

StoryLab: Reckoning with Trinity University's Roots

HIST 3392/SOCI 3391

Tuesdays 4:30 - 7:30pm CSI 205

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Course Description

While not everyone is a storyteller, everyone has stories to tell. Scholars and media practitioners listen to stories around us to understand the people who live among us. But while stories entertain and create opportunities for human connection they also teach us something. For scholars in the social sciences and humanities, stories become the basis for constructing knowledge about our world.

In this course students will learn about different scholarly traditions that centralize story gathering including history, sociology, and creative writing. Students will be trained in techniques to gather, analyze, and share stories. In a given semester, techniques might include the use and/or creation of oral history collections, primary interviews, ethnography, and folklore. Students will draw on such materials to bring stories to an academic and/or public audience for the benefit of the common good. This semester, students will use and collect data related to the Trinity University Roots Commission, which has been exploring the history of Trinity's 1869 founding vis-a-vis the legacy of slavery and racism.

Assigned Readings

W. E. B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*

Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*

All other readings will be available on TLEARN.

Course Format

The goal of this class is to give students the methodological and theoretical tools to craft narratives through research and to share story-based research in a creative capacity. The course is divided into three units that will prepare students to devise and develop a robust final project:

- I. Theory: What is the significance of narratives and stories across disciplines?
- II. Research Practicum: What are some methodologies of collecting stories?
- III. Creation and Analysis: How can we shape this story-data into a new story that speaks to a broader social issue?

At the center of this course is the idea of co-inquiry. Our co-inquiry will move through theory, method, and creation as we consider the legacy of slavery as it relates to the founding of Trinity University and its early history. We will be reading across the disciplines of history and sociology, paying special attention to important theoretical works that pertain to storytelling as a tool for research as well as dissemination of research. In addition to your research into the primary sources, you will also spend time exploring and understanding a range of digital tools that you might use to devise and share your final research projects. Each class will involve seminar-style discussion as well as hands-on practicums.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will have demonstrated the ability to:

- Employ academic research methodologies to make observations of primary source materials that contribute to the discovery or interpretation of knowledge within the disciplines of history and sociology.
- Apply the skills, theories, and/or methodologies gained through the course to develop a public-facing creative project that utilizes the source materials and demonstrates an understanding of disciplinary techniques.
- Reflect on and critically assess creative works.

Course Requirements and Grading

The course grade will be calculated as follows:

Weekly Reflections:	20%	Participation:	20%
Presentation:	10%	Final Creative Project:	50%

Weekly Reading Reflections (20%): Most weeks during the first two-thirds of the semester, you will have reading assigned to be completed before class. These readings will form the basis of our discussions, and are therefore an essential part of class work. To help us have the most productive and enlivening conversations, we ask that you write a reflection, due by noon on the day readings are assigned. Each week, we will supply you with three options: you might answer a question we pose; ask your own question or pose an observation on one of the readings; or respond to a classmate's post. These should describe a portion of the reading and add your own perspective, and are expected to be approximately 200-500 words. Reflections will be graded on a contract basis, with the following criteria:

If you contribute consistently to the prompts before noon every class, missing no more than one prompt, you are eligible for an "A" in this portion of the class grade. To receive an "A," your contributions must not only be consistent, but also thoughtful and detailed, responding to authors and classmates both.

If you contribute to *most* prompts before noon when reading is due, missing two or three prompts, you are eligible for a "B" in this portion of the class grading. To receive a "B,"

you must demonstrate evidence of in-depth reading and thinking, but your responses may be less detailed or well thought-out compared to “A” work.

If you miss more than three prompts, you will be eligible for a “C,” “D,” or “F” in this portion of the class grading, depending on the quality of the prompts. Failure to complete fewer than half the prompts will result in an “F”.

Participation (20%): This is a reading and discussion intensive course which requires active participation in class and careful engagement with the assigned texts. We expect you to have completed the assigned reading prior to class so that you can come to each meeting ready to explore the day’s topic in depth. This class will focus on the exchange of ideas, and it is crucial that students come prepared for active, engaged discussion and participation in the class activities.

Final Project Preview/Presentation (10%): Prepare a 10 minute presentation, with a visual aid, on your project. Your presentation should explain the research you conducted, the significance of your findings, and the methods that you are using to communicate your story to a public audience. Be ready to respond to questions from the instructors and the audience, and be ready to ask pertinent questions of your classmates when they present (asking questions is part of the grade for the presentation). Due December 7.

Final Creative Project (50%)

Proposal: Submit a proposal for your project that describes the topic you plan to explore, the scholarly questions you seek to answer through your research, and the methods and means you will use to share the stories you uncover. Due October 26.

Data/Sources Check-in: Share your research notebook with Dr. Kaufman and Dr. Turek and come to class prepared to share an overview of your findings to date, any challenges you have encountered so far, and how the sources you have uncovered have informed your interpretation and plans for the final project. Due November 9.

Final Artifact: Using at least one of the methods that we covered in class, you will develop a final creative artifact where you share your interpretation/narrative about your research findings with a public audience. The type of project you develop is up to you. In previous iterations of this lab, students have shared their research through podcasts, web exhibits, digital magazines, film, cartooning, and more. The final project should demonstrate a rigorous, nuanced understanding of the historical events and their implications into the present day, and incorporate feedback from the presentation and creative preview. Due December 14.

Schedule of Weekly Meetings

Part I: Foundations and Theory		
Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments Due
8/31	Introduction Halsell with Lisa Castro Endresen	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Linda Tuhiwai Smith, <i>Decolonizing Methodologies</i> Chapters 1-2. ● Christopher Graham, “The Lost Cause Myth”
9/7	Reconstruction and the Trinity Story	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Du Bois, <i>Black Reconstruction</i> Chapters 1-3, 6-7, 12 (just pp. 552-561), and 16-17. ● Brackenridge, <i>Trinity University: A Tale of Three Cities</i>, Preface and Chapters 1-2
9/14	Memory and the Collective	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Saidiya Hartman, <i>Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Trade Route</i> ● Brian Conway “The Sociology of Collective Memory and Commemoration” <i>Sociological Compass</i> 4, 7 (2010): 442-453.
9/21	Narrative, Hegemony, and Violence	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Love, Barbara J. "Brown plus 50 counter-storytelling: A critical race theory analysis of the “majoritarian achievement gap story.” <i>Equity & Excellence in Education</i> 37, no. 3 (2004): 227-246 ● Benjamin Wallace-Wells, “How a Conservative Activist Invented the Conflict Over Critical Race Theory” <i>The New Yorker Magazine</i>, June 18 2021.
Part II: Research Methods & Practicum		
9/28	Method: Primary Sources <i>Guest: Colleen Hoelscher, University Special Collections</i>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rael, “How to Read a Primary Source” ● Schmidt, “Using Archives” OR ● Claudio Benzecry, Andrew Deener & Armando Lara-Millán, “Archival Work as Qualitative Sociology” <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> 43: 297–303 (2020).

10/5	Method: Oral History <i>Guests: Carey Latimore, History and Abra Schnur, University Archives</i>	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davidson & Lytle, “The View from the Bottom Rail”
10/12	Method: Ethnography <i>Guest: Tahir Naqvi, Anthropology</i>	Readings TBD
10/19	Practicum: Narrative Technique <i>Guest: Patrick Keating, Communications</i>	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marie-Laure Ryan, “Narrative, Media, and Modes,” <i>Avatars of story</i>. University of Minnesota Press, 2006. Jorge Luis Borges, “The Shape of the Sword”
10/26	Practicum: Non-Fiction Writing <i>Guest: Kelly Carlisle, English</i>	*** Research Proposal due ***
11/2	Practicum: Non-linear Narratives <i>Guest: Lauren Malone, The Collaborative for Learning and Teaching</i>	
Part III: Creation and Analysis		
11/9	Data Workshop	*** Data/Sources Check-in ***
11/16	Digital Tools Workshop <i>Guest: Elizabeth Poff, Digital Technologies Librarian</i>	
11/23	*** Asynchronous Class ***	*** Creative Preview Due ***
11/30	Podcasting Workshop	Workshop presentations
12/7	Final Presentations	*** Presentations***
12/14	Final Artifact	***Creative Project Due***

Course Policies

Honor Code

All students are covered by a policy that prohibits dishonesty in academic work. Under the Honor Code, a faculty member will (or a student may) report an alleged violation to the Academic Honor Council. It is the task of the Council to investigate, adjudicate, and assign a punishment within certain guidelines if a violation has been verified. **Students are required to pledge all written work that is submitted for a grade: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this work” and their signature. The pledge may be abbreviated “pledged” with a signature.**

http://www.trinity.edu/departments/academic_affairs/honor_code/index.htm.

If you have any doubt about whether an action violates the Honor Code, please email us before submitting your assignments. If you are struggling, overwhelmed, or confused please contact us! We are here to help you in the course and guide you through the material. We understand that personal circumstances or unforeseen events can sometimes interfere with your academic work; we will keep any concerns confidential and work with you to ensure your best possible performance in the course.

Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Reporting

As Responsible Employees who are committed to creating an environment where every member of our community can thrive, we want to let you know that **we are Mandatory Reporters**. What that means is that we are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual intercourse, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, stalking, and related retaliation that we are aware of to the Title IX Coordinator. So, if you share information with either of us about any incidents that implicate the Sexual Misconduct or Anti-Harassment Policies, we are required to report all information to the Title IX Coordinator to make sure you have information about support resources and complaint resolution options. A report does not initiate the complaint process, and you are in control over how you choose to engage with our Title IX Coordinator. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, we encourage you to share this information directly with the Title IX Coordinator or one of the individuals who has been designated as a confidential resource on campus. Information about reporting is available here: [Reporting](#).

Students with Learning Accommodations

If you have a documented disability and will need accommodations in this class, please send your accommodation letter to us early in the semester so we can discuss how we can best meet your needs. All discussions will remain confidential. If you have not already registered with Student Accessibility Services, contact the office at 999-7411 or SAS@trinity.edu. You must be registered with SAS before we can provide accommodation.

Attendance

Attendance is a key component of your participation grade and we expect you to attend all of our course meetings. That said, if you are ill, injured, or dealing with a family emergency, please email us to let me know so we can excuse your absence. If you experience a family emergency, please also contact Dr. Jennifer Henderson, Interim Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Demetrius Brown, Dean of Students., who will provide help and will contact all of your professors for you. If you must miss class, please first contact a classmate to get notes, then let us know of any questions you might have about the material.

Excused Absences: The *Courses of Study Bulletin* specifies that “Students who are absent from class in order to observe a religious holiday, who are absent from class while participating in a University-sponsored dramatic production, or who are absent from the campus because they officially represent the University in such sponsored activities as intercollegiate athletics, debate tournaments, and tours will be excused from classes ...”

Pandemic Absences and Policy: The University wishes to disincentivize class attendance when students may be sick. **For the duration of the pandemic, students who are ill will be granted an excused absence.** To protect community health, we urge students to request an excused absence by informing instructors of the illness via email. Students must adhere to University health and wellness procedures for self-evaluation, follow-up, and quarantine as necessary. Please note: Untruthful student claims about illness may be regarded as a violation of the Academic Honor Code, which prohibits “falsification of academic records.”

To ensure that all members of the University community work in tandem to create a safe learning environment, the University [Policy on Protective Behavior](#) requires that the following be observed on campus at all times until otherwise officially altered by the University:

- Students, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a mask indoors and outdoors when safe distancing is not possible.
- Personal hygiene and proper cough/sneeze etiquette must be followed

Failure to observe University health protocols will be considered a violation of the [Policy Regarding Disruption of Class](#). In accordance with the Policy Regarding Disruption of Class, the instructor will issue a warning to the student; if the student continues to disrupt the class by failing to observe University health protocols, the instructor may drop the student from the class roster.