

Call for papers
Narratives and the Social Sciences. Interdisciplinary Perspectives

University of Palermo, Italy
Department Cultures and Societies

International Conference
26th, 27th, 28th June, 2024

Building 16, Room D2
Viale delle Scienze, Palermo

Deadline for abstracts: April 20th, 2024

Storytelling is a human practice that characterizes existence as a whole, responding to educational, social and cultural needs: from memory-making to establishing of relationships, from sharing experiences to forming a self-image, from learning to entertaining. If culture is our toolbox, then storytelling characterizes our way of using these tools to give shape and meaning to the disorder of experiences, and to present our actions as individual and social actors. Through narratives and storytelling we represent ourselves and the others, and we also use them to create metaphors to understand the world. In everyday life, we are all storytellers and make use of implicit narratives in one way or another. This aspect takes a special meaning for scholars in the humanities and social sciences: whether for scientific research, market surveys, interviews or a chronicle, storytelling can be as much a tool for analysis and research as an object of study in itself. The perspective adopted for this conference aims to highlight every possible side of this topic, including a “political” aspect: storytelling as a tool to counteract, across disciplinary fields, the pervasive problem of functional illiteracy. Nowadays, more than ever, it is necessary that knowledge play an active role, and that everyone get the skills to be a competent addresser and receiver of messages, as the web democratically seemed to promise. The conference aims to involve scholars and authors, coming from different parts of the world and belonging to various fields of knowledge, in order to analyse the different ways through which we fabricate our research by using implicit and/or explicit narratives and storytelling. Anthropologists, sociologists, literary and film critics, semiologists, linguists, economists, aesthetics and image scholars, cultural studies experts and geographers are invited to present their work. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Cultural and social interchanges and/or conflicts between cultures and perspectives: experiences or case studies
- Reality, between fact and fiction: the role of storytelling in journalism and marketing
- Web 3.0: the construction of the world via social media, the recent transformation of customs and lifestyles
- Inhabiting: counteracting generalised social acceleration with a personal scanning of time, by carving out spaces for oneself in the social networks
- Studying and describing a landscape or a territory as a narrative
- Border and borders in any possible meaning
- The economy and its narratives. Telling economic models and/or new representations of well-being and wealth
- Telling social interactions and cultural reality through sociological and anthropological research
- Telling social reality through films, video games, novels and short stories
- Yesterday’s myths in current narratives: the new myths
- Everyday and/or extraordinary life as source and object of narratives
- Food and representation: the case of reality cooking shows and food bloggers

- Nature and its representation: from eco-narrative to environmental emergencies and Greta Thunberg
- Fiction as a means of studying social and anthropological aspects (Pirandello, Calvino, Joyce, etc.)
- Photography related to the narrative of reality and authenticity, or meant as a form of denunciation
- The debates on cancel culture and woke doctrine
- Contemporary rhetoric and art
- Telling science: how the scientific community narrates and shapes research, between discoveries and debates
- Disclosing knowledge: science among the social in Web 3.0
- Telling the world of digital skills: extra and anti-academic storytelling
- Storytelling as an educational and didactic tool
- etc.

Organizing Committee:

- Stefano Montes (University of Palermo)
- Anna Fici (University of Palermo)
- Claudio Gnoffo (Guglielmo Marconi University)
- Claudio Pirrone (University of Palermo)

Scientific Board:

- Lieven Ameel (University of Helsinki)
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- Catherine Riessman (Boston University)
- Alessandro Scarsella (Ca' Foscari, University of Venice)
- Andrea Smorti (University of Florence)

Modalities of participation and deadline:

Send abstracts by April 20th, 2024 to Claudio Gnoffo (claudiognoffo87@gmail.com) and Stefano Montes (stefano.montes@unipa.it). Abstracts, max 300 words, include title, 3 key-words and a short biography (max 5 lines, not to be counted among the 300 words). Applicants will be notified by April 30th. The conference will take place, in-person, in Palermo. Admitted languages are English and Italian. Each speech is 20 minutes. Registration to the conference is free of cost. Grants are not foreseen. Travel, accommodation and food costs are to be covered by participants or their institutions.