

# English 270: Introduction to Folklore

Susan Hanson  
Spring 2005  
ENG 270  
M/W 1:30 – 3:18  
TO 250

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**Office Hours:** M/W 3:30–5:00 & by appt.

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

All of the required texts are available electronically. In other words, you will not need to purchase any books for this course, but you will need to download and print the reading assignments—a point which bears repeating: *print the reading assignments* so that you can refer to them during the lecture.

## Course Requirements

This course requires a substantial amount of reading and research, so plan your schedule accordingly. A quiz will be administered at the beginning of the class period to test your knowledge of that day's reading assignment(s). There will be no make-up quizzes for students who arrive late or are absent, regardless of the circumstances.

You will contribute to what we learn about how folklore works by doing field research on a subject of your choosing, and by regularly reporting on your research and analysis during class. Your research project will culminate in an eight to ten-page paper of publishable quality.

The final exam will cover the readings, lectures, and class discussions.

## Grades

The reading quizzes, research project, and final exam will be graded based on a scale that includes pluses and minuses. As a rule, “A” work is excellent; “B” work is *very* good; “C” work is good; “D” work satisfies the objectives in the lowest acceptable manner, and “E” spells trouble. You must complete all of the assignments in order to pass this course.

Final grades will be based on the following:

Reading quizzes: 50% (Best 10 @ 5% ea.)

Research project: 25%

Final exam: 25%

If you have any questions about my expectations or your progress, the best time to talk with me face-to-face is during my office hours, though I’m glad to take appointments if your schedule conflicts with mine. The best way to contact me is by email. Or you may call me at home—*Really!* It’s okay to call as long as it is not during ‘The O.C.’ or ‘The Shield’ (or later than 10:00 p.m.).

**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 unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism and/or the use of unauthorized materials will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

**Disabilities** If you have a documented disability and need accommodations, speak with me about your needs or contact Disability Services at 292-3307 and ask a counselor to contact me.

## The Daily Grind

### Week 1:

**M 3/28**

1. Course Introduction, Q & A.

**W 3/30**

1. “What is Folklore?” <http://afsnet.org/aboutfolklore/aboutFL.cfm>
2. “Purposeful Deceptions of the April Fool,” Nancy Cassell McEntire, in *Western Folklore* (OSCAR to Online: Serial Solutions to LION to Summer 2002).

### Week 2:

**M 4/04**

1. “Personal Power and Social Restraint in the Definition of Folklore,” Roger Abrahams, in *Journal of American Folklore* (OSCAR to JSTOR).

**W 4/06**

1. "Differential Identity and the Social Base of Folklore," Richard Bauman, in *Journal of American Folklore* (OSCAR to JSTOR).

**Week 3:**

**M 4/11**

1. "Introduction," "World by the Fireside," and "Fairy Tales for the Young and Old" (xvii-52), in *Folklore by the Fireside*, Alessandro Falassi (OSCAR to Reserves by Prof to Chap. 1 and Chap. 2).

**W 4/13**

1. "Fairy Tales for the Young and Old," cont. (53-72).
2. **Project Proposal due**

**Week 4:**

**M 4/18**

1. "The Favorite Jokes of Max Trzebiatowski," James P. O'Leary (Reserves by Prof).

**W 4/20**

1. "The Speech Play of Physicians," Anne Burson-Tolpin, in *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* (OSCAR to JSTOR).

**Week 5:**

**M 4/25**

1. "'We was always pullin' jokes'" Richard Bauman, in *Story, Performance, and Event* (Reserves by Prof).

**W 4/27**

1. "The Camp Mock-Ordeal: *Theater as Life*," Bill Ellis, in *Journal of American Folklore* (OSCAR to JSTOR).

**Week 6:**

**M 5/02**

1. "Inventing Latinismo," Laurie Kay Sommers, in *Journal of American Folklore* (OSCAR to JSTOR).

**W 5/04**

1. "The Portal Case," Deirdre Evans-Pritchard, in *Journal of American Folklore* (OSCAR to JSTOR).

2. **Field Research due**

*Week 7:*

**M 5/09**

1. "'Giving an Altar:' The Ideology of Reproduction in a St. Joseph's Day Feast" K. Turner and S. Seriff, in *Journal of American Folklore* (OSCAR to JSTOR).

**W 5/11**

1. "Polaroids from Heaven," Daniel Wojcik, in *Journal of American Folklore* (OSCAR to JSTOR).

*Week 8:*

**M 5/16**

1. "Yellow Ribbons and Seasonal Flags," Jack Santino, in *Journal of American Folklore* (OSCAR to JSTOR).

**W 5/18**

1. "New Authenticities in Rural Alaska," Tok Thompson, in *Journal of Folklore Research* 40:3 (OSCAR to Online: Serial Solutions to IIMP).
2. **Analysis due**

*Week 9:*

**M 5/23**

1. "Conjuring Culture," **Robert Cantwell**, in *Journal of American Folklore* (OSCAR to JSTOR).

**W 5/24**

1. **Self-reflection due**

*Week 10:*

**M 5/30**

1. Memorial Day—**No Class**

**W 6/01**

1. **Final Exam**
2. **Research Project due**

## Research Project Components

### 1. Project Proposal

Introduce your research project, describe what you already know about the location, situation, and subject(s), discuss how you plan to proceed, and what you expect to learn or accomplish.

### 2. Field Research

Choose the approach that best suits your project:

### 3. Transcription

Describe the context of the interaction as well as your observations, characterize the participants, transcribe the recording, and discuss your impressions.

### 4. Field Notes

Map the physical space, describe the situation or event, characterize the participants, recount their actions and interactions *in detail*, and discuss your impressions.

### 5. Analysis

Analyze your data according to the theory or approach modeled in one or more of the course readings.

### 6. Self-Reflection

Reflect on the research process: describe your original research goals, discuss what happened, and compare what you “knew” at the outset to what you know now.

### 7. Final Paper

8-10 pages, dbl-spaced, plus all supporting data, documents, and permissions.