



A Utrecht Network Intensive Course

Innovating Storytelling to Address Civic Awareness
2-30 November 2020 Bologna, Italy



<https://site.unibo.it/wetell-school/en>

"We all tell stories, but the stories differ in the purposes we expect them to fulfil and in the kinds of evaluations to which they are exposed".

Sir Peter B. Medawar, Nobel Prize for Medicine

IMPORTANT

Due to Covid-19 emergency and the international travel restrictions WeTell School 2020 runs online.

WeTell School turns the emergency into AN OPPORTUNITY to explore new interactive forms of sharing and exploring knowledge and realities through storytelling.

Our program has been reorganized along FOUR WEEKS, starting from November 2nd. We have adjusted our timetable to the new habitat, shifting the idea of INTENSIVE from GEOLOCATED SPACE to QUALITY TIME.

Originally conceived as an intensive and immersive experience in Bologna, WeTell 2020 is now rethought as an online experience combining LIVE SESSIONS and GUIDED SELF-LEARNING. The intent is to customize our learning path and accommodate different needs, also depending on a series of environmental factors that are still difficult to predict.

Have a look at our program and timeline!

2020 Edition

RESPONSIBILITY, DISSENT, VULNERABILITY



Our School focuses on the notions of RESPONSIBILITY, DISSENT and VULNERABILITY as LIBERTARIAN AND RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES to become active citizens, not as populist or nihilistic attitudes.

You will learn to appreciate dissent and vulnerability as SOCIAL DEVICES that relate to CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY, to ACT THROUGH LANGUAGE AND MEDIA upon a variety of discourses employed by institutions, agencies of power, corporations.

You will turn from IRONIC SPECTATORS TO ACTIVE THINKERS through seminars, charrettes, workshops and more.

PROGRAM

Week 1 / November 2-6

November 2, 14.30

SCHOOL OPENING

Presentation of the WeTell Summer School 2020:
Philosophy and Work Plan / Introducing The Teaching Team

15.00 / 17.00 - STORYTELLING IN/OF COMPLEX ECOSYSTEMS

Teaching Team: F. BENOZZO, E. LAMBERTI

Focus on:

- Environmental Awareness
- Narcissus Narcosis
- Hard Power & Soft Power
- The Free Will of Poetry

Some environments seduce us in subliminal and overwhelming ways, creating the reassuring illusion that we inhabit spaces enhancing our conscious free will when, in fact, they do not. In our technologically interconnected world, our individual and collective actions are often conditioned by more or less sophisticated forms of persuasions that create mainstream narratives that are not easily noticed. Because of that, we need to gain a more conscious, ecological vision of the ways in which we experience our actuality and oneness, even within our democratic, diverse and inclusive societies. Traditionally, the term ecology implies a respectful relation between all living organisms and their natural environment; yet, today the very idea of 'natural environment' is inscribed into a more complex dimension, as the biosphere constantly juxtaposes to the infosphere. The interplay of human and artificial conditions is therefore complicated, with inevitable but not always visible consequences on our cognitive and emotional consciousness, both as individuals and as groups.

The webinar on STORYTELLING IN/OF COMPLEX ECOSYSTEMS navigates the complex ecosystems of today, following the idea that media are no longer simply the extensions of the human body and mind; instead, they are our environment. Inevitably, being an environment, media are no longer unbiased. Against such a context, we will try to understand if free will is still an option and how it could develop into responsible dissent, meaning here the capability that we have to acknowledge and express one's own individual thinking, as well as constructive and effective differences (of opinion, language, gender, sexual orientation, etc.).

November 3

OFFLIFE ACTIVITIES & ONLINE SELF-LEARNING

As per our WeTell educational philosophy, knowledge is acquired through the active interplay of teachers and students. Because of that, we have structured our program so to let everybody find their learning pace, based on individual lifestyle and commitments.

It is important to understand that WeTell School is not a traditional e-learning program. Each week, we combine live classes and webinars with offline activities, that each student can pursue individually or in group, at their own pace.

Live classes (weekly seminars and interactive webinars) are conceived as starting points for further explorations that our teaching team will facilitate through:

1. Live tutorials/chats/meetings (customized upon request)
2. Repository of learning materials.

Concerning the repository, you can access it through the School Website.

What is important to know is that our repository relies on the biggest repository already existing on Earth: Internet, the World Wide Web. Therefore, in addition to some materials that we have prepared specifically for our WeTell School, you will find some hints to search for other useful materials, already available online, open source. These days, the real problem is not to have beautifully designed online materials; instead, it is to learn how to navigate and choose among the myriad of beautifully designed online materials.

Therefore, self-learning starts from a conscious understanding of the pervasive online strategies framing data into stories that might distract us from a clear appreciation of how those data are working on or through us.

Similarly, self-learning starts from a conscious approach to our onlife to avoid addiction and fight cognitive pollution. Self-learning relies on students to experience their cityscapes (or countryscapes) with a renewed approach to detect different narratives and opportunities.

November 4

PLAYFUL WEBINAR

Host: B. JIRKU

Each week, Prof. Brigitte Jirku will guide students through some practical and creative exercises related to the topics discussed in the various seminars and designed to stimulate all our senses. Being online, the great challenge will be how to develop our potential, how to interact with our fellows and with our environment. Navigating between different cultures and languages you will work with performative and theater techniques in and outside of the virtual classroom, fomenting mutual cultural understanding and interaction. The challenge will be to translate these activities to an online environment through live chats, webinars, breakout groups, and more... in an active and transformative way.

November 5

OFFLIFE ACTIVITIES & ONLINE SELF-LEARNING



Week 2 / November 9-13

November 9

**DISSENT AND POLITICS:
ACTIVISM, INFORMATION, CRITICAL STORYTELLING**
Teaching Team: L. CONTADINI, M. PETRELLI

Focus on:

- Mainstream versus counter narratives
- Rethinking public spaces, collective memory and trauma
- Dissent and critical thinking: disinformation

This session will explore the concept of dissent in our everyday life. Starting from some considerations related to the relationship between official narratives and counter-narratives, and how they engage with contemporary, technology-influenced perception of our everyday time-space, we will consider how dissent fosters creativity, and how it can change the way in which think and live. We will present different philosophical and artistic approaches to narration and dissent, focusing on how storytelling can be used as a platform for political analysis or advocacy, and as an instrument to create a different world in which an-other way of thinking is possible.

November 10

**OFFLIFE ACTIVITIES &
ONLINE SELF-LEARNING**

November 11 – 15.00/17.00

PLAYFUL WEBINAR
Host: B. Jirku

November 12

**OFFLIFE ACTIVITIES &
ONLINE SELF-LEARNING**

November 13 – 15.00/17.00

WEBINAR

“Conceptualizing your storytelling: tetradic storytelling”

Host: E. Lamberti

The tetrad is the operative model that Marshall and Eric McLuhan, both well-known media theoreticians, elaborated during their lasting collaboration to probe environmental hidden storytelling. The tetrad combines literacy and orality, knowledge, and art to encourage a mode of exploration which is participative and based on the human medium par excellence: language. Based on four questions, the tetrad can be turned into an effective tool also fostering individual and collective storytelling. This webinar will show how to employ the tetrad to both observe situations and create “performative storytelling”, that is narratives which are consciously conceptualized and shared.



Week 3 / November 16-20

November 16, 15.00 – 17.00

GENDER, LANGUAGE, DISSENT – Part A
Teaching Team: J. AUSTRISKIENE, P. RONDELLI

Focus on:

- Undressing Identity: dissenting on cliché
- Linguistic Discriminations

This week classes aim to investigate the linguistic discrimination of gender and sexual orientation through expressions of dissent and vulnerability. We will reflect on the metaphoric language that is used in different forms of communication, both traditional and multimedia, to express the normalness of linguistic diversity. We will also investigate how this language mirrors and forges individual and collective awareness; in particular, we will focus on how it leads to building a negative attitude towards a specific community. Dissent towards linguistic normativity, therefore, becomes an act of civic awareness, a form of activism to assess social vulnerability. We will analyze specific examples of interlinguistic communication that affect the construction of a shared background, also on a subliminal level. In particular, we will focus on gender complexity in the translation of audiovisual and multimedia discourse, which is increasingly widespread in transversal and transnational communities.

November 17

**OFFLIFE ACTIVITIES & ONLINE
SELF-LEARNING**

November 18, 15.00 – 17.00

GENDER, LANGUAGE, DISSENT – Part B
Teaching Team: J. URBONAITE, F. VITUCCI

Focus on:
Audiovisual Translations: some counter-thought.

November 19

**OFFLIFE ACTIVITIES &
ONLINE SELF-LEARNING**

November 20 – 15.00/17.00

PLAYFUL WEBINAR
Host: B. Jirku

Week 4 / November 23-27

Students will work to finalize their projects on Performative Storytelling. Customized sessions will be organized based on students' demand.

November 23 – 15.00/18.00

WEBINAR

“Students’ project implementation”

Hosts: WeTell 2020 Teaching Team



**TWO EXTRA WEBINARS ARE OFFERED TO FURTHER
EXPLORE SOME ISSUES ALREADY APPROACHED IN
THE FIRST THREE WEEKS**

November 25, 15.00 – 17.00

WEBINAR

“Rewriting together: storytelling as an inclusive practice”

Host: P. FLORIDIA

The collective interpretation and rewriting of pieces of literature offers a privileged field of experience to prepare for the dialogue of all the potentially conflicting worldviews that inhabit our cities. In its theatrical practices in the outskirts of the city, the company Cantieri Meticci seeks to create communities composed of the most diverse people who, starting from fragments of literary texts, experience playful practices of rewriting that mix not only verbal narration but also physical one through the body, images, and objects. The seminar, after a first theoretical approach, will propose to the participants some creative games based on this model.

November 26, 16.00-18.00

WEBINAR

“Signs of our Times: Sense-Making in the Semantic Environment”

Host: P. GRANATA

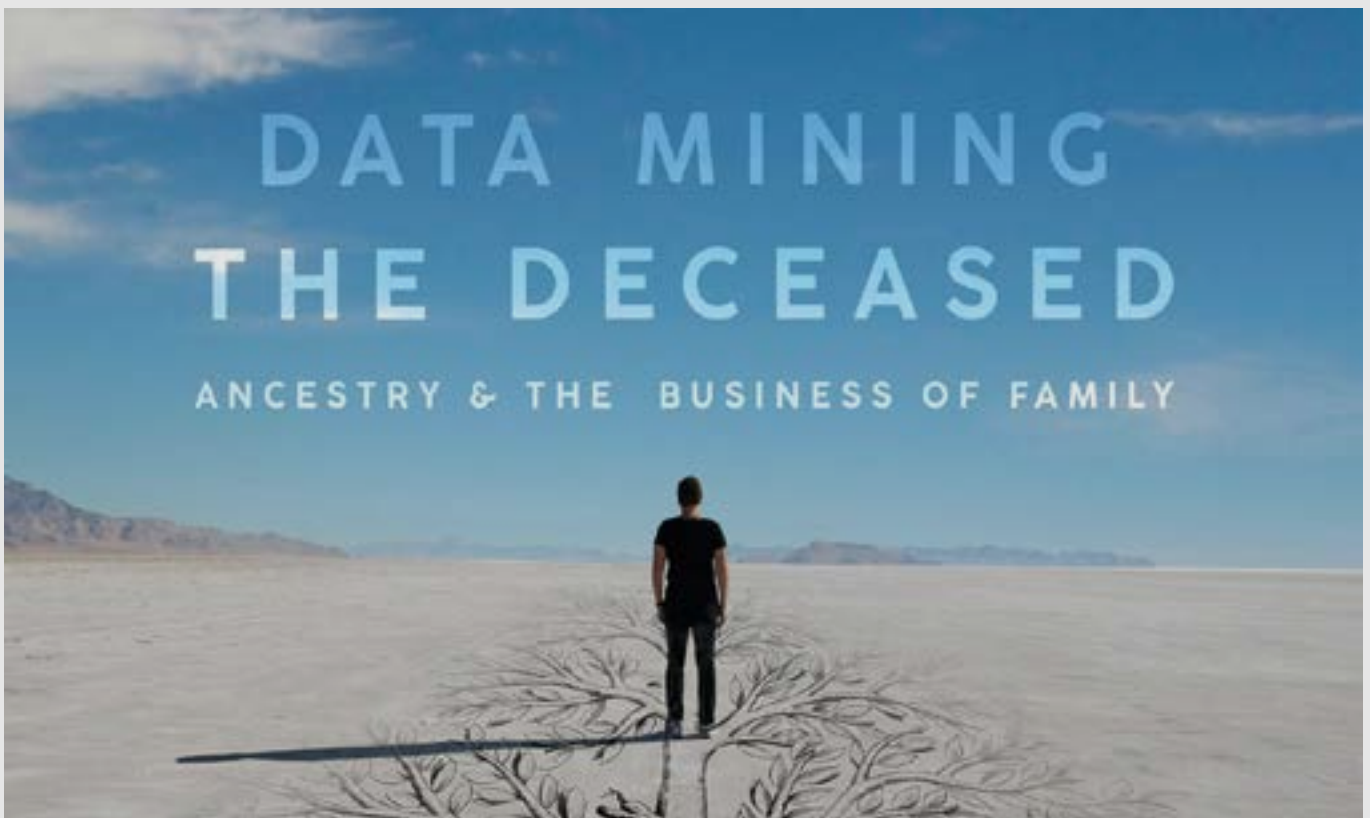
The way stories are told influences and, in some circumstances, determines the meaning conveyed. Similarly, the narratives that shape the collective imaginary cannot be separated from the sign-systems by which they are experienced. These sign-systems – not merely communicative codes but symbolic frameworks in a given culture – constitute in fact the taken-for-granted rules of social interaction. An analysis of the sign-systems embedded in everyday storytelling practices, either mainstream or personal, can lead to a deeper understanding of the narratives that contribute to forming our contemporary semiosphere. Through the lens of structural semiotics and media ecology, this seminar explores the potential of sense-making tools, both as an antidote to the uncertainty of our current times and as a design thinking exercise for fostering civic awareness.

NOVEMBER 30th – 17.00/19.00

SPECIAL EVENT

MEDIA ECOLOGY FOR LIFE QUALITY LECTURE – 4Th Edition
In collaboration with the Media Ecology Association
Hosts: Paolo Granata, President MEA & Luca DeBiase, Sole 24Ore

"Who do you think you are? Data, DNA and new narratives of the self."
Guest Speaker: Julia Creet, York University Toronto
Multimedia plenary and live Q&A



In her recent book, *The Genealogical Sublime*, (U. Mass 2020), Julia Creet traces the histories of the longest (Confucius), the largest (the LDS Church), the most complete (Iceland), the most lucrative (Ancestry.com) and the most rapidly growing genealogical databases (direct-to-consumer genetic genealogy), describing a genealogy of genealogy, a history of the industry built on the need to know where whence we come from. Reconsidered in the light of the database and DNA technologies driving the industry something else emerges—a sublime desire to gather all of the world's genealogical records. How does this drive for obsessive completeness affect the ways in which we narrativize ourselves?

JULIA CREET is Professor of English at York University in Toronto. On the cusp of literature and history, she is a leading scholar in Memory Studies having been involved in the development of the field since the 1990s. Her research projects are broadly interdisciplinary including the history of the Holocaust, literary studies, archival studies, public history, and more recently, data privacy and direct-to-consumer genetics. She is the author of *The Genealogical Sublime*, a history of the longest, largest, most complete, most lucrative and most rapidly-growing genealogy databases (U Mass Press, 2020); co-editor (with Sara Horowitz and Amira Dan) of *Shadows Over the City of Lights: Jewish Writing in Post-War Paris* (SUNY, In press) and *H.G. Adler: Life, Literature, Legacy* (Northwestern UP, 2016), winner of the Jewish Thought and Culture Award from the Canadian Jewish Literary Awards; and co-editor (with Andreas Kitzmann) of *Memory and Migration—multidisciplinary approaches to memory studies* (U Toronto Press 2011). She is also the director and producer of *MUM: A Story of Silence* (38 min 2008), a documentary about a Hungarian Holocaust survivor who tried to forget and *Data Mining the Deceased* (56 mins 2017, HD), a documentary about the industry of family history. In 2019, Julia Creet received the inaugural York University Research Impact Award for her leadership in public engagement.

Followed by **DIPLOMA CEREMONY** and **School Closing**



WeTell 2020

TEACHING TEAM

JURGITA ASTRAUSKIENĖ - a lecturer of Intercultural Translation Aspects and Dubbing at Vilnius University, Kaunas Faculty, Institute of Languages, Literature and Translation Studies. Her main research interests lie in the area of literary and audiovisual translation, culture translation, gender and translation, and AVT as a tool for social accessibility.

FRANCESCO BENOZZO teaches Romance Philology at the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures at the University of Bologna. Along with his academic career he is also poet, a musician, and the author of more than 700 publications. His areas of interests include among many the origins of human language, oral poetry, shamanism, anarchism, ethnophilology, critical editions of medieval texts, and the problem of landscape in literature. As a songwriter and harpist, he has released 11 CDs, produced in Italy, Denmark and the UK. For his poetry in defense of natural places and for his use of techniques belonging to the ancient tradition of oral poetry, since 2015 he has been nominated for the Literary Nobel Prize.

LUIGI CONTADINI teaches Spanish Literature at the University of Bologna. His areas of research include the phenomenological aspect of literary representations of contemporary writers, the literature of trauma and memory concerning the Spanish Civil War and the Francoist repression and various themes of the Eighteenth Century Spanish (memorial, epic, celebratory poetry, travel literature). He is promoter and organizer of the series of congress on Plural Spain (meetings and conflicts of languages and cultures) organized by the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures.

PIETRO FLORIDIA, A theatre director, scriptwriter, scenographer and actor, Pietro has founded and managed several theatres in the Bologna area since 1993. He has realised performances and projects about diversity and intercultural exchange; among them, La Compagnia dei Rifugiati (The Company of the Refugees), which was involved in many laboratories, performances and conferences on theatre, and gave birth to meetings, exhibitions and performances.

Pietro's travels across the world, from Palestine and Nicaragua to Bolivia and Africa, have always provided the grounding experiences for his projects. One of the most meaningful was his journey to Senegal, through Morocco and Mauritania, to meet the migrants leaving North Africa to reach Italy. Out of this experience were born a book and a performance, in which Pietro performed on stage.

La Compagnia dei Rifugiati has now become an independent project and has changed its name to Cantieri Meticci, where Pietro is currently covering the role of artistic and main director.

PAOLO GRANATA is an Assistant Professor in Book and Media Studies at St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto, President of the Media Ecology Association, and Director of the Media Ethics Lab at the University of Toronto. He is also a member of the Executive Committee at the Canadian Commission for UNESCO as Chair of the Culture, Communication and Information Sectoral commission. His main books are: *Arte in Rete* (2001), *Arte, estetica e nuovi media* (2009), *Mediabilia* (2012), and *Ecologia dei media* (2015).

BRIGITTE JIRKU, full professor of German Studies at the University of Valencia (Spain), received her PhD. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, specializing in 18th Century Literature and Gender Studies. Her current research centers on different aspects of Contemporary German Drama, especially post-drama and performativity, and on topics such as the representation of violence in literary texts, gender, and identity (construction) in the present. At present, she collaborates regularly with the Elfriede Jelinek Forschungsplattform (Universität Wien) and the European Network of violence (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz).

ELENA LAMBERTI teaches North American Literature and Media Studies at the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures at the University of Bologna. Her areas of research include: Anglo-American Modernism, Literature and Technology, Cultural Memory, War Literature.

She has published books and essays on English and Anglo-American Modernism, as well as Anglo-American culture of the late 20th Century. Her volume Marshall McLuhan's Mosaic. Probing the Literary Origins of Media Studies was a finalist for the 2013 Canada Prizes and received the 2016 Award for Outstanding Book in the Field of Media Ecology.

She coordinated the EU/Canada Cultural Project: "PERFORMIGRATIONS: People Are the Territory" (www.performigrations.eu) investigating shifting ideas on/of 'mobility' (both cultural and technological).

MONICA NOTARI is an accredited Psychosynthetic Counsellor and a member of the ICT staff at the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures, University of Bologna. She has collaborated with a variety of public bodies, developing integrated platforms for e-learning, data-processing and inter-art projects. She has served on the board of the European/Canadian Project "Performigrations: People Are the Territory", focusing on change, diversity and mobility; as well as on the team of "ACUME – Approaching Cultural Memory, a European Thematic Network" addressing European shared and divided memories.

Her areas of interests include psychosynthesis counselling, cultural memory, media ecology, mobile technologies.

MARCO PETRELLI teaches North American Literature at the University of Bologna. He holds a PhD in English-language Literatures from "Sapienza", University of Rome. His research interests include the literature and culture of the US South, the American Gothic, Postmodernism, Geocriticism and Graphic Narratives. He taught in various Italian Universities, and his essays (on authors such as Cormac McCarthy, William Faulkner, Stephen King, and Saa Taylor) appeared in a number of Italian and international journals. His first book is *Paradiso in nero: spazio e mito nella narrativa di Cormac McCarthy*. He collaborates with the newspaper *Il manifesto* as a literary critic.

VALERIA REGGI, Post-Doc Researcher and Translator. Valeria is a certified English-Italian translator. She holds a PhD from the Centre for Translation (CenTraS) of University College London, a specialization in literary translation from the University of Venice and a degree with honours in Modern Languages from the University of Bologna, where she has been appointed Independent Subject Expert in English Literature. Valeria Reggi began her career in languages as a research student at the University of Bologna, delivering lectures and publishing articles and translations. She has also gained experience in Marketing Communications for the private sector. Her current research interests focus on multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis applied to political discourse and disinformation

PAOLO RONDELLI, born in San Marino, served his Country during the years as civil servant and diplomat, until he covered the posts of General Director of Cultural Institutions, Ambassador to the USA, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO. Artistic Director for the National Theater for four seasons, art curator, National Commissioner at 56th and 57th Venice Art Biennale, he wrote some plays mainly focused on local and social history, gender issues, gender-based discrimination, and some papers for magazines of the University of Bologna (i.e. Storia e Futuro). He is a member of the Scientific Board of the University of San Marino Center for Historical Studies. For ages his interests are Cinema, Art, Theater and performing Arts, which he considers essential ingredients for a healthy living.

JUSTINA URBONAITĖ is an Assistant Professor at Vilnius University, Faculty of Philology, Institute of English, Romance, and Classical Studies. Her main research interests include cognitive linguistics and contemporary metaphor research. Currently, she is particularly interested in metaphorical representation of certain (minority) groups in public discourse and in ideological implications of such representation.

FRANCESCO VITUCCI is Senior Assistant Professor of Japanese Philology and Japanese Language and Linguistics at the School of Languages and Literature, Translation and Interpretation of Alma Mater Studiorum Bologna University. He has also taught Japanese at the Department of Asian and African Studies of Ca' Foscari University in Venice and at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures of Catania University. His research is based on multimedia teaching (audiovisual media and Internet in the Japanese class), audiovisual translation and language policies in contemporary Japan.



TEACHING TEAM ASSISTANTS

FEDERICA FONTANESI (Coordinator), federica.fontanesi4@studio.unibo.it

NICOLETA CATALINA BURAGA, nicoleta.buraga@studio.unibo.it

CHIARA DONATA ROTA, chiaradonata.rota@studio.unibo.it

SOFIA MISCHI, sofia.mischi@studio.unibo.it

MATTEO CAVINA

SOFIA VALENTINOTTI

PROGRAM GRAPHIC DESIGN

ANDREA PORCELLI