

**Project Narrative Summer Institute, 2025**  
**Narrative Theory: Foundations and Innovations**  
**Directors: Katra Byram and James Phelan**  
**June 2-June 13 on Zoom**

**Week One: Foundations and Innovations**

**N. B. Beginning with Wednesday's session (6/4) participants will collaborate in small groups to post initial questions for discussion about the reading. We'll set up the groups at our first session, so think about which day you'd most like to set the agenda for.**

**Monday (am): The Rhetorical Strand (1): From Poetics to Rhetoric**

*Theoretical readings:*

- Aristotle, *Poetics*.
- James Phelan, "The Chicago School: From Neo-Aristotelian Poetics to the Rhetorical Theory of Narrative."
- Phelan, Introduction to *Narrative as Rhetoric*

*Primary narratives:* Katherine Anne Porter, "Magic"; C. Namwali Serpell, "Account"

Presentation of Participant Projects

**Tuesday: The Rhetorical Strand (2): Authors and Audiences**

*Theoretical readings:*

- Wayne C. Booth, "Control of Distance in Jane Austen's *Emma*" from *The Rhetoric of Fiction*.
- Sarah Copland and James Phelan, "The Ideal Narratee and the Rhetorical Model of Audiences"

*Primary narratives:* Edgar Allan Poe, "The Cask of Amontillado"; Joyce Carol Oates, "Hospice/Honeymoon"; Franz Kafka, "Report to an Academy"

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**Wednesday: Structuralism and its Legacies (1): Cognitive Narratology**

*Theoretical readings :*

- Gérard Genette, "Time and Narrative in *A la recherche du temps perdu*."
- Genette, excerpts from chapter on "Mood," from *Narrative Discourse*, pp.169-198.
- Manfred Jahn, "Focalization" from *Cambridge Companion to Narrative*
- David Herman, Chapter One, from *Basic Elements of Narrative*

*Primary materials:*

Edwidge Danticat, "Sunrise/Sunset"

**Thursday: Structuralism and its Legacies (2): Feminist and Queer Narratology**

*Theoretical readings:*

- Susan Lanser, "Toward a Feminist Narratology."

- Lanser, "Toward a (Queerer and) More (Feminist) Narratology."
- Robyn Warhol, "The Space Between: A Narrative Approach to *Fun Home*"

*Primary Narrative:*

- Bechdel, *Fun Home*; Ingeborg Bachmann, "Problems, Problems"

### **Friday: Narrative as Social Action?**

- Mikhail Bakhtin, excerpts from "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel" and "Discourse in the Novel," pp. 84-85, 243-254, 301-331
- Ktra Byram, "Narrative as Social Action"

*Primary readings:*

- Babak Ghassim and Usama Elyas, "Behind Us, My Country"; Thomas Mann, "Disorder and Early Sorrow"; Sharon Dodua Otoo, "Mr. Gröttrup Takes a Seat"

## **Week Two. Innovations and New Horizons June 9-13**

### **Monday: Unnatural Narratology.**

*Theoretical readings:*

- Brian Richardson "Unnatural Narrative Theory." Target essay in *Style*
- Ellen Peel, "Unnatural Narratology and the Return of the Repressed Reader"
- Reply to Peel by Richardson and Jan Alber

*Primary Narratives:*

Cortazar, "A Continuity of Parks" and "Axolotl"; Oates, "Hospice/Honeymoon"(redux) and Dodua Otoo, "Herr Gröttrup Takes a Seat" revisited

### **Tuesday: Econarratology**

*Theoretical Readings:*

- Erin James, Introduction and Chapter 3 on Time from *Narrative and the Anthropocene*
- Alexa Weik von Mossner, *Affective Ecologies*, Chapter 4: "Beyond Boundaries Imaginary Animals and the Intricacies of Trans-species Empathy."

*Primary narratives:*

Jenny Erpenbeck, *Visitation* pp. 1-3, 15-32, 148-150; *My Octopus Teacher* (2020)

### **Wednesday: Option A. Seriality and Complexity in Television.**

*Theoretical readings:*

- Jason Mittell, from *Complex TV: Introduction*; Chapter 4, "Characters."
- Sean O'Sullivan, "Six Elements of Seriality"

*Primary narrative:*

- *Breaking Bad*, season 1, episodes 1-4

**Thursday (pm):** Participant Presentations

**Friday:** Participant Presentations