

Comparative Studies 2350/English 2270
INTRODUCTION TO FOLKLORE
MacQuigg 162

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Office Hours: Mon 1-2:30 or by appointment

Graduate Student Participants:

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General Description:

Folklore is the culture that takes shape in everyday social life. Not all of us are specialists, but all of us tell stories, shape our environments, cultivate communities, and take care of our souls and our bodies. The forms of folklore circulate from person to person and group to group, adapting to every change of situation; they lend themselves to a wide array of social purposes. This course provides an orientation to the basic stuff, methods, concepts, and stakes of folklore studies. We'll examine a range of case studies from the US, and you will examine and document the folklore in your own life. You'll learn the basics of these folkloristic skills:

- *Interpreting culture.* Learn how to “read” a wide variety of cultural messages according to their own conventions and in their social context.
- *Field observation and ethnography.* Learn how to size up an unfamiliar situation, participate in it appropriately, and describe it in writing.
- *Documentation and Accessioning.* Learn about the Folklore Archives: discover materials collected by past students and learn how to organize and code your own work so that it can be used by future researchers.
- *Rigorous listening and interviewing.* Learn how to understand what someone is telling you without imposing your own agenda on the conversation.
- *Understanding diversity.* Learn how communities in the US and internationally develop distinctive forms of expression that can foster strong identities, exercise social control, provoke conflict, and build bridges.
- *Connecting vernacular and codified expression.* Learn about the interchanges and miscommunications among communities, professionals, and institutions.

GENERAL EDUCATION CULTURES AND IDEAS

Goals: Students evaluate significant cultural phenomena and ideas in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; and interpretation and evaluation.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

- Students analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture and expression.
- Students evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.

FOLKLORE MINOR AND CONCENTRATION

This course is required for the UG concentration in folklore offered through English and Comparative Studies. It is also required for the Folklore Minor. For more information, visit <https://cfs.osu.edu/programs/undergraduate-options>

READINGS AND PREPARATION

No textbook is required for this class. We will be reading a series of articles and book chapters which are available on Canvas, through the Library database (JSTOR), or on the web. By printing these essays, you will compile your own course pack. You must have a printout of the readings with you for each class. Failure to print out the readings will result in your being marked unprepared for the session.

I suggest you purchase a binder of some sort in which you can keep your readings, your reading notes, and your class notes, so that you have everything in the same place when the time comes to review for the exams.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All requirements and assignments must be completed for a passing grade.

- Participation, 10%
- Daily Summaries 20%
- Two Midterms 30% (9/21; 11/16)
- Ethnographic Project 40%

Daily Summaries: To each class bring a typed paragraph that summarizes the reading for that day and ends with one or more questions that you have about the reading. These may be questions of clarification (the meaning of a term, a concept or other element in the reading), or questions for discussion (questions about the ideas in the essay). In a second paragraph, please describe of an item of folklore that you are familiar with in your own life that resembles the folklore being discussed in the reading. You will turn these summaries in to me.

Midterms: The two midterms are in-class exams that cover the readings, class notes, videos and other multimedia presentations.

Ethnographic project. This project has several parts. In preparation for doing your own ethnographic project, you will examine a student ethnographic project from the OSU folklore archive, keyword it, listen to the audio interview, and produce a tape-log or transcription for that project. This work counts as service-learning. It will enhance the accessibility of materials currently in the archive, making it easier for future scholars to conduct research on these materials. At the same time it will allow

you to familiarize yourself with material on your topic that already exists in the archive. You will then have an opportunity to add to the consultable record of human expression. You will conduct original research on a group, a practice, a place or a genre of expressive culture that you have access to face-to-face. This involves participant observation, interviewing, photo documentation and analysis. You may work individually or as part of a research team. Potential topics include: holiday traditions, dorm life, jokes, haunted places, traditions of rural Ohio (farming, forestry, hunting), African American Columbus, body art, yard art, dance scenes or anything else that you can convince me is worth documenting.

Assignment	Length	%	Due
Ethnographic Project Proposal	250 words	3	9/12
Key-wording a SEP	5-15 words	2	10/5
Tape Log for a SEP interview	variable	5	10/10
Tape Recorded Interview with tape log	Min. 30 minutes	10	11/9
Final Paper (keyworded) including context, original research, analysis, audio interview(s) and tape log, photographs, drawings, etc.	8-20 pages	20	12/8

OSU Grading Scale

A 93-100 B+ 87-89.9 B- 80-82.9 C 73-76.9 D+ 67-69.9 E below 60
 A- 90-92.9 B 83-86.9 C+ 77-79.9 C- 70-72 .9 D 60-66.9

CLASS POLICIES

Electronics: In order to focus on the work at hand and build our classroom community, no phone usage of any kind will be tolerated in class. Please turn your devices off before class begins. We will be practicing the “BE HERE NOW” philosophy made popular by 1960s era psychedelic guru Ram Dass, and giving our total attention to the present moment, even when it seems boring. No computer use during class time except for those who have received prior permission from the instructor.

Pedagogically speaking, taking notes by hand (except under certain special conditions) enhances one’s absorption and recall of course materials. Treat yourself. Invest in a nice pen.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the representation of another's work 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. Do not copy someone else’s exam or turn in a project that is not your work. All cases of suspected plagiarism will be turned over to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct for adjudication:

“It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic

misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For more information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>."

Disabilities

I will make every effort to meet your needs for instruction within the limitations of the course structure. "Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Student Life Disability Services is located at 098 Baker Hall, Columbus OH 43210; phone: 614-292-3307; slds@osu.edu For more information, go to <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/about-us/>

A Note on Course Content

Not all folklore is pretty! In this class, we will look at a wide range of folkloric material and expressions in the contemporary context. This means that we will sometimes need to deal with folklore that contains obscene language, is racist, sexist, homophobic, or provocative in some other way, or expresses ideological or political viewpoints that clash with our personal beliefs. This course does not promote or debunk such folklore. Our purpose is rather to confront the realities of folklore in contemporary life and think critically about *why* and *how* such folklore arises in a particular context.

SCHEDULE

(May be revised during the course of semester; check Canvas for updates)

Week 1: The Folk

8/22	Introduction; Who are the Folk? Games your teacher used to play
Assignment for 8/24	Dundes, Alan 1980 "Who are the Folk?" in his <i>Interpreting Folklore</i> (CP): Newell, William Wells. 1888. "On the Field and Work of a Journal of American Folk-Lore." <i>JAF</i> 1(1): 3-7 (Canvas).
8/24	The folk, folklorists, and modernity--the US approach
Assignment for 8/29	Bauman, Richard, 1971 "Differential Identity and the Social Base of Folklore" <i>Journal of American Folklore</i> 84(331):31-41 (Library); McIntosh, White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack <i>Peace and Freedom Magazine</i> , July/August, 1989, pp. 10-12 (google it)

Week 2: The Folklore Process

8/29	Discussion: Studying folklore: ethnography and comparison; Ethnic/Racial Diversity in the United States: elective vs. ascribed group membership
Assignment for 8/31	Toelken, Barre. The Folklore Process in his <i>Dynamics of Folklore</i> , pp 19-54. (Library—Project Muse)
8/31	Discussion: The Folklore Process Lecture: Introduction to the Genres of Folklore
Assignment for 9/5	Tucker, Elizabeth, Changing Concepts of Childhood: Children's Folklore Scholarship since the Late Nineteenth Century, <i>Journal of American Folklore</i> 125 (498): 389-410. (Library)

Week 3: Games

9/5	Video: "Let's Get the Rhythm" (Citylore) Discussion: Childhood Games
Assignment for 9/7	Think about what you would like to research for your Ethnographic Project: A group, a place, a practice, a genre, an event. Bring your draft proposal to class.
9/7	Fieldtrip to the folklore archive. We will meet at the Ohio Stadium, enter between gates 18-20, 2nd (top) floor. Guest Speaker: Cassie Patterson, Director, OSU Folklore Archives. Principals of accessioning. In-class activity: Decision-making about the Ethnographic Project: Work Alone or in Teams? Focus on an event, a group, a genre? Research where? How? Potential obstacles and opportunities. Find a project in the archive that relates to your proposed ethnographic research.
Assignment for 9/12	Upload your research proposal to carmen—include your request for a SEP and audiotape. Ellis, Bill 2001 The Fast Food Ghost in his <i>Aliens, Ghosts and Cults: Legends We Live</i> . (Canvas)

Week 4: Legends

9/12	Supernatural Legends in the Modern World
Assignment for 9/14	Turner, Patricia A. 1992. Ambivalent Patrons: The Role of Rumor and Contemporary Legends in African-American Consumer Decisions." <i>Journal of American Folklore</i> 105:424-441(Library);
9/14	Legends Supernatural and Otherwise
Assignment for 9/19	None. Start studying for the midterm

Week 5: Ways of Speaking

9/19	Film: American Tongues
	Study for mid-term Check box for your tape log assignment for the SEPs.

9/21	First Mid-Term
Assignment for 9/26	Bock, Sheila. 2017. Ku Klux Kasserole and Strange Fruit Pies: Shouting Match at the Border of Cyberspace. <i>Journal of American Folklore</i> 130(516):142-65. (library)

Week 6: Borrowing, Imitating, and Border Management

9/26	African-American Legends and Parody Traditions
Assignment for 9/28	Green, Rayna, 1988 The Tribe Called Wannabee: Playing Indian in America and Europe, <i>Folklore</i> 99(1):30-55 (library); Watch Gathering up Again: Fiesta in Santa Fe Jeanette DeBouzek and Diane Reyna, dirs., 1992. On www.folkstreams.net Take notes for discussion
9/28	Discussion: Playing Indian in a multicultural festival
Assignment for 10/3	Elizabeth Fine, 2003 "A History of Stepping," in her <i>Soulstepping: African American Step Shows</i> (Univ. of Illinois Press): 11-47; Ellis, Bill. 2001. Ostension as Folk Drama in his <i>Aliens, Ghosts and Cults: Legends We Live</i> , 165-85 (Both on Canvas)

Week 7: Cultural Performances

10/3	African American College Traditions and Ohio Teens Legend Tripping
Assignment for 10/5	Finalize your SEP tapelog
10/5	Service Learning Project: Keywording the SEPS for the Folklore Archive. Meeting Place TBD.
Assignment for 10/10	Borland, Katherine. 1998. "'That's Not What I Said': Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research." In <i>Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History</i> , S.B. Gluck and D. Patai eds, 63-75. NY: Routledge. (Canvas)

Week 8: Family Folklore

10/10	Discussion: The Oral Personal Narrative and Issues of Interpretation. Guest Lecture Mariah Marsden
Assignment for 10/17	Hufford, David David Hufford, 1995 Beings Without Bodies: An Experience-Centered Theory of the Belief in Spirits in <i>Out of the Ordinary: Folklore and the Supernatural</i> (Library ebook-project Muse)
10/12	Autumn Break: No class
Assignment for 10/17	Come to class ready to share your own supernatural encounters

Week 9: Experience-Centered Interpretation

10/17	Discussion: Experience-Centered Theories of Belief Guest Lecture: Jordan Lovejoy Workshop: How to use a tape-recorder—interviewing one another about supernatural encounters
Assignment	Upload Tape Logs for SEP projects to Carmen by 10/20

10/19	AFS conference—NO CLASS
Assignment for 10/24	Paredes, Americo. 1995 (1968) Folk Medicine and the Intercultural Jest. In his <i>Folklore and Culture on the Texas-Mexican Border</i> , ed. Richard Bauman. (Canvas)

Week 10: Folk Tales

10/24	Class Discussion: Induced Natural Context, Hybrid Genres
Assignment for 10/26	Lindahl, Carl, Sounding a Shy Tradition: Oral and Written Styles of American Mountain Märchen, 2001 <i>Journal of Folklore Research</i> 38(1/2):69-98; Two Transcriptions of “Jack and the Bull” by Polly Johnson, p 99-105, and Storybook Style: “Jack and the Green Man” pp 106-110 (same volume) (library)
10/26	Lecture: The Indo-European Folktale Complex Class Discussion: Oral and Written Traditions
Assignment for 10/31	Santino, Jack. Halloween: The Fantasy and Folklore of All Hallows Eve https://www.loc.gov/folklife/halloween.html ; Kugelmass, Jack 1991 Wishes Come True: Designing the Greenwich Village Halloween Parade, <i>Journal of American Folklore</i> 104(414):443-465 (library)

Week 11: Material Folklore

10/31	Discussion: Halloween: A Calendar Custom or Masquerade Opportunity?
Assignment for 11/2	Sciorra, Joe 2015 Imagined Places and Fragile Landscapes: Nostalgia and Utopia in Nativity <i>Presepi</i> in his <i>Built With Faith: Italian American Imagination and Catholic Material Culture in New York City</i> , 61-90. (Canvas)
11/2	Discussion: Customary Arts: Guest Lecture Sydney Varajon
Assignment	Work on your tape-recorded interviews

Week 12: Folklore Meets Popular Culture in Defense of the Local

11/7	Video: From Mambo to Hip Hop: A South Bronx Tale. Producers: Steve Zeitlin and Elena Martinez (Citylore).
Assignment	Prepare your tape-recorded interview and tape log
11/9	Tape Recorded Interviews—sharing and discussion. Special Guest Cassie Patterson
Assignment	Bring mid-term questions to class for review

Week 13 Midterm #2

11/14	Review session for midterm 2
Assignment	Study, study, study
11/16	Midterm 2
Assignment	Lloyd, Timothy 1981 The Cincinnati Chili Culinary Complex, <i>Western</i>

	<i>Folklore</i> 40(1):28-40; 2007 Long, Lucy Green Bean Casserole: The Logic of a Midwestern Foodways Aesthetic, <i>Midwestern Folklore</i> 33(1):29-44; Emily Wentzel, 2010 Getting a Piece: Purchasing Erotic Cakes and Constructing Discursive Symbols, <i>The Journal of Popular Culture</i> 43(5): 1111-1128 (Library)
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Week 14 Food for Thought

11/21	Foodways in the Midwest
Assignment	Hafstein, Valdimar 2004 The Politics of Origins: Collective Creation Reconsidered, <i>JAF</i> 117(465):300-315. (Library) Come to class with your final ethnographic observations
11/23	Thanksgiving: No Class

Week 15 Theoretically Speaking

11/28	Creativity Reconsidered
Assignment	Noyes, Dorothy, 2016 Compromised Concepts in Rising Waters: Making the Folk Resilient, in her <i>Humble Theory: Folklore's Grasp on Social Life</i> (Indiana University Press): 410-438. (Canvas)
11/30	The folklore process in changing times
Assignment	Come to class with your final ethnographic observations and questions about your final projects

Week 16 Wrapping up

12/5	Where we are now: Summing up and Celebrating our Accomplishments
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