelling is a powerful tool shaping what we know and how we experience the world. For centuries, feminists have recognized the power in telling their own stories and inspiring others to do the same. Storytelling exists in many forms and variations across time, cultures, and contexts, but it is located at the very root of our humanity and understanding. From science fiction novels, to love poems, to argumentative essays, to powerful speeches, and everything in between, feminists are using their stories to further their ongoing activism. Through their work, they are also continually revisiting the theory and practice of storytelling and how we can use our own words to shape our pasts, presents, and futures.

This course considers the power of storytelling within feminist thought and activism. It acknowledges storytelling as a key pillar in feminist methodologies and a way people "do" feminism. By considering the role and impact of storytelling, students are exposed to the various ways that people convey information and for what purposes. The course provides ample opportunities to practice and consider various methods of storytelling and encourages students to locate themselves within feminist research. It also empowers students to tell their own stories, using their own words, inspired by various teachings and methodologies. The course emphasizes knowledge gained through academic and non-academic means, learning communities, and personal standpoint.

This is an **in-person seminar course**. Brightspace will be used as a repository of information, including readings, and method of submitting assignments. Aside from regular class preparation, very limited engagement with course materials will take place online.

Undergraduate and Graduate Blended Course

This is a blended course for both undergraduate and graduate level students. Undergraduate students will receive special instructions regarding course requirements at the beginning of the semester and before assignments are turned in. Academic level will be considered during the grading of all assignments. For undergraduate students, this is an opportunity to sample graduate level materials and expectations.

Acknowledgement

This course was developed and is being delivered on the unceded and un-surrendered territory of the Algonquin Anishinabeg, and content will cover the traditional territories and treaty lands of many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit from coast to coast to coast. Everyone enrolled in the course is encouraged to consider their own relationships with lands and colonialism across Turtle Island (also called North America). The instructor acknowledges her position as a white settler and speaks solely from that perspective, while encouraging and amplifying Indigenous voices whenever possible.

Learning objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify, explain and discuss storytelling as a part of feminist theory and methodologies
- Critically analyze questions about various topics through the lenses of storytelling, standpoint, autobiography and others
- Illustrate the connections between feminist research, theory, and praxis, both within and outside the academy, in the realm of storytelling
- Demonstrate a broad range of critical reading, writing and thinking skills
- Identify their role and responsibilities as a scholar, from their own autobiographies and storytelling experiences
- Participate in a learning community based on respect and support
- Construct a project of direct practical value to further a topics based on feminist storytelling

Contacting the Instructor and Questions

Allow up to 48 hours email turnaround when contacting the instructor. Please use the email noted above and send all correspondence through your Carleton University email address.

If you're comfortable sharing your questions for the benefit of other students, please pose them in class or post on the discussion board on Brightspace. If you have a complex, private question, arrange for a virtual appointment with the instructor (please arrange at least 48 hours in advance).

Readings and Cost

All readings are available through the Brightspace page – **no textbooks or other texts are required for purchase.**

Course evaluation

Item	Percentage
Participation	25%
Presenting and leading discussion – various dates	15%
Introduce yourself – February 6	15%
Tell me a story – March 6	20%
Storytelling as Academic Method – Final Report – April 8	25%

Brief Description of Evaluation Components

(Please see assignment sheets on Brightspace for more details and grading rubrics). All due date times are 11:59pm EST, unless otherwise indicated.

Participation – 25% total

The participation grade will be based on contributions during in-person seminars. You must be present during the entire class and contribute thoughtful and well-developed points to receive full participation marks. Contributions should reference the seminar's readings (when relevant) and further the class discussion. Participation grades for the course are calculated cumulatively. You are encouraged to request participation updates, as required.

Please see assignment sheet for more tips and expectations.

Presenting and Leading Discussion – 15% total – various dates

You will select one case study from the list of potential ideas on the syllabus *or* choose your own example fitting the week's theme. You must let the instructor (and rest of the class) know about your selection at least one week before your presentation and circulate links, images, videos, etc. as required. You will briefly introduce the source and provide some additional context you researched, and then lead the seminar in a discussion about the source and its connections with course themes.

The presentation should be approximately 10 minutes and the seminar questions and discussion should be planned to last approximately 30 minutes.

Please see assignment sheet for more tips and expectations, as well as a list of potential sources.

Introduce Yourself – 15% - February 6

You will introduce yourself using some of the storytelling methods discussed in class. The introduction can be spoken, written, or multimedia, and can use a variety of materials, suitable to your autobiography, including prose, poetry, material culture/objects, art, etc., but must be submitted electronically through Brightspace (thus, art must be photographed, dances must be recorded, etc.). Depending on the media selected, an explanatory note may be required. Introductions will not be shared with anyone except the instructor.

Please see assignment sheet for more tips and expectations, as well as a list of potential media and expected length.

Tell Me a Story – 20% - March 6

You will record a short “podcast style” story using some of the storytelling methods discussed in class. The podcast must be spoken and use no additional visual or video media (although it can integrate sound effects, singing, etc.). You must also include some “episode notes”, in point form, explaining how you constructed the story, the methods you used, and why you chose this direction. Recordings will not be shared with anyone except the instructor.

The podcast style story should be 10-15 minutes in length, and the written “episode notes” should be 200-250 words.

Please see assignment sheet for more tips and expectations.

Storytelling as Academic Method – Final Report – 25% - April 8

You will write a final report on how storytelling has been used as a method for framing and presenting research and activism on a chosen topic in feminist scholarship. You will summarize and present your learnings and reflections from both academic (min. 5 sources) and non-academic sources (min. 5 sources) on your topic and their storytelling methodologies. Your final report should be structured like an academic essay and be approximately 2000 words.

Please see assignment sheet for more tips and expectations.

Late policy for assignments:

If students are struggling to meet deadlines due to unforeseen circumstances, they are encouraged to reach out to the instructor as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements.

Other late assignments are deducted one letter grade per day (eg: a day late = B+ down to a B; two days late = B+ down to a B-; etc). Assignments submitted over 10 days after the deadline has passed will not be graded and receive an automatic F.

Technology:

This is an in-person course, but all course materials will be housed on and submissions made on Brightspace. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the appropriate technology to access the materials. You will need: 1) regular and reliable internet access, 2) appropriate software for reading and writing documents (word processing, PDF viewer, etc.), 3) video/audio listening abilities (computer, tablet or smartphone), 4) recording/presentation equipment (for assignments), and 5) access to the Carleton University library online services.

It is your responsibility to check your Carleton email and log onto the course website to check for updates.

Course Policies and Netiquette

All assignments must be submitted through Brightspace using a commonly readable file type. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the software to submit assignments in one of these formats. For multi-media and audiovisual assignments, some instruction is provided.

If you cannot access an assignment link in Brightspace, email your course instructor all submission documents by the specified deadline. Note the instructor's email address and download the assignment details in case you are having difficulty accessing the course page.

Class Courtesy

In each class setting, we form a community of learners. The instructor works at providing a safe space in which students can share their experiences and ideas, take risks and explore sensitive issues through open dialogue. This class respects difference and diversity while welcoming thoughtful and critical debate and discussion. Nonetheless, the parameters of a "safe space" will be always maintained.

In a classroom taught through the lens of social justice education, conflict will happen. This is part of a healthy, dynamic, and questioning space of learning and discovery. **Please remember that it is acceptable to disagree on issues but not to disrespect or question identities.** You are encouraged to hold onto your own personal beliefs, but hate speech, discrimination and other defamatory language will not be accepted. No one person's right to their beliefs may supersede another person's right to security, respect, human rights, and dignity.

Some of the materials and topics in this class may include explicit and sensitive content (including, but not limited to, discussions of trauma, violence, war, racism, misogyny, and homophobia, as well as discourse regarding the remembrance/forgetting of these issues). **In a course on storytelling and centering personal narratives, it is very likely we will encounter difficult subject matter that may be triggering for many students.** If you feel any of these materials may cause you distress or severe discomfort, you are encouraged to speak with the instructor and we will work together to accommodate your concerns.

In order for us to form an effective community of learners, there are a number of protocols that must be in place to help ensure that all present feel safe and welcomed:

- Be respectful, self-aware, and mindful of the class dynamic and your place in it.
- **Do not make assumptions** about other people's identities and life experiences. That includes but is not limited to race, gender, sexuality, ability, mental and emotional wellbeing, age, citizenship status, social class, and reproductivity.
- Recognize that **language is a powerful tool** in education. Language changes as new issues and greater clarity develops. If you do correct others' language use, do so respectfully; if you are corrected, accept that correction respectfully.
- Make an effort to speak from **the position of "I"** (not the generalized "you" or "people") and to clarify any statements you make, using verifiable evidence and experience. Making a sweeping judgment on a class or group of people is not acceptable.
- **Address people without assuming their gender** and address people using the **gender pronouns** they have indicated for themselves.

- Provide discrete and succinct content warnings if you will be talking about topics that may be traumatic for some and the content is not already apparent.
- Respect your own and others' physical, mental, and emotional boundaries. Please speak up in a respectful way if you are uncomfortable, seek support if you want/need it, and engage in **self-care** as required and/or desired.

Final Grades:**Undergraduate Students**

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+= 90-100;

A= 85-89;

A-=80-84;

B+=77-79;

B=73-76;

B-=70-72;

C+=67-69;

C=63-66;

C-=60-62;

D+=56-59;

D=53-56;

D-=50-52;

F= Below 50

Graduate students

FIST considers a B- to be the minimum grade for a course credited toward the Master's degree.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR GRADES AS A GRADUATE STUDENT

A+ = 90-100 Excellent

A = 85-89 Very Good

A- = 80-84 Good

B+ = 77-79

B = 73-76 Adequate

B- = 70-72 Poor

Below B- = Failure

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

PLAGIARISM

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This includes reproducing or

paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

Statement on Mental Health

As a University student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you.

[You may include the following list or reference this link (<https://carleton.ca/wellness/>)] :

Emergency Resources (on and off campus): <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

Carleton Resources:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources:

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

IX. Requests for Academic Accommodations

[Please include the following text or reference this link (<https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline/>) on all course outlines, and read it at the beginning of your first few classes to remind students. For details, see the [accommodations section](#) and the [Course Outline Information on Academic Accommodations](#).]

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Academic consideration for medical or other extenuating circumstances: Students must contact the instructor(s) as soon as possible, and normally no later than 24 hours after the submission deadline for course deliverables. *[Provide any additional information on your requirements for short-term informal accommodations. If you require supporting documentation for short-term considerations, you may only request the [Academic Consideration for Coursework form](#). You may not request medical notes or documentation.]*

Students should also consult the [Course Outline Information on Academic Accommodations](#) for more information. Detailed information about the procedure for requesting academic consideration can be found [here](#).

Pregnancy and Family-Status Related Accommodation: Please write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first few weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details about the accommodation policy, visit the Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC) website.

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, please request your accommodations for this course through the [Ventus Student Portal](#) at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For final exams, the deadlines to request accommodations are published in the [University Academic Calendars](#). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or

international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Course Calendar

Week 1: January 8 – Introduction to the Course

**NO readings for this week*

Week 2: January 15 – Storytelling, Biography and Feminism Introduction

Hua, A. (2013). Black diaspora feminism and writing: memories, storytelling, and the narrative world as sites of resistance. *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, 6(1), 30–42.

McNamara, Patricia. “Feminist Ethnography: Storytelling that Makes a Difference.” *Qualitative Social Work* vol 8, issue 2.

Week 3: January 22 – The Power of the Pen: Written Storytelling

Ilmonen, Kaisa. “Feminist Storytelling and Narratives of Intersectionality.” *Signs* vol 45, no. 2 (Winter 2020).

Minh-Ha, Trinh T. “Grandma’s Story”. In *Woman, Native, Other*. Indiana University Library, 1989.

Potential Case Studies (presenters to select one week in advance)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *The Yellow Wallpaper*. The New England Magazine, 1892.

Virginia Woolf. *A Room of One’s Own*. London: Hogarth Press, 1935. Chapter 1.

Alice Walker. *Everyday Use*. Harper’s Magazine, 1973.

Kate Chopin. *The Story of an Hour*. Vogue, 1894.

Susan Glaspell. *A Jury of Her Peers*. Every Week Magazine, 1917.

Newspaper or magazine article from pre 1980.

OR you can choose one of your own *short story or poem written before 1980*. If your source is longer than ~15 pages, indicate a section to focus on.

Week 4: January 29 – Mementos and Memory: Material Culture Intersecting with Storytelling

Bartlett, Alison and Margaret Henderson. "What is a Feminist Object? Feminist Material Culture and the Making of the Activist Object." *Journal of Australian Studies* vol 40, issue 2 (May 2016): 156-171.

Rentschler, Carrie. "Making Culture and Doing Feminism." In *the Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Feminism*. Routledge, 2019.

Potential Case Studies (presenters to select one week in advance)

Examples of craft or handwork
Souvenirs with a feminist message
Clothing or other attire
Jewelry or other bodily adornments
Tattoos
"Feminist" branded merchandise

OR you can choose one of your own objects/items of material culture (*note: avoid "visual art", as this is a different topic)

Week 5: February 5 - Art as Storytelling: Visual Art

Brodsky, Judith and Ferris Olin. "Stepping out of the Beaten Path: Reassessing the Feminist Art Movement." *Signs* vol 33, no. 2 (winter 2008).

Pollock, Griselda. "Feminism and Language". In *A Companion to Feminist Art*, edited by Hilary Robinson, and Maria Elena Buszek, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2019.

DUE DATE: February 6 – Introduce Yourself

Week 6: February 12 – Talking your Truth: Oral Storytelling

Iseke, Judy. "Indigenous Storytelling as Research." *International Review of Qualitative Research* vol 6, issue 4 (2013).

Tiffe, Raechel and Melody Hoffmann. "Taking up Sonic Space: Feminized Vocality and Podcasting as Resistance." *Feminist Media Studies* vol 17, issue 1 (2016).

Potential Case Studies (presenters to select one week in advance)

Political or activist speech

Indigenous teaching

Slam or spoken word poetry (*note: choose based on its oral storytelling, not performance)

Lecture or TED Talk

Podcast episode

News or media broadcast (video or audio)

OR you can choose one of your own oral storytelling examples (*note: avoid music, as this is a different topic). If your source is more than 30 minutes, please select a clip.

READING WEEK – February 19 – NO CLASSES

Week 7: February 26 - Doing and Being: Performance Storytelling

Heddon, Dee. "The Politics of the Personal: Autobiography in Performance." In *Feminist Futures? Theatre, Performance, Theory*. Eds Elaine Aston and Geraldine Harris. Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Millner, Jacqueline and Catriona Moore. "'Performing Oneself Badly?' Neo-Burlesque and Contemporary Feminist Performance Art." *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art* vol 15, issue 1 (2015).

Potential Case Studies (presenters to select one week in advance)

Slam or spoken word poetry (*note: choose based on its performance, not oral storytelling)

Music of any kind

Short play or scene

Short clip from a film

Dance of any kind
Television clip or episode
Film of any kind

OR you can choose one of your own performance examples. If your source is more than 30 minutes, please select a clip.

Week 8: March 5 – In Place and Out of Place: Storytelling and Place

Clover, Darlene. "Feminist Storytelling in the Museum: Uncovering Pedagogies of Critique, Possibility and Agency." *Dialogues in Social Justice* vol 9, no. 1 (2024).

De Leeuw, Sarah and Vanessa Sloan Morgan. "Narrating New Spaces: Theories and Practices of Storytelling in Feminist Geographies." In *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Feminist Geographies*. Routledge, 2020.

Potential Case Studies (presenters to select one week in advance)

On site walking tour
Plaques or panels from a site
Podcast about a "place"
Short story about a "place"
Indigenous land teaching or story
Speech or other oral account of a "place"

OR you can choose one of your own "place" examples. If your source is more than 30 minutes, please select a clip.

DUE DATE: March 6 – Tell me a story

Week 9: March 12 – Case study focus: Storytelling as Anti-colonial Activism

Chau, Annie. "Feminist Activist Storytelling: Transforming Identity and Building Resistance." *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education* vol 32, no 2 (2020).

Frenette, Arielle. "Story-listening as Methodology: A Feminist Case for Unheard Stories." *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* vol 31, issue 3 (2024).

Potential Case Studies (presenters to select one week in advance)

Any Indigenous writing focused on activism
Any Indigenous oral account, history, story, etc., focused on activism
Footage of activism event
Performance related to anti-colonial activism
Visual art related to anti-colonial activism

OR you can choose one of your own examples of anti-colonial activism. If your source is more than 30 minutes, please select a clip.

Week 10: March 19 – Case study focus: Storytelling through Humour

Monk-Payton, Brandy. "LaughingWhileBlack: Gender and the Comedy of Social Media Blackness." *Feminist Media Histories* vol 3, issue 2 (2017).

Samer, Rox. "Trans Comedy as Trans Care." *Feminist Foundations* vol 34, issue 3 (winter 2022).

Potential Case Studies (presenters to select one week in advance)

Written story with humour as central theme
Comedy skit or sketch
Comedic film or television episode
Other forms of comedic performance
Visual art with humour as central theme

OR you can choose one of your own examples of humour. If your source is more than 30 minutes, please select a clip.

Week 11: March 26 – Case study focus: Storytelling to and by Children/Youth

Earles, Jennifer. "Reading Gender: A Feminist, Queer Approach to Children's Literature and Children's Discursive Agency." *Gender and Education* vol 29, issue 3 (2016).

Gubrium, Aline C. and Gloria T Difulvio. "Girls in the World: Digital Storytelling as a Feminist Public Health Approach." *Girlhood Studies* vol 4, issue 2 (2011).

Potential Case Studies (presenters to select one week in advance)

Children's book

Youth book or written story

Video (or series) intended for or by children or youth

Podcast episode intended for or by children or youth

Speech or oral storytelling for or by children or youth

Film or television episode intended for or by children or youth

Footage of activism for or by children or youth

OR you can choose one of your own examples of storytelling to or by children or youth. If your source is more than 30 minutes, please select a clip.

Week 12: April 2 – Course Conclusion

DUE DATE: April 8 – Final Report