Overview

Questions of what I am called to do, what members of my community are called to do, and what we are called to do now are at least as old as Moses’ conversation with God at the Burning Bush: Why me? asks Moses, when called to free his people. And, who – or what - is calling me? And, why these people? Why here, now, in this place? The intent of this course is to offer students an opportunity to develop their capacity to lead by asking themselves these questions at a time in their lives when it really matters.

Public narrative is a leadership practice. To lead is to accept responsibility for enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty. Through narrative we learn how to make choices in response to challenges of an uncertain world – as individuals, as communities and as nations. Responding to urgent challenges creatively requires drawing on sources of hope to trump fear; empathy to trump alienation; and self-worth to trump self-doubt. All of these are matters of the heart that we learn to articulate as a story. We must also formulate a vision of how we can act, a matter of the head, articulated as strategy. And then we must act, a matter of skillful and determined hands. By using public narrative we can link our own calling to that of our community to a call to action – a story of self, a story of us, and a story of now.

Public narrative is the art of translating values into action. It is a discursive process through which individuals, communities, and nations learn to make choices, construct identity, and inspire action.

*Office hours appointments (15min) must be made by filling out the sign-up sheet outside Professor Ganz’s office.
Because it engages the “head” and the “heart,” narrative can instruct and inspire - teaching us not only why we should act, but moving us to act. Leaders can use public narrative to interpret their values to others, engage others in an experience of community, and inspire others to join in acting on challenges their community must face. It is learning how to tell a story of self, a story of us, and a story of now.

In recent years, scholars have studied narrative in diverse disciplines including psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, philosophy, legal studies, cultural studies, and theology. Professions engaged in narrative practice include the military, the ministry, law, politics, business, and the arts. In the last two years we have introduced training in public narrative in diverse settings that included the Obama campaign, the Sierra Club, the Episcopal Church, the Israeli-Palestinian Negotiation Network, the Courage Campaign, the California School Employees Association, the Amman Community Organizing Initiative, the Immigration Reform Movement, the National Health Service (UK) and the Jewish Theological Seminary. In this course we link narrative analysis across the disciplines, narrative practice across the professions, and narrative discourse across cultures with the narrative we practice every day.

Our pedagogy is one of reflective practice. We model public narrative, engage students in articulating their own narrative, facilitate peer coaching, and evaluate students on their demonstrated practical and analytic understanding of narrative practice. This is not a course in public speaking, in messaging, image making or spin. Successful students complete the course not by writing a script, but by having learned a process. As Jayanti Ravi, MPA/MC 07 put it, “in this course students learn how to bring out their ‘glow’ from within, not how to apply a ‘gloss’ from without.”

Class will meet twelve times between September 2 and October 12: twice a week, every Tuesday and Thursday. We discuss theory, reflect on readings, analyze videos, and coach students to develop their own public stories. At the second class, Tuesday, September 7, students submit a public narrative worksheet. Each Friday, at a time to be determined, an optional “clinic” offers students an opportunity for individual coaching. On Saturday, October 9, an optional all day “clinic” offers coaching for the final “story telling” due by Friday, October 22. Our teaching team videographs and coordinates scheduling. Students may invite whomever they wish to be their “listeners.” Students are evaluated on class participation (35%), a public narrative video of 5 minutes (25%), and a theoretical analysis (5 pages) (40%) of why their story worked or didn’t that will be due on October 22.

Three books for this class are available at the Coop and on reserve in the Kennedy School Library:


Articles and book chapters will be available on the MLD 355 website or in the coursepacks.
W E E K  1  |  WHAT IS PUBLIC NARRATIVE?

Thursday, September 2, 2010

Reading:

Class Work:
1. Introductions: Framing, Who’s Who and Norms
2. Lecture Discussion: What is Public Narrative

Assignment:
On Tuesday, September 7, please post your two page response to the Public Narrative Worksheet. Focus on section one, story of self, identifying key choice points. In section three, the story of now, describe a purpose for which you might motivate others to act. For section two, story of us, try to define the values community you might inspire to join you in this action.

W E E K  2  |  HOW NARRATIVE WORKS

Tuesday, September 7, 2010  |  HOW EMOTION MOVES: Values, Motivation and Action

Reading:
1. **REQUIRED** * George Marcus, *The Sentimental Citizen: Emotion in Democratic Politics*, (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2002). Introduction (p. 1-8), Chapter 4 (p. 49-78), and Chapter 8 (p.133-148) [43 pages] (Book)


**Class Work:**
1. Lecture Discussion: How Emotion Moves
2. Debrief: Dr. Martin Luther King, “I Have a Dream”, Washington DC, August 28, 1963
3. Debrief: Student Public Narrative

**Assignment:**
Turn in your response to the *Public Narrative Worksheet*. Save a copy for yourself.

**Thursday, September 9, 2010 | ELEMENTS OF NARRATIVE: Plot, Character, and Moral**

**Reading:**

**Class Work:**
1. Lecture Discussion: Elements of Narrative
3. Debrief: Student Public Narrative

**WEEK 3 | STORIES OF “SELF”**

**Tuesday, September 14, 2010 | Telling Your “Self” Story**
You tell a “story of self” to enable others to “get you’ by enabling them to experience sources of values that shape who we are, what we are doing, and why. It requires finding the courage the to permit yourself the vulnerability.

**Reading:**
3. **REQUIRED * Video Debriefing of Stories of Self, CAUSE Campaign, California School Employees Association, March 2010. [21 minutes] (Online)
   *Available on MLD-355M Website* [22 pages] *(Online)*

**Class Work:**
1. Lecture Discussion: Story of Self

**Thursday, September 16, 2010 | Telling Your “Self” Story**

Today we conduct our **first story telling workshop**. Students will be assigned to one of four sections of 20 students whose work will be facilitated by a member of our teaching team. Each section subdivides into 5 “coaching teams” of 4 people who will work together coaching one another on their public story telling for the rest of the course. Team selected examples will be posted on the **MLD 355 website** so that you can learn from each other’s progress beyond your own team and section. Please use the story of “self’ worksheet to prepare.

**W E E K  4 | STORIES OF “US”**

**Tuesday, September 21, 2010 | Telling Your Story of “Us”**

We tell a “story of us” to enable others to identify with each other by experiencing sources of values they share. It requires the courage to risk an empathetic articulation of the experience of others. Our story of self is interwoven with stories we share with others: stories of our family, community, faith tradition, school, profession, movements, organizations, nations and, perhaps the world. Through shared stories we establish the identities and celebrate the values of communities in which we participate (family, faith, nation) and of emergent communities we are forming (new social movements, new organizations, new neighborhoods). Telling a "story of us" requires learning how to put into narrative form elements of experience the “us” in the room (or greater audience) share with each other, as well as the speaker. Telling a “story of us” is a way to engage a community in acting together, based on values that it shares. How did Obama tell his story of the United States of America? How did Henry V turn his "happy few" into “a band of brothers?”

**Reading:**
3. **REQUIRED** * Video, The Empathic Civilisation, J. Rifkin, RSA Animate, UK [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7AWnFFrC7g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7AWnFFrC7g) [10 minutes] *(Link)*
4. **REQUIRED** * Read ONE of the following that interests to you.*


Class Work:
1. Lecture Discussion: Story of Us

Thursday, September 23, 2010  |  Telling the Story of “Us”
Today we conduct our second workshop in story telling. This time students focus on the “story of us” component of their public narrative. Please use the story of “us’ worksheet to prepare.

W E E K  5  |  STORIES OF “NOW”

Tuesday, September 28, 2010  |  Telling Stories of Now
We tell a “story of now” to motivate others to join us in acting on an urgent challenge to values we share. It requires the courage to create tension in the present, elicit sources of hope, imagine a possible future risk rejection.. The story of now grows out of the “story of self” and the “story of us” that created the ground for it. On the other hand, it also shapes the content of the “story of self” and “story of us” that preceded it. We are the “characters” in a story of “now.” We face a challenge now. We hope for an outcome, as yet unknown, but it depends on a choice we make now.

Reading:

Class Work:
1. Lecture Discussion: Story of Now
2. Debrief: Dr. Martin Luther King, excerpt from “I Have a Dream”, Washington DC, August 28, 1963; “You Have to Give Them Hope”, Harvey Milk
Thursday, September 30, 2010  |  Telling Stories of Now
Today we conduct our **third workshop in story telling**. This time students focus on the “story of now” component of their public narrative. **Please use the story of “now” worksheet to prepare.**

**W E E K  6  |  LINKING SELF, US AND NOW**

**Tuesday, October 5, 2010**  |  Telling Public Stories
In class, we will discuss ways to link one’s story of self, story of us, and story of now. A story that links all the elements may begin with a “challenge” drawn from the story of now, end with the “choice” called for in the story of now, with the story of self and us in between. A public narrative usually ends with the words, “So join me in . . .”

**Class Work:**
1. Lecture Discussion: Linking Self, Us and Now

**Thursday, October 7, 2010**  |  Telling Public Stories
In this workshop, we practice linking one’s story of self, story of us, and story of now. We also reflect on key learning during the module and evaluate our work together in section. **Please use the “linking” worksheet to prepare.**

**W E E K  7  |  CONCLUSION**

**Tuesday, October 12, 2010**  |  New Stories for a New Era
In this final class of the module, we reflect on the ground we have covered since we began. What have we learned about public narrative? Have we learned how to tell our public story? What will be our narrative of the class? How can understanding public narrative equip us for challenges in our own lives – and in our own times?

**Reading:**

**Class Work:**
1. Retrospective on the Semester
2. Evaluation
3. What’s the Next Chapter?

A 5-minute **VIDEO** of your Public Story and a 5 page **ANALYTIC PAPER** are due **Friday, October 22, 2010  at 5 PM EST.** They can be submitted via e-mail to your CA.