

English 270: Introduction to Folklore

Instructor: Sheila Bock

Meeting Time: TR 11:30 – 1:18

Meeting Place: Sullivant Library, Room 244

Email: bock.42@osu.edu

Office: 461 Denny Hall, Columbus, OH 43210

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:30–2:30 & by appt.

Course Description

This course is designed as an introduction to folklore studies. During the first part of the term we will concentrate mostly on key concepts, classic genres, and research methodology. The remainder of the term will be spent exploring some of the ways that folklore is mobilized for expressive, political, and economic ends in our global society.

Course Texts

Martha C. Sims and Martine Stephens, *Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and Their Traditions*

One copy of this book will be available in the Sullivant Library Closed Reserves all quarter, where you will be able to check it out for 2 hours at a time.

All other readings for the course will be accessible on Carmen (carmen.osu.edu). **Be sure to print and bring to class all reading assignments due each day.** Information about course assignments and other announcements will also be available on Carmen.

Daily Schedule

Thursday, September 25: Definitions and Major Concepts: Folk and Folklore

- Introduction to the course

Tuesday, September 30: Definitions and Major Concepts: Folk and Folklore

- **Reading due:**
- 1-20: Folklore
- Lindquist, Danille Christensen. "'Locating' the Nation: Football Game Day and American Dreams in Central Ohio"

Thursday October 2: Introduction to Folklore and Genres and to Folk Narrative

- **Reading due:**
- Oring, Elliot. "Folk Narratives"
- Tatar, Maria. "Yeh-hsien"

- **Due in Carmen's Dropbox by 10 pm the night before class:** Write a 500-word detailed description of a customary folk event in which you have participated, including what you consider to be traditional elements of the event.
- **In class:** Introduce the OSU Folklore Archives Genre Collection

Tuesday, October 7: Variants and Structure: Children's Rhymes

- **Reading due:**
- 179-187: Structuralism
- 198-200: Intersectionality
- **Due in Carmen's Dropbox by 10 pm the night before class:** Collect an OSU Football Game Day Story, using the format established by the OSU Folklore Archives. On a separate page, write a 250-word explanation about what this story communicates about the teller's sense of personal and group identity.

Thursday, October 9: Truth or Fiction?: Legends and Rumors

- **Reading Due:**
- Alver, Brynjulf. "Historical Legends and Historical Truth"
- Turner, Patricia. "Church's Fried Chicken and the Klan: A Rhetorical Analysis of Rumor in the Black Community"

Tuesday, October 14: The Performance Approach

- **Reading Due:**
- 127-173: Performance
- ["Swapping Stories"](#)

Thursday, October 16: Negotiating Belief: Personal Experience Narratives

- **Reading Due:**
- 56-63: Groups and Belief
- 202-224: Fieldwork and Ethnography

Tuesday, October 21: Folklore Workshop 1

- **Due In Class:** Group Project Proposal
- **In class:** Review for midterm exam
- Continue discussing fieldwork issues; Introduce audio-recording equipment

Thursday, October 23: Midterm Exam

Tuesday, October 28: Folklore Workshop 2

- **In class:** Introduction to multimedia production and presentation

Thursday, October 30: Transforming Identities: Rituals and Calendar Customs

- **Reading Due:**
- 94-126: Ritual
- Santino, Jack. "[The Fantasy and Folklore of All Hallows](#)"

Tuesday, November 4: Community Identities

- **In Class:** View *Strut!*
- **Due in Carmen's Dropbox by 10 pm the night before class:** Document a Halloween tradition (verbal, material, or customary) that you or someone you know takes part in, using the format established by the OSU Folklore Archives. On a separate page, write a 250-word explanation of how the form and meaning of this tradition are both similar to and different from those traditions described by Jack Santino and in the film.

Thursday, November 6: Rituals of Mourning, Materializing Memory

- **Reading Due:**
- 174-179: Functionalism
- 250-265: Roadside Memorials
- 245-248: The AIDS Quilt: Performance of Remembrance

Tuesday, November 11: No class for Veterans Day

Thursday, November 13: Creolization in American Vernacular Music

- 64-93: Tradition
- **Guest Speaker:** Emeritus Professor Patrick Mullen

Tuesday, November 18: Embodied Identities: Dance

- **Reading due:**
- 193-195: Feminist Interpretations
- Desmond, Jane. "Embodying Difference: Issues in Dance and Cultural Studies"
- **Due on Carmen by 10 pm the night before class:** Short writing assignment (details TBA)
- **In class:** Groups work on Final Projects

Thursday, November 20: Folklore Workshop 3

- **In class:** Groups work on Final Projects

Tuesday, November 25: Final Group Presentations

Thursday, November 27: No Class for Thanksgiving

Tuesday, December 2: Final Group Presentations

Thursday, December 4: Wrapping Up

- **In class:** Review for final exam

- Course Evaluations
- **Due in class:** Group Final Project--Please turn in 2 copies, and be sure to include consultant consent form(s), collector consent forms, and archiving cover sheet.

Tuesday, December 9: Final Exam

- 11:30-1:18

Course Requirements

- Midterm Exam: (20%)
- Final Exam: (20%)
- Group Final Project and Presentation (35%)
- Genre Collection Assignments and Homework Assignments (15%)
- Participation (attendance, class participation) (10%)

Attendance Policy

You are allowed no more than two unexcused absences. Additional absences will lower your grade. Please document excused absences (e.g., medical reasons). 5 unexcused absences will result in an E for the course.

Other Course Policies

No late papers or assignments will be accepted. If you miss an exam without a valid excuse, you will not be allowed to make it up. On the exams, you will be responsible for all materials covered in the readings, lectures, films, and class discussions. You must complete all assignments in order to pass this class. Attendance is required, and your active and engaged participation is expected. That means you are expected to come to class having read and thought about the reading assignments due that day. **If it appears that people are coming to class unprepared, I will start giving quizzes at the beginning of each class.** The syllabus is subject to minor revision, and it is your responsibility to stay informed of any changes. I will be available for consultation during office hours and other times by appointment; also, I'll try to answer questions by e-mail. Improvement will be considered in your final grade.

Library Resources

You will be expected to draw upon OSU Library resources as well as the research and multimedia assistance offered by Kathy Webb and Tingting Lu. Supplementary tools are available in Carmen. These tools were designed to assist you in the processes of research, multimedia production and presentation. Sullivant Library's Multimedia Production Space (MPS) technologies and tools, group presentation production and practice spaces are available during library hours. The MPS student staff are available to assist with your projects. Email: webb.45@osu.edu and Lu.162@osu.edu with specific questions related to your projects.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own: it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. Plagiarism via the internet is very likely to be caught since course-specific assignments, such as the ones in this course, do not match well with what is available on the net, and search engines on the net make detection as easy as the plagiarism itself.

Class Cancellation Policy

In the unlikely event of class cancellation due to emergency, I will contact you via email and request that a note on department letterhead be placed on the door. In addition, I will contact you as soon as possible following the cancellation to let you know what will be expected of you for our next class meeting.

Disability

The Office for Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS at 2-3307

Counseling

The Counseling and Consultation Service, located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center, 1640 Neil Avenue, offers counseling for all students. Contact CCS at 2-5766.

G.E.C. Category 5: Arts and Humanities

5.B. Analysis of Texts and Works of Art

Goals/Rationale: The purpose of courses in this category is for students to evaluate significant writing and works of art. Such studies develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing; and experiencing the arts and reflecting on that experience.

Learning Objectives: Students develop abilities to be enlightened observers or active participants in the visual, spatial, musical, theatrical, rhetorical or written arts. Students describe and interpret achievement in the arts and literature. Students explain how works of art and literature express social and cultural issues.