COM 49 - The Alchemy of Leadership: Turning Stories Into Gold
Developed and Taught by Marianne Neuwirth, PhD
Spring, 2015

Course Description and Objectives
Among the components necessary for effective leadership, few are as important as the ability to transform the ordinary into the remarkable through effective storytelling. The innovative telling of anecdotes, legends, and visionary ideals can dramatically enhance leaders' influence and charisma.

In this course we will examine what it means to be a leader, and we will analyze storytelling techniques used by several well-respected leaders. By the end of this course you will have a clear sense of what mesmerizing stories look and sound like, which approaches work best for keeping audiences rapt, and how to incorporate these techniques into your own presentations and leadership roles.

More specifically, you will:
- have a clear sense of why particular leaders' stories are memorable
- determine which aspects of a story best match your objectives
- identify which personal anecdotes are and are not effective
- identify values common to particular groups
- create a welcoming environment for your listeners
- develop the ability to access your most natural and confident tone of voice
- incorporate body language that commands attention and respect
- project vitality and charisma in your self-expression
- remain calm and poised even under pressure

Speeches, myths, movies, songs, books, and fairy tales will be used as source material. Class members will prepare, practice and deliver various presentations, incorporating techniques learned in class.

Course Activities:
There will be on-going in-class participation exercises and activities, such as readings and presentations, and we will view several videos/DVDs. By the end of the course you will have a greater repertoire of storytelling and public speaking skills.

Assignments

Two Options for Storytelling Reflection Paper
There will be one 3 to 5 page paper due during the 8th week of class. In this paper you will address a turning point in your own life, and how it parallels that of a turning point in a company, story character, or historical figure. Details will be handed out on the second day of class.

Class Presentations
There will be three class presentations, with the first being three minutes, the second being two to three minutes, and the third being four to five minutes. I will provide you with basic information on how to present information in a cogent and coherent manner.
Class Policies
1) You must attend 8 of the 10 classes and complete all of the assignments in order to receive credit for the course.
2) Please – no texting during class.
3) Please do your best to be on time for each class.

COURSE CALENDAR
Spring, 2015
(You should have the following reading/homework assignments completed by the date listed.
Note: Due dates, assignments, and topics subject to revision).

Week One – April 2
Intro class and selves
Listening lecture and exercises
The Three Basic Stories Leaders Tell
Storytelling exercise and homework assignment
Articles: Life Experiences and Leadership
Three Stories Leaders Need to Tell
The Art of Listening

Week Two – April 9
Presentation One – About Self
Archetypes and Stereotypes
Articles: Why We Love a Good Yarn
How Stories Change the Brain
Great Leaders Are Great Storytellers
What Makes a Hero?

Week Three – April 16
How to capture and trim a story – “getting to the point” – Nail Soup
Summarizing, telling, analyzing, interpreting stories
Molding captivating stories – character development, turning points, etc.
- CMM Theory
Ethos, Pathos, Logos – Storytelling techniques from Aristotle, Jesus
Articles: Made to Stick
Credibility Makes a Difference

Week Four – April 23
Emotions and Non-Verbal Communication in Storytelling – Identity
Values and Persuasion – how they inform good stories – Commercials – JFK
TED Talk – Jane McGonigal
Article: The Solitude of Self – by Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Class exercises

Week Five – April 30
Presentation Two – About Group
Speeches by Successful Leaders
The Value of Vision – John Muir, Abraham Lincoln, Malala Yousafzai, Steve Jobs
Articles: Her ‘Crime’ Was Loving Schools
Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address
Steve Jobs Stanford Graduation Speech – 2008 - youtube
Week Six – May 7
Delivery – Carol Mosely Braun, Barack Obama, Pema Chodron
Poetry exercise – delivery skills
Article: Ain’t I A Woman? by Sojourner Truth

Week Seven – May 14
Telling stories that successfully cross intercultural differences - TED Talks, Historical speeches
Readings on humor and idioms

Week Eight – May 21
Papers Due
Hearing successful storytellers – Guest Speakers
Article: Why Compassion in Business Makes Sense

Week Nine – May 28
Final Presentations

Week Ten – June 4
Final Presentations
Course Wrap-Up