

# YOU'RE INVITED!

2014 DISTINGUISHED UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR LECTURE  
**DR. CAROLYN ELLIS**



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## TAKE(S) HEART:

*DOING COMPASSIONATE RESEARCH WITH A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR*

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**FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2016**

PATEL CENTER FOR GLOBAL SOLUTIONS (CGS) ROOM 136/138

**Reception Begins at 3:30 PM**

**Lecture at 4:00 pm – 5:00 PM**

**Q & A from 5:00 PM – 5:20 PM**

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**ABOUT THE SPEAKER:** Dr. Carolyn Ellis's career at USF has spanned over 35 years, having joined the faculty in 1981 in the Department of Sociology as an Assistant Professor. She was promoted to tenured Associate in 1985 and then promoted to Full Professor in 1994. In 1996 she moved to the Department of Communication. Dr. Ellis has been an outstanding teacher and mentor during her time at USF, having been honored at three different times with USF's "Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Award." In addition, she has received eleven national and international awards in recognition for her scholarship, including three lifetime achievement awards. Dr. Ellis is the founder of *autoethnography* which, in her words, is a "reflexive approach to research, writing, and storytelling that connects the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social and political." One reviewer tellingly connects the scholarship of Dr. Ellis to the reputation of USF when she writes that the "productivity, visibility, depth, and originality" of Dr. Ellis's scholarship has allowed USF to "become the premiere university for graduate students interested in pursuing qualitative research methods."

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**ABOUT THE LECTURE:** I have been collaborating with Holocaust survivors for the last seven years, in particular a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, Jerry Rawicki. This presentation will employ film clips of our interactions in interviews and classes along with a story about our trip to Treblinka to demonstrate the research relationship that has formed between us. Using an approach I have developed called compassionate interviewing and storytelling, Jerry and I work together to understand his experiences during and after the Holocaust and how this research orientation might work in practice. In this method, a researcher and participant listen deeply to, speak responsibly with, feel passionately for, share vulnerably with, and connect relationally and ethically to each other with care. We write and tell stories empathetically and respectfully, focusing on participants' wellbeing and the possibility of renewal and purpose in life. This approach adds a relational and emotional dimension to research on trauma, such as the Holocaust, that enables us to learn from our interaction with others as well as from what our participants say. Though most researchers may not have the time, inclination, and/or the temperament to immerse themselves in relationships with participants or to study their own close connections, I offer this kind of immersion as an option to consider, especially when studying sensitive issues such as loss, trauma, and end-of-life care.