

Storytelling: Language and Movement

Course Syllabus

Contact Hours: 45 (15 sessions, 3 hours each)

Schedule: Varies per semester.

Lead Instructor: Daniel Bryan, daniel@pachaysana.org

Co-Instructors: Daniel Acosta, Chelsea Viteri, Marleen Haboud, Wilson Pico

Office Hours: Anytime outside of normal class hours. Just ask.

Course Description:

It can easily be argued that the greatest human quality is our ability, and need, to tell stories. Every day, we communicate through stories, yet rarely do we study how to tell a story or learn how to become empowered through our stories. This course takes students through a process that seeks to unleash the power of stories, but most especially we attempt to harness such power in the creation and presentation of our community's stories. Based on the realities present in our host community, students work with their counterparts, combining theory with practice, to create and tell stories to the community at large. Since stories are both spoken and performed, we aim to engage the "telling" through both language and movement, thus transcending the limits of each. Beginning with the elements of storytelling, students and counterparts practice the structuring of stories, focusing on both the traditions within the community and the influence of the modern world, and then the multiple forms of expressing those stories. The cohort is required to work with other local community members, first interviewing and collecting data, and later using our creativity to construct and present the stories back to them, placing special focus on the conflicts that inhibit our development in a globalized world.

Universal Objective:

Students and their counterparts develop a personal and communal relationship with the power of storytelling and be able to clearly articulate how it affects their lives and the world around us. The process of developing this relationship will achieve the following universal goals of Rehearsing Change:

- Improving our intercultural communication
- Better understanding our host community and its relationship to the world
- Gaining an understanding of self and one's personal story as related to our ever-changing world around us

Specific Objectives:

- Improve abilities to identify and develop the specific characteristics of stories (plot, characters, conflict, place, etc.) and how they contribute to our humanity
- Develop knowledge and skills in interviewing that allow students to efficiently and ethically learn each other's stories
- Discover several stories from our host community and how they relate to the community's identity and lived reality
- Develop skills in the structuring of stories for presentation to a live audience
- Develop creative skills that assist with the re-creation of stories

General Content

We begin by studying *storytelling as what makes us human*, exploring our own stories (individual and collective). We then see those stories as being composed of powerful *narrative elements*. Next, we look at the *power of myth*, or the stories that our human world has been built upon. Then, we turn to *oral tradition* as a form of narrative, for which we learn techniques that enable us to learn stories of the “other” and our partner/host community. After a time *collecting stories*, we *share the collected stories* and articulate lessons-learned, comparing the stories to the elements we have learned, focusing on the concept of *language*. Next, we work on finding the symbolic (or mythical) nature of the collected stories and analyze their potential for impacting the community. Then, we delve into the *recreation of our collected stories*, using movement and images as our methodology. Finally, we structure and *share our re-created stories with the community-at-large* and engage in a discussion of storytelling, oral tradition and performance.

Evaluation:

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| • Class Participation | 20% |
| • Project 1 (Individual Story Project) | 10% |
| • Project 2 (The myth) | 10% |
| • Project 3 (Our community stories) | 20% |
| • Project 4 (The Re-creation) | 20% |
| • Journal | 20% |

Projects: Specific instructions for each project will be given according to the specific calendar for the semester. At the conclusion of each project, international students should write a detailed reflection of the project. Using both observations and reflections, explore 1) the dialogue that accompanied the creative process, or the elaboration of the project, 2) how the class sessions (activities, conversations, interactions) contributed to the process, and 3) how the readings relate to what you have created (integrate at least two readings so that they are complementing your curiosity and furthering your reflections).

Journals: There are a total of 4 journal prompts each course. The objective of each journal entry is to tell stories that explore the relationship between storytelling, life in and with the host community, and how this all relates to your own growth and processes of discovery. Think of yourself as a journeywoman, an explorer filled with curiosity for the world and its communities, and look for the interconnections that make this experience more meaningful to you. Then look for a creative way to express the story. You can choose a short story, poems, paintings, games, monologues, songs, dances, etc. We will create specific times to share journal entries or you can set up a private time with the instructor.

Readings (include sections of each of the following):

- Cachiguango, Luis Enrique. (2010). *Yaku-Mama: La crianza del agua*. Ministerio de la Cultura.
- Campbell, Joseph. (1988). *El Poder del Mito*. Emecé
- Cohen, Cynthia, Roberto Gutierrez Varea and Polly Walker. (2011). *Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict*. New Village Press.
- Cohen-Cruz, Jan. (2010). *Engaging Performance: Theatre as Call and Response*. Routledge.

- Cohen-Cruz, Jan and Mandy Schutzman. (2006). *A Boal Companion: Dialogues on Theatre and Politics*. Routledge.
- De Garay, Graciela. "La entrevista de historia oral: ¿Monólogo o conversación?" *REDIE: Revista Electrónica de Investigación Educativa*, 1(1), 7.
- Escobar, Melba. (2008). *Mitos y Leyendas de América*. Intermedio.
- Gaynor, Mitchell. (2001). *Los sonidos que curan: descubre el poder terapéutico del sonido, la voz y la música*. Urano
- Gottschall, Jonathan. (2013). *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human*. Mariner.
- McCloud, Scott. (2019). *Entender el Cómic: El arte invisible*. Astiberri.
- Moya, Alba. (2009). *Arte oral del Ecuador*. Ministerio de la Cultura
- Nicholson, Helen. (2015). *Applied Drama*. Springer.
- Pico, Amaranta and Wilson Pico. (2011). *El Cuerpo Festivo*. Ministerio de la Cultura
- Walsh, Catherine. (2013). *Pedagogías Decoloniales: Prácticas insurgentes de resistir, (re)existir y (re)vivir Tomo I*. Abya-Yala.