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English 1027F: The Storyteller's Art I **Introduction to Narrative: Narrating the Beginning**

Course Description

Storytelling is essential to who we are and our relationships to our community, nation, and the world. Aristotle says that every good story has a beginning, middle and end. To his pronouncement from his *Poetics*, one could add that many stories are also about the beginnings, middles and ends of the people, places and things they tell about. In this course, we will examine stories about different forms of beginnings. This section will encourage us to read narrations that depict beginnings, rebirths, or revivals. Beside stories about genesis or cosmological myths (Bible, Aboriginal myths), we will examine fictions about births of civilization (*2001: A Space Odyssey*), and about Utopian societies (*Plato's Republic*, Thomas More's *Utopia*) which also allude to class and gender-related issues (Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies*). A beginning can be thought of as an expression of human creativity (Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*) which can be performed by means of magic (1001 Nights' story of Aladdin). Beginnings may occur in the inner world of dreams (*Inception*), or mystical visions (Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love*).