



UNIVERSITÀ DEL PIEMONTE ORIENTALE

## **Factual Narratives (II): An Intermedial and Interdisciplinary Perspective on Stories about Reality — The Case of the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area (AMBA)**

**Type of Activity:** Seminar

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**Dates:** Monday, March 10; Tuesday, March 11; and Wednesday, March 12, 2025

**Total Hours:** 12 hours

**Delivery Mode:** In-person, at Università del Piemonte Orientale (UPO), Vercelli, Italy.

### **RATIONALE**

Narration is, perhaps, the most elementary way of organizing discourse and, therefore, thought. This does not mean that it lacks complexity, but rather that it is fundamental in relation to other textual types, such as explanation or argumentation, as it forms their condition of possibility: to explain something (to ourselves or others) or to defend an argument (even within our own minds), we must first construct a narrative, assembling a “story.” Moreover, narration has been present in human culture since the dawn of time due to its primary function of helping to retain and give meaning to events in reality — events that are inevitably fleeting and subject to the passage of time.

When studying how narrative texts are constructed and interpreted (myths, legends, short stories, novels, historical sources, historiographical texts, news articles, chronicles, autobiographies, anecdotes, gossip, films, documentaries, biblical parables, confessions, political speeches, patients' stories, and many others), it is essential to adopt a specific conception of the boundaries and relationships between factual discourse (which claims truth) and fictional discourse (which does not claim referential truth). Facts preexist factual narratives, which confirm them; in fictional narratives, on the other hand, facts are created *ex nihilo* in an act of imagination.

The term “factual narrative” (*récit factuel*) was coined by Gérard Genette in *Fiction and Diction* (1991), distinguishing it from “fictional narrative” based on the reading pact established in each case. Factual texts are part of real communication and consist of sentences uttered by an author and interpreted by the reader as claims of referential truth. Fictional texts also form real communication between an author and a reader, but they are, so to speak, more complex than factual texts because they establish, alongside this real communicative situation, a second imaginary communicative situation between an imaginary narrator and an imaginary reader, akin to a textual citation. Although the course will briefly touch on the issue of the fictional representation of reality, the primary focus will be on studying factual narrative and its various manifestations in society.

The interest in studying narration in non-fictional contexts emerged relatively late compared to the study of narration in literature. The advent of the linguistic turn in the late 1960s, particularly in the fields of historiography and journalism, marked an initial

step toward recognizing the importance of narrative textuality in non-literary domains. Hayden White's metahistorical approach, presented in texts such as *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973), and the "New Journalism" pioneered by Tom Wolfe in his article "The New Journalism" (also in 1973) — though previously practiced in Argentina by Rodolfo Walsh in *Operación Masacre* (1957) — are key milestones in acknowledging the centrality of narration and remain subjects of lively debate.

In 1967, William Labov and Joshua Waletzky, within the framework of sociolinguistics, conducted their famous studies on oral narration in "natural" contexts, that is, in everyday life. Their contributions spurred the development of narrative studies in previously unexplored areas. A particularly illustrative case is medicine: starting in the 1980s, the idea gained ground that narrating the experience of illness plays a significant role in the doctor-patient relationship, and therefore in medical diagnosis and treatment. This shift led to the emergence of narrative medicine. Moreover, this "narrative turn" can be observed across all disciplines, even in the natural and exact sciences, since the 1990s.

This seminar, centered on the interdisciplinary study of factual narrative textuality as a vehicle for representing reality (existential, anthropological, professional, cultural, health-related, psychological, economic, social, political, criminal, etc.) in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires (AMBA), aims to explore its uses and functions in various spheres of textual production and across different media and formats. The goal is to provide students with analytical tools and categories they can apply to their own research. The seminar will address both oral narration (in everyday life or medical contexts, for instance) and written narration, exploring not only the "canonical" domains of non-fictional narration (such as historiography and journalism) but also those that have received less attention, such as law, anthropology, medicine, and the natural sciences.

Notice: As this seminar is the second part of a course delivered in 2024, this edition will focus on various aspects related to mode, voice, and the narrated world or *storyworld* (the "What" dimension). Nonetheless, introductory tools will also be provided for participants who did not attend the previous edition.

## OBJECTIVES

General Objective:

The general objective of this course is to study the characteristics, discursive construction methods, reception strategies, functions, and uses of factual narrative in written, oral, audiovisual, and transmedia texts produced across the various socio-discursive domains where human activity unfolds.

Specific Objectives:

The course aims to enable students to:

- 1) Acquire theoretical tools to conceptualize narration as a discursive form.
- 2) Develop strategies to distinguish between factual and fictional narration by recognizing the factual pact through paratextual elements or internal textual features.
- 3) Understand the functions that narration fulfills in diverse fields of textual production within society.
- 4) Learn to apply narratological categories and theoretical tools to solve concrete textual problems related to interpreting the meanings at play in the reception of a factual text.

- 5) Analyze factual texts from and about Greater Buenos Aires to gain insight into its political, social, media, health, legal, and everyday realities, among others.

## **CONTENT/THEMATIC UNITS**

### Unit 1: Factual Narration – An Introduction

Narrative textuality as an elemental form. Communicative, explanatory, and cognitive functions of narration. Media and formats of narration. The anthropological matrix of narration within structuralist definitions. Narrative texts from the perspective of text linguistics. Factual narrative and its relationship with fiction. Terminological distinctions: factual, non-fictional. Semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic definitions of the factual/the fictional. Factuality as a gradient: texts with “strong” versus “weak” factuality. Markers of fictionalization within factual texts. Socio-discursive domains, genres, and regimes of truth. Possible hybridizations.

### Unit 2: Mode and Voice

Narrative distance: *showing and telling*. Representation of thought in journalistic and historiographic texts. Degrees of narrator participation in the story: homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrators. Autodiegesis in illness narratives and migrant experiences. Narrator and ethos in political discourse. The narrator’s identity self-construction in the accounts of Buenos Aires SME entrepreneurs. Narrative frames and embedded factual narratives. The present of narration and its temporal relationship with what is narrated. Retrospective narration as a paradigmatic case. Simultaneous narration in sports reporting. Intercalated narrative in transmedia storytelling: journeys and narrators on X (formerly Twitter). Breaking news and serialized news. Implied author and implied reader.

### Unit 3: The Elements of the Narrated World – The What

The notions of "action" and "event." Happenings, story, and episode. Motivation and causal explanation. From linear causality to the notion of "causal field." The reality effect. Beginning, middle, and end. Complication, turning point, and resolution in “springboard stories” in business marketing. The action scheme and the global meaning of narratives. Agents and other participants in factual texts. Characterization of participants in police reports. (Attribution of) intentionality in legal discourse and personal anecdotes. Affective-evaluative reception of participants and narrative regulation to achieve diverse goals. Space and its boundaries. Construction of the narrated setting. The (re)construction of Greater Buenos Aires and AMBA territories and spaces through narrative.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Each of the three sessions is planned to be divided into two parts: a theoretical-lecture segment and a practical exercise segment. In the first part, the assigned bibliography will be addressed and discussed, which students are encouraged to have read beforehand. In the second part, a module of factual texts produced in various domains and covering a wide range of topics (though related to the realities of the Buenos Aires metropolitan area) will be analyzed using the concepts introduced during the theoretical segment.

## Schedule

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Content / activities</b>
1	<u>Monday, March 10</u> 10:30 to 14:30	Introduction / Unit 1
2	<u>Tuesday, March 11</u> 8:30 to 12:30	Unit 2
3	<u>Wednesday, March 12</u> 8:30 to 12:30	Unit 3

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### Unit 1

- Koval, M./Galluzi, M. (eds.) (2023). Dossier: Teoría y usos del relato factual. Aproximaciones a la narración en contextos discursivos diversos. *Revista Argentina de Investigación Narrativa* (RAIN), Vol. 3, N<sup>a</sup> 6. [A translation into English will be provided.]
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- Schaeffer, J.-M. (2009). Fictional vs. Factual Narration. In Hühn, P. et al. (Eds.). *The Living Handbook of Narratology* (pp. 98-113). Hamburg.

### Unit 2

- García, V. (2023). El punto de vista en el relato factual. Una aproximación a partir del testimonio. *Revista Argentina de Investigación Narrativa* (RAIN) 3, 6, pp. 123-144. <https://fh.mdp.edu.ar/revistas/index.php/rain/article/view/7477/7691> [A translation into English will be provided.]
- Martínez, M./Scheffel, M. (2019). Stimme / Voz. In *Einführung in die Erzähltheorie*. [A translation into English will be provided.]
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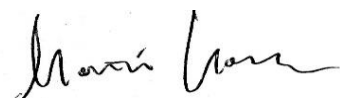
### Unidad 3

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