

DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES

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2010-2011 *MLCS 205 (Winter Term):*  
*The Study of Folklore*

Instructor: Natalie Kononenko

Time: MWF 2-2:50

Office: Arts 441-C

Place: BUS 205

Telephone: 492-6810; fax:492-2051

Friday sections in BUS 205, BUS 305, and ESB 235

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**Course Prerequisites:** None

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

Yes

No, not needed, no such projects involved

**Community Service Learning component**

Required

Optional

None

**Course Description and Objectives:** Folklore is all around us. Humans naturally strive toward expression and seek beauty – stories, songs, toys, foods that are both well-crafted and meaningful. Folklore is traditional expression, those stories, songs, houses, games that have been around for a long time – or a modern variation of them. This course will acquaint students with the history of the discipline. 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:** Robert Georges and Michael Owen-Jones, *Folkloristics: An Introduction*

**Course Schedule:**

**Jan. 10:** Introduction. What is folklore and what are the types of folklore? What are the traits of folklore?

**Jan. 12:** Who are the folk and what is lore? Echoes of folklore in pop culture, film, literature, medicine.

Reading assignment: pp. 1-13 of the textbook

**Jan. 14:** Traits of folklore: transmission, variation, communality, anonymity

Reading assignment: pp. 13-23

**Jan. 17:** Folklore as historical artifact

Reading assignment : pp: 31-40

**Jan. 19:** Early scholars and approaches – folklore as a way to reconstruct history

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 class during the next class period.

**Jan. 21:** 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.

Reading assignment (for next week): pp. 40-55

**Jan. 24:** Brothers Grimm; folklore and nationalism

Reading assignment: pp. 59-78

**Jan. 26:** More early work – the concept of survivals

Reading assignment: pp. 78-87

**Jan. 28:** Discussion day – interpreting contemporary phenomena

Reading assignment: pp. 93-112

**Jan. 31:** Folklore revivals. Folklore material that continues over time

Reading assignment: pp. 112-121

**Feb. 2:** Understanding continuity – classifying folklore: the concept of genre, folktale types, motifs

Reading assignment: pp. 127-141

**Feb. 4:** The dissemination of folklore – oral transmission experiment

Please meet in the main classroom instead of going to sections

Reading assignment: pp. 141-153

**Feb. 7:** Structural analysis and Propp

Reading assignment: Propp handout

**Feb. 9:** Dissemination of folklore; oral theory: composition in performance

Written assignment – analyze the oral transmission experiment performed on Feb. 4 using Propp. Write a 1 ½ to 2 page analysis.

**Feb. 11:** Discussion of the oral transmission experiment and of folklore universals

Please note that your second written assignment is due

Reading assignment: pp. 159-169

**Feb. 14:** Happy Valentine's Day! Folklore and Culture. The concept of a folk group.

Reading assignment: pp. 169-171

**Feb. 16:** Groups in contact. Folklore and identity

Reading assignment: pp. 171-190

**Feb. 18:** Discussion – we start thinking about possible project topics

Reading assignment: pp. 193-204

**Week of Feb. 21:** This is your reading week and a good time to explore project topics

**Feb. 28:** Folklore and identity, presenting ethnicity to others  
Reading assignment: pp. 204-225

**March 2:** Politics and folklore

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 March 7  
No reading assignment – please review

**March 4:** Midterm

**March 7:** Psychological and psychoanalytical approaches to folklore

Reading assignment: pp. 231-243  
Please note that your project proposal is due today

**March 9:** Folklore and belief; the efficacy of folk medicine

Reading assignment: pp. 243-254

**March 11:** Discussion day

Project proposal continued. 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 March 14.

Reading assignment: Ethics and the Student Fieldworker, which will be posted on eClass.

**March 14:** Fieldwork preparation. Discussion of ethics, discussion of techniques.

Reading assignment: pp. 254-264  
Project questionnaire or observation plan due.

**March 16:** Folklore as a personal resource

Reading assignment: pp. 269- 288

**March 18:** Discussion day – sections. Discussion of projects

Reading assignment: pp. 288-310

**March 21:** Folklore as motivation, inspiration for art

Reading assignment: pp. 313-328

**March 23:** Folklore in art and pop culture. Folklore in the media

No reading assignment – you should be doing your fieldwork

**March 25:** Class cancelled. Mandatory individual consultations with instructors

**March 28:** Class cancelled. Mandatory individual consultations with instructors

**March 30:** Class cancelled. Mandatory individual consultations with instructors

**April 1:** meet in the main classroom. Discussion of fieldwork

Preparing a project abstract for evaluation

Work on the project abstract over the weekend and submit in class on Monday, April 4.

**April 4:** Peer evaluation of project abstracts.

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

**April 6:** Student presentations

**April 8:** Student presentations

**April 11:** Student presentations

**April 13:** Wrap-up, review – The final version of the written project is due on this day.

**April 28, 2PM:** Final exam

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

Short essays: 5% each, total of 10%

Due: Jan. 21, Feb. 11

Project proposal and questionnaire: 5% each, total of 10%

Proposal due March 7

Questionnaire due March 14

Consultation : 10%

Oral presentation: 10%

Oral presentation – one of the three dates above

Project write-up: 20%, Due April 13

Midterm exam: 10%, exam takes place on March 4

Final exam: 20%, exam takes place on April 28; exam make-up date:

May 6

Class participation: 10%

***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 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.