Narrative Approaches to Conflict Analysis
Conf 695 ONLINE Fall 2010
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Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00-4:00

Introduction

(See "Video Introduction" in Blackboard under "Technical Information for Students" click on "How to Do This Course" and the video file is there; however, it can also be accessed on UTUBE http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRzGtCqMinw.)

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. These narratives in turn, 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.

This course is intended to provide participants with the analytic tools needed 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* offer them an opportunity to conduct narrative analysis.

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 processes 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. 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 conflicts.

However at the leading edge of the poststructural 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.

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.**

Course Requirements:

This is an on-line course. As such, all course materials, including the syllabus, my lecture notes and comments, as well as your papers will be posted on our course site. Additionally, this site will also house all of our conversations and exchanges. However, we will also have 3 meeting dates in which we convene, at Point of View, for the day, *to*

conduct narrative analysis. The combination of the discussion and writing forum, with the face to face practice will provide both the knowledge, as well as the practical wisdom that participants need to conduct narrative research for their thesis, their dissertation, and/or in their work as conflict analysts and interveners.

Workshops (These are closed to all but our class participants). Learning Objective #3
The Point of View Narrative Analysis Workshops will be held on:
October 2nd: Using a Structural Approach to Narrative Analysis
October 30th: Using a Functional Approach to Narrative Analysis
December 4th: Using a Poststructural Approach to Narrative Analysis

Required Papers: Learning Objectives #1-3

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.

Participation: Learning Objectives #4 & #5

If the course goes well, students will be actively engaged, on a daily basis, in interaction on-line. It is my hope, as the instructor, that the "conversations" flow easily, organically, and are compelling for each participant, as well as for the group-as-a-whole. Legislating participation defeats the purpose, at some level---rules about when and how to participate destroy the environment of engagement. However, if participants use the openness of the format as an excuse to participate minimally, or in a pro-forma fashion, the quality of the engagement for all of us in the electronic environment is diminished. For this reason, participation is extremely important to this course. It is possible to sit in a seminar all semester, and never participate. It is not possible in this format---being "in class" is more here than having your body in a seat in the seminar. It is really about timely and deep engagement.

I have "taught" several courses on line in the past, and have found them, paradoxically, more intimate, and more engaging than a traditional seminar environment can be. One of the first things we will do in the environment is address the issue of how we communicate with each other over the course of the semester.

Some Participation Guidelines: Temporal Expectations

1. I will post, each Monday (before 9:00am) my notes and comments on the readings, along with some questions and musings, intended to jump-start our conversations.
2. Each week, before Thursday (midnight), each student will post his or her contributions.
3. Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday will provide us an opportunity to comment on our comments, muse on our musings, and raise issues of importance.

NOTE: IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO "MAKE UP" PARTICIPATION IN THE NEXT, OR SUBSEQUENT WEEKS. The issue here **is timely engagement.**

Criteria for Postings: Content Expectations

 Each week students will post three kinds of postings, responding to others in the discussion forum; some of these can be postings in the discussion forum and some can be as a blog. The three kinds of postings include:

a) *A reflection* on the topic and the readings, in relation to your own research/practice interests; for example, one student might have a research interest in development and conflict resolution, and comment on the connection/utility of "counternarratives" (an important topic in narrative analysis) for their own research/practice.

b) *A comment which synthesizes* two other topics/lines of research; this synthesis is intended to demonstrate not only your grasp of the material for that week, but also your integration of it with other analytic frameworks. For example, you may choose to write about the "narrative turn" (Week #1 Topic) and its connection to peacebuilding. This would require you to *integrate or synthesize* your understanding of these two topics via a connection you draw.

c) *A comment that functions as a critique* of the literature for that week; this critique should be made in relation to a set of criteria you create, drawing on other theoretical or practical frameworks; thus it is not a statement of your preference--- it is substantial and substantiated.

You may do any of these (or all) in a blog format. However, during the course of the semester, **one of your postings must be done as a blog.** Here is a resource which can help you ponder the difference between a blog and a discussion board. http://www.commoncraft.com/what-are-differences-between-message-boards-and-weblogs-15

After WEEK #1, **you are also required to link at least one of your postings each week as a response to someone else's posting**, as I want to ensure that students are interacting with each other; (I am making an exception re the first week's posting, as likely there will not be enough material posted on which you can tag or connect your postings.) However, you may write ALL of your postings as responses to other students' postings. For example, suppose one student wrote about the implications of the "narrative turn" for peace economics (their own research interest) but you felt that the entire field of economics contained assumptions that are problematic for conflict resolution. You could write your "critique" posting as a response to the other student. In this way, I hope the course can become interactive, and students will be engaged with each other.

Blogging

Blogs are an important tool for experts in conflict resolution. They provide a venue for helping others learn about issues, from a conflict resolution perspective; they also enable the writer to connect their own views to the topic---there is no requirement to produce "neutrality" and indeed "bias" is expected or anticipated, by the readers. They also provide a venue to help policymakers and planners to learn because they offer a

condensed perspective---blogs are not as long as an academic paper; but they are also written in a non-academic, everyday language that is accessible. They are short, substantive, and well argued. As we, conflict resolvers, are often trying to persuade audiences to think differently about conflicts, blog writing is an important skill. For examples of blogs see the ICAR Blog Roll at http://icar.gmu.edu/blogrole.html and http://adrblogs.com/.

All blogs will be within the Blackboard site, but authors may choose at any time to additionally post in public, on the web.

Papers

Three papers (7-10 pages or so each) will be required for this course:
1. A Structural Narrative Analysis **(Due Oct 9)**
   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 6)**
   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]
3. A Poststructural Narrative Analysis **(Due December 1)**
   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.[3]

Grading:

Papers (3) 60%
Each paper will be "worth" a total of 20 points. Below 13 points, the paper must be redone. 13-15 points is a C- through a C+; 16--18 points is a B- through B+; 19-20 points is either an A- or an A. 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

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

The papers are very short, for this structure, so argumentation and analysis will need to be clear, concise and short as the limit will be 10 pages. Papers will be evaluated on the basis of the quality of the structure (above) as well as the analytic argumentation across the structural components.

Participation 40%
Students will be evaluated on two dimensions of participation:
 a) Timeliness: Each week that students do not post in a timely manner **3** percentage points will be subtracted from the possible 40pts (comprising 40%) of the grade. But I hope you will post on time out of enthusiasm and interest in the discussions.
 b) Content: I will be examining the postings to ensure that all the three types of postings were made: reflection, synthesis and critique.

Course Feedback

As is the case with all ICAR courses, GSCS will host a "conversation" with students to facilitate 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.

Instructor Accessibility

I will work to ensure that I respond to emails within 36 hours. However, there is one, possible two, periods of the semester where I will be traveling (for a conference as well as for practice) and in both cases, I will be in remote regions. I will announce the time frame for these trips, to alert students that there may be 48 instead of a 36-hour turnaround. However, I hope that will not be the case.

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.

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.

ADD/DROP Deadlines for Course

Last Day to Add: September 14

Last Day to Drop: October 1

See http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/2010Fall.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.

Blackboard (Pilot 9.1)

This course will utilize Blackboard to both house documents pertinent to the course, as well as provide a site for discussion and collaboration. Students will be expected to have access to this site. Instructions for access will be circulated by GMU email.

"WHERE CAN I ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT BLACKBOARD?"

If you can not log in to myMason please contact the ITU Support Center, 3x8870, or email them at support@gmu.edu

If you have other questions regarding your Bb 9.1 Pilot course please email courses@gmu.edu.

Be sure to include that you are requesting assistance with the 9.1 Pilot.

Also, please include your Mason email address, course CRN, and G number in all correspondence. Allow 24 hours for a response.

The Support Center is able to advise you of network problems, including if access to the authentication server, is the source of any disruption to your ability to use Bb on or off-campus".

Email

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.

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. Rotberg, R. I. (2006). *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict: History's Double Helix*. Indiana University Press.

5. Moghaddam, F. M., Harre, R., & Lee, N. (2009). *Global Conflict Resolution Through Positioning Analysis*. Springer New York.

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.

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 library.gmu.edu
2. Under the category of "Services", click on "E-Reserves"Click on "Search electronic reserves"
3. At the Bottom, click on "Search items placed on reserve for Fall 2010"
4. Select a course (CONF 695)
5. Select an instructor (Cobb)
6. Enter password (narrative) and click on "Submit"; you will see the e-reserve list in a few seconds.

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.

List of articles and book chapters:

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.

Bamberg, M. (2004). Positioning with Davie Hogan: Stories, tellings, and identities. In C. Daiute & C. Lightfoot (Eds.), *Narrative Analysis* (pp. 135-157). SAGE.

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

Burnell, K. J., Hunt, N., & Coleman, P. G. (2009). Developing a model of narrative

analysis to investigate the role of social support in coping with traumatic war memories. *Narrative Inquiry*, *19*, 91-105.

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. (2010). Narrative Practice: Negotiating Identity, Managing Conflict. (Draft in Progress)

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.

Hajer, M. A. (1995). Discourse Analysis. In *The politics of environmental discourse* (pp. 42-72). Oxford University Press.

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.

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.

Law, J. (2000). On the Subject of the Object: Narrative, Technology, and Interpellation. *Configurations*, *8*, 1-29.

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

Mateas, M., & Sengers, P. (1999). Narrative Intelligence. In *Proceedings of Narrative Intelligence* (Vol. 99, pp. 1-10). Presented at the AAAI Fall Symposium 1999, AAAI Press, Menlo Park, California.

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

Mueller, E. T. (2004). Understanding script-based stories using commonsense reasoning. *Cognitive Systems Research*, *5*(4), 307–340.

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.

Steinmetz, G. (1992). Reflections on the role of social narratives in working-class formation: narrative theory in the social sciences. *Social Science History*, 489-516.

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.

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

Weekly Class Structure and Assignments: [4]

Introduction to Narrative

      8/30-9/5

            Research on Narrative and Narrative Research
            The "Narrative Turn" and the Implications for Conflict Analysis
            Postings: **Due by 9/2**

1. Bruner: *Acts of Meaning* (pp. 1-138)
2. Burnell *et al*: "Developing a model of narrative analysis to investigate the role of social support in coping with traumatic war memories"

      9/6-9/12

            Characteristics of Structural, Functional, and Poststructural
            Postings: **Due 9/9**

1. Elliott: *Using narrative in social research* (pp. 35-115)
2. Mishler: "Models of Narrative Analysis: A Typology"

Part I: Structural Approaches to Narrative Analysis

      9/13-9/19

            A "Content Analysis" Perspective
            Postings: **Due 9/16**

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"

      9/20-9/26

            Modeling Narrative
            Postings: **Due: 9/23**

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. Mateas & Sengers: "Narrative intelligence"

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[4] 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

9/27- 10/3

Positioning Analysis as Narrative Analysis
Postings: **Due 9/30**
1. Moghaddam *et al*: *Global Conflict* (pp. 1-277)

10/4-10/10

Counter narratives and narrative analysis
Postings: **Due 10/7**
1. Bamberg: "Positioning with Davie Hogan: Stories, tellings, and identities"
2. Shenhav: "Once upon a time there was a nation: Narrative conceptualization analysis"
3. Harre & van Langenhove: "Varieties of Positioning"
4. Entman: "Framing US Coverage of International News"
5. Roe & van Eeten: "Three – Not Two – Major Environmental Counternarratives to Globalization"

10/11-10/17

Narrative and the Production of Identity
Postings: **Due 10/14**
1. Porat: "Its Not Written Here, But This is What Happened"
2. Archakis & Tzanne: "Narrative Positioning and the Construction of Situated Identities"
3. Mueller: "Understanding Script-based Stories using Commonsense Reasoning"

10/18-10-/24

Conflict History and Narrative Analysis
Postings: **Due 10/21**
1. Rotberg: *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict* (pp. 1-141)

10/25-10/31

Contesting Identity and Narrative Analysis
Postings: **Due 10/28**
1. Rotberg: *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict* (pp. 142-270)

11/1-11/7

> *Narrative Approaches to Mediation*
> > Postings: **Due 11/4**
> > 1. Winslade: "Mediation with a Focus on Discursive Positioning"
> > 2. Hardy: "Mediation and Genre"
> > 3. Senehi: "Constructive Storytelling"

Part III: Poststructural Approaches

11/8-11/14

> *Narrating the Other and Narrative Analysis*
> > Postings: **Due 11/11**
> > 1. Benhabib: "The Generalized and the Concrete Other"
> > 2. Cobb: "A developmental approach to *turning points*: 'Irony' as an ethics for negotiation pragmatics"

11/15-11/21

> *Normative Approaches to Narrative Analysis*
> > Postings: **Due 11/18**
> > 1. Nelson: *Damaged Identities: Narrative Repair* (pp. 1-149)

11/22-11/29

> *Normative Responses to Damaged Identity: Narrative Analysis of Narrative Intervention*
> > Postings: **Due 11/24**
> > 1. Nelson: *Damaged Identities: Narrative Repair* (pp. 150-188)

11/30-12/6

> *Interpellation and Radicalization*
> > Postings: **Due 12/2**
> > 1. Law: "On the Subject of the Object"
> > 2. Steinmetz: "Reflections on the Role of Social Narratives in Working Class Formation"
> > 3. Hajer: "Discourse Analysis"
> > 4. Cobb & Armstrong: (forthcoming)

12/6-12/10   *Wrap Up*

> Postings: (Reflections Only) 12/9