

# English 367.01: The U.S. Folk Experience:

## American Legends and legendary Americans: The Stories We Tell Ourselves

Autumn Quarter 2006

Tuesday & Thursday 7:30-9:18 a.m., Denney Hall 268

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Office: 029 Denney, ph. 688-3814 (during office hours only)

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 9:30-11:00 & by appointment

### Overview

The goal of English 367 is to build on the skills you obtained in English 110 and to further improve your critical thinking and writing skills. In this class we will examine legends and related genres of traditional narrative (such as rumor, joke, and ballad) in order to understand the power of narrative to shape and confirm worldview at both individual and societal levels, asking questions such as: What can the narratives we tell and hear (and see) tell us about American worldview? How do legendary narratives shape our understanding of American history, American culture in the present, and the role of America in the world? We will consider scholarship that examines topics ranging from legendary hero Jesse James to rumors about fast food restaurants in order to understand how "American" values and beliefs are represented in the stories we tell each other (and ourselves). We will read both primary and secondary texts rhetorically, and—through informal and formal writing assignments—formulate our own interpretations about both primary texts and the interpretations offered by other scholars.

Throughout the quarter you will complete both formal and informal writing assignments, each designed to add skills to your writing toolbox and to develop your habits of revision and rewriting. In addition, you will be expected to participate fully in class discussion and in the oral presentation of your analytical responses to the readings and of your own written work.

### Goals and Objectives for the General Education Curriculum

#### *Writing and Related Skills*

Goals/Rationale:

Writing courses across the disciplines develop students' skills in writing, reading, critical thinking, and oral expression.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students apply basic skills in expository writing
2. Students demonstrate critical thinking through written and oral expression
3. Students retrieve and use written information analytically and effectively

### Required texts

- Course pack available for purchase at Grade A Notes, 22 E. 17th Ave.
- A grammar/usage handbook of your choice.

This course will also depend heavily on a Carmen Web site, which you can reach through <https://carmen.osu.edu/> . Please check right away to be sure that you can access this site and let me know if there are any problems.

## Assignments

### Writing Assignments

There will be three major writing assignments throughout this quarter.

- Assignment 1: Reading Historical Legends Rhetorically (3-4 pages)
- Assignment 2: Reading Urban Legends Rhetorically (5-6 pages)
- Assignment 3: Reading Scholarly Articles Rhetorically (7-8 pages)

You will receive detailed instructions on each of the three major assignments.

### Drafts

Writing is a *process and good writing takes time*. One major goal of this class will be the formation of habits of writing as a multiple-draft process. You will be required to bring multiple copies of the drafts of each of the three writing assignments to class on the date drafts are due, for peer response activities and to turn in to me, and to bring a second draft to class on the date indicated in the Daily Schedule for additional peer response. I will return drafts (ungraded) with comments about the kinds of major revisions that you will be expected to make before submitting your final paper. All drafts and peer feedback must be turned in with your final papers. **Failure to submit a draft will result in the lowering of your final grade on that paper by one full letter grade.**

*Failure to submit a final paper on the day it is due will result in the lowering of your grade on that paper by one full letter grade per every day that the paper is late.*

### Informal writing

This course will involve extensive informal writing in order to practice the skills that we are working to develop. This writing will take place both during and outside of class.

1. You will be required to post a response on our course Carmen site (carmen.osu.edu) for **each of the readings indicated** in the Daily Schedule. You must post your response by **9 p.m. the night before the day of the class for which the reading is assigned**; you will be expected to read the responses posted by your classmates and come to class ready to participate in a discussion of the readings.
2. Additional informal homework and in-class writing assignments will be assigned throughout the quarter.

## Discussion Leading

Each of you will be responsible for leading one class discussion on a course reading with one or two other classmates. Your group must plan ahead to coordinate your presentation, and each of you must have a "speaking role" in the discussion. You should come prepared with a summary of the article as well as discussion points and questions based on the related concepts with which we are dealing in order to facilitate class discussion about the day's reading and related (relevant) issues. The bulk of your time (about 30 minutes or so) should be devoted to the leading of class discussion rather than a "presentation." You are strongly encouraged to do additional (although not extensive) research on the topic of the day's readings in order to add supplementary ideas, texts, and viewpoints to the discussion. Class members should be able to consider you the resident "expert" for that day. Make your notes legible, as I will collect and read them.

## Participation

Critical thinking and writing skills are most successfully developed through the sharing of ideas through both oral and written means. Therefore, a major requirement of this course is that you come to each class ready to discuss the readings and written assignments with an open mind and a desire to engage with the class.

## Evaluation

Assignment 1: 15%  
Assignment 2: 20%  
Oral Presentation on Assignment 2: 10%  
Assignment 3: 20%  
Informal writing: 15%  
Discussion leading: 10%  
Participation: 10%

## Course Policies

**I will not accept papers or drafts via email.**

**Attendance** is important to the success of this class and to your development as a writer. Therefore, **each unexcused absence after two** will result in the lowering of your final grade by a third of a grade. Excused absences, such those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or travel for inter-collegiate athletics, will not affect your grade if you bring me written documentation the next class. **It is program policy that five unexcused absences will automatically result in failure for the course.**

**Tardiness** is disruptive to the classroom environment, and prevents you from fully participating and assimilating the information and materials discussed in class. Excessive tardiness will lower your participation grade.

**Plagiarism** is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. It is a serious academic offense that can result in referral to the Committee on Academic Misconduct and failure for the course. Please remember that at no point during the writing process should the work of others be presented as your own. Please come to me with any and all questions.

**Class Cancellation Policy:** In the unlikely event 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.

## Resources

The **Ombudsman of the Writing Programs**, Dr. Matthew Cariello, mediates conflicts between teachers and students in 110 and 367. You can contact him at 292-5778 or Email [cariello.1@osu.edu](mailto:cariello.1@osu.edu) . Autumn 2006 office hours in Denney 533 are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 1.30-3.00, but other times are available by appointment. All conversations with the Ombudsman are strictly confidential.

The OSU **Writing Center** consultants hold one-to-one writing tutorials with any member of the OSU community. I *strongly* encourage you to use these important resources:

- At Mendenhall Laboratory (Monday-Friday 9:30-5:30)
- At Younkin Success Center (Monday-Thursday 5:30-7:30)
- On Carmen (via the chat system)

In addition, you can

- Have face-to-face tutorials recorded to CDs
- Schedule appointments online

Please visit <http://cstw.osu.edu> to make an appointment or have an online tutorial.

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

**Additional Resources** for this course are available on our Carmen site at: <http://carmen.osu.edu> .

## Daily Schedule

**Thursday, September 21 *Introduction***

Introduction to the course, in-class writing exercise  
Sign up for group presentations

**Tuesday, September 26**

► Oring, Elliot. "Folk Narratives"  
Introduce Assignment 1

**Thursday, September 28**

► Grider, Sylvania Ann. "How Texans Remember the Alamo"  
*Assignment:* Respond to reading on Carmen by 9 p.m. the night before class  
Discussion of Drafting/Writing Processes

**Tuesday, October 3**

► Mayor, Adrienne. "The Nessus Shirt in the New World: Smallpox Blankets in History and Legend"  
*Assignment:* Respond to reading on Carmen by 9 p.m. the night before class  
Thesis Statement Basics

**Thursday, October 5**

**DRAFT of Assignment 1 due in class; Bring two copies**

► Sullivan, C.W. "Jesse James: An American Outlaw"  
*Assignment:* Respond to reading on Carmen by 9 p.m. the night before class  
Peer work on drafts

**Tuesday, October 10**

► Tuleja, Tad. "The Tooth Fairy: Perspectives on Money and Magic"  
*Assignment:* Respond to reading on Carmen by 9 p.m. the night before class  
Strategies for revision/Grammar and Mechanics

**Thursday, October 12**

**Bring 2nd DRAFT of Assignment 1 to class**

► Pershing, Linda and Margaret R Yocom. "The Yellow Ribboning of the USA: Contested Meanings in the Construction of a Political Symbol"  
*Assignment:* Respond to reading on Carmen by 9 p.m. the night before class

**Tuesday, October 17**

**Writing Assignment 1 due in class**

Introduction to Assignment 2  
Film: *The Ballad of Frankie Silver*

**Thursday, October 19: NO CLASS**

**American Folklore Society Annual Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 24**

- ▶ Bennett, Gillian and Paul Smith. "Introduction"
  - ▶ Foss, Sonja K. "Pentadic Criticism"
- Assignment:* Bring in an urban legend (on paper, whether typed or handwritten)

**Thursday, October 26**

- ▶ Stromberg, Peter. "Elvis Alive?: The Ideology of American Consumerism"
- Assignment:* Respond to reading on Carmen by 9 p.m. the night before class  
Writing analytical comparisons

**Tuesday, October 31 HALLOWEEN**

**DRAFT of Assignment 2 due in class; Bring two copies**

- ▶ Ellis, Bill. "'Safe' Spooks: New Halloween Traditions in Response to Sadism Legends"

*Assignment:* Respond to reading on Carmen by 9 p.m. the night before class  
Peer work on drafts

**Thursday, November 2**

- ▶ Bird, S. Elizabeth. "Playing with Fear: Interpreting the Adolescent Legend Trip"
- Assignment:* Respond to reading on Carmen by 9 p.m. the night before class  
Strategies for revision

**Tuesday, November 7**

**Bring 2nd Draft of Assignment 2 to class**

- ▶ Turner, Patricia A.. "Church's Fried Chicken and The Klan: A Rhetorical Analysis of Rumor in the Black Community"
- Assignment:* Respond to reading on Carmen by 9 p.m. the night before class

**Thursday, November 9**

► [Reading on American joking to be announced]

**Tuesday, November 14**

**Writing Assignment 2 due in class**

Introduction to Assignment 3

Oral presentations on Assignment 2

**Thursday, November 16**

Oral presentations on Assignment 2

**Tuesday, November 21**

Assignment 3 sources due to me via email or during my office hours by or on this date

Strategies for making an argument about scholarly arguments!

*A Northern Exposure* Thanksgiving

**Thursday, November 23 NO CLASS: Thanksgiving**

**Tuesday, November 28**

**DRAFT of Assignment 3 due in class; Bring two copies**

Peer work on drafts

► Thomas, Jeannie B. "Dumb Blondes, Dan Quayle, and Hillary Clinton: Gender, Sexuality, and Stupidity in Jokes"

*Assignment:* Respond to reading on Carmen by 9 p.m. the night before class

**Thursday, November 30**

**Bring 2nd Draft of Assignment 3 to class**

**Monday, December 4**

**Final Assignment 3 due**