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:

- Turabian, Kate L. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Recommended Texts:


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

Turabian, Discussion of Part I
Due: Assignment #1
Handout: Assignment #2

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


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

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


*Methods:*
- Handout: Conference Paper Guidelines
**Week 7 (Oct. 06): Folk Group, Community, Identity**

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; Bahktin, 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

Recommended: Bauman and Briggs, “Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives”

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


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

Methods:
Discussion of thesis proposals
Due: Annotated Bibliography
**Week 14 (Nov. 24): Gender**

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