This course serves as an introduction to the concept of narrative. We will be reading literary and philosophical texts that both define and question conventional ideas about fiction, history, and ethical action. We will think about how narrative creates a sense of identity, and consider the relationship writers see, and we ourselves construct, between our stories and our actions. I hope to focus some of our discussion on fields that reflect the interests of members of the class, and in that sense, our course will be formed by collaboration.

**Objective:** By familiarizing you with some fundamental works in the history of narrative, this course aims to explore your ideas about the role of narrative in your lives and your work. Class discussions and writing assignments are meant to deepen your observations as close readers and refine your ability to articulate your complex insights with evidence and panache.

**Course Requirements**
The work for the class combines class participation, intensive reading, and various types of writing. Class discussion will enable us to make connections between the material we are studying and your areas of interest. As your explorations of narrative progress, please feel free to propose readings and activities and to bring any additional material to the class that you feel might make it more meaningful.

Ground rules: Attendance is required. Habitual lateness and more than two unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade in the course. You are expected to have completed the readings before the class for which they are assigned. Plagiarism will result in no credit for the assignment. Papers are due on deadline. No laptops please unless you have a documented reason for needing to use one. Please let me know. You need to be fully in the room!

**Texts (required editions; no substitutions please)**
Selected handouts and NYU Classes postings.

**Recommended text:** *Lazarillo de Tormes and the Swindler: Two Spanish Picaresque Novels.* Michael Alpert, editor and translator. New York: Penguin Classics, 2003. Don't buy this yet! It is not in the NYU bookstore. This book is a picaresque novel that Cervantes refers to at various moments. It was a best seller in 1554! It is short, funny, and a good example of the genre. One of the characters in Don Quixote, Gines de Pasamonte, is also writing a picaresque novel. We will discuss and for those who want to read it, we can have a class lunch, or weave it in when we discuss the relevant chapters in DQ.

**Papers**
Requirements: Four 500-word short observation essays and two 1500 to 2000-word essays. Writing must be handed in on time. Short essays are important for my understanding of what you’re thinking about as you read, so it’s vital that you hand them in on deadline. They are also sources for your longer essays.

Guideline for observation essays: Your goal is to show your analytical wingspan as you explore the text. The length of this short essay is about 500 words. This length specification doesn't mean that you should write until you hit 500 words! It means that you should write and get down your best, bravest, most precise ideas about the reading and thoroughly develop them, and then cut your essay down to your best 500 words.

Specifications: All essays must have a title. When you quote from and cite your sources, you are expected to use the MLA citation format, either parenthetical documentation or footnotes. All essays must include a list of Works Cited following the MLA format. (I’m serious about this, so pay attention!). See *MLA Handbook* or you can find MLA format on line. Excellent site: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/. Every essay should be typed, double-spaced, and carefully proofread, with pages numbered. Please use 12-point font, ideally Times or Times Roman (not Cambria; if you care why, I will explain)! Everything matters!

**Grading**
- Participation 15%
- Responses 35%
- Essays 50% (25% each)

**Academic Integrity**
As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website for a full description of the academic integrity policy: www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html

**Schedule**
- 9/6 Introductions. In-class writing.
9/8  READING DUE: Plato, excerpt from *Republic* (NYU Classes).
    Recommended reading on NYU Classes: Introductions to Plato by Annas, Cornford, Grube, Reeve.

DISCUSSION: Why are stories discussed in the context of education in books 2 and 3? What effect does narrative have on the emotions? What relationship do you think Plato sees between art and the state?

9/13  Continued discussion of Plato, Books 2, 3, and 10.
    Recommended reading on NYU Classes: Lear essay on Plato.

DISCUSSION: Think about art and the emotions. How does the discussion change in Book 10? Why do you think Book 10 has two parts? What are they and how do they relate?

9/15  READING DUE: Aristotle's *Poetics*.

DISCUSSION: Bring in passages that show Aristotle’s notion of mimesis in contrast to Plato's. In what different ways does Aristotle justify poetry? Bring in one question or idea to start off discussion.

9/20  More on Plato and Aristotle and notions of narrative.
    READING DUE: Plato and Aristotle, *Poetics*
    Recommended reading on NYU Classes: Nehamas essay.

DISCUSSION: How does Aristotle’s notion of catharsis differ from Plato’s ideas about art's effect on the emotions? What is catharsis, anyway, and what do you think about it? Think about the relationship Aristotle sees between plot and human action. Why is plot so important?

9/22  Even more about narrative
    READING DUE: *Don Quixote*, Part 1, Author's Preface. Hillis Miller on Narrative (NYU Classes). Recommended: Scholes on narrative for the impassioned.
    DISCUSSION: Look carefully at the Prologue. Who is the author and what is he up to?

**WRITING DUE: SHORT OBSERVATION ESSAY #1** 500-word response discussing an issue that engages you in Plato and/or Aristotle about the relationship between stories and the way we live our lives. Think about and write about how Plato's and Aristotle's ideas about stories inform your own ideas and beliefs about narrative. Try to get behind your own presuppositions as you explore your ideas.


DISCUSSION: What are the main themes that you see the opening chapters introduce? Choose some passages that illustrate them. What relationships do the author, the narrator, and the reader
have? How does Don Quixote become a knight? How do people treat him at the inn? Bring in your questions.


DISCUSSION: Bring in passages that you have found important. Look carefully at the movement from chapter 8-chapter 9. What is happening in the transition? We’ll discuss the story of Marcela. What do you think about Sancho? Who is Dulcinea?

WRITING DUE: SHORT OBSERVATION ESSAY #2 Initial response to DQ, prologue-chapter 15. What do you think is important? What does the book make you think about? Pick an idea, a motif, or a passage and explore it. Which ideas do you want to discuss?


DISCUSSION: Bring in passages that you have found important. Look at the story of what happens at the inn that DQ takes for a castle, and at the episode with Mambrino’s helmet. Think about Sancho's naming of DQ and Sancho's story of the goatherd in chapter 20.

10/6 READING DUE: *Don Quixote*, Part 1, chapters 22-27.

DISCUSSION: Bring in passages. We’ll discuss Sancho’s story, the galley slaves and Gines de Pasamonte, and Cardenio. Pay special attention to ch. 25. What do you make of it? What do you think about what the story of Cardenio et. al. is saying about love and about women? Think about what interruptions and digressions are saying about literature and life. Think about the relationship of Cardenio’s and DQ’s notions of honor.


DISCUSSION: How does this adventure, as well as the narrative about Cardenio's situation, change when Dorotea enters the story? Think about honor and what it means to Dorotea. What do you think about the Priest and the Barber?


DISCUSSION: Look carefully at The Tale of the Man Who Was Recklessly Curious. What issues does this tale raise? What emotions does this story explore? What is it suggesting about honor? Pay attention to the discussion about arms and learning. What are the different layers of the actual, enchanted, and fictional worlds here? Pay attention to the role Dorotea plays. Consider the context of this fiction within the episode of Dorotea, Don Fernando, Cardenio and Luscinda, which is shaped like a novel, and in which the strange is real. Think about what TRC suggests about honor, and about any relations you see between this story and Dorotea’s reframing of nobility in the "case" she makes to Don Fernando in Chapter 36. When Dorotea talks about "true nobility," and about choosing reason over appetite, think back to Socrates! What do you make of DQ's absence, and of his experience with the wineskins, in which the real becomes strange, while this is going on? What connections do you see between DQ's enchanted reality, Anselmo's
fictional reality, and Dorotea & Co.'s actual reality? Also think about these characters as readers, and about how you would describe the role that reading plays for them. What relation does their reading have to your experience of reading this book? What role does imitation play?

**WRITING DUE: SHORT OBSERVATION ESSAY #3** Response to chapters 16-38, in which you raise questions and respond to the text. Reflect on some the questions we’ve asked in class and the role of the interpolated tales. What connections do you see among the interpolated tales? Follow out ideas you've been pursuing, connecting them with text and with how it is evolving. Start letting paper thoughts percolate.

10/20 **READING DUE:** *Don Quixote*, Part 1, chapters 39-44.

**DISCUSSION:** More discussion of Dorotea and Co. Pay attention to the discussion about arms and learning. Also pay attention to the Captive's Tale and Zoraida's story. How do we see characters' views of reality shifting? Keep thinking about the role women play in the novel, about Zoraida's letter, and about what her story suggests about religious differences.

**WRITING DUE: Paper ideas. The 150 exercise.**

10/25 **READING DUE:** *Don Quixote*, Part 1, chapters 45-52.

**DISCUSSION:** Resolutions galore. Mambrino's helmet! Clara and Don Luis! What is Leandra's story doing here? What role does Sancho play? How has the notion of enchantment evolved? Pay attention to chapters 47, 48, 49 and 50. What is the discussion with the cathedral priest about? What positions about literature are they expounding? What do you think of the end of Part 1?

10/27 **READING DUE:** *Don Quixote*, Part 2, Prologue - chapter 5.

**WRITING DUE: Essay #1: 1500-word paper (see specs in syllabus for format).** This is sort of an extended observation essay. The goal is to figure out how to make the transition from a short to a longer form in articulating your ideas. We will discuss.

**DISCUSSION:** How does Book 2 seem so far? Has Don Quixote changed? What is the relationship between him and Sancho like? Why do you think the story of Sancho’s conversation with Teresa is included? What does it show?

11/1 **READING DUE:** *Don Quixote*, Part 2, chapters 6-17.

**DISCUSSION:** Important matters. Why does Samson Carrasco do what he does? What’s going on? What do you make of the presence of Book 1 in Book 2? What about those lions?

11/3 **READING DUE:** *Don Quixote*, Part 2, chapters 18-23.

Reading also due: Bruner, "Life as Narrative," on NYU Classes.

**DISCUSSION:** What do you make of Camacho's wedding and DQ's role? What is going on in the Cave of the Montesinos? IS DQ dreaming or?
11/8  READING DUE: *Don Quixote*, Part 2, chapters 24-35.

DISCUSSION: Master Pedro, Don Quixote and the puppets. What do you think about his reactions and about the resolution of this incident? What’s going on with Sancho’s salary? Think about reality, illusion, and literature.

11/10  READING DUE: *Don Quixote*, Part 2, chapters 36-41.

DISCUSSION: The adventures at the Duke and Duchess’s.


DISCUSSION: Sancho’s governorship and other matters. Why are DQ and Sancho separated? How does their awareness evolve? What do you make of Sancho’s adventure in the pit? Are Sancho and DQ changing? Is their relationship changing? (This is an open question; I don’t have a specific answer that I’m looking for). Follow out themes you’ve been thinking about. Pay attention to chapters 44 and 48, too! Those torn stockings. . .

11/22  Discussion: Refresh and renew.

11/24  THANKSGIVING BREAK. No class. Please finish the novel over Thanksgiving.


DISCUSSION: What is happening to Teresa Panza? Ricote. How does Sancho's governorship end? The reunion of DQ and Sancho. What is happening with Tosilos? Think about roles we play, resolutions in stories vs. in life. The Knight of the White Moon. Roque Guinart.

**WRITING DUE: SHORT OBSERVATION ESSAY #4**  What do you think about the effect of the Duke and the Duchess on DQ, the character and the text? What do you think this turn of events signifies?

12/1  READING DUE: *Don Quixote*, Part 2, chapters 66-74.

Recommended reading: Essays on NYU Classes by Unamuno, Kundera and Ortega y Gasset

DISCUSSION: The end. . . where does it leave you?

12/6  READING DUE: *Jacques the Fatalist*, pp. 21-105.

DISCUSSION: Bring in your questions and observations. Possible ideas: the relation of history and fiction, the relation of the narrator and the reader, the book’s notion of morality, the role of one of the interpolated narratives, digression and interruption.
12/8  READING DUE: *Jacques the Fatalist*, pp. 106-153 and “In Praise of Richardson” (NYU Classes).

**DISCUSSION:** Mme. de la Pommeraye. Why is this tale included? What are the formal and moral implications? Look carefully at the narrator's address to the reader, and consider the relations between the action of Diderot's story and the narrative style.


12/15  Conclusion. Narrativefest. Reading: Grace Paley, “Conversation with My Father” (NYU Classes)

**WRITING DUE: Essay #2: 1500 to 2000-word paper (see specs in syllabus for format)**