

6700: Folklore Theory and Methods

English/History 6700
Fall 2008
Monday: 4:30–7:00
RWST 113

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Office hours: M/W 11:30-12:00 and by
appointment
Office location: RWST 204C

Course Description: This course provides an introduction to the foundations of folkloristics and has a very heavy reading load. We also will review research tools such as indices, bibliographic materials, and databases. Students will acquire a basic understanding of the history of the discipline, key concepts, and basic research methods. A full understanding of folkloristics, however, cannot be obtained in a single seminar and so students wishing to further their knowledge should expect to read well beyond the syllabus.

Required Texts:

- Georges, Robert A. and Michael Owen Jones. Folkloristics: An Introduction. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Dundes, Alan. International Folkloristics. Rowman and Littlefield, 1999.
- Propp, Vladimir. Morphology of the Folktale. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Regina Bendix, In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies. University of Wisconsin Press, 1997.
- Elizabeth Tucker, Haunted Halls: Ghostlore of American College Campuses. University Press of Mississippi, 2007.
- Henry Glassie, Stars of Ballymenone. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.
- Richard Bauman, A World of Others' Words: Cross Cultural Perspectives on Intertextuality. Wiley, John and Sons, 2004.
- Turabian, Kate L. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Recommended Texts:

- Bauman, Richard, ed. Folklore, Cultural Performances and Popular Entertainments: A Communications Centered Handbook. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Additional articles on electronic reserves can be accessed through the USU main library online: <http://library.usu.edu/> Click on course reserves, find the course. Password: **gab6700**. The list of articles is available for reading or printing.

Assignments and Requirements

This class is a community of students. We will participate in group discussion and problem solving together in order to further our thinking. It is essential for the success of this seminar that all participants are prepared for class.

Your final semester grade will be calculated as follows:

Assignments (4): 20%

Thesis Proposal: 50%

Annotated Bibliography: 30%

Assignments and information will be handed out in class. Late assignments will be marked down ½ letter grade for each day they are late.

Projected Class Schedule:

Week 1 (Aug. 25): Introduction and Course Overview

Visit to Library and Fife Folklore archives.

Handout: *Assignment #1* & Annotated Bibliography Assignment

Week 2 (Sept. 01): class cancelled for Labor Day

Week 3 (Sept. 08): Historical Perspectives

Readings: Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity*; Georges and Jones, Chpt. 1 “Introduction” and Chpt. 2, “Folklore as a Historical Science”; Grimm, “Circular,”; Thoms, “Origin of the Word”; Frazer, “Principles of Sympathetic Magic”; Müller, “Study of Folk-Lore” all in *International Folkloristics*

Turabian, Discussion of Part I

Due: *Assignment #1*

Handout: *Assignment #2*

Week 4 (Sept. 15): Tradition as Product, Invention, and Process

Readings: Georges and Jones, Chpt. 3, "Survivals, Revivals & Continuities"; Handler and Linneken, "Tradition, Genuine or Spurious," Ben-Amos, "The Seven Strands of Tradition," Gilman, "The Traditionalization of Women's Dancing," Bauman, "Go My Reciter, Recite My Words" in A World of Other's Words

Recommended: Glassie, "Tradition"; Dell Hymes, "Folklore's Nature and the Sun's Myth"; Bauman, "Tradition"

Methods:

Turabian, Discussion of Part I
Handout: *Thesis Proposals*

Week 5 (Sept. 22): Genre, Classification, and the Comparative/Historic-Geographic Method

Readings: Georges and Jones, Chpt. 4, "Folklore as Genre and Type"; Chpt. 5, "The Dissemination of Folklore"; Jason, "Russian Criticism of the Finnish Method"; Thompson, "Classifying Folk Narrative" and "Life History of a Folktale"; "The Method of Julius Krohn" in International Folkloristics; Bauman, "I'll Give You Three Guesses" in A World of Other's Words

Recommended: Bauman, "Genre"; "Genre" in Handbook; "Folklore" in Handbook; Taylor, "Precursors to the Finnish Method"

Methods:

Turabian, Discussion of Part I
Due: *Assignment #2*
Handout: *Assignment #3*

Week 6 (Sept. 29): Anatomy of a Genre

Reading: Propp, Morphology of the Folktale (pp. xi-xxi, chpts. 1-3, chpts. 6-8, chpt. 9 pp. 92-107; Olrik, "Epic Laws of Folk Narrative" in International Folkloristics

Recommended: Propp, "The Structure of Russian Fairy Tales" in International Folkloristics; Harle, "Structuralism"

Methods:

Handout: Conference Paper Guidelines

Week 7 (Oct. 06): Folk Group, Community, Identity

Readings: Dundes, “Who Are the Folk?”; Malinowski, “The Role of Myth in Life”; Oring, “The Arts, Artefacts, and Artifices of Identity”; Del Negro, “Identity Considered, the World Doubled”; Sokolov, “In Search of Folktales and Songs” in International Folkloristics

Recommended: Oring, “Three Functions of Folklore”

Methods:

Turabian, Discussion of Part II

Due: *Assignment #3*

Handout: *Assignment #4*

Week 8 (Oct. 13): Text, Context, Contextualization

Readings: Gabbert, “The Text/Context Controversy;” Ben-Amos, “Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context”; Bauman, “Introduction” and “And the Verse is Thus” in A World of Others’ Words

Methods:

Turabian, Discussion of Part II

Discussion of Assignment #4

Week 9 (Oct. 20): Sample Study #1

Reading: Tucker, Haunted Halls

Methods:

Discussion of Assignment #4

Week 10 (Oct. 27): Ritual and Carnival

Reading: van Gennep, "Rites de Passage" in International Folkloristics; Turner, excerpt; Bakhtin, excerpts from Rabelais and His World;

Recommended: Gabbert, "On Slanderous Words and Bodies Out-of-Control"; Elliot, "Carnival and Dialogue in Bakhtin's Poetics of Folklore"

Methods:

Due: *Assignment #4*

Week 11 (Nov. 03): Oral Formulaic Theory, Performance, and Event

Reading: Lord, excerpts from Singer of Tales, Hymes, "Breakthrough into Performance;" Jordan-Smith, "Folk Event Analysis"; Bauman, "That I Can't Tell You" in A World of Others' Words

Recommended: Bauman and Briggs, "Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives"

Week 12 (Nov. 10): Art, Form, Meaning

Reading: Pocius, "Art"; excerpts from Boas, Primitive Art; Metcalf, "Politics of the Past," Toelken, "Visual Patterns of Performance: Arts"; Jones, "A Strange Rocking Chair"

Recommended: Babcock, "Artefact" in Handbook; Glassie, The Spirit of Folk Art and Material Culture, Georges and Jones, chpts. 8 and 9; Glassie, "The Idea of Folk Art"

Week 13 (Nov. 17): Modern, Postmodern, Late Modern, Global

Reading: Lau, "Folklore and Theories of Globalization"; Thomas, "Out of the Frying Pan and Into the Postmodern"; Thomas, "Postmodernism"; Gramsci, "Observations on Folklore" in International Folkloristics; Preston, "Postmodernism and the Fairy Tale"

Methods:

Discussion of thesis proposals

Due: *Annotated Bibliography*

Week 14 (Nov. 24): Gender

Reading: Rosaldo, "Woman, Culture, and Society,"; Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?"; Kousaleos, "Feminist Theory and Folklore"; Radner, "The Woman Who Went to Hell"; Bacchilega, "India as 'Wonder' Tale"

Recommended: Shuman, "Gender and Genre," Thomas, Naked Barbies and Warrior Joes

Methods:

Discussion of thesis proposals

Week 15 (Dec. 01): Sample Study #2

Reading: Glassie, Stars of Ballymenone

Thesis Proposals due Monday, Dec. 08 @ 11:30 am in my mailbox