

Topics in American Folklore: **Culture and Aging**

AM ST 530

American Studies Program, Penn State Harrisburg
Spring 2011, W 6:15-9 p.m.
Rm. 302, Library

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William B. Burford, "Stages of Man's Life from the Cradle to the Grave," Lithograph Print, c. 1883 (from ArtStor)

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE CONTENT

The focus of this course is on the use of folklore as an adaptation to aging from the cradle to the grave in American culture. Folklore comprises expressive traditions that people know as a result of informal learning by word of mouth and other forms of interpersonal (or mediated) communication, imitation and demonstration, and custom. This course emphasizes oral and social aspects of folklore, such as speech (slang, rhymes, proverbs), narratives (legends, jokes, tales), songs, games, and rituals. The investigation of the adaptation to aging in folklore shows folklore to be a living tradition in everyday lives, serving social and psychological functions for individuals as individuals, members of groups, and part of society. Students will learn tools and theories used by folklorists in such investigations: (1) field collection related to textual/content analysis, (2) contextual work related to structural-symbolic-functional analysis, and (3) ethnographic observation related to practice and performance interpretation.

The course begins with the linear concept of the American life course as a form of folklore representing beliefs about age, fate, and afterlife that contrast with the constructions of age categories and their sequence in other cultures. The course then moves through different phases of life as they have been culturally organized in America: birth and childhood (games, jokes, rhymes, songs), adolescence and adulthood (initiations, rituals, family folklore, occupational folklore, midlife crisis), and old age/death (life review, funerary traditions, memorial traditions, humor about death). The course asks students to use folkloric materials as evidence of the distinctive ways that Americans navigate through the life course and work with others in groups and communities (involving issues of gender, ethnicity, race, and sexuality). Related to these issues, students are advised that because the course works from documents of people expressing themselves freely, material may contain strong language and images that some may consider offensive. The purpose of including this material is for open discussion of cultural reality, and not an endorsement of the language or beliefs expressed.



Nine-year-old girls playing handclapping games, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 2009 (Photo: Simon Bronner)

OBJECTIVES OF COURSE

AM ST 530 offers an investigation of the ways that folklore is an adaptation to aging in the American context. To conduct that investigation, the course provides a grounding in the theory, method, and applications of folklore studies. By the end of the course,

1. Students will be able to apply in their research and writing major techniques used by

folklorists: (a) field collection related to textual/content analysis, (b) contextual work related to structural-symbolic-functional analysis, and (c) ethnographic observation related to practice and performance interpretation.

2. Students will be able to use with facility major print and electronic resources used by folklorists: motif and type index (online at PastMasters), Types of International Folktales (online at Hathi Trust), Wayland Hand classification system of belief (and other volumes from Frank C. Brown Collection at Internet Archive and Open Folklore), eHRAF (Human Resources Area Files), MLA online, UCLA folk medical archives online.

3. Students will be able to work with a variety of evidence in their studies: (a) oral, (b) visual and material objects, (c) ritual and social genres (emphasis on the course will be on oral and social genres; see AM ST 531 for material and visual culture).

4. Students will have developed different presentational competencies: (a) writing, (b) oral presentation as part of a group and as an individual, and (d) electronic “discussion.”

5. Students will be familiar with ethical guidelines to “responsible conduct of research” (RCR) in folklore fieldwork.

6. Students will be able to identify intersections of folklore research with the intellectual history and contemporary practice of American Studies.



Celebrating 80th birthday with cake and single candle, Great Neck, New York, 2005 (Photo: Simon Bronner)



TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The course requires use of a computer and readings and assignments require use of the ANGEL website (cms.psu.edu or www.angel.psu.edu):



After logging on, you'll choose AMSTD 530 from your course profile, and then see a set of "tabs." The folders referred to in this syllabus are mostly under the "Course Lessons" tab. In this course, you will use ANGEL to submit projects (in a "drop box"); download readings and Powerpoint presentations; communicate through ANGEL mail; engage in discussion forums; check for your grades; access Penn State resources; and refer back to your syllabus.

The screenshot displays the ANGEL LMS interface. At the top, there is a 'My Profile' section with a 'Refresh' button. Below this, the 'My COURSES' section shows a course titled '2005/06 Sp, Up' with 'Course 000 Section 001' and the user's role as 'Student'. The 'My GROUPS' section shows a 'Study Group' with 'Study Buddies' and the user's role as 'Group Leader'. The 'My TOOLBOX' section includes links to 'My Bookmarks', 'My Files', 'My Email', 'My Tasks', 'My Calendar', and 'My Settings'. Below the toolbox, there is a 'NEW MAIL' section showing '(1) Course 000 Section 001' and a 'TODAY'S CALENDAR' section with a 'Course 000 Section 001 Schedule' showing a 'Term paper due' reminder. The bottom navigation bar includes tabs for 'Syllabus', 'Calendar', 'Lessons', 'Class', 'In Touch', and 'Tools', with 'ASTER LEARNER' on the right. The 'Course Lessons' section is active, showing a list of lesson types: Folder, Page, Link, Quiz, Survey, Uploaded File, Drop Box, and Discussion Forum, each with a brief description.

My Profile [Refresh](#)

My COURSES [Find a Course](#)

- 2005/06 Sp, Up
 - Course 000 Section 001
 - Role: Student

My GROUPS [Find a Group](#) [Create a Group](#)

- Study Group
 - Study Buddies
 - [Delete] Role: Group Leader

My TOOLBOX

- My Bookmarks**
Keep a personalized list of bookmarks for easy access to your favorite sites.
- My Files**
Upload files for easy access from anywhere.
- My Email**
Access your Penn State and Internet mail.
- My Tasks**
Keep track of your daily tasks online.
- My Calendar**
Keep track of important personal events.
- My Settings**
Edit your personal information, change your password and more.

NEW MAIL

- (1) [Course 000 Section 001](#)

TODAY'S CALENDAR

Sort by: [Date](#) [Section](#) [Category](#) | [Show Notes](#)

Course 000 Section 001 Schedule

- Term paper due
 - Category: Reminder

Syllabus **Calendar** **Lessons** **Class** **In Touch** **Tools** **ASTER LEARNER**

Course 000 Section 000

Course Lessons [Print My Notes](#) | [Previous](#) [Next](#) [Up](#) [Top](#) [Index](#) [Search](#)

- Folder**
A folder, used to organize lessons
- Page**
An HTML document created by an instructor within ANGEL
- Link**
A link to a Web page outside ANGEL
- Quiz**
A quiz you take within ANGEL, which automatically records your score
- Survey**
A survey you submit within ANGEL, which compiles all class responses
- Uploaded File**
A file created in another application, then uploaded to ANGEL by the instructor
- Drop Box**
A location set up by the instructor to collect assignments uploaded by each student
- Discussion Forum**
A threaded discussion that is asynchronous (users post at different times)

You should have an access account allowing you to log on to the Penn State network. You can use computers on campus at various lab locations or use a laptop on campus that logs into the wireless system. If you're using a computer at home to access ANGEL or Penn State resources, a **broadband connection is essential**. Most databases require a PC platform; the following chart summarizes the technical needs, which are usually standard on consumer computers. III

recommends that you use Firefox 3.0 or above as your browser (available as a free download from www.Mozilla.com). Please note that **Chrome, Explorer 8, and Safari browsers are not supported at the present time**. For a site to retrieve free Penn State downloads, including Firefox, see <https://downloads.its.psu.edu/>. For technical assistance with Penn State computer resources, contact: helpdesk@psu.edu or look at the guide to information technology posted at <http://css.its.psu.edu/internet/> For local help, you can visit:

Instructional and Information Technologies

E302 Olmsted Building

777 West Harrisburg Pike

Middletown, PA 17057

Computer Center Phone: 717-948-6188

Operating System	Windows XP, Vista, or Windows 7 recommended
Processor	500 MHz or higher
Memory	256 MB of RAM or higher
Hard Drive Space	500 MB free disk space or higher
Browser	Windows: Windows Firefox 3.0 or higher
Plug-ins (free)	Adobe Reader Flash Player Quicktime Player Real Player
Additional Software	Microsoft Office (including Powerpoint, Excel) or Word Perfect word processing software
Internet Connection	Broadband (cable or DSL) connection strongly recommended

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

After a foundational section on the definition and analysis of folklore, the course begins an examination of the life course with the folklore of the life course in cross-cultural perspective. Then the course proceeds to the major divisions of the American life course, arranged linearly from birth to death: birth and childhood, adulthood, old age and death. At the end of the course, students will review aging lore today and anticipate changes in the future.

Students will read classic works in American folklore and have a background in the intellectual legacy of folklore studies (and the way it intersects with American Studies), assess new trends and uses of evidence, become familiar with technological aids to research, analyze different media, and become aware of ethical issues in conducting folklore fieldwork.



WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Four projects compose the products of the class:

First is an ANNOTATED FIELD COLLECTING ASSIGNMENT documenting and annotating folklore texts (a collecting form is distributed to the students); **DUE FEBRUARY 9.**

Second is an ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELD REPORT with visual documentation of a “cultural scene” involving symbolic communication and behavior such as a ritual, custom, or event; **DUE MARCH 2.**

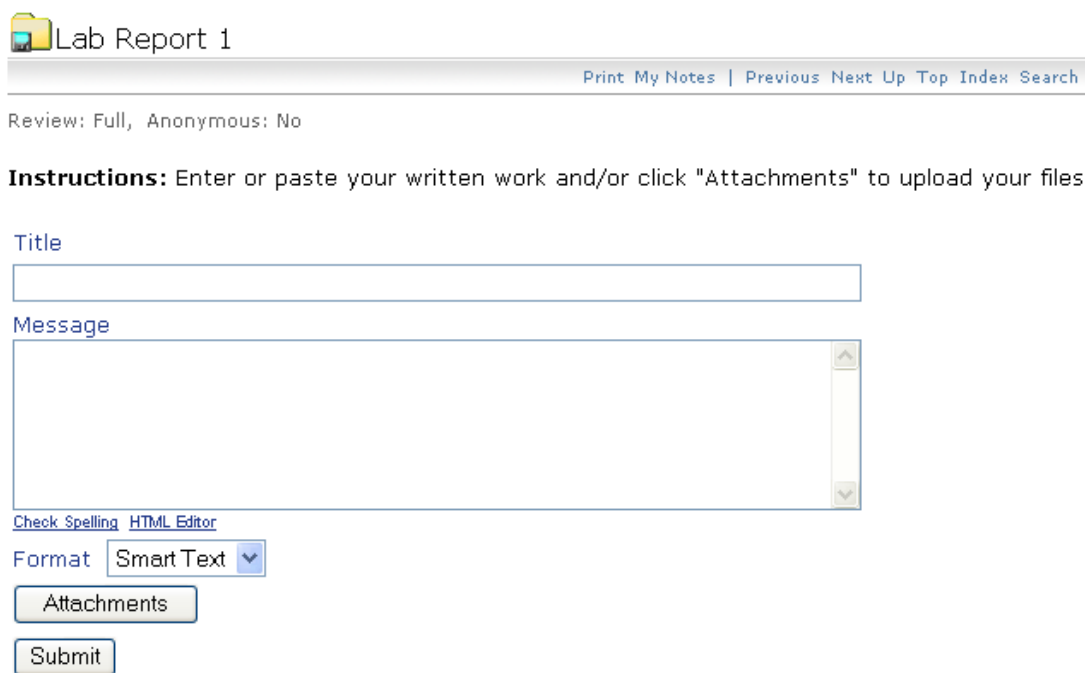
Third will be an ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY of a dozen print sources that propose a thesis regarding the topic you have chosen for the analytical paper; **DUE APRIL 6.**

Fourth, the course culminates in the ANALYTICAL PAPER (which can use material gathered in

the collecting or ethnographic assignments) using one of the approaches discussed in the course: structural-functional-symbolic analysis, ethnographic and performance/practice interpretation, cultural collection with cross-cultural/textual annotation. Consult guides to the assignments for descriptions of the writing and outlines provided on ANGEL (Lessons Tab, Assignments and Guides Folder). **DUE May 2 before NOON.**

Students are required to confer with the instructor about the topics they choose for the analytical paper. They can communicate directly by phone, office appointment, instant messaging, or electronic mail. The preferred method is through ANGEL mail because messages can be tracked and located more easily for both students and faculty.

Assignments are submitted in the ANGEL “drop box” provided in the Lessons Tab, Assignments and Guides Folder. If you have images in your paper, you should be sure to save them as jpeg files or else the file will exceed the limits of the drop box. To submit an attachment, hit the attachments button above “submit.” You will be taken to a dialogue box for attachments. You use the browse window to find your file and then hit “upload” to put it in the main window. Then hit the “Finished” button on the lower left. The dialogue box should disappear and you should be back at the drop box page (as shown below). The attachment should appear below the message box. Give your submission a title in the title box and you can put your name and topic of the submission in the message box. Then click the “submit” button and your materials will be submitted.



The screenshot shows the ANGEL submission interface for a document titled "Lab Report 1". At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: "Print My Notes | Previous Next Up Top Index Search". Below this, it indicates "Review: Full, Anonymous: No". The main section is titled "Instructions: Enter or paste your written work and/or click 'Attachments' to upload your files." Below the instructions, there is a "Title" field with a text input box. Underneath the title field is a "Message" field with a larger text area and a vertical scrollbar. At the bottom of the form, there are several controls: a "Check Spelling" link, an "HTML Editor" link, a "Format" dropdown menu currently set to "Smart Text", an "Attachments" button, and a "Submit" button.

The analytical paper is marked for composition and scholarship. The rubric below will be used to give feedback to students on their work through ANGEL.

Analytical Project Grading Rubric (2 @ 200 points each)

ATTRIBUTE	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unsatisfactory or Incomplete
I. Composition (100 points)	100	80	60	40	0
A. Clarity and Tone - 25 points	25	20	15	10	0
B. Mechanics - 50 points	50	40	30	20	0
C. Strength of Documentation - 25 points	25	20	15	10	0
II. Scholarship (100 points)	100	80	60	40	0
A. Design of Topic and Research Problem - 25 points	25	20	15	10	0
B. Application of Analytical Tools and Strength of Interpretation - 50 points	50	40	30	20	0
C. Use of Scholarly Sources - 25 points	25	20	15	10	0
Total possible points	200 (A)	160 (B- to B+)	120 (D to C+)	80 (F)	0 (F)



OTHER GRADED ACTIVITIES

In addition to developing writing competencies in this class, you will also have activities intended to give practice in oral presentation, media application, and interpretive commentary. These activities are summarized as a “class participation” grade.

The descriptions of the activities along with dates are:

January 26: Post message and response (min. 100 words) to discussion thread in ANGEL on panels and papers from the American Folklore Society conference program online.

March 23: In-class participation in group presentation on family folklore patterns.

April 13 & 20: In-class individual presentation (15 minutes max)

Collecting, Field Report, Bibliography, and Participation assignments are graded according to the following rubric:

ATTRIBUTE	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Poor
1. Student followed guidelines and instructions of assignment	5	4	3	2	1
2. Student contribution is thorough and properly documented	5	4	3	2	1
3. Student contribution demonstrates knowledge and/or research of subject	5	4	3	2	1
4. Student contribution demonstrates insight, creativity, and/or imagination	5	4	3	2	1
5. Written or visual contributions are clear, well composed, and logical in sequence and content	5	4	3	2	1

TOTAL POINTS= (Score on each attribute) X 3 (maximum=75 points)

GRADING AND DEADLINE SUMMARY

The following table organized in ascending order by date summarizes the graded activities and assignments in the course.

Date Due	Type of Assignment
January 26	Post Message to Thread about American Folklore Society conference
February 9	Collecting Assignment
March 2	Ethnographic Field Report
March 23	Group Presentation on Family Folklore Patterns
April 6	Annotated Bibliography Due
April 20	Individual Presentation
May 2	Analytical Paper

The following tables summarize the grading.

Category	Points
Collecting Assignment	75
Ethnographic Assignment	75
Annotated Bibliography	75
Participation Assignments & Presentation	75
Analytical Paper	200

Points	Grade	Quality of Performance	GPA Equivalent
475-500	A	Exceptional Achievement	4.00
450-474	A-	Excellent Achievement	3.67
435-449	B+	Extensive Achievement	3.33
415-434	B	Good Achievement	3.00
400-414	B-	Acceptable Achievement	2.67
385-399	C+	Minimal Achievement	2.33
350-384	C	Inadequate Achievement	2.00
300-349	D	Inadequate Achievement	1.00
Below 300	F	Failure	0.00
	XF	Academic Dishonesty	0.00

For more information on Penn State's grading policy, see <http://www.psu.edu/ufs/policies/47-00.html#47-60>.

N.B. : STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT ALL ASSIGNMENTS as “requirements” of the course. That means the student can fail for not submitting assignments even if his or her cumulative score is passing.

SPECIAL SPRING ACADEMIC EVENTS (OPTIONAL)

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, APRIL 8-9, 2011: “HERITAGE AND THE STATE”

CONFERENCE Middle Atlantic American Studies Association Meeting With The Middle Atlantic Folklife Association And Pennsylvania Political Science Association, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (State Capitol Building and Harrisburg Hilton Hotel) See <http://www.hbg.psu.edu/research/maasa/conferences.htm>

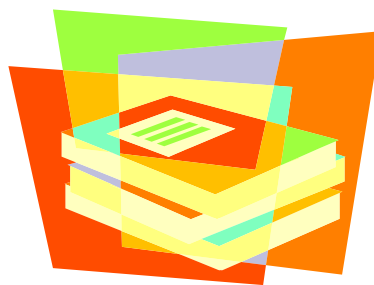
TUESDAY-FRIDAY, MAY 24-27, 2011. INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR

CONTEMPORARY LEGEND RESEARCH. Harrisburg Hilton Hotel. See <http://www.contemporarylegend.org/>.

And of related interest this fall (see CFPs for proposal submission deadlines):

American Studies Association annual meeting, Baltimore, October 20-23, 2011,
See: theasa.net.

American Folklore Society annual meeting, Bloomington, Indiana, October 12-15, 2011,
See: afsnet.org.



REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS (Available at Campus Bookstore)

Brandes, Stanley. *Forty: The Age and the Symbol*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987.

Bronner, Simon J. *American Children's Folklore*. Little Rock: August House, 1988.

Tucker, Elizabeth. *Haunted Halls: Ghostlore of American College Campuses*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007.

REQUIRED ELECTRONIC TEXTS (Available in ANGEL)

American Folklore Society Annual Meeting Program 2010

<http://afsnet.org/annualmeet/index.cfm>

Auslander, Mark. "Rites of Passage." In *Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, ed. H. James Bix, vol. 5, 2022-25. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006.

Bascom, William. "Four Functions of Folklore." *Journal of American Folklore* 67 (1954): 333-49.

Ben-Amos, Dan. "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context." *Journal of American Folklore* 84 (1971): 3-15.

Berardo, Felix M., and Hernan Vera. "The Groomal Shower: A Variation of the American Bridal Shower." *Family Relations* 30 (1981): 395-401.

Bird, S. Elizabeth. "Playing with Fear: Interpreting the Adolescent Legend Trip." *Western Folklore* 53 (1994): 191-209.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana. "'You Gotta Know How to Tell a Story': Telling, Tales, and Tellers in American and Israeli Narrative Events at Dinner." *Language in Society* 22 (1993): 361-402.

Brady, Margaret K. "Transformations of Power: Mormon Women's Visionary Narratives." *Journal of American Folklore* 100 (1987): 461-68.

Bringéus, Nils-Arvid. "Pictures of the Life Cycle." *Ethnologia Scandinavica* (1988): 5-33.

- Bronner, Simon J. "Analyzing the Ethnic Self: The *Hinkel Dreck* Theme in Pennsylvania-German Folk Narrative." *Columbia Journal of American Studies* 8 (2007): 20-54.
- _____. "Contesting Tradition: The Deep Play and Protest of Pigeon Shoots." *Journal of American Folklore* 118 (2005): 409-52.
- _____. "Digitizing and Virtualizing Folklore." In *Folklore and the Internet: Vernacular Expression in a Digital World*, ed. Trevor Blank, 21-66. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2009.
- _____. "Fathers and Sons: Rethinking the Bar Mitzvah as an American Rite of Passage." *Children's Folklore Review* 31 (2008-2009): 7-34.
- _____. "Folklore" and "Folklorists." In *Encyclopedia of American Folklife*, ed. Simon J. Bronner, 419-26. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006.
- _____. "This is Why We Hunt: Social and Psychological Meanings of the Traditions and Rituals of Deer Camp." *Western Folklore* 63 (2004): 11-50.
- Burns, Thomas A. "Fifty Seconds of Play: Expressive Interaction in Context." *Western Folklore* 37 (1978): 1-29.
- _____, and J. Stephen Smith. "The Symbolism of Becoming in the Sunday Service of an Urban Black Holiness Church." *Anthropological Quarterly* 51 (1978): 185-204.
- Camp, Charles, ed. "What Do Folklorists Do?" In *Time and Temperature*, ed. Charles Camp. Washington, D.C.: American Folklore Society, 1989, reprinted on-line, <http://afsnet.org/aboutfolklore/whatFLdo.cfm>
- Chick, Garry. "Rites of Passage." In *Encyclopedia of Recreation and Leisure in America*, ed. Gary S. Cross, vol. 2, 210-18. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004.
- Crowder, Linda Sun. "Chinese Funerals in San Francisco Chinatown: American Chinese Expressions in Mortuary Ritual Performance." *Journal of American Folklore* 113 (2000): 451-63.
- Davalos, Karen Mary. "'La Quinceañera': Making Gender and Ethnic Identities." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 16 (1996): 101-27.
- Davis-Floyd, Robbie. "The Technological Model of Birth." *Journal of American Folklore* 100 (1987): 479-95.

- Dirks, Martha. "Teen-Age Folklore from Kansas." *Western Folklore* 22 (1963): 89-102.
- Dundes, Alan. "Folk Ideas as Units of Worldview." *Journal of American Folklore* 84 (1971): 93-103.
- _____. "On Game Morphology: A Study of the Structure of Non-Verbal Folklore." *New York Folklore Quarterly* 20 (1964): 276-88.
- _____. "Projection in Folklore: A Plea for Psychoanalytic Semiotics." *MLN* 91 (1976): 1500-533.
- _____. "Who are the Folk?" In *Interpreting Folklore*, by Alan Dundes, 1-19. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980.
- Ellis, Bill. "'The Hook' Reconsidered: Problems in Classifying and Interpreting Adolescent Horror Legends." *Folklore* 105 (1994): 61-75.
- Fine, Gary Alan, and Bruce Noel Johnson. "The Promiscuous Cheerleader: An Adolescent Male Belief Legend." *Western Folklore* 39 (1980): 120-29.
- Humphrey, Linda T. 1979. "Small Group Festive Gatherings." *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 16: 190-201.
- Jones, Michael Owen. "Why Folklore and Organization(s)?" *Western Folklore* 50 (1991): 29-40.
- Kawano, Satsuki. "Pre-Funerals in Contemporary Japan: The Making of a New Ceremony of Later Life among Aging Japanese." *Ethnology* 43 (2004): 155-65.
- Kidorf, Irwin W. "The Shiva: A Form of Group Psychotherapy." *Journal of Religion and Health* 5 (1966): 43-46.
- Mathias, Elizabeth. "The Italian-American Funeral: Persistence through Change." *Western Folklore* 33 (1974): 35-50.
- Mechling, Jay. "'Banana Cannon' and Other Folk Traditions Between Human and Nonhuman Animals." *Western Folklore* 48 (1989): 312-23.
- _____. "Solo Folklore." 65 (2006): 435-54.
- Meley, Patricia M. "Adolescent Legend Trips as Teenage Cultural Response: A Study of Lore in Context." *Children's Folklore Review* 14 (1991): 5-24.
- Myerhoff, Barbara G. "A Renewal of the Word." *Kenyon Review* 1 (1979): 50-79.

- _____.; Linda A. Camino; and Edith Turner. "Rites of Passage: An Overview." In *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, vol. 11, 2nd ed., 7796-801. Detroit: Macmillan, 2005.
- Newman, Lucile F. "Folklore of Pregnancy: Wives' Tales in Contra Costa County, California." *Western Folklore* 28 (1969): 112-35.
- Phillips, Wendy. "Cravings, Marks, and Open Pores: Acculturation and Preservation of Pregnancy-Related Beliefs and Practices among Mothers of African Descent in the United States." *Ethos* 33 (2005): 231-55.
- Santino, Jack. "Characteristics of Occupational Narratives." *Western Folklore* 37 (1978): 199-212.
- Scheiberg, Susan L. "A Folklorist in the Family: On the Process of Fieldwork among Intimates." *Western Folklore* 49 (1990): 208-14.
- Smith, Moira. "Whipping Up a Storm: The Ethics and Consequences of Joking Around." *Journal of Folklore Research* 32 (1995): 121-36.
- Tangherlini, Timothy R. "Heroes and Lies: Storytelling Tactics among Paramedics." *Folklore* 111 (2000): 43-66.
- Tucker, Elizabeth. "The Dramatization of Children's Narratives." *Western Folklore* 39 (1980): 184-97.
- _____. "Go to Bed, Now You're Dead': Suffocation Songs and Breath Control Games." *Children's Folklore Review* 31 (2008-2009): 45-58.
- _____. "Levitation Revisited." *Children's Folklore Review* 30 (2007-2008): 47-60.
- Williams, Clover Nolan. "The Bachelor's Transgression: Identity and Difference in the Bachelor Party." *Journal of American Folklore* 107 (1994): 106-20.
- Yoder, Lonnie. "The Funeral Meal: A Significant Funerary Ritual." *Journal of Religion and Health* 25 (1986): 149-60.

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

I. Foundation of Folklore Studies in American Studies

II. Overview of the Life Course as Lore

III. Beginning of Life: Childhood and Adolescence

IV. Adulthood

V. End of Life: Old Age and Death

VI. Future of Aging Lore

I. Foundation of Folklore Studies in American Studies

Meeting 1: January 12

A. INTRODUCTION TO COURSE AND THEME OF AGING

The theme is introduced of aging as a cultural as well as biological process. Syllabi distributed; objectives, themes, assignments, and course resources on the web explained.

B. WHAT IS FOLKLORE?

Background is given to approaches to the definition of folklore and the rise of folklore studies since the eighteenth century in Europe and America. Operational (based on characteristics of folklore) and conceptual (based on the premise of folklore as a type of learning) definitions are given.

C. WHAT IS AMERICAN FOLKLORE?

The issue of the distinctiveness of American folklore compared to other national traditions is discussed. The history, scope, and problematics of American folklore are given. In relation to the course, the field of age lore in America is charted.

N.B. During second half of class, we will meet in computer lab

Meeting 2: January 19

D. GENRES OF FOLKLORE

A genre is a type of expression distinguished by its content, structure, or process. The genres of

folklore—native (emic) and analytical (etic)—are discussed, particularly for oral and social traditions. The importance of genres for identification and classification will also be discussed.

E. FIELDWORK AND FOLKLORE METHODOLOGIES (TEXTUAL
COLLECTING AND ETHNOGRAPHY)

The methodology of fieldwork will be described with special attention to (1) the textual documentation of oral traditions and (2) ethnographic observation of a cultural scene. Considerations of representativeness and annotation will be discussed. Ethical issues of dealing with “informants” will be also discussed.

READING (on Angel):

Ben-Amos, “Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context”
Bronner, “Folklore” and “Folklorists”
Burns, “Fifty Seconds of Play”
Burns and Smith, “Symbolism of Becoming in the Sunday Service”
Dundes, “Who are the Folk?”
Mechling, “Banana Cannon”
Mechling, “Solo Folklore”
Scheiberg, “A Folklorist in the Family”

Meeting 3: January 26

A. ANALYZING AND THEORIZING FOLKLORE

What are the problems of folklore that attract analysis and theory? The main issues discussed are the relationship of folklore to modernization, the spread of folklore, its use for identity, and the artistry of folklore.

B. CONCEPTS FOR EXPLANATIONS OF FOLK PRACTICES

The following concepts will be defined and discussed with examples of studies: structure, process (with special consideration of the rite of passage as structure and process), function, symbol (with special consideration of the psychology of projection), practice, performance.

READING (ANGEL):

Bascom, "Four Functions of Folklore"
Bronner, "Contesting Tradition"
Bronner, "*Hinkeldreck* theme"
Dundes, "Folk Ideas as Units of Worldview"
Dundes, "Projection in Folklore"
Dundes, "On Game Morphology"

ACTIVITY: Browse through the online program of the American Folklore Society annual meeting (<http://afsnet.org/annualmeet/index.cfm>) and find a topical panel that represents your interests. Discuss a presentation you might contribute.

N.B.: Paper Proposal Deadline is Feb. 1 for International Society for Contemporary Legend Research meeting in Harrisburg, May 24-27, 2011

II. Overview of the Life Course as Lore

Meeting 4: February 2

A. LIFE COURSE IN CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Various conceptions of the life course over time and space are discussed, including the linear model of three, seven, and ten stages common in America and the cyclical conceptions common in Asian cultures. The life course represents different folk ideas about aging and suggest that the life course is basic to the formation of worldview.

B. RITUAL, INITIATION, AND RITES OF PASSAGE

Markers in the life course are often constructed as ritual and this key concept is discussed in relation to its structure, function, and process. The special rituals of moving from one stage to another, called "rites of passage," are discussed in connection with "initiation."

READING:

Auslander, "Rites of Passage"
Bringeus, "Pictures of the Life Cycle"
Bronner, "This is Why We Hunt"
Chick, "Rites of Passage"

Myerhoff, Camino, Turner "Rites of Passage: An Overview"

III. Beginning of Life: CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

Meeting 5: February 9

A. CONCEPTION AND PREGNANCY

Cultural beliefs in the life course are anticipated in beliefs and narratives concerning conception and pregnancy. These include folk techniques of enhancing or preventing conception, foodways related to a successful pregnancy, folk medicine of inducing birth, beliefs in predicting the sex of the child, and couvades (male birth pangs).

B. BIRTH AND INFANCY

Cultural transmission begins early in life with perceptions of the maternal and paternal role toward the infant and the expressions used for play/education such as finger/body play and "nursery" songs. The structure, symbolism, and function of these expressions are discussed.

C. THEMES AND SETTINGS OF CHILDHOOD

Various themes and settings of children's folklore can be identified that distinguish childhood as a stage of life. The significance of these themes (e.g., power, antithesis, maturity) and settings (e.g., camp, playground) in cultural formation are discussed.

D. CHILDREN'S SPEECH, SONGS, AND STORIES

The development of slang that children recognize as their own signals a children's culture. A content analysis of such speech should reveal the concerns that children have. Other speech genres such as secret languages, taunts, and rhymes are discussed along with notable absences (proverbs). From this foundation in the manipulation of language, children develop song and story repertoires. The structure, symbolism, and function of these repertoires are discussed.



Collecting Project Due

READING:

Brady, "Transformations of Power"
Davis-Floyd, Robbie. "The Technological Model of Birth."
Newman, "Folklore of Pregnancy"
Phillips, "Cravings, Marks, and Open Pores"
From *American Children's Folklore*—Chapters 1-7

Meeting 6: February 16

E. CHILDREN'S GAMES, DRAMAS, AND PLAY

Play is often called the "work" of childhood. The forms that play takes, including games, dramas, pranks, and holiday customs are examined. The use of play to prepare for adulthood and the ways that play subverts adult expectations are discussed. The role of play in gender, ethnic, and sexual development are explored.

READING:

Bronner, *American Children's Folklore*—chapters 8-10
Tucker, "The Dramatization of Children's Narratives"
Tucker, "Go to Bed, Now You're Dead"

Meeting 7: February 23

F. ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence, or the teenage years, as a special category in the life course is of relatively recent

vintage. The folklore genres that distinguish the age, including legends and customs, are examined. As a time of transition, it also is associated with a number of rites of passage that are discussed in relation to ethnic and popular culture.

READING:

Bird, "Playing with Fear"
Bronner, "Fathers and Sons"
Davalos, "La Quinceanera"
Fine, "The Promiscuous Cheerleader"
Meley, "Adolescent Legend Trips"
Tucker, "Levitation Revisited"

Meeting 8: March 2

G. THE COLLEGE YEARS

In this session, we examine the evidence for "campus" being a distinctive American setting for folkloric production into the present day. In particular, we will ask why so many campuses have ghost and horror stories told about them.

READING:

Tucker, *Haunted Halls*



Ethnographic Field Report due

N.B., Spring Break, March 7-11

IV: ADULTHOOD

Meeting 9: March 16

A. OCCUPATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL FOLKLORE

Without a public initiation into adulthood, Americans often associate becoming adult status with “living on one’s own” and this usually entails engaging work and residential/organizational communities apart from one’s family. Adulthood is supposed to be about “being serious” and this is culturally expressed in social sanctions against “being childish,” “joking around,” and “playing games.” In addition, the man or woman is expected to acquire an “identity” that is constituted from ethnic, religious, regional, and social influences. These patterns are discussed with particular attention to traditions of modern American occupational and community life.

READING:

Jones, “Why Folklore and Organizations?”
Santino, “Characteristics of Occupational Narrative”
Smith, “Whipping up a Storm”
Tangherlini, “Heroes and Lies”

Meeting 10: March 23

B.FAMILY FOLKLORE

Patterns of family folklore are discussed, including the identification of the “family” that is a fundamental social unit generating folklore. Among the folkloric forms discussed will be rituals (e.g., weddings, baptisms, bedtime routines), speech (nicknames), narratives (family stories) and customs (reunions, picnics).



Group Presentations on Family Folklore Patterns

READING:

Blum-Kulka, "You Gotta Know How to Tell a Story"

Humphrey, "Small Group Festive Gatherings"

Williams, "The Bachelor's Transgression"

Meeting 11: March 30

A. MID-LIFE CRISIS

An emergent tradition in America that apparently has grown in response to the expansion of the life span is ceremonies marking midlife. Many of the ceremonies have a theme of mourning for the end of youth at the age of forty. They refer in narrative and ritual to a "midlife crisis." In this section, we will discuss whether the components of this perceived crisis and the American folk responses by gender and class. The discussion of midlife ceremonies also raise questions about other adult milestones such as the ages of 21, 25, 30, 50, 60, 65, and life events such as menopause, divorce, and retirement.

READING:

Brandes, *Forty*

N.B. Paper Proposal Deadline is March 30 for American Folklore Society meeting, Bloomington, Indiana, October 12-15, 2011.

V. End Of Life: OLD AGE AND DEATH

Meeting 12: April 6

A. OLD AGE AND LIFE REVIEW

Old age as a constructed stage of life associated with life review is discussed. Folkloric forms of the life review are examined such as the personal experience narrative.

B. FOLKLORE OF DEATH AND AFTERLIFE

Anxiety over death and the uncertainty of afterlife are expressed in a number of folkloric forms including humor, pranks, rituals (funerals, wakes), and festivals. These forms will be discussed with reference to structure, symbolism, and function.

READING:

Crowder, "Chinese Funerals in San Francisco Chinatown"

Kidorf, "The Shiva"

Mathias, "The Italian-American Funeral"

Myerhoff, "A Renewal of the Word"

Yoder, "The Funeral Meal"



Annotated Bibliography Due

N.B.: "Heritage and the State" Conference, sponsored by Mid-Atlantic American Studies Association, Mid-Atlantic Folklife Association, and Pennsylvania Political Science Association, April 8-9, State Capitol and Harrisburg Hilton, Harrisburg, PA

Meeting 13: April 13

Student Presentations

Meeting 14: April 20

Student Presentations

VI. FUTURE OF LORE FOR THE AGES

(LAST) Meeting 15: April 27

A. FUTURE OF AGING AND FOLKLORE

In this section, we discuss trends and predictions about the changing life course and the way those possible scenarios have an effect on past and emergent folk traditions. Notably, we examine relatively new settings, family patterns, and communication technologies.

B. THE FUTURE OF FOLKLORE RESEARCH AND WORK IN AMERICAN STUDIES

We will discuss applications of folklore research in a variety of careers and institutions. We also discuss opportunities for expanding folklore work in the American Studies Program, organizations (American Folklore Society and other folkloristic agencies), and academic institutions.

READING:

Berardo and Vera, "The Groomal Shower"
Bronner, "Digitizing and Virtualizing Folklore"
Camp, ed., "What Do Folklorists Do?"
Kawano, "Pre-Funerals in Contemporary Japan"



Analytical Paper Due May 2, NOON

N.B. Schedule Subject to Change.

<p><i>POLICY STATEMENTS: ACADEMIC FREEDOM, ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, ATTENDANCE, CONFIDENTIALITY, DISABILITY SERVICES, PERSONAL DIGITAL DEVICES, and WEATHER</i></p>

Academic Freedom

According to Penn State policy HR64, “The faculty member is expected to train students to think for themselves, and to provide them access to those materials which they need if they are to think intelligently. Hence, in giving instruction upon controversial matters the faculty member is expected to be of a fair and judicial mind, and to set forth justly, without supersession or innuendo, the divergent opinions of other investigators.” See <http://guru.psu.edu/policies/OHR/hr64.html>

Academic Integrity

According to Penn State policy 49-20, Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an education objective of this institution. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. The instructor can fail a student for major infractions. For more information, see <http://www.psu.edu/dept/ufs/policies/47-00.html#49-20>.

Attendance

Students are expected to complete every lesson in the course and are held responsible for all work covered in the course. A student whose irregular attendance causes him or her, in the judgment of the instructor, to become deficient scholastically, may run the risk of receiving a

failing grade or receiving a lower grade than the student might have secured had the student been in regular attendance. Participation by students in the course should not be disruptive or offensive to other class members. See <http://www.psu.edu/ufs/policies/42-00.html#42-27>

Confidentiality

The rights of students to confidentiality is of concern to your instructor and to the University. According to Penn State policy AD-11, "The Pennsylvania State University collects and retains data and information about students for designated periods of time for the expressed purpose of facilitating the student's educational development. The University recognizes the privacy rights of individuals in exerting control over what information about themselves may be disclosed and, at the same time, attempts to balance that right with the institution's need for information relevant to the fulfillment of its educational missions. Student educational records are defined as records, files, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by The Pennsylvania State University or by a person acting for the University pursuant to University, college, campus, or departmental policy. Exclusions include:

- Notes of a professor concerning a student and intended for the professor's own use are not subject to inspection, disclosure, and challenge."

For more information, see <http://guru.psu.edu/policies/Ad11.html>.

Disability Services and Accessibility

Any student who cannot complete requirements of the class because of physical disabilities should make circumstances known to the instructor. In cases where documentation of disability is available, alternative ways to fulfill requirements will be made. For more information, see Penn State's disability services handbook at <http://www.hbg.psu.edu/studaf/disability/dshandbook.htm>.

Personal Digital Devices

Personal digital devices such as cell phones, smartphones and personal digital assistants (e.g., itouch, droids), laptop and netbook computers, ipads and tablet computers can help students in academic settings but can also distract from learning. As a matter of policy, I insist that cell phones be turned off or silenced; texting and other communication on the cell phone are strictly prohibited in class. Laptops, netbooks, and tablet computers enabling notetaking and viewing of course materials are permitted but students must not engage in non-classroom tasks such as emailing, web browsing, e-shopping, and social networking in class. If they do not abide by this guideline, use of their devices in class will be prohibited.

Weather and Cancellations

Students can find out about *campus closing or delay of the start of classes* through regional media. Outlets in Central Pennsylvania include WHP-TV 21, WLYH-TV 15, WTMP-TV (Fox 43), WHTM-TV 27, WGAL-TV 8, and campus closings or delays are also posted on their websites. In addition, the college will make its announcement in the following ways:

1. The college's web page will carry a message regarding the status of classes.
2. The university's email system will also be used to notify email subscribers about the weather emergency.
3. Messages will be placed on the 948-6000 and 948-6029 numbers. If the technical arrangements can be made, each of these numbers will be programmed to allow simultaneous and multiple access for external callers.

For Penn State Harrisburg's inclement weather policy, see <http://www.hbg.psu.edu/hbg/weather.html>.

If I have to cancel class because of illness or an unforeseen problem, I will make every effort to notify students by email through the ANGEL website. If you do not use your Penn State account for email, be sure to arrange forwarding of Penn State mail to the account you use (see www.work.psu.edu) so that you get messages from me.

TABLE OF MEETINGS AND TASKS

Meeting	Title	Student Tasks	Notes
1 1/12/10 I. Foundation of Folklore Studies in American Studies	A. Introduction to Course and Theme of Aging B. What is Folklore? C. What is American Folklore?	Read syllabus Complete the Contact Info card COMPUTER WORKSHOP IN 2 ND HALF OF CLASS	Access ID needed to get into ANGEL. To obtain account, swipe ID at one of computer workstations.
2 1/19/10	D. Genres of Folklore E. Fieldwork and Folklore Methodologies	Read Ben-Amos, "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context" Bronner, "Folklore" and "Folklorists" Burns, "Fifty Seconds of Play" Burns and Smith, "Symbolism of Becoming in the Sunday Service" Dundes, "Who are the Folk?" Mechling, "Banana Cannon" Mechling, "Solo Folklore" Scheiberg, "A Folklorist in the Family"	
3 1/26/10	F. Analyzing and Theorizing Folklore G. Concepts for Explanations of Folk Practices	Read Bascom, "Four Functions of Folklore" Bronner, "Contesting Tradition" Bronner, " <i>Hinkeldreck</i> theme" Dundes, "Folk Ideas as Units of Worldview" Dundes, "Projection in Folklore" Dundes, "On Game Morphology" Activity: Browse through the online program of the American Folklore Society annual meeting (http://afsnet.org/annualmeet/index.cfm) and find a topical panel that represents your interests. Discuss a presentation you might contribute.	

<p>4 2/2/10 II. Overview of the Life Course as Lore</p>	<p>A. Life Course in Cross-Cultural Perspective</p> <p>B. Ritual, Initiation, and Rites of Passage</p>	<p>Read</p> <p>Auslander, "Rites of Passage" Bringeus, "Pictures of the Life Cycle" Bronner, "This is Why We Hunt" Chick, "Rites of Passage" Myerhoff, Camino, Turner "Rites of Passage: An Overview"</p>	<p>Confer with your professor on topic for analytical paper</p>
<p>5 2/9/10 III. Beginning of Life: Childhood and Adolescence</p>	<p>A. Conception and Pregnancy</p> <p>B. Birth and Infancy</p> <p>C. Themes and Settings of Childhood</p> <p>D. Children's Speech, Songs, and Stories Childhood</p>	<p>Read</p> <p>Brady, "Transformations of Power" Davis-Floyd, "Technological Model of Birth" Newman, "Folklore of Pregnancy" Phillips, "Cravings, Marks, and Open Pores" From <i>American Children's Folklore</i>— Chapters 1-7</p>	<p>Collecting Project Due</p>
<p>6 2/16/10</p>	<p>E. Children's Games, Dramas, and Play</p>	<p>Read</p> <p>Bronner, <i>American Children's Folklore</i>—chapters 8-10</p> <p>Tucker, "The Dramatization of Children's Narratives" Tucker, "Go to Bed, Now You're Dead"</p>	
<p>7 2/23/10</p>	<p>F. Adolescence</p>	<p>Read</p> <p>Bird, "Playing with Fear" Bronner, "Fathers and Sons" Davalos, "La Quinceanera" Ellis, "The 'Hook' Reconsidered" Fine, "The Promiscuous Cheerleader" Meley, "Adolescent Legend Trips" Tucker, "Levitation Revisited"</p>	

<p>8 3/2/10</p>	<p>G. The College Years and Campus Setting</p>	<p>Read: Tucker, <i>Haunted Halls</i></p>	<p>Ethnographic Field Report Due</p> <p>No class March 7-11 for spring break</p> <p>Groups assigned for presentation on 3/23</p>
<p>9 3/16/10 IV. Adulthood</p>	<p>A. Occupational and Organizational Folklore</p>	<p>Read</p> <p>Jones, "Why Folklore and Organizations?" Santino, "Characteristics of Occupational Narrative" Smith, "Whipping up a Storm" Tangherlini, "Heroes and Lies"</p>	<p>Mid-Atlantic American Studies Association Meeting, Philadelphia, March 19-20</p>
<p>10 3/23/10</p>	<p>B. Family Folklore</p>	<p>Read</p> <p>Blum-Kulka, "You Gotta Know How to Tell a Story" Humphrey, "Small Group Festive Gatherings" Williams, "The Bachelor's Transgression"</p>	<p>Group Presentations on Family Folklore Patterns</p>
<p>11 3/30/10</p>	<p>C. Mid-Life Crisis</p>	<p>Read</p> <p>Brandes, <i>Forty</i></p>	
<p>12 4/6/10 V. End of Life: Old Age and Death</p>	<p>A. Old Age and Life Review B. Folklore of Death and Afterlife</p>	<p>Read</p> <p>Crowder, "Chinese Funerals in San Francisco Chinatown" Kidorf, "The Shiva" Mathias, "The Italian-American Funeral" Myerhoff, "A Renewal of the Word"</p>	<p>Annotated Bibliography Due</p>

		Yoder, "The Funeral Meal"	
13 4/13/10		Student Presentations	
14 4/20/10 VI.Future of Lore for the Ages		Student Presentations	Analytical Paper due in the following week
15 4/27/10 Last Meeting	A. Future of Aging and Folklore B. Directions for Folklore Work and Research in American Studies	Read Berardo and Vera, "The Groomal Shower" Bronner, "Digitizing and Virtualizing Folklore" Camp, ed., "What Do Folklorists Do?" Kawano, "Pre-Funerals in Contemporary Japan"	Analytical Paper Due on or before 5/2, noon