

**Syllabus**  
**English 2700/Anthro 2150: Introduction to Folklore Field Research**  
**Section 1**  
Spring 2010

MWF 11 A.M.- 11:50 A.M. • 232 Arts and Science

Instructor: Claire Schmidt  
Office: 84 McReynolds Hall  
Office hours: T/R 9:00-10:30 A.M.  
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**Required Texts:**

Newton, Esther. *Mother Camp*. U of Chicago P, 1979  
Spiegelman, Art. *MAUS*. Pantheon, 1986.  
Stewart, Kathleen. *A Space on the Side of the Road* Princeton UP, 1996.  
Sunstein, Bonnie Stone, and Elizabeth Chriseri-Strater. *FieldWorking: Reading and Writing Research*. Bedford St. Martin's, 2007.  
\*Additional readings will be made available on Blackboard (BB).

**Required Materials:**

Recording devices: Recorders, cameras, and video equipment are all invaluable to folklore fieldwork. We will be doing several field collection projects throughout the year, including one major one that will be your final project. Depending on the nature of the kind of folklore you want to gather, you will want to record, photograph, or even video a performance or item for your paper. Equipment is available for check out through the university, and you are welcome to use your own equipment. We will discuss options in class.

**Always bring paper, writing utensils, and any assigned readings to class.**

**Course Goals:**

This course will introduce basic concepts of folklore and consider these concepts in terms of fieldwork methodology: how you collect folklore, why you collect folklore, and what you might do with it, once you've collected it. We will identify types of folklore, consider practical and ethical methods of approaching and recording it, and ways to conserve, foster, and contribute to folklore scholarship and ethnographic study.

In the first part of this course, we will focus on defining terms and familiarizing ourselves with genres and issues of the field. In the second part, we will turn to ethical considerations and methods of observing and collecting folklore. In the third part, we will concern ourselves with presenting our collection and analysis in a formal fashion.

**Course Requirements:**

You will complete two short fieldwork assignments (2-3 pages), a midterm exam, and a final (semester-long) project. The short fieldwork assignments will be done solo, but you have the option to work in a group on the final project. The more people in your group,

the lengthier and more detailed your project will need to be. This is a discussion class; your ideas and opinions are essential to the success of the course. While you don't have to talk every single day, your participation is essential to be successful in class.

**Attendance:** You are required to come to class. Coming to class every day and participating in discussion is the key to success in this class. While I understand that emergencies do happen, you need to attend regularly in order to succeed in English 2700. Therefore, if you have 4 or more absences, your grade will drop by half a grade for each unexcused absence, and after 6 unexcused absences you may be dropped from the class. An unexcused absence means an absence without a doctor's note, or legal documentation. Tardiness contributes toward absences; 4 tardies (less than 20 minutes) equals one absence (tardiness beyond 20 minutes is counted as an absence). It is your responsibility to keep track of absences. If you come in late, it is your responsibility to make sure I have marked you present, as I will not stop class every time someone walks in late.

**Late Work:** Late assignments will be docked one full letter grade for each day they are late.

### **The Writing Center**

I strongly recommend that you take advantage of the Writing Center's services to work with you on your paper before you hand it in to me. The people there are available to help you at any stage of the writing process; they will not edit your paper, but they will discuss thoughts, find patterns, and encourage revisions that will help your paper best reflect your ideas. They are available at the Student Success Center, 882-2493, or online at <http://writery.missouri.edu/>. \*I will award 5 points of extra credit if you go to the Writing Lab for each of the three major assignments (a total of 15 points possible).

**Disabilities:** if you need accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me immediately. Please see me privately after class, or at my office.

To request academic accommodations (for example, a notetaker), students must also register with the Office of Disability Services, (<http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu>), S5 Memorial Union, 882-4696. It is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students requesting academic accommodations, and for accommodations planning in cooperation with students and instructors, as needed and consistent with course requirements. For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

**Plagiarism:** University of Missouri Policy on Academic Dishonesty: Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters.

Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

Plagiarism, regardless of intent, **will** result in grade penalties. In addition, I will report any plagiarism to the Provost's office. Though we will discuss plagiarism in this class it is *your* responsibility to familiarize yourself with the University's plagiarism policies.

\*Please note: cell phones, blackberries, laptops and other PDA devices are prohibited from use in the classroom. You may be asked to leave if you ignore this policy.

### **Course Grading**

- 20% 2 small-scale collection projects (100 points each)
- 20% Quizzes, in-class work, misc. assignments (200 points)
- 20% Mid-term exam (200 points)
- 30% Final project (300 points)
- 10% Project presentation (100 points)

### **Grade Scale:**

A+	98-100%
A	93-97
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	0-59

\*You are to complete the homework for class the day it is listed.

### **Week 1 (THE BASICS)**

Wednesday 1/20

- Welcome!
- What *is* folklore field research, anyway?

Friday 1/22

- Introduction to folklore
- Who are the folk? Or, who am us, anyway?
- Homework: Fieldworking pgs 1-24

## **Week 2 (THE BASICS CONTINUED)**

Monday 1/25

- Introduction to folklore studies
- Homework: “Ethics and the Student Worker” (BB)

Wednesday 1/27

- A brief history of folklore studies

Friday 1/29

- Where is this field, anyway?
- Homework: Read pgs 1-40 of Mother Camp

## **Week 3 (VERBAL FOLKLORE)**

Monday 2/1

- Collection Assignment #1 assigned
- Folk groups
- Jokes & folklore
- Homework: Read pgs 40-96 of Mother Camp

Wednesday 2/3

- Proverbs, riddles, charms
- Homework: Finish Mother Camp

Friday 2/5

- Folk tales & urban legends
- Guest Speaker: Darcy Holtgrave
- Homework: Dewan, “A Saucerful of Secrets” (BB)

## **Week 4 (FOLK MUSIC)**

Monday 2/8

- Mock interviews
- Homework: Fieldworking pgs 237-271

Wednesday 2/10

- Folk music and its collectors
- Blues & Country music
- Homework: Fieldworking Chapter 2 (65-115)

Friday 2/12

- Ballads & Ska
- Homework: Fieldworking, MLA Documentation (appendix A) 471-479

## **Week 5 (CUSTOMARY FOLKLORE)**

Monday 2/15

- Collection Assignment #1 due
- Celebrations and festivals

Wednesday 2/17

- Rituals, belief, superstition
- Guest Speaker: Dr. Elaine J. Lawless

Friday 2/19

- Games

## **Week 6 (FOLK ART)**

Monday 2/22

- Guest Speaker: Janelle Greening, MU Institutional Review Board

Wednesday 2/24

- High art vs low art; art vs craft—false dichotomies
- Functional art
- Project #2 Assigned
- Homework: Fieldwork: “The Grammar of Observation,” pgs 232-236

Friday 2/26

- Folk art and tourism
- Homework: Brady, “Tourism in the Ozarks” (BB)

## **Week 7 (CONFERENCES ON SEMESTER PROJECT)**

Monday 3/1 (please bring proposal, including, timeline, delegated tasks, and conception of finished project to your meeting)

- Conferences

Wednesday 3/3

- Conferences

Friday 3/5

- Conferences

## **Week 8 (ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS)**

Monday 3/8

- Taboos, prohibitions and danger
- Homework: Toelken, “Fieldwork Enlightenment” (BB)

Wednesday 3/10

- Who gets to speak?
- Homework: Prahlad, “Getting Happy: An Ethnographic Memoir”
- Guest Speaker: Dr. Anand Prahlad

Friday 3/12

- Why are we doing this research, anyway?

## **Week 9 (REFLEXIVE ETHNOGRAPHY)**

Monday 3/15

- Homework: A Space by the Side of the Road, Chapters 1 & 2 (13-66)
- Who benefits?

Wednesday 3/17

- Homework: A Space by the Side of the Road, Chapter 5 (117-139) & Chapter 7 (165-177)
- Who loses?

Friday 3/19

- Collection Assignment #2 due
- Homework: A Space by the Side of the Road, Chapter 8 (179-203)

## **Week 10 (ARCHIVES)**

Monday 3/22

- Visit to Western Historical Manuscript Collection! (meet in our regular classroom—we will walk over together)
- Homework: Fieldworking, Archives 359-410

Wednesday 3/24

- No class—instead, attend Dr. Jack Niles's guest lecture Thursday, March 25 at 4 PM. Details to follow.

Friday 3/26

- Guest Speaker: Jeff Corrigan, Oral Historian
- More uses of ethnographic research
- Homework: excerpts from World War Z (both files) and “Zombies” from The Greenwood Encyclopedia of African American Folklore (BB) and Fieldworking pgs 272-280

**\*\*\*\*SPRING BREAK\*\*\*\***

## **Week 11 (PRODUCING AN ETHNOGRAPHY)**

Monday 4/5

- Film: “Number Our Days”
- Homework: Maus pgs 1-56

Wednesday 4/7

- Homework: Maus pgs 57-93; Fieldworking “Family Stories” pgs 286-298

Friday 4/9

- Homework: Maus pgs 95-129

## **Week 12**

Monday 4/12

- Homework: Maus pgs 129-end

Wednesday 4/14

- Audio Ethnography

Friday 4/16

- Online exhibits

## **Week 13**

Monday 4/19

- Fieldworking Language, Linguistics, Ethnopoetics pgs 307-340

Wednesday 4/21

- Fieldworking, Drafts, 419-446

Friday 4/23

- Presentations

## **Week 14**

Monday 4/26

- Presentations
- Homework: Revising, Fieldworking, 460-462

Wednesday 4/28

- Presentations

Friday 4/30

- Presentations

## **Week 15**

Monday 5/3 Presentations

Wednesday 5/5 Presentations

\*Final project due by 4 P.M. Friday, May 7 to my mailbox in McReynolds Hall (3<sup>rd</sup> floor).