

Project Nous(Mianyang)
Oral Narrative and Memory, News
and Nostalgia
14:00-16:00, Tuyao

Ruomeng Liu
liuruomeng@ucass.edu.cn
[liuruomeng.github.io](https://github.com/liuruomeng)
wechat: scorpio_snake_01

Note

The original version of this course syllabus is in Chinese, this document is a translated version, all reading material in the document is in Chinese and the titles are my own translations. If you have any questions, you should check with me.

Course Description

The emergence of the concept of oral narrative, literally "speaking with the mouth," is linked to the "downward-looking" turn in historiography. In ancient China there was the Gesar and in the West there was the Homeric epics, but later the written word came to dominate and oral culture was less valued in comparison.

This course is not particularly concerned with oral history as historical narrative, which would imply a search for the legitimacy of oral truth, or with oral history "as method," which would imply putting the marginalization of oral history at the center of the discussion. With the concept of the oral as a central theme, we focus first on fascinating oral works, often fascinating personal narratives that often imply a rebellion against the mainstream. From there, we extend our consideration to the question of narrative and knowledge. We also focus on oral interviewing, recording and writing, as well as on oral works in different fields and other topics based on them.

Prerequisite(s): None

Credit Hours: 2

Grade Distribution:

Reading	40%
Lecture	30%
Discussion(2)	30%
Extra Work	(10)%

Letter Grade Distribution:

≥ 93.00	A	73.00 - 76.99	C
90.00 - 92.99	A-	70.00 - 72.99	C-
87.00 - 89.99	B+	67.00 - 69.99	D+
83.00 - 86.99	B	63.00 - 66.99	D
80.00 - 82.99	B-	60.00 - 62.99	D-
77.00 - 79.99	C+	≤ 59.99	F

Registration Tips

No requirements other than interest

Course Policies:

- **General:** No makeup quizzes or exams will be given.
- **Assignments**
 - Students are expected to work independently.
 - **assignments will be encouraged by small and personalized gifts**
- **Attendance and Absences**
 - Students are responsible for all missed work, regardless of the reason for absence.
 - It is also the absentee's responsibility to get all missing notes or materials.

Tentative Course Outline:

1. lectures and reading: Oral history of educational topics, oral history of the media, oral literature, autobiographical journalism, oral history in the Internet age
2. characteristics: Personal Narrative and Intellectual Reflection
3. Tips & Techniques: interview, recording and writing

Class dates with quizzes and tests are shown below. These dates are unlikely to change. The details of what will be covered during other classes will be filled out as the class progresses.

Tentative Schedule:

- **day1 01:Oral Introduction: What is education for? The answer to this question is found in the history of WSU.**
 - **content:** The basic information about oral history.How to know intellectuals? What should education in schools be like? What should be the relationship between politics and education, education and society?

- **materials:** He Zhaowu, "A Memoir of Going to School," 2008 edition, Life, Reading, and New Knowledge, Sanlian Bookstore[P93 174: "A Memoir of Schooling C: The Migrating Fortress"; "A Few Unforgettable People"]
- **discussions:**
 - * 1. Have you ever felt dissatisfied with the school? With teachers?
 - * 2. Have you ever been confused about why we are born with the "must" to be educated?
 - * 3. What is your ideal model of education?
 - * 4. Talk about your learning experiences and reflections
- **expanded materials:**
 - * Yang Xiao, In Search of SWLU on the Roads, Rivers and Post Roads, 2021, Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House
 - * Yi Sheqiang, Southwest United University in War and Revolution, 2012, Kyushu Publishing House

• **day2 02:Oral History: A Personal Narrative**

- **content:** How to recognize the personal narrative characteristics of oral history?What kind of people can become the protagonists of oral history?How can personal experiences transcend "local knowledge" and become universal knowledge?
- **materials:**
 - * Xing Suzhi (Lobsang Pearl) oral narration, Yang Nianqun/Zhang Jianfei pen narration: "Snowland Seeking Dharma: The Oral History of a Chinese Lama", 2008 edition, Life, Reading, Xinqi Sanlian Bookstore[P13-69: Preface and Chapters 1 and 2].
 - * Selected Documentary: Four Springs (Lu Qingqin, 2017)
- **discussions:**
 - * 1. If you had the chance, which part of history would you most like to see in the eyes of whom? Why?
 - * 2. What kind of "events" are public in the eyes of people? Try to describe it.
- **expanded materials:**
 - * Chen Mingzhong's oral narrative, compiled by Li Na: No Regrets: The Memoirs of Chen Mingzhong, 2016 edition, Life, Reading, New Knowledge
 - * Xiang Biao, Wu Qi: "Taking Yourself as a Method: A Conversation with Xiang Biao," 2019, Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House

• **day3 03:Oral Technique (I): Interview, recording**

- **content:**Participation, observation and shorthand: dictation and transcription in ethnography or interview
- **materials:**
 - * Ding Yizhuang: An Oral History Reader, Peking University Press, 2011-5 [p61 104 Part II: Research Methods (3 articles)

- * Robert Emmerson: How to Take Field Notes, Shanghai Translation Publishing House [P1 51].

– **discussions:**

- * 1. What do you do if the interviewee finds your questions offensive?
- * 2. How do you go about outlining the interview? Examples: comfort women; Eastern Airlines disaster accident
- * 3. What do you think is the most central spirit of the interview?

– **expanded materials:**

- * Ken Metzler: The Creative Interview, Renmin Univ. Press, 2004-1

work: *It can be history-related (e.g., a historical study of your city/hometown), family history-related (e.g., a record of your grandfather's life), or event-related (e.g., an "event" in your school or classroom, your parents' marriage experience), provided The prerequisite is that the material is available and actionable. Share at the end.*

• **day4 04:Dictation and knowledge: reflections and transcendence**

- **content:** A brief introduction to reflections on the sociology of knowledge. What is the significance of knowledge from non-dominant groups? The application of oral narrative as a method in sociology, anthropology, and communication. Rethinking the relationship between people.

– **materials:**

- * Ye Ziting, Daily Life of Women in the New Village of Shanghai Workers, 2021, Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House P13 94 Research Methodology and Oral Brief History
- * Sha Yao: My Land, My People: Cultural Expression and Subjectivity of Peasants P225 231 Postscript: Only the shadow in front of the lamp is amorous

– **discussions:**

- * 1. what do you think are the "biases" of the knowledge you have learned?
- * 2. What is the definition of "knowledge"? Examples: Laws of physics? Climate change?

– **expanded materials:**

- FR Michel Foucault: The Archaeology of Knowledge, Life, Reading and New Knowledge
- US Peter L. Berg, Thomas Luhmann: The Social Construction of Reality: An Outline of the Sociology of Knowledge, Beijing University Press
- FR Michel Foucault: The Life of the Unknown

• **day5 05:Oral Memory and Literature**

- **content:** How to view wounded literature? What is the significance of oral narratives in literature? What is the relationship between collective memory and individual memory?

– **materials:**

White Russian S. A. Alekseevich: Secondhand Time, CITIC Press [Ten Stories Without Embellishment, Noise in the Street and Conversation in the Kitchen, Appendix of a Minor Character]

* Feng Jicai: Ten Years of One Hundred People, 2014, Culture and Art Publishing House [Confessions of an Old Red Guard]

* Feng Jicai: No Way Out: 1966-1976 An Oral History of Myself, 2016, People's Literature Publishing House [Preface: Fifty Years Is Not Far Away]

– **discussions:**

* 1. Do you think the stories you read are selected, retouched, and literally manipulated?

* 2. Do you think it compromises the "truth"? If not, is there any point?

– **expanded materials:**

FR Pierre Nora: The Field of Memory: A Cultural and Social History of the French National Consciousness, 2020, Nanjing University Press

FR Maurice Halbwachs: On Collective Memory, 2002, Shanghai People's Publishing House

• **day6 06:Oral Technique (II)**

– **content:**Techniques of writing: scene building, detail organization and meaning interpretation. How to find a suitable and attractive story structure?

– **materials:**

* Modern Scholarship and Personal Harvest (Oral Narrative by Hu Shih) Robert McKee

* Storytelling: Materials, Structure, Style, and Principles of Screen Production, 2016 edition, Tianjin People's Publishing House, translated by Zhou Yidong

• **day7 07:Oral and Media: The Community of the "Golden Age"**

– **content:**The interpretive community of memory in the golden age of media, and the implied critique of the present.

– **materials:**

* Zuo Fang: "How Steel is Made: An Oral History of Zuo Fang, Founder of <Southern Weekend>", 2014, Tiandi Books Co. [Chapter 4, p188 280].

* Bai Hongyi, "Journalists as an Interpretive Memory Community: A Study of Nandu's Oral History", International Journalism 2015.12

– **discussion:**

* 1. Why do journalists write texts that collectively miss the journalism of the 90s-10s?

* 2. What do you think about the "death of journalism" on the Internet?

– **expanded materials:**

* Chai Jing: "Seeing", 2013, Guangxi Normal University Press

* Li Haipeng: "The Earth Shines Alone", 2011, Southern Daily Press

- **day8 08:Oral Narratives and News**

- **content:** What new things can oral narratives bring to traditional journalism? The flow of oral news in public events, "big people" and "little people"
- **materials:**
 - * Xie Mengyao: "A veteran trail runner's dictation: about the silver dead, bounty hunters and race safety"; "Luo Yonghao's autobiography: before he became Luo Yonghao"
 - * He Xiaoyu: "Daddy-flavored Love", *True Story Project*
 - * Wang Baiyang: "I am willing to tell: my sister and brother-in-law were on that plane, and my 1.5-year-old niece", *Freezing Weekly*
- **discussion:**
 - * 1. What are the characteristics of a self-explanatory essay? Can you summarize it?
 - * 2. What do you think about the autobiographies of "big shots" (stars, entrepreneurs, celebrities)?
- **expanded materials:**
 - * Xu Zhiyuan, "The Nostalgia of Journalism", 2005, China Water Conservancy and Hydropower Press

- **day8 09:Orality in the Age of the Internet: Personal Expression and Public Discussion**

- **content:** What are the new possibilities for recording history in the Internet era? What are the new characteristics of personal expression in the Internet era? Does personal narrative have a louder voice in the Internet era?
- **materials:**
 - * Hu Yong: "The Sound of Many Voices: Personal Expression and Public Discussion in the Internet Era"
 - * Yang Guobin: "Connecting Power: Chinese Netizens in Action"
 - * Jiang Sida: "Transparent People"
- **discussion:**
 - * 1. Do you have love beans? What do you do to show your support?
 - * 2. Does supporting love beans hurt the public nature of the public opinion arena?
 - * 3. What type of statements do you usually make on the public Internet? Social news? Star-struck? Or are you expressing your personal feelings? Is it different from WeChat and QQ Zone?
 - * 4. Do you think the current "public opinion" is led by individuals or led by individuals? Why?
- **expanded materials:**
 - * Patriotism as much as the beans: New media and the birth of "fan nationalism" (Liu Hailong)

* Henry Jenkins, Text Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture, 2016, Beijing University Press

• *day10* 10:Debate and Discussion

- **debate topic:**Is being misunderstood the destiny of the expresser (pro: yes/con: no)
- **discussion:**Oral work sharing: talk about your own work interview writing experience
- **expanded materials:**[US] Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination, 2017, Beijing Normal University Press