

## **POST-ISPP MINI-CONFERENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE**

### **TOPIC: NARRATIVE, INTERNATIONAL POLITICS & PSYCHOLOGY**

#### **Methods and Illustrations of Interviewing, Analysis, and Application**

On July 7-8<sup>th</sup>, the ISPP, in collaboration with the UC Irvine Ethics Center, will sponsor a two-day mini-conference on narrative analysis. Interested parties should contact Kristen Monroe at [krmonroe@UCI.Edu](mailto:krmonroe@UCI.Edu) or Marilu Daum at [daumm@uci.edu](mailto:daumm@uci.edu) for further details and to reserve a place.

**Aims and Significance.** The importance of narrative analysis for understanding critical events in international relations and conflict resolution seems well established, with analysts making frequent use of narrative in analyzing texts -- stories, journals, letters, autobiography, field notes, [interviews](#) – to understand how people create meaning in their lives and interpret and respond to wartime reality. Recent work at UCI established a valuable archive of stories, providing valuable insight on how the human mind creates a narrative that allows individuals to find a road to peace (helping others, forging a humane life after war) or another road (being a perpetrator, a war criminal or one crippled by the trauma of war). The “how-to’s” of narrative are less clearly-developed, especially the extent to which qualitative methods and tools based on anecdotal material can be utilized in a systematic manner. Similarly how do we construct interviews that are objective yet open-ended? Discussing the methodology underlying narrative analysis, how to construct an interview and apply interpretive tools to political conflict and its peaceful resolution is the focus of this mini-conference scheduled at UCI and hosted by the UCI Ethics Center.

**Organizational structure.** Each year, the Ethics Center sponsors an internship program for one month during the summer. This year that program will focus on narrative and its use in political analysis of conflict and its resolution. We have invited some of the top narrative scholars in the world to participate a mini-conference as part of this internship program. These scholars will take part in a two-day program on narrative and conflict analysis which will occur at UC Irvine immediately after the annual meetings of the International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP) in San Diego. The close proximity – in both time and geographic space – will allow any ISPP members who wish to attend the conference to do so at minimal cost and inconvenience. UCI is roughly 85 miles, along the beautiful Pacific coast. Irvine can be reached by train from San Diego or via car. The drive takes roughly 90 minutes; using the train will necessitate taking a cab from the train station to UCI. For ISPP participants interested in staying in Irvine, we will provide hotel accommodations at a reduced conference price. We encourage participants to stay in Irvine and to enjoy the nearby sights: Laguna Beach, Disneyland, and some of the world’s best museums in nearby Los Angeles (two Gettys, the Norton Simson, the Huntington, the LACMA) and the beaches in Laguna and Newport. The conference itself will consist of two days of lectures on narrative by top narrative scholars such as Paul Nesbitt-Larking (current ISPP president) and Catarina Kinnvall (editor of the prestigious journal, *Political Psychology*) inter alia. The two day conference will allow presentations such as those scheduled below; most of the participants will be at UCI in person but two others will be Skyped in from England. All talks will be in English.

**Conference volume.** The goal of the project will be to expose participants to the techniques underlying narrative analysis, to develop a cohort of young scholars working on narrative who

can interact throughout the year via the internet, and to produce a short volume on the mechanics of doing narrative analysis. The UCI Ethics Center Director will commit to editing the volume, along with others who are interested in doing so as a collaborative effort. (The Ethics Center has produced 8 volumes, with presses such as Yale, U of California and Oxford so we are confident we can find a publisher for this volume.)

By including top scholars and participants from diverse universities, we hope to build on the ISPP's diverse national membership and create a virtual community, via email and a social media network, of scholars working on this important topic with UCI as the hub. ISPP scholars may participate in the conference, simply by listening to the presentations or, if they wish, by presenting some of their own work on narrative. Finally, for those who so desire, each ISPP scholar who participates in the project also will be paired with an intern from the UCI Ethics Center (usually a graduate or undergraduate student). We will ask the senior scholar to mentor the intern in what becomes a valuable learning process in which the student can also contribute to the final paper – with joint authorship – on a topic relating to narrative, either applied to a particular area (such as peace activists and conflict in Israel/Palestine) or on the methods of narrative analysis. This thus will help launch new scholars in the field, as well as advance existing knowledge on an important topic and provide a handbook for interested scholars who cannot attend the conference itself. As a pedagogical exercise for students, the experience will prove invaluable.

**UCI July 7-8, 2015. Co-sponsored by the UCI Ethics Center.** Proposed potential participants (Subject to finalization, depending on travel of a few participants.)

1. **Kristen Renwick Monroe, UCI and Molly Andrews, University of East London.** "What is narrative? How do we construct an interview? Analyze it? Ethical and Practical issues." Molly's talk will be Skyped into our Center.
2. **Jennifer Jones, UC Irvine.** "Analyzing Narratives: From N-Vivo to Latent Semantic Analysis, Theme and King's methods for analyzing qualitative interpretive narrative data." Pennebaker's narrative techniques and natural language use, health, and social behavior.
3. **Helen Haste, Visiting Professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education and Bath University.** "Civic engagement needs stories! " "This land was made for you and me" – What follows these lines of a well-known folk song? Images, metaphors and narratives move us to action because they frame how we explain our world. They capture and reflect the values we hold self-evident, and address the issues for which we choose to struggle. In this regard, narratives are surprisingly culturally-specific. Haste will discuss how metaphors and stories fuel civic consciousness and participation and ask how and when does culture matter? Helen's talk will be Skyped in.
4. **Catarina Kinnvall. Lund University, Sweden and Editor of *Political Psychology*.** "Narratives and Trauma in International Conflict."
5. **Paul Nesbitt-Larking. Political Science at Huron University College, Adjunct research Professor at the University of Western Ontario, teaching professor in Huron's MA program in Theology.** "Narratives of power, identity and globalization: political psychology and political sociology."
6. **Cecelia Lynch. UCI Director of International Studies.** "Narratives, religion and conflict: The Case of Africa."
7. **Kristen Monroe and the Tobis Fellows. UCI** "Narratives and our treatment of others: Altruism and Giving Back."
8. **Angelika Kanavou.** "Adaptation post-conflict: Inter-generational stories of immigrants, survivors and perpetrators and the definitions of *otherness*." Discussion of how the

"other" exists in narratives of perpetrators, 40 years after the onset of the genocide in Cambodia. One can make the point that the other has not evolved since he is presented in nonspecific terms in a language that strongly resembles the narrative of party thought reform manuals. While I believe that the reproduced "language of non-thought" among genocidaires, as Robert Jay Lifton would say, has to do with the nature of the regime that shaped them, the imprecision of the narratives also may be explained by the indirectness of Cambodia's East Asian society.

9. **Tamir Magil. Tel Aviv University.** "Narratives of resistance: Peace activists reflecting on the efficacy of collective action". An Israeli-US comparison of peace-activists in the anti-war movement, focusing on what motivates peace activists to take action. Presentation asks: How has this action affected their view of society? Their views of the desired goals?
10. **Michael Spezio. Scripps and CalTech.** "Narratives of democracy and inclusion in post-conflict settings."