

Comp Stud/NELC 792: Tradition and Transmission
Autumn 2010 MW 2:30-4:18
Hagerty Hall 335

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This course is offered as one of the core graduate seminars for those interested in theory and research methodology as it relates to folklore broadly conceived and ethnological studies. We will review theories of how cultural forms travel through time and space across social networks, their stability, variation, and cultural reproduction. Key terms such as genre, structure, formula, and text/ entextualization are examined for their place in theories of transmission. Other key concepts and topics: Diffusion and the comparative method that theorizes it; ethnomimesis; habit and the reproduction of the everyday; implicit vs. explicit memorial forms; theories relating to oral transmission, orality and memory techniques, literacy and entextualization; sites of memory (memory as celebrated, as sequestered, or censored/suppressed); cultural continuities operating below awareness; traditionalization and invented traditions; heritage and the legal and political ramifications of cultural property rights.

Put more informally, we are asking, with regard to a very large and diverse body of cultural knowledge including what is called “folklore,” what fosters persistence over time, and/or who cares where this stuff comes from, and why do they care?

This is basically a comparative theory class, though we will try to illustrate each body of theory with an examination of case studies or applications. The sequence of theories under review is very roughly historical, in order of development. One primary concern will be to notice, in each case, what questions the theorists try to answer, and in conversation with what other, previous bodies of theory or social thought their ideas and research agenda developed.

In core folklore theory courses, we explore what is basic and common to the field. Not all the key theorists consider(ed) themselves folklorists. Interdisciplinary eclecticism is a hallmark and major strength of contemporary folklore studies, and makes for a “braided” history of ideas, to which students from a variety of disciplines attach themselves in different ways. Participants in the class will develop and make explicit in their presentations their own particular trajectories into the subject, and articulate the implications, in theory and method, of their respective angles of interest.

The course thus is designed to serve the interests of a wide spectrum of students, regardless of area and disciplinary focus, public or academic career goals, and so on. Indeed, one purpose of this curriculum is to foster more effective conversation across positions within the field and with allied disciplines. Fieldwork and ethnographic method will be highlighted throughout: how the sets of data are being constructed and for what purpose. The public character of folklore studies as a discipline should be recognized throughout. Folklore has never been exclusively or even primarily an academic object of study, and its theorizing has never been free of political and applied considerations. The field is also unique for the degree of grassroots as well as institutional participation: the “folk” themselves, conceived as communities of thought, variously defined, also need to be understood as active in the constitution of the discipline.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

- (1) **ALL THOSE REGISTERED FOR CREDIT ARE EXPECTED TO READ CLOSELY AND TAKE NOTES ON THE ASSIGNED READINGS PRIOR TO CLASS. PLEASE BRING THE WEEKLY SELECTIONS TO CLASS IN SOME TEXT FORM, TO FACILITATE YOUR OWN CLOSE READING AND EXAMINATION OF KEY PASSAGES IN DISCUSSION.** All readings are available as pdfs on the Carmen website for the course. To which registered students have access. (IF you wish to audit the class, please let me know so that I can add you to the class list for Carmen access.) Informed participation in the in-class discussion is a basic requirement for this graduate seminar. “Informed” does not mean that you are in perfect control of the material, but it does mean that you can ask precise questions and identify problems informed by your reading of it.
- (2) **Weekly Key Word or “Smart Glossary” Exercise:** Each participant will formulate from their reading and post to the Carmen discussion file for the week, a list of 3-7 key or problematic terms **by the midnight prior to each class meeting** (twice a week). Note the terms, the definitions offered for them in the readings (or lack thereof), and your own brief observations/ thoughts about the problems and usefulness of the term. You may compare other readings, prior to these, that have used the same key term (e.g. “tradition,” “text,” etc.). What are some significant differences or similarities in definition or focus among writers using the same or related key terms? Does this writer use the same underlying concept as another writer, but under a different term? You **must post your key word list by midnight** prior to each class, the Carmen site accessible to the class, and bring a printed copy to class as well. The printed copies, with any additional comments you add, will be collected at the end of class and returned with comments the following week.
- (3) **Lead Discussant Assignment: 3 per quarter.** Each participant will choose three from among the weekly reading clusters and prepare and present orally a ten-minute introduction to the main points and problematics of the readings. This is on the order of a cluster review of related books /articles, about 5 pages double-

spaced (longer if desired), an expanded version of the weekly commentary. The written version will be due in class when it is presented. If two people wish to focus on the same week's readings, you may wish to coordinate the two presentations as a debate or conversation on alternative critiques of key points.

- (4) **Review Essay with Case Studies:** For the **final paper**, each participant may choose one body of theory or one author, and constructs a review essay of **minimum** approximately 15 pages, double-spaced, discussing the theoretical approach **and at least one application**. Your review of a case study or case studies derived from the theory should help to clarify what kinds of questions the approach does and does not answer. Feel free to take into account reviews and responses to the work that appeared after its publication.

You may also develop a report on your own field work or other research or creative work framed by issues raised in the class. If you are undertaking new fieldwork for this class, though, please consult with the instructor **early in the term (by Week 3)** to make sure that the project is of limited enough scope to fit into the available time. **Due in class Weds, Dec. 1, 2010 (our last meeting), or by 5 PM on the first day of exam period, Monday Dec. 6. FIFTEEN-MINUTE ORAL PRESENTATIONS TO THE CLASS are due on the last day of class, Dec. 1, FULL WRITTEN VERSION TO THE INSTRUCTOR either that day or the first day of exams.**

ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY:

Plagiarism is the one unforgivable academic crime. All work submitted must be your own, and all sources (whether hard copy, electronic, oral, or what) used as references or inspiration must be fully cited. **You are responsible for knowing what these standards are.** If you aren't sure what an academic citation should look like, ask the instructor to refer you to appropriate reference works or models. Any written work with incomplete citations will be returned for revision and not accepted for credit until citations are complete. **An allegation of intentional plagiarism requires formal investigation by a university academic accountability committee (the instructor does not have the option to solve the problem unilaterally), and may result in penalties from loss of credit for the course up to suspension of the student from the university and loss of all credit toward a degree.** When in doubt, cite your idea sources. Keep good notes on where you got ideas.

Absences from class harm the whole seminar. If you must be absent, please inform the instructor, in advance if possible, and submit appropriate documentation of the necessity for your absence. Absence or late submission of work without an acceptable excuse will result in loss of academic credit.

DISABILITY AND ACCESS SUPPORT

Ohio State University is committed to providing accommodations as needed for all those with special needs. Please inform the instructor if you have any existing or developing needs that should be addressed.

ACCESS TO READINGS

All assigned selections from individual works will be available as pdf files available to read or download, on the Carmen site for NELC 792. Some additional, recommended readings listed for some of the excerpted works may also be posted as they may be useful for developing final paper topics around a set of readings. If you find a reading or other item that you think merits class attention, please send a pdf to the instructor (mills.186@osu.edu) and I will add it to the recommended files.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF TOPICS / READINGS:

Week 1: 22 Sept 2010

Warm-Up Exercises and Orientations

Dorothy Noyes, "Tradition", *Journal of Folklore Research* 46:3, 2009, pp. 233- 268
(have no fear, half of this is references)

Bengt Holbek, "On the Comparative Method in Folklore Research," *NIF Papers* No.3, 1992, pp. 3-20.

Week 2: 27-29 Sept CLASS TO BE RESCHEDULED

Historic-Geographic Comparative Methodologies: Tale Typing and Motif Indexing

A. A Story in Literary and oral variation:

- 1) Dorson, Richard M. *Folktales Told Around the World:*
 "The Seventy-Year Old Corpse" (pp. 238-242)
 "Khastakhumar and Bibinagar" (pp. 230-237)
- 2) Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, trans. Lindsay, J. "Cupid and Psyche" (pp.101-147).
- 3) M. Mills "Cupid and Psyche in Afghanistan", Asia Society Afghanistan Council Occasional Paper No. 14, 1978.

B. Commentaries

Stith Thompson, *The Folk Tale* "Enchanted Husband (Lover) Disenchanted" (pp.97-102)

Cocchiara, *History of Folklore in Europe* pp. 308-313

Annti Aarne & Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale*: Tale type entry for #425

Writing assignment (this week in lieu of key word exercise): DEVISE A MOTIF LIST FOR APULEIUS' "CUPID AND PSYCHE" and/or for one or more of the variants. Use Stith Thompson's *Motif Index of Folk Literature* (6 vol. reference work in library, does not circulate). Note any apparently significant narrative elements for which you did not easily find an indexed motif that seemed to fit. Critique the concept of "motif." This can probably best be done as a group enterprise if two or more people want to converge on the *Motif Index* as a team.

Week 3: 4 & 6 Oct Oral Formulaic Theory

Lord *Epic Singers and Oral Tradition* Ch 1: "Words Heard and Words Seen" pp 15-37;
Ch. 5: "Homer as an Oral-Traditional Poet" pp.72-103.

John Foley *Immanent Art*, Introduction, pp. xi-xvi; Ch. 1 "From Traditional Poetics to Traditional Meaning," pp. 1-37; Ch 2 "Traditional Referentiality: A Receptionalist Perspective," pp. 38-60.

Week 4: 11 October Orality and Literacy

13 OCTOBER CLASS CANCELLED DUE TO AFS MEETING

Brian Street *Literacy in Theory and Practice* Part One, "Literacy in Theory," pp. 19-125.
G. Nagy *Poetry as Performance*, Introduction pp. 1-4; Part I "Mimesis and the Making of Identity in Performance," Ch. 1 "The Homeric Nightingale and the Poetics of Variation" pp. 7-38. [Recommended: Ch. 3 "Mimesis of Homer and Beyond" pp. 59-86.]

Week 5: 18 & 20 October: Formalism and Structuralism

C. Levi-Strauss *The Savage Mind*, Ch. 1 "The Science of the Concrete" pp. 1-33.
C. Levi-Strauss *Structural Anthropology*, "The Structural Study of Myth", pp. 206-231.
V. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, entire book (browse some parts as needed).

Week 6: 25 & 27 October: Genre, Text, Entextualization

D. Ben-Amos "Analytical Categories and Ethnic Genres" *Folklore Genres* 215-242.
R. Bauman, *Folklore, Cultural Performances and Popular Entertainments: A Communications-Centered Handbook*, "Genre" pp. 53-59
G. Urban and M. Silverstein, *Natural Histories of Discourse* "The Natural History of Discourse" pp.1-17, "Entextualization, Replication and Power" pp. 21-44.
R. Bauman and C. Briggs *Voices of Modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality*, "Introduction" pp. 1-18.
E. Fine "Leading Proteus Captive: Editing and Translating Oral Tradition" in J. Foley, ed., *Teaching Oral Traditions* pp. 59-71.

[Recommended: T. Harris-Lopez "Genre" in B. Feintuch *Eight Words for the Study of Expressive Culture* pp. 99-120.]

[Recommended: J. T. Tilton "Text" in B. Feintuch *Eight Words for the Study of Expressive Culture* pp. 69-98.]

[Recommended: E. Brady, *A Spiral Way: How the Phonograph Changed Ethnography*, whole book, not on Carmen]

Week 7: 1 & 3 November

Nov. 1: Tradition and Authenticity

D. Ben-Amos "The Seven Strands of *Tradition*: Varieties in Its Meaning in American Folklore Studies" *Journal of Folklore Research* 21(2/3) pp. 97-132.

D. Hymes, "Folklore's Nature and the Sun's Myth" *JAF* 88:350 (1975) pp. 345-369.

E. Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing traditions" in E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, pp.1-14.

D. Ó Giolláin "The national and the local—practices of de- and retraditionalization" pp. 10-18. *FF Network* (28) June 2005.

T. Hofer *Journal of Folklore Research* 21(2/3) "The Perception of *Tradition* in European Ethnology" pp. 133-148.

R. Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity*, Ch. 2 "From Experience to Representation", Ch. 3 "American Romanticism and the Emergence of American Folklore Studies", Intro to Pt. 2 "The Role of Authenticity in Shaping Folkloristic Theory . . ." pp. 45-96.

R. Handler and J. "Tradition, Genuine or Spurious," in *Journal of American Folklore* 97:385, (1984) pp. 273-290.

Nov. 3: And Now for Something Completely Different: Defining Traditions by Group Process and Groups by Tradition

D. Noyes "Group," Feintuch, *Eight Words for the Study of Expressive Culture*, 7-41.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett "The Electronic Vernacular" in G. Marcus., ed., *Connected: Engagements with Media*, 1996.

Week 8: 8 & 10 November: Below Awareness

P. Bourdieu *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Ch. 1 pp. 1-22 only; Ch. 2 pp. 72-95.

P. Willis, *Learning to Labor*, Introduction and Part I, pp. 1-116, Ch.8, pp. 171-184.

D. Goldstein *Once Upon a Virus*, Ch. 4: "What Exactly Did They Do with that Monkey, Anyway?"; and Ch. 5, "Welcome to the Innocent World of AIDS," pp. 77-116.

Week 9: 16 & 18 November: Problematics of Memory: Secrecy, Ownership, Deniability

S. Slyomovics *The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco*, Introduction pp. 1-12, Ch. 5 "Women and Testimony" pp.132-164.

R. Price *First Time*, "Those Times Shall Come Again," pp. 5-30

J. Radner and S. Lanser *Feminist Messages*, "Strategies of Coding in Women's Cultures" pp. 1-29, in Radner, Ed., *Feminist Messages*.

- L. Pershing, "Scandalous Sunbonnet Sue" pp. 98-125, in *Feminist Messages*
 Angela Bourke "More in Anger than in Sorrow: Irish Women's Lament Poetry" pp. 160-182., in *Feminist Messages*.
 M. F. Brown, *Who Owns Native Culture?* Introduction, pp. 1-10.

Week 10: 22 November 2009: Revival and Appropriation

N.B. Nov. 24 class to be moved or cancelled due to schedule conflict. These readings may change slightly

- S. Stewart "Notes on Distressed Genres" in *Crimes of Writing*, pp. 66-101.
 B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett "Theorizing Heritage", *Ethnomusicology* 39(3) pp. 367-380
 B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett *Destination Culture* pp. 149-176, 189-200, 249-256.
 J. Bau Graves: *Cultural Democracy The Arts, Community and the Public Purpose*, Ch.2
 "Tradition and Innovation" pp. 41-61.

Week 11: 29 November, Dec 1:

Nov 29: Intangible Cultural Heritage, between Protection and Commodification

N.B. These readings may change slightly

From Laurajane Smith & Natsuko Akagawa, eds *Intangible Heritage* (Routledge, 2009))

- (1) Smith & Akagawa, "Introduction," pp. 1-9
- (2) Norika Aikawa Faure, Ch. 2, "From the Proclamation of Masterpieces to the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage," pp. 13-44 (This is a **very** detailed history. Read for issues, not for details.)
- (3) Ahmed Skounti, Ch. 4: The Authentic Illusion: Humanity's intangible cultural heritage, the Moroccan experience," pp. 74-92.
- (4) Valdimar Tr. Hafstein, Ch. 5: "Intangible Heritage as a list: From masterpiece to representation," pp. 93-111.
- (5) Anthony Seeger, Ch. 6, "Lessons learned from the ICTM (NGO) evaluation of nominations for the UNESCO *Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity*, 2001-5," pp. 112-128.
- (6) Denis Byrne, Ch. 12, "A critique of unfeeling heritage," pp. 229-252.
- (7) Regina Bendix, Ch. 13, "Heritage between economy and politics," pp. 253-269.

Dec. 1: IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS OF FINAL PAPERS (APPROXIMATELY 15 MINUTES EACH) Refreshments will be served . . .

DEC. 6, 5 PM. 300 HAGERTY HALL: PLEASE TURN IN ANY REVISED VERSIONS OF FINAL PAPERS. HARD COPIES PREFERRED, ELECTRONIC COPIES ACCEPTED IF NECESSARY. THANKS!!

