

FOLKLORE & LITERATURE
ENG 5650 001 CRN: 16118
M, 6-9 p.m.
1171 Main
Fall, 2007

Dr. Janet Langlois
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OH: M, 3-5 p.m., W, 1-3 p.m.
& by app't
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Course Description

"After all, the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction, between literature and non-literature and so forth are not laid up in heaven." Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin's apt quote captures this course's aim to explore the complex and shifting interconnections between "folklore" (traditional cultural practices including the verbal arts, social folk customs and material culture) and "literature" and other "arts." We will examine storytelling in all its permutations across the borders of the oral, the written, and the visual within cultural frameworks. We will also evaluate various writers' and artists' appropriations of folk traditions as well as folk artists' appropriations of literary material. The discussion will unfold in the broader context of questions about the nature of "cultural texts" and "cultural readings" and their meanings in the academy and in everyday life. We will explore folkloric, literary and artistic works as well as secondary literary and cultural criticism and ethnographic materials.

Texts

(All texts are required and are available for purchase at Marwil's Bookstore on the southeast corner of Cass and Warren Avenues and online, and for reading on three-hour reserve at Purdy-Kresge Library)

Byatt, A.S. *Little Black Book of Stories*. NY: Vintage, 2005.
 de Caro Frank and Rosan Augusta Jordan. *Re-Situating Folklore: Folk Contexts and Twentieth-Century Literature and Art*. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 2004.
 Forster, E.M. *Passage to India*. NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/Harvest Book, c. 1965. (Other editions may be used.)
 Percy, Walker. *The Moviegoer*. NY: Vintage International, 1998. (Other editions may be used.)
 Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. NY: Penguin, c. 1986. (Other editions may be used.)

Additional Readings

Other readings will be posted on Blackboard /eReserves or distributed as class handouts as noted in the syllabus.

Blackboard-Assisted Course

Please check the Blackboard website for this course regularly as full-text readings noted in the syllabus as well as announcements, class information, assignments, exam review summaries and website links will be posted. To access Blackboard and to communicate by email, you will need to activate your WSU Access ID at <http://computing.wayne.edu/accessid/activate.php>. You should do this even if you have another email address. If you do use another email address, you should have email that is sent to your WSU account forwarded to you by going to <http://computing.wayne.edu/email/forwarding.php>.

Requirements

Final grades will be based on midterm and final essay exams (40%), term projects (#1 brief ethnographic research report due on 10/15/07 and #2 research paper on a folklore & literature topic selected by the student due 12/03/07) (45%), and class participation (attendance, discussion board and classroom activities, and oral reports on projects)(15%). Fuller guidelines are forthcoming.

Syllabus

I. Introduction: Folklore & Literature Issues

09/10 Beginnings

Readings: Baxter, Charles. "Scheherazade." *Harper's Magazine*. (June, 1989):62-4 (handout).

09/17

Readings: de Caro & Jordan, *Re-Situating Folklore*, introduction and chapter 1, pp.1-52; *The American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress* (Homepage), especially the links "What is Folklife" and "American Folklife: A Commonwealth of Cultures" at <http://www.loc.gov/folklife>.

II. Verbal Arts and the Literary Imagination

09/24

Readings: de Caro & Jordan, *Re-Situating Folklore*, chapter 2, pp. 53-71; Haase, Donald. "Feminist Fairy-Tale Scholarship." In *Fairy Tales and Feminism: New Approaches*. Ed. Don Haase. (Detroit, Wayne State University, 2004), pp. 1-36 (Blackboard/eReserves); Bacchilega, Cristina, *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender & Narrative Strategies* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1997), pp. 103-38(Blackboard/ERes); film clip from Jane Campion's "The Piano."

10/01

Readings:

Byatt, A.S., "The Thing in the Forest," "A Stone Woman" and "The Pink Ribbon" in her *Little Black Book of Stories*, pp. 1-44, 111-56, 199-236; Tiffin, Jessica. "Ice, Glass, Snow: Fairy Tales as Art and Metafiction in the Writing of A.S. Byatt." *Marvels & Tales* 20:1 (2006):47-66 (Blackboard/ERes).

Coover, Robert, "The Gingerbread House" in his *Pricksongs & Descants* (NY: Plume, 1969), pp. 61-75 (Blackboard/eReserves); Benson, Stephen, "'Familiarity Breeds Consent': Robert Coover and the Fairy Tale" in his *Cycles of Influence: Fiction, Folktale & Theory*. (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2003), pp. 147-65 (Blackboard/ERes).

10/08

Readings: de Caro & Jordan, *Re-Situating Folklore*, chapter 4, pp. 93-116; Forster, E.M., *A Passage to India*

10/15

Readings: Forster, *A Passage to India* continued; Armstrong, Paul B. "Reading India: E.M. Forster and the Politics of Interpretation." *Twentieth Century Literature*. 38:4 (Winter, 1992): 365-85 (Blackboard).

Midterm review

10/22

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

III. Social Folk Customs: Breaking into Myth & Ritual

10/29

Readings: Forster, *Passage to India*, cont.; Silko, *Ceremony*; Sims, Martha & Martine Stephens, "Ritual," chapter 4 in their *Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and Their Traditions* (Logan: Utah State UP, 2005), pp. 94-126 (Blackboard/ERes); Casebook 3: Leslie Marmon Silko, especially her "Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective," pp. 1573-78, and Kim Barnes' interview, pp. 1578-84 (Blackboard/ERes).

#1 BRIEF ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH REPORT DUE

Project #1 reports

11/05

Readings: Silko, *Ceremony*; Mitchell, Carol. "Ceremony as Ritual." A Special Symposium Issue on Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*. *American Indian Quarterly: A Journal of Anthropology, History, and Literature* 5:1(February 1979):27-35 (Blackboard); Mott, Rick. Browse through "Digitizing Leslie Silko's Laguna Landscape." *Image & Narrative: Online Magazine of the Visual Narrative*. Issue 14: Painting/portrait (Blackboard).

Project #1 reports

11/12

Readings: continuation from week 11/05 on *Ceremony*; de Caro & Jordan, *Re-Situating Folklore*, chapter 5, pp. 117-48; Percy, Walker, *The Moviegoer*.

Project #1 reports

11/19

Readings: Percy, Walker, *The Moviegoer* continued.

Project #2 works-in-progress reports

IV. Material Culture and the Creative Process

11/26

Readings: de Caro & Jordan, *Re-Situating Folklore*, chapter 6, pp. 149-181; Bronner, Simon, "Folk Objects" in *Folk Groups & Folklore Genres: An Introduction*. Ed. Elliott Oring. (Logan: Utah State UP, 1986), pp. 199-223 (Blackboard/ERes)

Project #2 works-in-progress reports

12/03

Readings: de Caro & Jordan, *Re-Situating Folklore*, chapter 7, pp. 183-216; Byatt, "Body Art" and "Raw Material" in her *Little Black Book of Stories*, pp. 45-108; Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Objects of Memory: Material Culture as Life Review." *Folk Groups & Folklore Genres: a Reader*. Ed. Elliott Oring (Logan: Utah State UP, 1989), pp. 329-38 (Blackboard/ERes).

Project #2 works-in-progress reports

Project #1 revisions due

12/10

Conclusions/new directions

Readings: de Caro & Jordan, chapter 8 and conclusion, pp. 217-38, 265-74.

Final exam review

Student evaluations

#2 RESEARCH PAPER ON FOLKLORE & LITERATURE TOPIC DUE

12/17

FINAL EXAMINATION

Contract between Instructor and Students

The instructor asks students to come to class, read and discuss readings, write term projects without plagiarizing, and have fun in the process. In turn, the instructor agrees to present concepts, examples and term project guidelines as clearly as possible, to give fair exams, and to return graded student exams and projects in a timely manner (usually one week later for exams, and no more than two weeks later for term projects).

Attendance

The English Department attendance policy is as follows:

Enrolled students in any English classes must attend one of the first two class sessions; otherwise, they may be required to drop the class. The instructor will not add students to the class after the third class session. In addition, the instructor counts attendance as part of the class participation grade based on % of classes attended. Students are allowed up to 2 **excused** absences that require advance notice to instructor; 3 or more **unexcused** absences, however, will lose attendance points and may constitute withdrawal.

Late Assignments

Students may ask for extension of assignments #1 & #2 due up to a two-day grace period with no loss of grade; after that time, one-half grade mark down per day late.

Paper Format

Reports should be typed, double-spaced, one-inch margins, no larger than 12 pt. type, no binders. (Material in appendices need not follow this format.)

Paper Revision

To be discussed.

Plagiarism

The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Policy on Plagiarism states:

The principle of honesty is recognized as fundamental to a scholarly community. Students are expected to honor this principle and instructors are expected to take appropriate action when instances of academic dishonesty are discovered. An instructor, on discovering such an instance, may give a failing grade on the assignment or for the course. The instructor has the responsibility of notifying the student of the alleged violation and the action being taken. Both the student and the instructor are entitled to academic due process in all such cases. Acts of dishonesty may lead to suspension or exclusion.

The instructor's policy, on a case-by-case basis, follows the English Department 's guidelines based on college and university guidelines.

Exam Make-ups Considered if student arranges with instructor before exam.

Incompletes (REVISED UNIVERSITY POLICY)

The mark of "I" (Incomplete) is given to either an undergraduate or a graduate student when he/she has not completed all of the course work as required for the term and when there is, in the judgment of the instructor, a reasonable probability that the student can complete the course successfully without again attending regular class sessions. The student should be passing at the time the grade of "I" is given. A written contract specifying the work to be completed should be signed by the student and instructor and filed with the English Department.

Students receiving incompletes must finish their assignments by the end of a year or the grade will be replaced by an "F." The University will not allow any extensions past the year's deadline.

Withdrawals (REVISED UNIVERSITY POLICY)

The grade of "WN" replaces the "X" grade and applies to any student who has never attended class, or did not complete any assignments, or did not participate in credit-earning activities by the withdrawal date. If a student decides not to go to class after having received a grade for any component of a course, these grades will be issued only as follows: "WP" (Withdrawal with a passing grade earned to date) or "WF" (Withdrawal with a failing grade earned to date.).

Drops and Adds Same as University Policy

Educational Accessibility Services

If you have a physical or mental impairment that may interfere with your ability to complete successfully the requirements for this course, please contact the Educational Accessibility Services Office in Room 1600 of the David Adamany Undergraduate Library to discuss appropriate accommodations on a confidential basis at 577-1851.