

Masaryk University

**“Autobiographical Memory and Narrative” – Intensive Course**

Jens Brockmeier

September 5-7, 2022 (Mon, Tue, Wed 10:00 -13:00, room B2.32)

Western cultures have increasingly become autobiographical cultures. Never before have so many autobiographies been written and produced; never before has there been such a wide spectrum of genres and media – traditional, digital, and performative; never before have so many people been concerned with telling their individual past and its meaning for the present. And never before have practices of autobiography been so intimately connected with the idea of self-exploration and, in fact, of self-construction. This course explores the role of narrative in this process. It takes a closer look at the narrative shape of autobiographical memory and identity.

**1<sup>st</sup> Class**

**September 5, 10:00 -13:00**

- Introduction: Memory, narrative, and the autobiographical process (Lecture & discussion)
- Self and identity as idea and social practices (Discussion)
- Visual and narrative identity (Photovoice)

All participants are expected to bring to this class (via memory stick or any other electronic media) 2 photographic self-portraits/selfies/ photographs of themselves, one of which is recent, the other one from the past.

Background (optional) reading: *Beyond the archive: Memory, narrative, and the autobiographical process*, Chap 1

**2<sup>nd</sup> Class**

**September 6, 10:00 - 13:00**

- The rhetoric of public self-presentation (Group work)
- The autobiographical process: The case of literature (Text analysis)
- Creating a memory of oneself (Critical discussion). Reading (required):  
*Beyond the Archive: Memory, narrative, and the autobiographical process*, Chap 6  
[*Creating a memory of oneself: Narrative identity*, pp. 171-202]

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Class

**September 7, 10:00 - 13:00**

- Difficult memories: The story of Oswald and Linda (Text/Transcript analysis).
- What makes me “me”? (Lecture & discussion)
- Between art and life: What is the self in a self-portrait? (Photovoice)
- Summary

All participants are expected to bring to this class (via memory stick or any other electronic media) photographs of 1-2 artistic portraits or self-portraits – whether paintings, drawings, photographs, sculptures, media works, or other artistic creations (historical or contemporary) that can be photographed.

#### *Reading:*

Brockmeier, J. (2018). *Beyond the archive: Memory, narrative, and the autobiographical process*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press (Paperback).

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