

Introduction to Folklore
 ENG 2600 001 CRN: 10098
 9:35 a.m.--12:20 p.m. W
 0111 State Hall
 Fall, 2008

Instructor: Dr. Janet L. Langlois
 Office: 5057 Woodward Ave, #9305.4
 Office Hours: 3-5 p.m. M, 1-3 p.m. W,
 & by appointment
 313-577-7708
ad5634@wayne.edu / janet_langlois@wayne.edu

Course Description

Folklorist Barre Toelken writes that "Folklore comes early and stays late in the lives of all of us. From the childhood rhythms of 'Patty Cake' to wedding customs, from Black dozens to Native American 'forty-nine' songs, from Valentine's candy to Easter eggs, from riddles to burial customs, we continue to wend our traditional way through life" (*Dynamics of Folklore*). In this course, we will explore traditional cultural practices (oral, customary and material), and the ways that researchers and participants have interpreted their meanings for individuals and communities. This course satisfies a Culture & Society requirement for the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

Texts

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

- Correll, Timothy Corrigan and Patrick Arthur Polk. *Muffler Men*. Folk Art and Artists Series. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000.
- Fadiman, Anne. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. NY: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1998.
- Oring, Elliott, ed. *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 1986.
- Stone, Kay. *Some Day Your Witch Will Come*. Series in Fairy-Tale Studies. Detroit: WSU Press, 2008.

Additional Readings

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard/ERes (Electronic Reserves) as noted, either on the syllabus or by the instructor during class periods.

Blackboard-Assisted Course

Please check the Blackboard website for this course regularly as the instructor will post announcements, class information, assignments, additional readings, exam review summaries and website links, etc. 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>.

Course Requirements

The class will be a combination of lecture, discussion and term projects. Final grades will be based on midterm and final exams (40%), term projects: #1 Web Site Evaluation due November 5, 2008 (20%) and #2 Field Research Project: Interview with person of student's choice on folklore topic with analysis due December 3, 2008 (25%), and class participation (attendance, discussion, brief oral presentations of field research projects) (15%). Fuller guidelines are forthcoming.

Syllabus**I. Introduction: Folklore & Folk Groups**

9/3 Beginnings

9/10

Readings: *The American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress* (Homepage), especially the link "What is Folklife?" at <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/> (Click on "external links" on Blackboard for access); Wilson, William A., "Documenting Folklore," chapter 10 in Oring, ed., *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres*, pp. 225-54; Oring, Elliott, "On the Concepts of Folklore," chapter 1 in Oring, pp. 1-22, especially pp. 17-18.

II. Open Your Mouth: Oral Folklore or Verbal Arts in Context

9/17

Readings: Oring, Elliott, "Folk Narratives," chapter 6 in Oring, pp. 121-45; Stone, Kay, *Some Day Your Witch Will Come*, front matter, pp. ix-xvii; introduction, pp. 1-9 and Part I, chapters 1-2, pp. 13-23.

9/24

Readings: Stone, Part I, chapters 2-5, pp. 36-74; Barzak, Christopher, "The Boy Who Went Forth," *Brothers & Beasts: An Anthology of Men on Fairy Tales*. Ed. Kate Bernheimer. Series in Fairy-Tale Studies. Detroit, WSU Press, pp. 227-233 (Blackboard/ERes).

10/1

Readings: Stone, Part II, chapters 6-10, pp. 77-170.

10/8

Readings: Stone, Part II, chapters 11-13, pp. 171-247.

10/15

Readings: Stone, Part III, chapters 14-17 and Epilogue, pp. 252-302.

midterm exam review

10/22 **MIDTERM EXAM****III. Take Action: Social Folk Customs in Performance**

10/29

Readings: Mechling, Jay, "Children's Folklore," chapter 5 in Oring, pp. 91-120; Fadiman, Anne, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, preface and chapters 1-8, pp. 3-105.

11/5

Readings: Oring, Elliott, "Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Folklore," chapter 2 in Oring, pp. 23-44; Fadiman, chapters 9-13, pp. 106-180.

#1 Web Site Evaluation Due

11/12

Readings: Danielson, Larry, "Religious Folklore," chapter 3 in Oring, pp. 45-69; Fadiman, chapters 14-19, pp. 181-290.

Oral reports for #2 project

IV: It's Handmade: Material Folk Culture and Meaning

11/19 Readings: McCarl, Robert, "Occupational Folklore," chapter 4 in Oring, pp. 71-89; Correl & Polk, *Muffler Men*, preface, pp. ix-xi, chapters. 1-2, pp. 3-28.

Oral reports for #2 project

11/26 **NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK**

12/3

Readings: Bronner, Simon J., "Folk Objects," chapter 9 in Oring, pp. 199-223. Correll & Polk, *Muffler Men*, chapters.3-4, pp. 29-74.

Oral reports for #2 project

#2 Ethnographic project due

12/10 **Conclusions/new directions**

Readings: Correll & Polk, *Muffler Men*, chapters 5-6, Conclusion, pp. 75-100; "Approaches to Interpreting Folklore," chapter 6 in Sims & Stevens, *Living Folklore*, pp. 174-78 (Blackboard/ERes).

Oral reports for #2 project

Final exam review; student evaluations

12/17

FINAL EXAM 9:35 a.m. – 12:20 p.m. (Time and Place to be confirmed)

Contract between Instructor and Students

The instructor asks students to come to class, read and discuss readings, write term projects and exams without plagiarizing, and have fun in the process. In turn, the instructor agrees to present concepts, examples and term project and class participation 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 two weeks later for ethnographic 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 are asked to turn in assignment #1 on due date during class period as noted on syllabus; students who are unable to come to class may e-mail as attachments or use Blackboard's drop box for assignments on due date. Students may ask for up to a two-day grace period without loss of grade for assignment #2. Late assignments are marked down one-half grade per day late.

Paper Format

Reports should be typed, double-spaced, one-inch margins, no larger than 12 pt. type, paginated. Please don't use binders or plastic folders (Material in appendices need not follow this format).

Paper Revision Possible for Assignments #1 only. Further guidelines will be given.

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 which are based on college and university guidelines.

Exam Make-ups

The instructor will consider if student arranges with the instructor before the 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.).

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.