



# UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

## FACULTY OF KINESIOLOGY & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

### KIN5540

### Narrative Methods in Health Research

#### COURSE OUTLINE - Fall 2022

**Lectures:** Thursdays 9am-12pm  
Location: BN304

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Narrative methodologies and their associated techniques of research practice have ascended quickly in health-related research across the social sciences, humanities, and medical sciences. In this course, we examine the rise of narrative methods in the pursuit of phenomenological and existential accounts of pain, illness, disease, and more patient-oriented healthcare. Specific attention is given to the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of narrative methods, and several narrative-producing and representational methodologies such as interviewing, life history analysis, discourse analysis, arts-based techniques, visual and documentary approaches, and narrative ethnography are highlighted. Emphasis is also given to the complex and evolving relationship between narrative methods, the field of narrative ethics, and the practice of narrative medicine by healthcare practitioners. The use of case studies, first-hand assignments conducted by students, online videos, podcasts, and patient accounts of pain, illness, and suffering will highlight the personal significance and translational impact of narrative methods within healthcare fields

**Pre-Requisites:** none  
**Co-Requisites:** none

**Instructor:** Michael Atkinson  
**Email:** [michael.atkinson@utoronto.ca](mailto:michael.atkinson@utoronto.ca)  
**Phone:** 416-978-7205  
**Office Hours & Location:** Day: By appointment  
40 Sussex, Room 102

**Communication:** **Preferred method is via email/telephone/in person:**  
Response time to e-mail or telephone inquiries is within 24 hours (weekends excluded).

**Course Webpage:** Quercus, via <https://q.utoronto.ca>  
You are responsible for all information posted to this site (announcements/communications etc.)

## The Centre for Critical Qualitative Health Research ('CQ') at the University of Toronto



This course is part of CQ's Essentials of Qualitative Research curriculum. CQ is an extra-departmental unit in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health also supported by the Faculties of Kinesiology and Physical Education, Nursing, Pharmacy, Social Work, and the Rehabilitation Sciences Institute. CQ builds capacity in the health sciences to advance critical and theoretically informed qualitative inquiry. As a hub for researchers, graduate students, and professors teaching qualitative methodology, its academic fellows promote research that addresses the socio-political dimensions of health and questions prevailing assumptions that naturalize health, for example, as individual and biological phenomena.

Visit the CQ website [www.ccqhr.utoronto.ca](http://www.ccqhr.utoronto.ca) to learn more about CQ's resources and activities, which include other QR courses (Essentials of Qualitative Research Course Series), free methodology seminars (At the Centre Speaker Series; 3-4 seminars per term), the Certificate in Advanced Training in Qualitative Health Research Methodology for PhD students, and the Joan Eakin Award for Methodological Excellence in a Qualitative Doctoral Dissertation.

## STUDENT CONDUCT AND ACADEMIC BEHAVIOUR

Adherence to the Code of Student Conduct and the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters will be strictly enforced in this course.

These policies can be found online at [www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies.htm](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies.htm)

**\*\*Course grades are not final until approved by the Faculty's Examinations Committee\*\***

### ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It is a misrepresentation by deception or other fraudulent means.

Academic dishonesty can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with transcript notation (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. You are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty.

In an academic setting this includes things such as:

- copying or the use of unauthorized aids in tests, examinations and laboratory reports
- plagiarism
  - the submission of work that is not one's own
  - submission of any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom work is submitted
- aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty
- giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit
- giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines
- forging or falsifying University of Toronto documents

For complete information visit: <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/> and <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjun011995.pdf> for the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters.

## LEARNING ENVIRONMENT EXPECTATIONS

### Equity and Inclusion

The Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education highly values equity and social inclusion and aspires to have diverse representation among students, staff and instructors. It is a Faculty-wide expectation that every member of FKPE (students, TAs, staff, instructors) actively works to collectively create an inclusive culture through compassionate and supportive behaviour. This requires a continuous commitment to fostering mutual respect across all interactions and written communication among students, TAs, instructors and staff within FKPE spaces. We do not tolerate disrespect, discrimination, harassment, bullying and any other behaviour that threatens an equitable and inclusive environment, directed at students, TAs, staff or instructors.

U of T/KPE does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities. If you believe an act of discrimination has taken place, this [flow chart](#) will assist you in reporting your concerns and finding a resolution. If students encounter any problems in the course, these should be discussed with the course instructor. If problems persist, the Dean can be contacted.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

| LEARNING OUTCOME   | PROCESS BY WHICH THESE SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED  |
|--|--|
| <p><b><u>I. Subject-Specific Content.</u></b><br/> <b>By the end of the course, students should be able to:</b></p> <p>(i) Demonstrate a working knowledge of the relationship between ontology, narratives, and experiences in health, illness, and healing.</p> <p>(ii) Apply a range of narrative methodological techniques to contextually study what illness does to people, and how such experiences can be articulated.</p> <p>Suggest innovative and progressive health-related policies geared toward the protection, tolerance, appreciation, and respect of diverse illness narratives.</p> | <p>Each of the 3 subject-specific skills listed to the left will be developed in 4 keys ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Through careful and considerate reading of the assigned books, articles and chapters;</li> <li>b. By participating in supplemental learning through podcasts and videos;</li> <li>c. Through in-person discussion during seminars and student presentations; and,</li> <li>d. Hands-on, experiential learning via course assignments.</li> </ol> <p>Reflection on and synthesis of coursework for the course papers</p>  |
| <p><b><u>II. Transferable Skills.</u></b><br/> <b>By the end of this course, students will have enhanced the following skills:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) equity and diversity</li> <li>(ii) literacy</li> <li>(iii) presentation skills</li> <li>(iv) critical thinking skills</li> <li>(v) research/inquiry skills</li> <li>(vi) independent and collaborative learning professional responsibility</li> </ol>   | <p>This course focuses on how health care researchers and workers in a range of institutions may consider a full range of narrative methods as relevant to their practice. Here, specific attention is given to a range of narrative techniques frequently used for research and translational work. The seminars, and assignments focus on the complexity of narratives in the practice of health care, and how innovative approaches to understanding of illness are clearly needed in policy/ethics circles. Emphasis is given, equally, to the generation of narratives, the analysis of narratives, and the production of narratives by researchers and health care workers themselves.</p> |

## EVALUATION

Grades are a measure of the performance of a student in individual courses. Each student shall be assessed on their command of the course materials. Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's Plagiarism Detection Tool (Ouriginal) for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site

(<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>). To opt-out of submitting through the University's Plagiarism Detection Tool you must provide written notice to the instructor two weeks in advance of the submission deadline and students may be requested to turn in all rough notes/drafts and/or references along with their assignment and their work will be reviewed manually for textual similarity.

**Penalty for Late Assignments:** All written assignments must be submitted electronically via Quercus by 11:59 pm on the specified due date. Late assignments will be assessed a **5% penalty per day** (including weekends). Any requests for coursework extensions must be petitioned through the Graduate Office.

**Evaluation Components**

|  |   |                                |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>Component I: Listening</b>              | <b>Value: 25%</b>   | <b>Date: October 9, 2022</b>   |
|  | Description: For the first assignment in the course, students will engage in a reflexive listening exercise as part of a broader narrative interview session with a classmate. Here, the goal will be to develop one’s skills for one-on-one narrative facilitation, examination, and critical inspection. A small reflection paper, of 2,000 words in length, will be submitted by each student. Detailed instructions will be discussed in class and will be available on course website. |                                |
| <b>Component II: Narrative exploration</b> | <b>Value: 30%</b>   | <b>Date: November 13, 2022</b> |
|  | Description: The major paper for the course will involve students exploring at least two different narrative methods to provide a representation of a health/illness issue of their choice. Students may pursue this assignment individually or in groups of 2-3. Papers will be up to 4,000 words in length. Detailed instructions will be discussed in class and will be available on course website.   |                                |
| <b>Component III: Auto-narration</b>       | <b>Value: 30%</b>   | <b>Date: December 13, 2022</b> |
|  | Description: This assignment will involve students composing an auto-narration of a health-related story of their own experience. Building on the tradition of narrative medicine, the goal is to have students think reflexively about and then articulate their own lives as a teaching/learning tool for others. Students will submit a creative/arts-based project for this assignment. Detailed instructions will be discussed in class and will be available on course website.       |                                |
| <b>Component IV: Participation</b>         | <b>Value: 15%</b>   | <b>Date: Ongoing</b>           |
|  | A course grade will be allocated to active participation in the course over the entire semester.  |                                |

**READING**

In addition to the assigned chapters from the core texts, links to essential course readings (i.e., 2-3 journal articles per week) will be posted weekly on Quercus. Please keep up to date with the posted readings.

The following texts are reading for the course. I will be drawing on them extensively in class.

1. Frank, A. (2010). *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology*. University of Chicago Press.

2. Kim, J-H. (2015). *Understanding Narrative Inquiry: The Crafting and Analysis of Stories as Research*. Sage.
3. Charon, R. & S. DasGupta. (2016). *The Principles and Practice of Narrative Medicine*. Oxford University Press.

### CLASS SCHEDULE and READING OUTLINE

We cover a specific topic in narrative research methodology each week. Core readings establish a foundational or definitional understanding of the methodological issues, sample articles are used to illustrate how the methods are employed in practice, and supplementary videos/podcasts are provided to deepen our understandings of the methods. Students will participate in a seminar with other students in the class (led by the instructor) each week to discuss the readings and online tasks assigned for that week. Links to podcasts and video supplements will be provided each work on Quercus.

| DATE           | LECTURE TOPIC  | READING  | ONLINE TASK                               |
|----------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Week 1</b>  | Stories vs. narratives   | Frank (ch 1, 2); Kim (ch 1,2)                    | None                                      |
| <b>Week 2</b>  | The social function(s) of stories and narratives                                       | Frank (ch 1-4); Kim (ch 1-4)                     | Online podcast                            |
| <b>Week 3</b>  | Life histories   | Frank (ch 1-4, 5); Kim (ch 4-8)                  | Online video supplement                   |
| <b>Week 4</b>  | Narrative interviewing   | Frank (ch 1-4, 5); Kim (ch 4-8)                  | Online podcast                            |
| <b>Week 5</b>  | Journaling and story completion  | Frank (ch 1-4, 5); Kim (ch 4-8)                  | Online podcast                            |
| <b>Week 6</b>  | Narrative ethnography  | Kim (ch 4-8)                                     | Online podcast                            |
| <b>Week 7</b>  | Indigenous storytelling  | Kim (ch 4-8)                                     | Online video<br>Online podcast            |
| <b>Week 8</b>  | Telling stories through creative non-fiction: Film, theatre, short stories, and poetry | Kim (ch 4-8)                                     | Online podcast                            |
| <b>Week 9</b>  | Telling stories through the visual arts: photovoice, body mapping, and sculpture       | Kim (ch 4-8)                                     | Online podcast<br>Online video supplement |
| <b>Week 10</b> | Auto-ethnography   | Kim (ch 4-8)                                     | Online podcast                            |
| <b>Week 11</b> | Narrative medicine (part 1)  | Frank (ch 6); Charon & DasGutpa (Part I, II, VI) | Online video                              |
| <b>Week 12</b> | Narrative medicine (part 2)  | Frank (ch 6); Charon & DasGutpa (Part I, II, VI) | Online video                              |

## KIN STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES:

We're here to help! The Registrar's Office offers student services related to academic success, health and wellness, career planning and much more.



### Registrar's Office

The Registrar's Office provides a variety of services, including academic, program and personal advising. For information regarding coursework extension, program requirements, etc., email [grad.kpe@utoronto.ca](mailto:grad.kpe@utoronto.ca) or drop by the Registrar's Office. Forms and further information available at: [www.kin.utoronto.ca](http://www.kin.utoronto.ca). For program information, refer to the [KIN Student Handbook](#).



### Technical Requirements & Support

The University of Toronto has identified the following minimum technical requirements needed for students to access remote/online learning <https://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/covid-19/tech-requirements-online-learning/>. Institutional supports are available for any students experiencing challenges in acquiring these minimum requirements.



### KPE Student Life Hub - Academic Success, Career Education and Accessibility Services

The Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, in partnership with the UofT Student Life Office, has created the KPE-Student Life Hub in the Registrar's Office (BN110) that offers a variety of in-house learning skills, career education and accessibility services resources, workshops and advising for our undergraduate and graduate students. Students may attend workshops on academic skills or career exploration, or schedule a one-on-one appointment with a learning strategist, career educator or disability specialist. Our learning strategist, career educator and disability specialist are also available to work with instructors and visit classes. Please refer your students to the KPE website for more information about workshops, appointments and booking procedures.

<https://kpe.utoronto.ca/academics-research/student-services>



### Writing Centre ([www.hswriting.ca](http://www.hswriting.ca))

The Health Sciences Writing Centre provides free individualized, confidential writing instruction to:

- Develop your writing skills
- Improve your capacity to plan, organize, write and revise academic papers (in any subject!)
- Manage ESL/EFL language challenges

The centre works with *all* students, for *all* assignments, at *all* stages of the writing process. Visit the website to book an appointment or for more information.



### Academic Success Centre ([www.asc.utoronto.ca](http://www.asc.utoronto.ca))

In addition to graduate in-house offerings, the Academic Success Centre at U of T offers group workshops and individual counselling to develop strategies for a range of learning challenges such as:

- time management
- stress and anxiety
- memory
- exams
- note-taking
- other aspects of study
- textbook reading
- concentration

Visit the website to view upcoming workshops and drop-in centre hours.



### Accessibility Services ([www.accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca))

Accessibility Services provides services and programs for students with a documented disability, whether *physical, sensory, learning disabilities* or *mental disorders*. Students with a temporary disability (e.g. concussion, broken arm or leg,) also qualify. Services include test and exam arrangements, note-taking

services, on-campus transportation, concussion support etc. Visit the website to find out about registering, accommodations, peer mentoring, financial supports etc.



### **Career Services** (<http://www.careers.utoronto.ca>)

The KPE Registrar's office has a **dedicated** Career Centre advisor on specific days for career counselling services, along with specific career workshops throughout the year geared towards graduate students. Visit the website to view other broad services including resume writing, cover letter workshops and career exploration programs. More information will be provided to you via email.



### **Health and Wellness**

- KPE now has an embedded Mental Health Counsellor providing first-level counselling services. Available Monday-Friday by appointment only.
- Contact: Health & Wellness, 416-978-8030, to book an appointment with a Wellness Counsellor or for questions about the counselling service. Students should state that they would like to meet with the "KPE Wellness Counsellor".
- Instructors may refer students to the Counsellor using the [Counselling Referral Form](#)
- Numerous additional health, wellness and counselling services are offered through the University of Toronto's Health and Wellness Centre.
  - Contact: <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc/services-offered>

### **Tri-Campus Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre ("The Centre").**

**The Centre has a location on all three campuses** to help students who disclose to access supports and, in cases where the student chooses to formally make a report, the Centre will explain the process, and facilitate the making of the report to the University and/or to the Police. The Centre can be contacted through its confidential phone at 416-978-2266 or [thesvpcentre@utoronto.ca](mailto:thesvpcentre@utoronto.ca).

Students are encouraged to call or email for an appointment, which will be booked as soon as possible. **Students in crisis or in need of immediate support related to sexual violence can contact Women's College Hospital Sexual Assault Care Centre at 416-323-6040.**