

WRT 105  
 Beyond Books: Narrative Across Media  
 T/R 11:05–12:20  
 Hylan 206

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 Office Hours: W 10:30–12:30 or by appointment

### **Course Description**

Traditionally, the concept of narrative has been associated with books, from literary classics to current bestsellers. But in our increasingly multimedia world, how do ideas of storytelling inform our understanding of texts outside these traditional forms of literature? How do new forms of media enable both creator and audience to communicate ideas, create identities, and complicate traditional narrative structures? In this course, we will think about the ways stories are told to create thoughtful writing about a diverse group of texts, which include *Welcome to Night Vale* (podcast), *The Wire* (TV), *Lifeline* (mobile game), albums by David Bowie and Kendrick Lamar, etc. Using tools like peer-feedback, reflection, and revision to craft critical papers, students will learn to engage course topics and communicate personal insights in academic and professional contexts. The course includes a final 8–10 page argumentative research paper that integrates course themes with student interests.

### **Required Texts**

*Emily is Away*. Kyle Seeley, 2016. (app for Mac, Windows, or Linux)  
*Lifeline*. 3 Minute Games, LLC, 2015. (app for iOS or Android)  
*Mosaic*. Steven Soderbergh, 2017. (app for iOS or Android)  
 --All other texts provided by instructor, on library reserve, or accessed freely online

### **Sensitive Material Statement**

Please be aware that some course material contains violent and/or graphic sexual content that some may find upsetting. If you have concerns or questions, please make an appointment or visit office hours.

### **Grading & Assignment Definitions**

- “Informal Assignments” included short homework throughout the semester. Their purpose is to provide a platform for reflection and response to class readings and to test skills necessary to complete Formal Assignments. Informal Assignments will be graded based on demonstrated insight and/or understanding. They are not expected to be polished pieces of writing/work. Grades will be assigned on the check, check-plus, check-minus format. In-class informal writing (as in, not “assignments”) will not be graded.
- “Peer Reviews” are completed in class on the due dates for formal assignment first drafts—making four total review days. If you are absent from class on peer review day, you must make arrangements to complete a peer review before the next class or you will forfeit your Peer Review/Reflection grade for that unit. Detailed instructions for peer review sessions

will be handed out on the first peer review day of the semester. Grades will be assigned on the check, check-plus, check-minus format.

- “Reflections” must be turned in with final drafts of formal assignments. Reflection guidelines will be passed out with each formal assignment prompt. Grades will be assigned on the check, check-plus, check-minus format.
- “Formal Assignments” constitute the major assignments of this course. Formal Assignments include **first drafts and final drafts**. First drafts are graded based on completion, and final drafts are assigned a formal letter grade.

Final grades in this class will be calculated as follows:

Participation: 5%  
 Informal Assignments: 10%  
 Peer Reviews/Reflection: 5%  
 Formal Assignment #1 (3-5 pages): 10%  
 Formal Assignment #2: (min. 5 pages): 15%  
 Formal Assignment #3 (8-10 page research paper): 35%  
 Formal Assignment #4 (multimodal project): 20%

Total: 100%

Letter grades for all formal assignments will be converted into the following point values:

A = 97	C = 74.5
A- = 92.5	C- = 71
B+ = 88	D+ = 68
B = 85	D = 64.5
B- = 81	D- = 61
C+ = 78	E = 58

No paper submitted = 0

The Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program has established the following scale for determining final course grades:

A = 95 – 100	C = 73 – 76
A- = 90 – 94	C- = 70 – 72
B+ = 87 – 89	D+ = 67 – 69
B = 83 – 86	D = 63 – 66
B- = 80 – 82	D- = 60 – 62
C+ = 77 – 79	E = Below 60

### **Primary Writing Requirement**

In order to satisfy the University of Rochester's Primary Writing Requirement, you must earn a grade of "C" or better in this course.

### **Late/Missed Assignments**

All assignments are due before the start of class on the dates indicated by assignment handouts and the course schedule. Because of this course's rigorous schedule, it is imperative to keep up with assignments and not fall behind. In general, **late work/drafts/papers will not be accepted and will receive a zero/incomplete**. A late draft for a formal assignment will lower the final grade by a full letter. (And a first draft still must be turned in to complete the formal assignment.) A late draft will also prevent you from participating in peer review sessions—see below for guidelines on completing peer review. If a student requires an extension, requests must be made at least a week in advance of a deadline. Last-minute accommodations will be made for extreme circumstances (hospital visits, family emergencies, etc.).

### **Attendance and Participation**

Because this course depends on discussion as well as the collaborative nature of learning writing, attendance is required and participation is graded. Grades for participation will be assigned on the check, check-plus, check-minus format, and will be assigned holistically for the entire semester. (Because of participation's 5% value for final course grades, you can think about it this way: a check-minus may lower a standing grade, a check will maintain it, and a check-plus may raise a standing grade.)

As such, students are expected to attend all classes and be prepared with the day's readings and assignment(s). Keep in mind that participation is not limited to talking frequently in class; it also includes active listening, asking questions, reading aloud, sharing responses, completing in-class writing/activities, etc.

Missing class affects your ability to participate; therefore, missing more than three classes may adversely affect your grade. I make no distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" absences—so, no need to get an absence "approved." If you anticipate missing more than three classes, please see me and make arrangements and discuss options as soon as possible. Accommodations will be made for religious observances, illnesses, sports participation, etc. **Regardless of attendance, each student is responsible for both the lessons of that class day and assignments that may be due.**

### **Classroom Policies:**

To better facilitate discussion, you must bring the day's reading(s) with you to class, either print or electronic. Laptops and tablets are permitted for relevant class work. On peer review days, you *must* bring a laptop or tablet with you to class. (If you don't own a laptop or tablet, please see me to make other arrangements.)

### **Contacting Your Instructor**

I am happy to discuss any aspect of this course and its assignments with you. To do so, please attend office hours or email me to schedule an appointment. For the sake of efficient communication, papers, drafts, and grades will not be discussed over email.

University email is the best way to reach me. In general and during the work week, you may expect a response within 24 hours, and typically you may receive one much sooner than that. Emails received after 8pm will not be read and responded to until the following day.

### **Academic Honesty**

The following statement is WSAP's and The College's official position on academic honesty / plagiarism:

“As members of an academic community, students and faculty assume certain responsibilities, one of which is to engage in honest communication. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of the trust upon which an academic community depends. A common form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism: the representation of another person's work as one's own, or the attempt “to blur the line between one's own ideas or words and those borrowed from another source” (Council of Writing Program Administrators, January 2003, <http://wpacouncil.org/node/9>). More specifically, plagiarism is the use of an idea, phrase, or other materials from a written or spoken source without acknowledgment in a work for which the student claims authorship.

Examples include: the misrepresentation of sources used in a work for which the student claims authorship; the improper use of course materials in a work for which the student claims authorship; the use of papers purchased online and turned in as one's own work; submission of written work such as laboratory reports, computer programs, or papers, which have been copied from the work of other students, with or without their knowledge and consent.

A student can avoid the risk of plagiarism in written work or oral presentations by clearly indicating, either in footnotes or in the paper or presentation itself, the source of any idea or wording that he or she did not produce. Sources must be given regardless of whether the idea, phrase or other material is quoted directly, paraphrased or summarized in the student-writer's own words.

In all cases of suspected plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty evident, the College's procedures and policies governing academic honesty will be followed. This pertains to all work in writing courses, including (but not limited to) first drafts, final drafts, presentations, and informal writing assignments. In cases where academic dishonesty has been established, the typical penalties for a first event are as follows:

- for an informal assignment: "0" for the assignment + 1/3 of a grade off of the final course grade,
- for first drafts of formal papers: the grade on the final draft of the paper will be capped at a C.
- For a final draft of a formal paper or a presentation: "0" for the paper.

As required by College policy, all instances of plagiarism are reported to the College Board of Academic Honesty. For the complete College honesty policy, see <http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/index>.”

**Writing Support**

Please know that this classroom respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities, and I invite you to talk with me about any concern or situation that affects your ability to complete your academic work successfully.

In addition, the University of Rochester provides numerous resources to help students with their writing and schoolwork. A couple to note:

*Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)*

*CETL is a resource available to all students in the College. All kinds of students with all kinds of GPAs and academic records make use of our programs. We work with strong students who wish to become even better, as well as with students who have not yet tapped into the strategies needed to succeed in college, and everyone in between. We offer an extensive study group and Workshop program, individual study skills counseling, study skills workshops and a study skills course, and disability support. We are located in 1- 154 Dewey Hall on the River Campus. To make an appointment or to learn more, stop by our offices, call us at (585) 275-9049, or send an email: [cetl@rochester.edu](mailto:cetl@rochester.edu).*

*The Writing and Speaking Center*

*At the University of Rochester, we all communicate as writers and speakers, and every writer and speaker needs an audience. The Writing and Speaking Center is a free resource available to all members of the University--undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty. The Writing and Speaking Center welcomes visitors who are at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming ideas to polishing a final draft. Similarly, students can visit a Speaking Fellow at any point as they are developing or practicing a presentation. To learn more about the Writing and Speaking Center's services and/or to find a tutor, please visit <http://writing.rochester.edu>.*

**Schedule Policy:**

Course schedule (below) is subject to change, with sufficient notice.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

## PROLOGUE: THE “PWR” OF LIFE

**Thursday, Jan. 18**

Course Introduction

**Tuesday, Jan. 23**

Read: Lamott, Introduction & 1–43 (PDF on BB)

In Class: Writing Diagnostic (bring laptop)

## CH. 1: UNDERSTANDING ARGUMENT / FILM AND TV

**Thursday, Jan. 25**

Read: Wikipedia article, “Narrative” (web link on BB)

Read: Gitelman, “Introduction: Media as Historical Subjects” from *Always Already New: Media, History, and the Data of Culture* (PDF on BB)

Read: McLuhan, “The Medium is the Message” (PDF on BB)

Informal Assignment #1: Create a Venn diagram that compares/contrasts print media (books, comic books, etc.) with visual media (film, TV, etc.). Due 11AM on BB.

**Tuesday, Jan. 30**

Read: Williams, “Making Good Arguments” (PDF on BB)

Watch: “How Does an Editor Think and Feel?” (YouTube link on BB)

Watch: “Mise-en-scène & Cinematography in American Beauty: Scene Analysis” (YouTube link on BB).

Watch: *The Wire*, S1E1, “The Target” (on reserve in Art/Music Lib; also available via HBO and Amazon)

Informal Assignment #2: Choose a moment in the *The Wire* episode to analyze based on some of the criteria discussed in the YouTube videos. Be specific and make an argument about the narrative effect(s) of the visual and audio decisions of the filmmaker. Approx. 1 page, due 11AM on BB.

**Thursday, Feb. 1**

Read: Lamott, 95–115 & 133–171 (PDF on BB)

Read: Gage, “Asking Questions, Generating Ideas” (PDF on BB)

**Tuesday, Feb. 6**

Formal Assignment #1 First Draft & Reflection Due 11AM on Google Drive

In Class: Peer Review Day

**Thursday, Feb. 8**

Read: Sommers, “Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers” (PDF selection on BB)

In Class: Thesis and Revision Workshop (bring FA #1 materials)

**Tuesday, Feb. 13**

No Class, Individual Conferences

**Thursday, Feb. 15**

Formal Assignment #1 Final Draft & Reflection Due 11AM on BB

Field Trip: Memorial Art Gallery (Details TBD)

## CH. 2: JOINING A CONVERSATION / INTERACTIVE [DIGITAL] NARRATIVES

**Tuesday, Feb. 20**

Library Day: Using University Resources || Meet at Rush Rhees Q&I

**Thursday, Feb. 22**

Read: Bizup, “BEAM: A Rhetorical Vocabulary for Teaching Research-Based Writing” (PDF on BB)

Play/Read (as much as you can): *Lifeline* and *Mosaic*

Informal Assignment #3: Using the university resources you learned about last class, find two sources you might use for Formal Assignment #2. Write a brief summary for each one (~paragraph) and classify each one according to the BEAM method. Due 11AM on BB.

**Tuesday, Feb. 27**

Formal Assignment #2 First Draft & Reflection Due 9:30AM on Google Drive

Peer Review Day

**Thursday, March 1**

Read: Graff & Birkenstein, “Preface,” “Introduction,” & “Part 1. ‘They Say’” (PDF on BB)

Play (as much as you can): *Emily is Away*

Informal Assignment #4: Using the Graf & Birkenstein approach for summarizing, quoting, and responding to what others say, create a short (fictional) dialogue (1-2pp) between two authors from your research. This dialogue can be written as a script, email chain, Snapchat, Tweet storm, whatever. Due 11AM on BB.

**Tuesday, March 6**

Read: Graff & Birkenstein, “Part 2. ‘I Say’”

Read: *MLA Handbook*, “Part 1: Principles of MLA Style” (skim)

In-Class: Citation Workshop (bring FA #2 materials)

**Thursday, March 8**

Formal Assignment #2 Final Draft & Reflection Due 11AM on BB

In Class: Twine Demo—Writing Interactive, Nonlinear Stories

**Tuesday, March 13 & Thursday, March 15**

**No Class—Spring Break**

### CH. 3: CRAFTING A RESEARCH PAPER / PODCASTS & MUSIC

**Tuesday, March 20**

Library Day: The Research Process || Meet in Rush Rhees Q&I

Informal Assignment #5: Email class librarian a research question that you’ll explore during our library session. CC me. Due Noon MON 3/19.

**Thursday, March 22**

Listen: *This American Life* (podcast link on BB)

Listen: *Radiolab* (podcast link on BB)

Listen: *Welcome to Night Vale* (podcast link on BB)

Listen: *The Leviathan Chronicles* (podcast link on BB)

**Tuesday, March 27**

Read: Howard, et al, “Writing from Sources, Writing from Sentences” (PDF on BB)

Read: Buranen, “But I Wasn’t Cheating: Plagiarism and Cross-Cultural Mythology” (PDF on BB)

**Thursday, March 29**

Informal Assignment #6: Create an annotated bibliography based on your prospective research topic for Formal Assignment #3. Minimum 6 sources, MLA style. Due 11AM on BB.

In Class: Effective Analysis Workshop (bring FA #3 materials)

**Tuesday, April 3**

Formal Assignment #3 First Draft & Reflection Due 11AM on Google Drive  
Peer Review Day

**Thursday, April 5**

Listen: David Bowie, *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* (on reserve in Art/Music Lib) (Spotify)

Read: Copetas, “Beat Godfather Meets Glitter Mainman” (link on BB)

Listen: Kendrick Lamar, *good kid, m.A.A.d city* (on reserve in Art/Music Lib) (Spotify)

Read: Bassil, “The Narrative Guide To Kendrick Lamar’s ‘good kid, m.A.A.d city’” (link on BB)

**Tuesday, April 10**

Read: Orwell, “Politics and the English Language” (PDF on BB)

In Class: Style Workshop (bring FA #3 materials)

**Thursday, April 12**

Formal Assignment #3 Final Draft & Reflection Due 11AM on BB

In Class: UR Recording Studio Tour, Meet in Rettner Hall

CH. 4: BEYOND THE PAPER / MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTION

**Tuesday, April 17**

See Optional Media Production Readings/Viewings on BB

Informal Assignment #7: Make your own vine-style narrative video (~6 sec), using whichever platform you wish (Vine, Instagram, iMovie, etc.). Due 11AM on BB (upload video file or share link).

**Thursday, April 19**

No Class, Individual Conferences

**Tuesday, April 24**

Formal Assignment #4 “First Draft” & Reflection Due 11AM on Google Drive (may be an outline, storyboard, wireframe, etc. based on your selected media format)

Peer Review Day

**Thursday, April 26**

Workshop Day / Catch Up Day / Troubleshoot Day

EPILOGUE

**Tuesday, May 1**

Last Day of Class

Formal Assignment #4 Final Project & Reflection Due 11AM on BB (upload file or link or make arrangements depending on your selected media type)

In Class: Final Project Show & Tell