Narrative Approaches to Conflict Analysis
Wednesday, 4:30-7:10
Arlington: Founders Hall 209
Conf 695, Section 003, Fall 2012
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Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00-4:00

Introduction

We are the stories we tell. If we follow the theoretical assumptions of social constructionism, identity, relationships, institutions, as well as history itself, are created in interactions, over time. These interactions themselves are enactments of meaning frameworks, meaning structures, organized as narratives. Narrative provides the architecture for consciousness and action. In this way, narratives structure the dynamics of conflicts, as well as the dynamics of conflict resolution. Marginalization and violence, memory and trauma, are a function of the narratives that are anchored by experience, and sewn into the culture. "We are the stories we tell" becomes ever more important when the stories become the foundation for legitimizing violence.

For this reason, narrative analysis is critically important to both understanding and transforming conflicts, for making sense of how people make sense is indeed the foundation for any program or process of conflict resolution. Further, the process itself of making sense of how people in conflict make sense of that conflict *is an intervention,* that is, an analysis of a conflict is a description that has its own implications, as narrative. For this reason, accuracy in conflict analysis is not the standard for narrative analysis, but rather, pragmatics (what are the practical implications of a given analysis) and, indeed, ethics (what are the consequences of an analysis on the processes of marginalization, and who are *we* as interveners to make such a description).

This course is intended to provide participants with the analytic tools needed to conduct their own research on conflict and conflict resolution, using a narrative perspective. Specifically, this course is designed to enable students to a) review the key narrative research in the field of conflict resolution; c) design a narrative analysis of conflict; and c) conduct a narrative analysis of conflicts. As narrative approaches to conflict analysis are varied and a function of the multiple theoretical traditions that are available for narrative analysis, this course will function as a review of these theoretical traditions. In summary, the course is designed to both make students familiar with the narrative research in the field of conflict resolution, *and* offers them an opportunity to conduct narrative analysis.

As this is a research course, it can be used toward the requirements in research methods for the doctoral program. However, it does not replace the requirements for CONF 610 at the master's level.

The narrative research traditions mirror the three dominant traditions in social science---the *structural, functional and postructural*. The structural tradition of narrative analysis offers a framework for understanding narrative structures, including plots, character roles and themes. Analysis of narrative *structures* seeks to account for the component parts of narrative; this is particularly pertinent to understanding the features of conflict narratives. Attention to narrative *processes* begins with an analysis of how narratives *function*; research studies that attend to the functional analysis of narrative often are focused on the performance of narrative in specific cultural or situational contexts. Finally, the *postructural approach* to narrative analysis moves toward a *critical* functional analysis of how power operates in specific contexts. Often these studies attend to process of how specific identities are contested and marginalized by dominant narratives. Studies of conflicts in this tradition contribute descriptions of how domination functions and suggests approaches to conflict resolution that address access to the politics of narrative processes. But the research in this tradition is also often reflexive---researchers account for their own role in the interpretative process, including themselves in the research process. This course offers a review of the theory and research on narrative, in these three domains, and works to connect these approaches to narrative analysis to research on conflict and conflict resolution.

However at the leading or cutting edge of the postructural approach *research on narrative* becomes *narrative research*. In the former case, narrative is an object of study; in the latter case, while narrative remains a domain for sense making, it is not an object to be separated from the *narrative of the inquiry* itself. In this case, the reflexive relation between the research and the process of research blurs the boundaries between "science" and "politics" ---doing science is itself a practice, as a sequence of events, in a given context, connected to given characters, and related to values, leading to a "point." And the "point" refers back to science as practice, in the process of building and remaking community itself. From this perspective, narrative research fits hand and glove with the practice of conflict resolution---the analysis itself is an intervention. And it is the practice of narrative research, not research on narrative, that builds the relational bonds between "subjects" and "researchers,"

This course will offer students an opportunity to conduct *research on narrative*, exploring analytic frameworks that may fit their research interests, but it will also offer students an opportunity to do *narrative research*, exploring their role as researchers, in the social contexts where they work to intervene in conflicts.

While it is beyond the scope of this course to fully address narrative practice, we will explore the normative, critical, dimensions of narrative analysis as conflict intervention, addressing, in this process, the ethical dimensions of narrative conflict analysis.

Learning Objectives:

1. **Students will become familiar with analytic frameworks pertinent to narrative approaches to conflict analysis from within structuralist, functionalist, and poststructuralist's perspectives.**

2. **Students will be able to write a literature review of narrative research on conflict, as part of designing a narrative method for research of conflict processes.**

3. **Students will be able to conduct a narrative analysis of a conflict from a structuralist, functionalist *and* poststructuralist perspective, toward the development of a case study.**

4. **Students will learn to do analytic synthesis as well as analytic critics related to both the theory and practice of narrative analysis.**

5. **Students will engage their own research interests, developing those interests through the course.**

6. **Students will explore both the ethical and practical implications of narrative analysis, as a form of narrative intervention.**

Course Requirements:

As this course is a research methods course, students will be required to complete 3 different analyses of narrative, one from each of the three traditions we will be exploring: structural, functional, and poststructural.

Papers

You may choose to write either three short papers, or one long paper, due at the end of the course. In either or both cases, you will demonstrate competency across the three narrative research traditions.

If you choose to do the three papers (7-10 pages or so each):
1. A Structural Narrative Analysis **(Due Oct 3)**
    a. This paper offers an exemplar of using a structural approach to narrative analysis. The text under analysis can be drawn from any source as long as it is consistent with HSRB policy.[1]
2. A Functional Narrative Analysis **(Due November 7)**
    a. This paper offers an exemplar of using a functional approach to narrative analysis. The text under analysis can be drawn from any source as long as it is consistent with HSRB policy.[2]

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[1] See the HSRB policy under "Classroom Project Guidelines" at
http://research.gmu.edu/ORSP/HumanPoliciesAndProcedures.html.

3. A Poststructural Narrative Analysis **(Due December 5)**
   a. This paper offers an exemplar of using a poststructural approach to narrative analysis. The text under analysis can be drawn from any source as long as it is consistent with HSRB policy.[3]

If you write one longer paper, it is due on December 10th. You may however submit drafts at any time for review and feedback.

Grading:

Papers (1-3) 75%

The papers, explore the application of a narrative research traditions: structural, functional and poststructural. Either long or shorter papers will be expected to have the following organization:

1. Statement of the problem
2. Review of (some) the pertinent literature
3. Re-formulated problem statement
4. Method
5. Analysis
6. Discussion

Each of the short papers will be "worth" a total of 25 points. Below 15 points, the paper must be redone. 16-18 points is a C- through a C+; 19-22 points is a B- through B+; 22-25 points is either an A- or an A.

The long paper will be worth 75 points. Below 65 points, the paper will need to be re-written. 65-68 is a C- through C+; 69-71 is a B- through B+; 72-75 is an A- through A+.

Participation 25%

Narrative is itself a dynamic process and learning about it requires engagement, struggle and a reflexive capacity for learning about self. We will spend portions of some of the classes working in small groups, on the analysis of texts. Groups will present their analysis to the class and presentations will be evaluated for analytic clarity and reflexive critical assessment. These presentations will be "report-out" of the groups' efforts and will not be graded as a group project.

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[2] See the HSRB policy under "Classroom Project Guidelines" at
http://research.gmu.edu/ORSP/HumanPoliciesAndProcedures.html.
[3] See the HSRB policy under "Classroom Project Guidelines" at
http://research.gmu.edu/ORSP/HumanPoliciesAndProcedures.html.

Course Feedback

As is the case with all ICAR courses, one of you can facilitate a "conversation" with the class toward the creation of course feedback which we can use, together, to create course corrections, mid course. I would of course welcome any feedback from students at any time that might be helpful in creating an excellent learning environment.

Honor Code Policy

Each student is expected to familiarize himself or herself with the Honor Code at George Mason. While collaboration on research design and the analysis of data is critical to this course, individual papers will be solely authored. See http://honorcode.gmu.edu/.

All written work must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared to electronic databases. Students will be required to submit work through Blackboards SafeAssign program. Faculty may also directly submit their students' work using the same system. Should I find any text in a student paper that appears to be copied without citation from another text, I will file an accusation and recommend expulsion from the program.

ADD/DROP Deadlines for Course

Last Day to Add or Drop without Penalty: September 4

Last Day to Drop: September 28

See http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/2012Fall.html for the academic calendar for the fall, which lists important dates.

Disabilities
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services at 703.993.2474 or ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Email and Blackboard

Mason uses only Mason e-mail accounts to communicate with enrolled students. Students must activate their Mason e-mail account, use ONLY Mason email to communicate with the instructor for this course; as Mason email is critical to the delivery of information pertinent to this course, it must be checked regularly.
Course materials will be archived in BlackBoard. To Access Blackboard see http://ondemand.blackboard.com/students.htm. You can also follow these instructions:
1.Go to http://mymason.gmu.edu.
2.Login using your NETID and password.
3.Click on the 'Courses" tab.
4.Double-click on 201270. CONF 695 Sections 003 (Fall 2012) under the "9.1 Course List" heading.

Required Texts:

1. Bruner, J. S. (1990). *Acts of Meaning*. Harvard University Press.
2. Elliott, B. J. (2005). *Using Narrative in Social Research*. London: SAGE Publications.
3. Nelson, H. L. (2001). *Damaged Identities, Narrative Repair*. New York: Cornell University Press.
4. Lara, P. (2007). *Narrating Evil: A Postmetaphysical Theory of Reflective Judgment*. New York: Columbia University Press.
5. Wibben, A. (2011). *Feminist Security Studies: A Narrative Approach*. New York: Routledge Press.[4]

Recommended:

1. Merwe, C. N. V. D., & Gobodo-Madikizela, P. (2007). *Narrating Our Healing*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
2. Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. (2008). *Analyzing Narrative Reality*. SAGE Publications.
3. Rotberg, R. I. (2006). *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict: History's Double Helix*. Indiana University Press.

Articles and Book Chapters:

Note: unless otherwise noted, the following articles will be available on e-reserve.

Adobe Acrobat must be installed on your computer to view and print some E-Reserves Readings. E-Reserves permits students to access Course Readings remotely from home or office, and allows students to view and print materials using Adobe Acrobat Reader. All users of the E-Reserves must comply with the University Policy and Copy Right Law (Title 17, United States Code).

Accessing E-Reserves:

1. Go to http://oscr.gmu.edu
2. Click on the magnifying glass (Search electronic reserves)
3. Using the drop-down boxes, select the course [CONF 695; Section 008] and instructor [Cobb]. Be sure it says "Fall 2011."
4. Enter in the password (**"narrative"**) and click "submit" to view the item. It is case sensitive.
5. To view and print an article click on the small PDF button or the Link button if available

If you experience problems with an electronic reserve item or need additional help please contact the E-Reserves Coordinator at 993.9043. If you need additional assistance please e-mail ereserves@gmu.edu.

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[4] This is a very expensive book and I have ordered it for the library and asked that it be put on reserve.

List of articles and book chapters on e-reserve: (Note: Additional readings may be added to this list on reserve as the semester progresses).

Adwan, Sami, and Dan Bar-On. 2003. "Shared History Project: A PRIME Example of Peace-Building Under Fire." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 17 (3): 513-521. doi:10.1023/B:IJPS.0000019616.78447.5e.

Archakis, A., & Tzanne, A. (2005). Narrative positioning and the construction of situated identities: Evidence from conversations of a group of young people in Greece. *Narrative Inquiry*, *15*, 267-291.

Benhabib, S. (1992). The generalized and the concrete other. In *Situating the Self: Gender, Community, and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (pp. 148-177). Routledge.

Borins, S. (2011). Governing Fables: Learning from Public Sector Narratives. Information Age Publishing. Charlotte: NC. pp.135-173.

Büthe, T. (2002). Taking temporality seriously: Modeling history and the use of narratives as evidence. *American Political Science Review*, *96*(03), 481-493.

Cobb, S. (2006). A Developmental Approach to Turning Points: Irony as an Ethics for Negotiation Pragmatics. *Harvard Negotiation Law Review*, *11*, 147.

Cobb, S., Laws, D. & Sluzki, S. (Under Review). Narrative grammar: Exploring the "rules of the game" in negotiation simulations. *Group Decision and Negotiation.*

Entman, R. M. (1991). Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Incidents. *Journal of Communication*, *41*(4), 6-27.

Faiz, Ahmed, V. B. C. 2007. "Afghanistan' reconstruction, five years later: narratives of progress, marginalized realities, and the politics of law in a transnational Islamic Republic." *Gonzaga Journal of International Law* 10: 269-309

Hardy, S. (2008). Mediation and Genre. *Negotiation Journal*, *24*, 247-268.

Harre, R., & Langenhove, L. V. (1991). Varieties of Positioning. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *21*(4), 393-407.
Harre, R., and N. Slocum. 2003. "Disputes as complex events - On the Uses of Positioning Theory." *Common Knowledge* 9 (1): 100–118.

Helsig, Sarah. 2010. "Big stories co-constructed: Incorporating micro-analytical interpretative procedures into biographic research." *Narrative Inquiry* 20 (2) (July): 274-295. doi:10.1075/ni.20.2.03hel.

Labov, W. (1997). Some further steps in narrative analysis. *Journal of Narrative and Life*

History, *7*, 395–415.

Labov, W., & Waletzky, J. (1967). Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience. (J. Helm, Ed.) *Essays on the verbal and visual arts*, 12–44.

Maines, D. R. (1999). Information pools and racialized narrative structures. *Sociological Quarterly*, *40*(2), 317–326.

Mishler, E. G. (1995). Models of Narrative Analysis: A Typology. *Journal of Narrative And Life History*, *5*(2), 87-123.

Porat, D. A. (2004). It's Not Written Here, But This Is What Happened: Students' Cultural Comprehension of Textbook Narratives on the Israeli-Arab Conflict. *American Educational Research Journal*, *41*(4), 963-996.

Roe, E., & van Eeten, M. J. (2004). Three–Not Two–Major Environmental Counternarratives to Globalization. *Global Environmental Politics*, Global Environmental Politics, *4*(4), 36-53.

Senehi, J. (2002). Constructive storytelling: A peace process. *Peace and Conflict Studies*, *9*(2), 41-63.

Shenhav, S. (2004). Once upon a time there was a nation: Narrative conceptualization analysis. The concept of 'nation' in the discourse of Israeli Likud party leaders. *Discourse Society*, *15*(1), 81-104.

Shkedi, A. (2004). Narrative survey: A Methodology for studying multiple populations. *Narrative Inquiry*, *14*, 87-111.

Smith, Tammy. 2007. "Narrative boundaries and the dynamics of ethnic conflict and conciliation." *Poetics* 35 (1) (February): 22-46. doi:16/j.poetic.2006.11.001.

White, L., & Taket, A. (2000). Exploring the Use of Narrative Analysis as an Operational Research Method: A Case Study in Voluntary Sector Evaluation. *The Journal of the Operational Research Society*, *51*(6), 700-711.

White, M. 2005. "Children, trauma and subordinate storyline development." *The International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work* 3/4: 10-21.

White, M. (2007). *Landscapes of Action, Landscapes of Identity*. To be Placed on Reserve.

Winslade, J. (2006). Mediation with a focus on discursive positioning. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, *23*(4), 501-515.

Winslade, J. (2009). Tracing lines of flight. *Family Process*. Family Process, 48(3): 332-346.

Weekly Class Structure and Assignments: [5]

Introduction to Narrative

8/29

> *Research on Narrative and Narrative Research*
> *The "Narrative Turn" and the Implications for Conflict Analysis*
>> Reading:
>> 1. Bruner: *Acts of Meaning*

9/ 5   *Characteristics of Structural, Functional, and Poststructural*
>> Readings:
>> 1. Elliott: *Using narrative in social research* (pp. 35-115)
>> 2. Mishler: "Models of Narrative Analysis: A Typology"

Guest Lecture: Samantha Hardy

Part I: Structural Approaches to Narrative Analysis

9/12   *A "Content Analysis" Perspective*
>> Readings:
>> 1. Shkedi: "Narrative survey: A Methodology for studying multiple populations"
>> 2. Labov & Waletzky: "Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience"
>> 3. Labov: "Some further steps in narrative analysis"

9/19   *Modeling Narrative*
>> Readings:
>> 1. White & Taket: "Exploring the Use of Narrative as an Operational Research Method"
>> 2. Büthe: "Taking Temporality Seriously: Modeling history and the use of narratives as evidence"
>> 3. Maines: "Information pools and racialized narrative structures"
>> 4. Liquid Narrative Group: http://liquidnarrative.csc.ncsu.edu/
>> 5. Cobb, Laws, & Sluzki: "Narrative grammar"

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[5] Note: All reading assignments are due for the date at which they are listed, not the subsequent date.

Part II: Functional Approaches to Narrative Analysis

9/26   *Positioning Analysis as Narrative Analysis*
Readings:
1. Harre & Langenhove: "Varieties of positioning"
2. Harre & Slocum: "Disputes as complex events"
3. Archakis & Tzanne: "Narrative Positioning and the Construction of Situated Identities"
4. Helsig: "Big Stories Co-Constructed"

10/3   Rob Ricigliano on Systems

Narrative and Conflict Mapping
Readings:
1. TBD

10/10   *Counter narratives and narrative analysis*
Readings:
1. Shenhav: "Once upon a time there was a nation: Narrative conceptualization analysis"
2. Entman: "Framing US Coverage of International News"
3. Porat: "Its Not Written Here, But This is What Happened"

10/17   *Narrative Approaches to Mediation*
Readings:
1. Hardy: "Mediation and Genre"
2. Senehi: "Constructive Storytelling"
3. Adwan & Bar-on: "Shared history project"
4. Pappe: "Bridging narratives"

Developing Narratives in Interviewing
1. White: "Children, Trauma and Subordinate Storyline Development
2. White: On Landscape of Identity and Landscape of Action

Part III: Poststructural Approaches: Narrative Research as Narrative Intervention

10/24 *Narrative and Silence*: Guest Lecture, Leslie Dywer

Reading: Dwyer: "A Politics of Silences" (on reserve)

10/31 *Narrating the Other*
Readings:
1. Benhabib: "The Generalized and the Concrete Other"
2. Wibben: *Feminist Security Studies*
3. Faiz: "Afghanistan Reconstruction Five Years Later"

11/7 *Normative Approaches to Narrative Analysis and Narrative Intervention*
Readings:
1. Nelson: *Damaged Identities: Narrative Repair* (pp. 1-188)
2. Cobb: "A developmental approach to *turning points*: 'Irony' as an ethics for negotiation pragmatics

11/14 *Narrative Analysis of the Public Space*
1. Lara: *Narrating Evil*
2. Borins: "Cynicism, Idealism, Compromise: American Political Fables"

11/28 *Course Wrap Up: Design Practice Session*

Note: There is no class on December 5. Instead, I am asking students to attend one of CNCR's guest lectures for this semester. See the names, titles and dates for the lectures at http://scar.gmu.edu/cncr.