

## **Course title: Narratives in International Relations / Narrativas em RI**

### **Instructor**

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### **Abstract**

How do we make sense of the world we live in? Gabriel Garcia Márquez once said that life was not about what someone lived, but about what someone remembered and how someone remembered it to tell it. So, life in Garcia Márquez's words is about how people remember, tell and re-tell their lives, about how people construct their own life-stories. We understand and make sense of the world by telling stories about this world. We understand the political processes and power relations among different actors in IR through the stories historians, scholars, diplomats and politicians tell and re-tell. Our view of IR theory is essentially shaped by particular stories told by leading scholars of the field. When HIV/AIDS broke out in the early 1980s whole societies wove particular stories about its mysterious and threatening nature to be able to come to grips with its devastating consequences. When the US government justified its war on terror after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, they told a story so powerful that our view on the world is still imprisoned by it today. Stories do not only help us to make sense of the world. Stories essentially make, shape and transform the world. They influence our thoughts and our behaviour. They influence how we view the political processes and changing power relations in IR. They influence how we see ourselves.

Como fazer sentido do mundo em que vivemos? Gabriel García Márquez disse uma vez que a vida não era sobre o que alguém viveu, mas sobre o que alguém se lembrou e como alguém lembrou-se de dizer isso. Assim, a vida nas palavras de Garcia Márquez é sobre como as pessoas se lembram, contam e recontam suas vidas, sobre como as pessoas constroem suas próprias histórias de vida. Entendemos e damos sentido ao mundo contando histórias sobre este mundo. Nós entendemos os processos políticos e as relações de poder entre os diferentes intervenientes nas Relações Internacionais através das histórias / narrativas de historiadores, acadêmicos, diplomatas e políticos que eles e elas contam e recontam. Também, nosso ponto de vista da teoria de RI é essencialmente formando e moldado pelas histórias contadas por particulares estudiosos da nossa área. Quando a AIDS eclodiu no início de 1980 sociedades inteiras teceram histórias sobre sua natureza misteriosa e ameaçadora para ser capaz de compreender e enfrentar as suas consequências devastadoras. O governo norte-americano justificou a sua guerra contra o terrorismo depois dos ataques terroristas de 11 de Setembro de 2001 contando uma história tão poderosa que a nossa opinião sobre o mundo continua estando presa por ela hoje. Histórias não só nos ajudam a dar sentido ao mundo. Histórias essencialmente fazem, formam e transformam o mundo. Elas influenciam nossos pensamentos e nosso comportamento. Elas

influenciam a forma de como vemos os processos políticos e mudanças de relações de poder em RI. Elas influenciam a forma de como os cidadãos se vêem a si mesmos.

### **Content**

This course is intended to demonstrate how political processes and changing power relations in IR can be better understood through the conceptual lens of narrative. In part I, the student will be familiarised with the concept of narrative and its origins. In part II, we will discuss the key elements of different narrative types such as tragedy, romance, satire, irony and utopian/dystopian narrative lines characterising science fiction plots. Part III begins with an analysis of the film “Dr. Strangelove”. In the subsequent sessions we examine the foreign policy behaviour of various states and international human rights politics through the lens of the narrative types presented in part II. The students will learn to analyse political processes in IR through particular narratives and will be able to identify key narratives in IR which have shaped global politics and our understanding of essential issues in IR theory and IR.

Esta disciplina destina-se a demonstrar como os processos políticos e mudanças de relações de poder nas Relações Internacionais (RI) podem ser melhor compreendidos através da lente conceitual da narrativa. Na Parte I, os alunos serão familiarizados com o conceito de narrativa e suas origens. Na parte II, discutiremos os elementos-chave de diferentes tipos de narrativa, como tragédia, romance, sátira, ironia e linhas distópicas / utópicas narrativas que caracterizam parcelas de ficção científica. Parte III começa com uma análise do filme "Dr. Strangelove". Nas sessões subsequentes examinamos a política externa de vários estados e a política internacional de direitos humanos através da lente dos tipos de narrativas apresentadas na parte II. Os alunos irão aprender a analisar os processos políticos nas Relações Internacionais por meio de narrativas particulares e serão capazes de identificar narrativas chave em RI que moldaram a política global e a nossa compreensão das questões essenciais na teoria RI e RI em geral.

### **Requirements**

- Attendance / Participation
- Presentation (15 minutes)
- Film paper (4 pages) + Learning logs (2 – 3 pages) + Lessons learned paper (4 pages)
- Essay (10 pages)

### **Marking**

- Attendance / Participation (20%)
- Presentation (20%)
- Film paper + Learning logs + Lessons learned paper (25%)
- Essay (35%)

### **Attendance / Participation:**

Since this is a course based on student assignments, group work and other social interaction methods, student participation is vital to the success of the course. Punctuality is also crucial!!!

### **Film Paper:**

- You will answer several questions about the film Dr Strangelove, shown in session 7.
- 4 pages, DIN-A-4
- Font 12
- Line spacing: 1.5
- Language: English or Portuguese
- **To be handed in before the beginning of session 8!!!**

### **Lessons Learned Paper:**

- Summarise what you have learned in this course / pose further questions / point out issues you have not fully understood!
- 4 pages, DIN-A-4
- Font 12
- Line spacing: 1.5
- Language: English or Portuguese
- **To be handed in before the beginning of session 12!!!**

### **Learning logs:**

Learning Logs are basically a summary of the key arguments of the reading; a log, or record, of your own learning (process). Learning logs are not a formal piece of academic work.

- Learning logs are required in the following sessions: [Sessions 2 – 6 and Sessions 8 – 11](#) (totalling 9 learning logs)
- Select **two texts** from the reading material of each session
- pages DIN-A-4, font 12, line spacing 1.5
- Language: English or Portuguese
- Tips:
  - Write short and concise sentences
  - Concentrate on what is important
  - Concentrate on the key arguments
  - Focus on comparisons / differences in the arguments
  - In later learning logs you may compare the arguments of the reading material with reading material, discussions and debates of former sessions
  - Include your own critical reflections on the reading and what you make of it / how it helps you to better understand the issue at hand
- **to be handed in before the beginning of each session!!!**

## **Essay:**

**TASK:** Choose one event in International Relations and explain its narrative character!

Pay attention to the following questions:

- Why can the event be described as a narrative?
- Which kind of narrative has developed around this event?
- Are there different narratives at play?
- What is the possible meaning of the narrative construction of the event?

Formal requirements:

- 10 pages text (without bibliography), DIN-A-4
- Font 12
- Line spacing: 1.5
- Language: English or Portuguese
- Requirements:
  - Organisation: Introduction (with background of the topic, main question, possibly a puzzle, key argument, layout of the essay); Theory (your theoretical underpinning), Empirical Part (showing your evidence based on the theory), Conclusion (summary of your results, answering your question and argument, further thoughts and possible implications)
  - Write short and concise sentences
  - Concentrate on ONE issue, ONE question, ONE argument
  - Of course, you may use the reading material of the course

**SUBMIT ESSAY by 10 December 2017!**

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## **Essay Presentation (oral preparation for your essay):**

**TASK:** Choose one event in International Relations and explain its narrative character!

Pay attention to the following questions:

- Why can the event be described as a narrative?
- Which kind of narrative has developed around this event?
- Are there different narratives at play?
- What is the possible meaning of the narrative construction of the event?

Formal requirements:

- Around 5-10 minutes (**no more than 15 minutes**)
- Present your topic, main question, key argument, theoretical foundation and the organisation of your empirical part
- Speak freely without reading from the paper

- Make your arguments understandable to your audience (Power Point, Prezi, etc.)

**Structure of the course:**

- 14 sessions (one session per week: 120 - 150 minutes)
- Introductory 15 minute (background) lecture in most of the sessions
- Social learning activities / social interaction / group assignments / short films
- Student-led debates based on the reading material

**Seminar room requirement:** room with internet access / white board

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**Course outline****Part I: Narratives: Making sense of the world we live in****Session 1: Introductory session***The Danger of a Single Story*

- TED Talk by the Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story”, available at [http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story](http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story).

**Session 2: Storytelling and collective action***The Storytelling Animal***Reading material:**

- Friedman, Matti (2014), “An Insider’s Guide to the Most Important Story on Earth”, available at <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/183033/israel-insider-guide>. (OBLIGATORY READING FOR THE WHOLE CLASS)
- Mayer, Frederick W. (2014), “Constructing the Collective Good”, in: *Narrative Politics. Stories and Collective Action*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.101-124. (GROUP 1)
- Mayer, Frederick W. (2014), “The Storytelling Animal”, in: *Narrative Politics. Stories and Collective Action*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 53-78. (GROUP 2)

### **Session 3: Narratives in Ancient Greece**

*The use of narrative in the Greek Polis*

Reading material:

- (Schupman, Benjamin A. (2012), “A Pessimism of Strength? Tragedy and Political Virtue”, in: Erskine, Toni and Lebow, Richard Ned (eds.), *Tragedy and International Relations*, New York: Palgrave, pp. 129-143. )
- Frost, Mervyn (2012), “Tragedy, Ethics and IR”, in: Erskine, Toni and Lebow, Richard Ned (eds.), *Tragedy and International Relations*, New York: Palgrave, pp. 21-43. (whole class)
- Goff, B. (2009), Euripides: Trojan Women, London: Bloomsbury, Ch. 1. (whole class)
- Thucydides: The Melian Dialogue / Pericles’ Funeral Oration

### **Part II: Different narrative types and their origins**

#### **Session 4: Tragedy in IR Theory**

*So tragic, our field of study!*

Reading Material:

Brown, Chris (2007), “Tragedy, ‘Tragic Choices’ and Contemporary International Political Theory”, *International Relations*, 21 (1), pp. 5-13.

Group 1:

- Lebow, Richard Ned (2003), “Hans J. Morgenthau”, in: *The Tragic Vision of Politics. Ethics, Interests and Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 216-256.

Group 2:

- Mearsheimer, John (2001), *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Chapter 2 (Anarchy and the Struggle for Power) and 9 (The Causes of Great Power War).

Group 3:

- Keohane, Robert O. and Axelrod, Robert (1985), “Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions”, *World Politics*, 38 (1), pp. 226 – 254.

## **Session 5: Irony and Satire**

*Of clowns and fools*

Reading material:

- Kuusisto, Riika (2009), “Comic Plots as conflict resolution strategy”, *European Journal of International Relations*, 15 (4), pp. 601-626.

Group 1:

- Brassett, James (2009), “British irony, global justice: a pragmatic reading of Chris Brown, Banksy and Ricky Gervais”, *Review of International Studies*, 35 (1), pp. 219-245.

Group 2:

- Hall, Ian (2012), “The satiric vision of politics. Ethics, interests and disorder”, *European Journal of International Relations*, 20 (1), pp. 217-236.

## **Session 6: Utopian and Dystopian Realities**

*The Brave New Worlds and their promises*

- Paik, Yonsuuk Peter (2010), *From Utopia to Apocalypse: Science Fiction and the Politics of Catastrophe*, University of Minnesota Press.
- Neumann, Iver B. (2001), ‘Grab a Phaser, Ambassador’: Diplomacy in Star Trek, *Millennium Journal of International Studies*, 30 (3), pp. 603-624.
- Deery, J. (1993), H.G. Well’s *A Modern Utopia* as a Work in Progress, *Extrapolation*, 34 (3).

## **Part III: The heroes and villains, the clowns and fools in global politics**

## **Session 7: Dr. Strangelove or: How I stopped worrying and Love the Bomb**

*Showing the film “Dr Strangelove” about which the students will have to write a brief discussion paper.*

## **Session 8: Emerging Powers**

*The narrative construction of power ambitions*

Reading material:

Group 1:

- Fraundorfer, Markus (2014), Global power shifts and transnational law. A case study of Brazil and the human right to health, in: Francis Snyder / Yi Lu (eds.), *The Future of Transnational Law: EU, USA, China and the BRICS / L'avenir du droit transnational: UE, USA, Chine et les BRICS*, Travaux de Droit International et Européen, Brussels: Bruylant, pp. 211-239.
- Fraundorfer, Markus (2015), *Brazil's emerging role in global governance: health, food security and bioenergy*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 38 – 54; 94 – 101; 144 – 152.

Group 2:

- Brüttsch, Christian and Papa, Mihaela (2012), “Deconstructing the BRICs: Bargaining coalition, imagined community or geopolitical fad?”, CRP Working Paper Series, No 5.
- Stuenkel, Oliver (2014), “Emerging Powers and Status: The Case of the First Brics Summit, *Asian Perspective*, 38 (1).
- Van Noort, Carolijn (2016), “Constructing a New World Order through a Narrative of Infrastructural Development. The Case of the BRICS”, *International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering*, 10 (2), pp. 395 – 400.

## **Session 9: US Foreign Policy after 9/11**

*Of ironic tragedies, utopian dreams and dystopian realities*

Reading material:

- Krebs, Ronald (2015), “The Narrative Politics of the Battlefield”, in *Narrative and the Making of US National Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 175 – 190.
- Ringmar, Eric (2006), “Inter-Textual Relations: The Quarrel Over the Iraq War as a Conflict Between Narrative Types“, *Cooperation and Conflict*, 41 (4), pp. ----.



- Reese, Steven D. and Lewis, Seth C. (2009), Framing the War on Terror. The internalization of policy in the US press, *Journalism*, 10 (6), available at <http://journalism.utexas.edu/sites/journalism.utexas.edu/files/attachments/reese/framing-war-on-terror-sagepub.pdf>

## **Session 10: Global Health Epidemics**

### *Our dystopian fear of the virus*

- Sontag, Susan (1990), *Aids and its metaphors*, London: Penguin.
- Abeysinghe, Sudeepa (2016), “Ebola at the borders. Newspaper representations and the politics of border control”, *Third World Quarterly*, 37 (3), pp. 452 – 467.
- Rosenberg, Charles (1989), “What is an epidemic? AIDS in historical perspective”, *Daedalus*, 118 (2), pp. 1-17.

## **Session 11: Global Ethics, Democracy and Human Rights**

### *Of heroes and dreamers*

#### Reading material:

- Amstutz, Marc R. (2005), “Morality and Foreign Policy”, in: *International Ethics. Concepts, Theories, and Cases in Global Politics*, Rowman and Littlefield, pp.7-25.
- Hurrell, Andrew (2002), “Norms and Ethics in International Relations”, in: Carlsnaes, Walter; Risse, Thomas and Simmons, Beth A. (eds) *Handbook of International Relations*, pp.137-153.
- Ignatieff, Michael (2000), “Human Rights as Politics”, *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, Princeton University, pp. 287-319, available at: [http://tannerlectures.utah.edu/\\_documents/a-to-z/i/Ignatieff\\_01.pdf](http://tannerlectures.utah.edu/_documents/a-to-z/i/Ignatieff_01.pdf)

## **Session 12: Student Presentations**

## **Session 13: Student Presentations**

## **Session 14: Global Politics: An Arena of Narratives**

- “Lessons Learned” Session
- Feedback Session

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### Further reading

Amsterdam, Anthony and Bruner, Jerome (2002), *Minding the Law. How courts rely on storytelling, and how their stories change the ways we understand the law – and ourselves*, Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Arendt, Hannah (1998), *The Human Condition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, University of Chicago Press.

Barthes, Roland (1996), “Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives”, in: Onega, Susana and Garcia Landa, José Angel (eds), *Narratology*, New York: Longman, pp. 45-60.

Bruner, Jerome (1991), “The Narrative Construction of Reality”, *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1), pp. 1-21.

Butcher, Samuel Henry (2000), trans. *The poetics of Aristotle*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University.

Devetak, Richard (2005), “The Gothic scene of international relations: ghosts, monsters, terror and the sublime after September 11”, *Review of International Studies*, 31 (4), pp. 621–43.

Devetak, Richard (2009), “After the Event. Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and September 11 Narratives”, *Review of International Studies* 35 (4), pp. 795-815.

Erskine, Toni and Lebow, Richard Ned (eds) (2012), *Tragedy and International Relations*, New York: Palgrave.

Frye, Northrop (1957), *Anatomy of Criticism. Four Essays*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gewirtz, Paul (1996), “Narrative and Rhetoric in the Law”, in: Brooks, Peter and Gewirtz, Paul (eds), *Law's Stories. Narrative and Rhetoric in the Law*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Heathcote, Gina (2005), “Article 51 Self-Defense as a Narrative: Spectators and Heroes in International Law”, *Texas Wesleyan Law Review*, 12 (1), pp. 131-152.

Hodges, Adam (2011), *'The War on Terror' Narrative. Discourse and Intertextuality in the Construction and Contestation of Sociopolitical Reality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kamola, Isaac (2014), “The politics of knowledge production. On structure and the world of *The Wire*”, in Deylami, Shirin S. and Havercroft, Jonathan (eds), *The Politics of HBO's The Wire*, Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 59 – 86.

Ringmar, Eric (2006), "Inter-Textual Relations: The Quarrel Over the Iraq War as a Conflict Between Narrative Types", *Cooperation and Conflict*, 41 (4).

Sheeran, Paul (2007), *Literature and International Relations*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

Shenhav, Shaul R. (2006), "Political Narratives and Political Reality", *International Political Science Review* 27 (3), pp. 245-262.

Sontag, Susan (1986), *The way we live now*, available at [http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic868218.files/Sontag\\_1986.pdf](http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic868218.files/Sontag_1986.pdf).

Sontag, Susan (1990), *AIDS and its metaphors*, New York, Picador.

Speight, Allen (2011), "Arendt on Narrative Theory and Practice", *College Literature* 38 (1), pp. 115-130.

Suganami, Hidemi (1997), "Narratives of War Origins and Endings: A Note on the End of the Cold War", *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 26 (3), pp. 631-649.

Suganami, Hidemi (1999), "Agents, Structures, Narratives", *European Journal of International Relations*, 5 (3), pp. 365-386.

Suganami, Hidemi (2008), "Narrative Explanation and International Relations: Back to Basics", *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 37 (2), pp. 327-356.

Tiefenbrun, Susan (2005), "The Failure of the International Laws of War and the Role of Art and Story-Telling as a Self-Help Remedy for Restorative Justice", *Texas Wesleyan Law Review*, 12 (1).

Todorov, Tzvetan (1984), *The Conquest of America. The Question of the Other*, New York: Harper & Row.