

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

www.mlcs.ca

**2010-2011 MLCS 204 (Fall Term)  
*Forms of Folklore***

Instructor: Natalie Kononenko

Time: MWF 14-1450

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Place: Tory 87

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Friday sections in Tory 87, Tory 90, and Tory 96

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Office Hours: MW 13-1350 *or by appointment*

Personal Website: <http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/uvp/>

Course Website: On e-Class

***Course Prerequisite:* none**

***Course-based Ethics Approval*** in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

X  Yes       No, not needed, no such projects involved

***Community Service Learning component***

Required     Optional    X  None

***Course Description and Objectives:*** Folklore is all around us. Humans naturally strive toward expression and seek beauty. They find these in stories, songs, toys, foods, festivals, jokes, dances, games. Folklore is traditional expression. It is those stories, songs, houses, games that have been around for a long time. Folklore is also very modern. Oral forms persist and university students tell jokes and stories. Modern media relies heavily on folklore, both the story structures used for films and television and the folklore-derived images used in advertising. This course will acquaint students with the forms of folklore. In addition to taking exams, students will do a collection project where they will record an item of folklore and analyse it. The objective of the course is to encourage students to examine artistic expression in everyday life and to build awareness of the many meanings such expression may hold.

***Texts:*** Martha C. Sims and Martine Stephens, *Living Folklore*

***Course Schedule - General information:*** We will meet in lecture on Mondays and Wednesdays and break into sections on Fridays. The Friday sections will allow for discussion of the readings and of the material presented in lecture in smaller groups. Your written assignments will be submitted in section and to your section instructor. There will be no sections the first week of classes.

**Sept. 8:** Introduction. What is folklore and what are the types of folklore? What are the traits of folklore?

Reading assignment: Sims and Stephens, chapter 1.

**Sept. 10:** Please come to the main classroom (Tory 87) rather than going to section.

What is folklore continued: Genre, text and context.

- Sept. 13:** Folk groups; the concept of group, self-definition and identity construction  
Reading assignment: Sims and Stephens chapter 2  
Written assignment: identify one item of folklore and write approximately one page explaining why you consider this a folklore item. This written assignment is due in your discussion section, which will meet Sept. 17.
- Sept. 15:** Folk groups continued. Group types. Groups and belief.
- Sept. 17:** Discussion day – we will break up into sections  
Written assignment is due today. Once you go to your discussion section, you will present your items of folklore and discuss them.
- Sept. 20:** Tradition; defining tradition  
Reading assignment: chapter 3 of Sims and Stephens
- Sept. 22:** Dynamics of tradition
- Sept. 24:** discussion section – you get to talk about your ideas of what does and does not constitute tradition.
- Sept. 27:** Ritual: ritual forms and ritual types  
Reading assignment: chapter 4 of Sims and Stephens
- Sept. 29:** Liminality and ritual space; rituals and identity
- Oct. 1** – discussion section
- Oct 4:** Performance; types of performance, performance theory  
Reading assignment: chapter 5 of Sims and Stephens
- Oct. 6:** performance context.
- Oct. 8:** discussion of ritual and performance.  
Written assignment: identify a ritual that occurs in your life. One possibility is Thanksgiving. Your topic need not be Thanksgiving. There are all sorts of rituals that we all practice. Write approximately one page describing this ritual as folklore. The assignment will be due in section on Oct. 15.
- Oct. 11:** Happy Thanksgiving! While you are enjoying the holiday, please do look at it with scholarly eyes. To what extent is this holiday a ritual? Does it provide a liminal time in life? Does it reflect the identity of the celebrants? Also, you might use this opportunity to prepare for your course project. Practice observing. Practice asking questions.
- Oct. 13:** More on performance. The role of the audience. Performance context.
- Oct. 15** – discussion section. Your ritual written assignment is due.
- Oct. 18:** Aesthetics  
Reading assignment is a chapter on Ethics and the Student Fieldworker which will be posted on eClass.

**Oct. 20:** Preparing for fieldwork. Discussion of ethics, discussion of approaches and techniques.

**Oct. 22:** Midterm

**Oct. 25:** Approaches to interpreting folklore

Reading assignment: chapter 6 of Sims and Stephens

**Oct. 27:** More on folklore methods. Discussion of class projects.

Written assignment: write up a project proposal. This can be as short as 1 paragraph.

Instructions will be given on eClass. Your project proposal will be due on Oct. 29

**Oct. 29:** discussion of projects and project proposals; more on ethics. Preparation for fieldwork.

**Nov. 1:** Fieldwork and ethnography; ethics of fieldwork

Reading assignment: chapter 7 of Sims and Stephens

**Nov. 3:** More on fieldwork: the questionnaire and the observation plan. Qualitative as opposed to quantitative analysis.

Written assignment: Time to write a questionnaire or observation plan. This should be about 1 page long and you will get a set of examples on eClass. You should submit your questionnaire or observation plan on Nov. 5.

**Nov. 5:** Discussion of questionnaires and observation plans. Other fieldwork issues.

Your written questionnaire or observation plan is due.

**Nov. 8 and 10:** More on fieldwork and analysis. Examples of projects.

Reading assignment: chapters 8 and 9 of Sims and Stephens

On the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> you have a break – so please do start your fieldwork.

**Nov. 15 and 17:** examples of folklore studies continued.

No reading assignments. You should be done with your reading and working on your projects.

**Nov. 19:** Class cancelled. Mandatory individual consultations with instructors

**Nov. 22:** Class cancelled. Mandatory individual consultations with instructors

**Nov. 24:** Class cancelled. Mandatory individual consultations with instructors

**Nov. 26:** meet in the main classroom. Discussion of fieldwork

Preparing a project abstract for evaluation

You will work on the project abstract over the weekend and submit in class on Monday, April 4.

**Nov. 29:** Peer evaluation of project abstracts.

The abstracts, in written form, must be brought to class for the peer evaluation. Please bring 2 copies

**Dec. 1:** Student presentations

**Dec. 3:** Student presentations

**Dec. 6:** Student presentations

**Dec. 8:** Wrap-up, review

The final version of the written project is due on this day.

**Dec. 16, 2PM:** Final exam

***Grade Distribution and important due dates:***

Short essays: 5% each, total of 10%

Due: Sept. 17, Oct. 15

Project proposal, questionnaire or observation plan: 5% each, total 10%

Proposal due Oct. 29

Questionnaire or observation plan due Nov. 5

Project abstract and oral presentation: 10%

Abstract due Nov. 29

Oral presentation – one of the dates above

Project write-up: 20%, Due Dec. 8

Midterm exam: 10%, exam Oct. 22

Final exam: 20%, Dec. 16, 2PM

Class participation: 20%

***Required Notes:***

“Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University calendar.” (GFC 29 SEP 2003). “The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at [www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm](http://www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm)) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.” (GFC 29 SEP 2003)

☛ ***Plagiarism and Cheating:***

**All students** should consult the “Truth-In-Education” handbook or Website (<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>) regarding the definitions of **plagiarism** and its consequences when detected.

**Students involved in translation** courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.”

**Students not writing in their native language** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences. An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. Before unpleasantness occurs consult <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>; also discuss this matter with any tutor(s) and with your instructor.

☛ ***Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:***

In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.4.2 and 23.4.3 of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

**In this course**, MLCS 205 we expect you to participate in the discussions that take place in section. You should have your reading done ahead of time. When a written assignment is due, bring it with you. Active discussion will help you master and retain the material.

☛ **Policy for Late Assignments:**

*Students who consult in advance with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension. Otherwise, assignments may be handed in one class-day after the stated deadline without penalty, with a 33%-per-class-day penalty (one third of a grade, e.g. from B+ to B) assessed for each subsequent class-day of lateness.*

**Grading:**

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below (“**MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale**”). The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

**“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”**

| Letter | %       | Pts | Descriptor   |
|--------|---------|-----|--|
| A+     | 95-100% | 4.0 | <b>Outstanding:</b> Superior performance showing understanding and knowledge of the subject matter far exceeding expectations. |
| A      | 90-94%  | 4.0 | <b>Excellent:</b> Superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.                                  |
| A-     | 86-89%  | 3.7 | <b>Very good:</b> Clearly above average performance with complete knowledge of subject matter.                                 |
| B+     | 82-85%  | 3.3 | <b>Very good</b>   |
| B      | 75-81%  | 3.0 | <b>Good:</b> average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.  |
| B-     | 70-74%  | 2.7 | <b>Good</b>  |
| C+     | 66-69%  | 2.3 | <b>Satisfactory:</b> Basic understanding of the subject matter   |
| C      | 61-65%  | 2.0 | <b>Satisfactory</b>  |
| C-     | 58-60%  | 1.7 | <b>Satisfactory</b>  |
| D+     | 55-57%  | 1.3 | <b>Minimal Pass:</b> Marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.    |
| D      | 50-54%  | 1.0 | <b>Minimal Pass:</b> Marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.    |
| F      | 0-49%   | 0.0 | <b>Fail:</b> Unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.  |