



Storytelling as Strategy: Narrative and AI Syllabus

Designed for ambitious professionals who are tasked with communicating complex ideas in high-stakes settings, this course teaches learners how to frame insights as compelling narratives in order to engage stakeholders and communicate with clarity and impact. The course offers a practical, business-oriented, and AI-informed toolkit for effective story detection, diagnosis, generation, and delivery.

Modules		Expert Insights	Takeaways	Key Exercises
Module 0	Introduction	Experts featured throughout this course include Esi Seng (CEO of Truff and former CEO of Tate's Bake Shop and Tom's of Mane) and Lou Shipley (three-time tech CEO and Harvard Business School lecturer).	Get to know your professors and orient yourself with the course's structure and content.	- Reflect on your reasons for taking part in this learner journey. - Clarify your baseline knowledge and intended learner objectives.
Module 1	Storytelling in the Professional World		- Recognize the inherent nature of storytelling in human cognition and its impact on professional communication. - Understand why stories prove more salient than isolated facts or data points in communication efforts. - Distinguish between elements of storytelling that are enhanced by AI versus ones that should remain human-centered.	- Identify professional areas in which storytelling proves useful or effective. - Acknowledge the importance of narrative in human cognition as it relates to professional communication. - Clarify where AI can enhance storytelling and where it falls short.
Module 2	The Foundational Story Archetypes	Business executive Esi Seng shares her own professional experiences that align with the different archetypes.	- Identify and analyze five foundational story archetypes that shape any narrative. - Apply these archetypes to common workplace scenarios that often need to be communicated.	- Understand the major components of the five universal story archetypes. - Practice applying these classic story archetypes to typical workplace opportunities and challenges.

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Module 3	Detecting Stories	Business executive Esi Seng revisits the professional scenarios previously shared and detects various new stories living within the same conflict.	Detect stories living within professional scenarios, using the universal archetypes as lenses through which to interpret conflict, characters, and tensions.	- Make use of the classic archetypes to identify and interpret professional stories. - Shift between archetype lenses to bring new tensions, perspectives, and possibilities into focus when interpreting a workplace scenario. - Leverage AI to brainstorm, test, and evaluate archetype application to professional situations.
Module 4	Diagnosing Stories	- Business executive Esi Seng engages in the act of story diagnosing, considering different archetypes to deploy when communicating the same situation to different audiences. - Business expert Lou Shipley provides insight and advice regarding active listening and intended purpose when communicating stories at work.	- Determine the optimal archetype to communicate a workplace scenario to a specific audience. - Combine story listening, audience analysis, and intended purpose to diagnose the optimal archetype for a story.	- Practice active listening to uncover the story the intended audience is already telling themselves about a situation. - Engage in audience analysis to adjust a narrative accordingly. - Reflect on a story's purpose as it relates to the desired outcome. - Leverage AI to help determine the optimal archetype to communicate a professional scenario for a specific audience.
Module 5	Designing and Drafting Stories	- Business executive Esi Seng offers insight on how a story's stage determines what to emphasize and when during communication. - Business expert Lou Shipley offers insight on non-chronological story telling as a way to engage and motivate audiences.	- Emphasize different stages of a story to evoke desired engagement. - Experiment with non-chronological storytelling to pique audience interest and introduce a story with the greatest emotional heft. - Shape stories based on the intended emotional trajectory for an audience. - Pace a story in accordance with time constraints as well as audience familiarity, skepticism level, and norms.	- Practice drafting stories that emphasize different stages of chronology: beginning, middle, and end. - Experiment with non-chronological and future-state storytelling. - Shape stories in accordance with Kurt Vonnegut's "shapes of stories" theory. - Leverage AI to brainstorm and pressure-test different story stages and shapes. - Leverage AI to test different levels of pacing for a story.

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Module 6	Delivering Stories	Business expert Lou Shipley provides insights and advice on strong story visuals.	- Adjust voice and body to show confidence, conviction, and openness when communicating a story. - Make use of visuals to supplement, but not supplant, storytelling. - Use a story's archetype base to inform its presentation and engagement with audience response.	- Plan and practice optimal story delivery by considering voice, body, and visuals. - Consider the archetype foundational to a story and make use of it to ensure a consistent throughline when communicating to others.

Learning requirements: In order to earn a Certificate of Completion from Harvard Online, participants must thoughtfully complete all modules, including satisfactory completion of the associated quizzes, by stated deadlines.