Introduction to Graduate Study in Folklore 2:

Fieldwork

English 770.02 (08805-7)

Professor: Ray Cashman
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Office: Denney 509
Office Hours: 9:00-11:00 a.m Tuesdays, or by appointment
Quarter: Spring 2008
Meeting Time: M 12:30–3:18
Location: Dulles 308

Course Description:
This course will be run as a seminar/workshop that explores a range of methodological, theoretical, and ethical issues in fieldwork as practiced in folklore and allied fields of ethnographic research. The emphasis will fall on students applying perspectives, methods, and strategies from readings and discussion, in a series of exercises that offer students hands-on field experience. Class periods will alternate between discussion of readings and collectively reviewing and critiquing students’ fieldwork documentation and written reflections.

Reading:
Issues in Collaboration and Representation, special issue of The Journal of Folklore Research (2000, 37: 2/3) will be available at SBX bookstore, 806 North High St. between 14th and 15th Ave

All other readings will be posted on Carmen.

Expectations:

Attendance. The success of a small class depends on the regular attendance of all participants, so I expect you at every class session, barring significant illness or other personal emergencies.

Preparation and contribution. You must keep up with the readings and come prepared to discuss them. Participation in class discussion is expected and necessary; it ensures the best possible educational experience for all. Contributing is not necessarily about having the right answers. Discussion allows us to raise questions and critical concerns, try out new ideas and positions (even if we eventually abandon them), and help each other consider all sides of an issue.

Due dates. In the imposing words of Richard Bauman, “late work is a sure sign of indolence, shiftlessness, and moral turpitude.” The due dates indicated are firm. Contact me ASAP, however, if you have compelling reasons to need an extension.
Grading:

25%
preparation for class, contribution to discussion and constructive critique

75%
fieldwork exercises, documentation, and reflections

Fieldwork Exercises:

You will receive more detailed instructions for each exercise. When an assignment is due, bring enough copies for each person to have one for in-class critique.

1. Proxemics exercise (observing social uses of space), 3 page (or more) reflection (10%)
2. Document a “scene,” 4 page (or more) description, append a copy of your fieldnotes (15%)
3. First recorded interview, 4 page (or more) reflection on the interview process, audio index (10%)
4. Ethnopoetic transcription of interview section, 4 page (or more) reflection on transcription decisions (10%)
5. Second interview, 4 page (or more) reflection with reference to class readings, audio index (15%)
6. Photographic portfolio (10–20 images) evoking a sense of place, image index, 3 page reflection on the process (10%)
7. Document, describe, and analyze a performance or display event using whichever tools, techniques, and strategies from throughout quarter are relevant to the event under study. Write an 8–10 page report with reference to class readings. Append all fieldnotes and other supporting documentation such as photos, image indexes, and audio indexes. You will present your findings to the class during the last week. (30%)

Class Schedule (subject to change)

Week One (3/24)
Introduction to the Course and the University District

- Follow links on Carmen to “about folklore” statements on the websites of the American Folklore Society and the OSU Center for Folklore Studies [http://afsnet.org/aboutfolklore/aboutFL.cfm](http://afsnet.org/aboutfolklore/aboutFL.cfm).
- About Center for Folklore Studies

Week Two (3/31)
From Participant Observation to Documentation and Representation

Assignment #1 due

• Cashman, Ray. Excerpts from Irish fieldwork journal 1998-2007
• Cashman, Ray. Report on the Fort Wayne Macedonian Ball for Traditional Arts Indiana.

Week Three (4/7)
Interviewing, take one

Assignment #2 due

• Cashman, Ray. Audio index, Patrick James McGrath, Co. Donegal, 8/15/07.
• Cashman, Ray. Documentation of Dita Atzeff interview for Traditional Arts Indiana

Week Four (4/14)
Interpreting Life Stories and Oral History

Assignment #3 due


Week Five (4/21)
Interviewing, take two

Assignment #4 due


Week Six (4/28)
Photography and the Sense of Place

Assignment #5 due


Week Seven (5/5)
The Ethnography of Performance

Assignment #6 due

Week Eight (5/12)

Ethics and the Institutional Review Board (IRB)

- Statement of the American Folklore Society on Research with Human Subjects at [http://www.afsnet.org/aboutAFS/humansubjects.cfm](http://www.afsnet.org/aboutAFS/humansubjects.cfm)
- Look over the page at [http://orrp.osu.edu/irb/training/citi.cfm](http://orrp.osu.edu/irb/training/citi.cfm) then click on www.citiprogram.org, take the course, and print out your certification (due week 10)
- OSU IRB forms for Human Subjects Review


Week Nine (5/19)

Reflexive, Collaborative, and Reciprocal Ethnography


Week Ten (5/26)

In-class Presentations

Assignment #7 due by noon Monday, 6/1/08, in my mailbox in Denney 421.