

Megan Amato

LBST 330-01

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## Fields of Interest Assignment

### 1. Emerging Fields of Interest:

#### Creative Writing and Storytelling

- Fiction writing and folklore
- Fiction writing and history
- Creative writing and advocacy
- The creation of myth
- Myth and history
- Storytelling and geography
- Storytelling and history
- Editing
- Etymology

#### Teaching and Advocacy

- Education and storytelling
- Education and primary age children
- Education and social advocacy
- Storytelling and advocacy

## 2. List of courses taken

**EDUC 179** Guiding Young Children- Fall 2016 - Year 1 - Antje Bitterberg

How future educators can create inclusive classrooms. Storytelling used to provide evidence to children of inclusiveness.

**ENGL 103** Studies in Contemporary Literature - Fall 2016 - Natalie R. Nickolichuk

A critical look at themes in essays, plays and literature connecting to a Vancouver landscape.

**LBST 100** Approaching Knowledge - Fall 2016 - Cheryl Schreader and Brook Houglum

An introduction to interdisciplinary studies by looking critically at themes in climate change, social issues and the different factors that connect them.

**ANTH 121** Introduction to Social Anthropology - Spring 2017 - Gillian Crowther

Introduction to world systems including religion, race, class, cosmology, and familial structures through an anthropological lense.

**ENG 190** Creative Writing 1 - Spring 2017 - Ryan Knighton

Introduction to narrative and poetry

**GEOG 100** Human Geography - Spring 2017 - Jeanne Mikita and Kirsten McIlveen

Introduction to place, space and environment and the interconnections of people throughout the world.

**HIST 101** Europe in the Middle ages and Renaissance - Spring 2017 - Dale Montgomery

Historical look at the development of Europe in the middle ages and renaissance.

**AHIS 109** Women and Art History - Summer 2017 - Sandra Seekins

A look at woman's role in art throughout history as well as a look at women artists and their strengths and limitations over the years.

**ENG 218** Children's Literature - Summer 2017 - Carlos Reyes

A critical look at themes in children's literature, from picture books to graphic novels.

**HIST 235** World Civilization 1945 - Present - Summer 2017 - Dale Montgomery

A look at the recent history that shaped the world from after the Second World War to today.

Emphasis on the Cold War as well as social revolts around the world.

**ENG 191** Creative Writing II - Fall 2017 - Wayde Compton, Roger Farr, Anne Stone

Further work on narrative and poetry in different styles.

**GEOG 101** Environmental Geography - Fall 2017 - Cheryl Schreader

A look at the natural and man made cycles that affect weather, climate and biology.

**LBST 200** Refocusing Knowledge - Fall 2017 - Aurelea Mahood and Sean Ashley

A look at the scientific, interpretive and critical paradigms that surround research and how they are defined and used.

**HIST 209** - Aboriginal Peoples in Canada - Spring 2018

A relearning and decolonization of the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada

**HIST 249** Twentieth Century Europe - Spring 2018 - Denis Dubord

A look at the events that shaped the last century in Europe.

### 3. Extracurricular Activities

Writing, reading and research:

- Nine years of research regarding folklore and mythology in Scotland
- Fiction writing concerning that research

The last nine years I have been focused on researching and exploring Scottish Folklore and its connections to people, place and culture. I have read texts, had informal interviews and engaged in personal field work. From there I have been converting these myths and stories into a modern format so that I may understand them and use them for my fiction.

#### Travel:

- Two years lived abroad in Scotland: working; travelling around the country; researching and writing
- Travel around Europe; museums and places of history

History and storytelling are large interests of mine, and travelling around cities and countries that have an abundance of evidence of this in history, both positive and negative, has taught me a lot about human interaction and how woven into culture storytelling is.

#### Volunteer

- 2011-2014 volunteer with the BC Highland Games: Children's tent
- SFU Center for Scottish Studies: Events regarding Roberts Burns reading

#### 4. Signature work

##### **Micro fiction portfolio for ENGL190**

Writing has always been an interest of mine and I often indulged it in my spare time. The first creative writing course (ENG 190) taught me how to start refining those skills and the value in words. However, it wasn't until taking ENGL 191 that I put those lessons into a practice that I enjoyed. My work before taking both classes had never been short as my efforts focussed on writing longer short stories and an ongoing work on a novel. However, these two classes combined taught me the lesson of saying a lot though little. In the microfiction assignments, we had to create a short story with a maximum of 200 words while still including all the hallmarks of a story: plot, setting characters and conflict. To use my prior personal experience with what I had learned in previous lessons was an intriguing challenge.

In preparing to writing microfiction, we were giving a number of examples showing different styles to read in class. All were interesting, well written, and gave insight on how plot and conflict can work in such a short piece. However, not many of those pieces had a background in mythology or genre fiction so I had to some research on my own. I started by researching myths and select pieces of fiction that fit the mark and carefully studied them as I tried to discern patterns that were similar and different and then compared them to longer pieces of fiction. After reading several texts, an understanding of the workings behind writing micro fiction began to form and I wrote six pieces that were a combination or previous and new research.

I learned through this process that while micro fiction is not my preferred choice of work, the processes that led to creating them taught me skills that I can use for all my writing be it short story, longer pieces of fiction and even academic writing.

### **Digital Research Portfolio for LBST 200**

Research is entrenched deep into academics, and with my own person research combined I had practice in the art of researching and thought that would suffice. However, upon taking the class I soon learned that research was not a two-dimensional process. It wasn't only studying texts and recording them, nor was it only found in reading textbooks. I learned about the different paradigms that directed research and the epistemologies and modes of investigation that made up each one. When it came to the digital research portfolio, we had to attempt to align ourselves to one paradigm and the modes that went with it. Prior to taking this class, my work had always fell into the interpretive or critical paradigms and so I knew that my final portfolio would fall something between two two of them. After choosing main mode of investigation as archival research, I focused on old Capilano calendars from its first to its last.

After choosing my topic and research choice, I had to then narrow the timeline. Capilano had been open for nearly fifty years and each calendar held pages upon pages of information. In narrowing my topic, I decided to combine my interest in history with my project and focused on the history courses offered to Capilano students throughout the years. This still, was too broad and so I narrowed it down to the years 1969-1991 and focused on how history was told during the cold war. I tracked similarities, differences and courses added throughout and this process illuminated interesting trends. However, it was Aurelea who suggested to me that I add another mode of research to my project: interviewing. This was well out of my comfort zone as I am not a naturally verbose person and so, it was of more value to me. She got me in touch with two teachers who had taught history during my timeline and while the interview process wasn't as natural as it might be for others, I gained insight on my project that I wouldn't have had otherwise. Interviewing still is not a skill that easily comes to me, but I learned the value of talking to people that you can't get from viewing a text.

## 5. Sample research projects

### **Storytelling and community**

My first level of research could evolve around the idea of how storytelling connects communities and their interconnecting communities. I would focus on one community, using previous research, and look into the history that connected it to their use of storytelling throughout time. I would also look for small pieces of folklore that had been left behind, including but not limited to superstitions, toponymy and childrens books. I would look at archival records, books, interviews and films. After this research, I could start to focus my research on how community has used evolved through time, and how even through the scientific revolution,

storytelling is still a major factor in passing along information. Historical and archival data would be my focus for this part of research.

### **Storytelling and identity**

After focusing on community, I would narrow my research on how storytelling connects to the individual. I would want to look at how it shapes individual life from infancy to adulthood; from learning at a school-age to retirement. For this, my research methods would have to expand from only textual based studies, I would have to move to my least favourite mode of research: the interview. As much as I would rather go around it, I cannot get to know how storytelling shapes identity if I do not talk to the individual. I would do a series of interviews, with people of different ages so that I may see the full effect of how storytelling shapes the person in communities. Another mode of research I could use for this is surveying. I could circulate the survey throughout the community and gather the data I was interested in.

### **Modern fiction and Folklore**

For this aspect of my research, I would look at how classic mythology has been adapted into modern fiction writing. I would look at the changes in relaying the myth, both in the way it is told and the method. I would also look at the reasons behind the myth--which I hope to have learned from the first research project--and look for why it has either remained or been phased out of modern fiction writing. This phase of research would be almost completely textual but I would also look at talks done by writers who have modernized myth. I would also look at how responsive we are today to myths. I would look at modern religion as well, to see how science has affected its allegorical messages through storytelling