The Graduate Program in Folk Studies at Western Kentucky University

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The Graduate Program in Folk Studies at Western Kentucky University is recognized internationally for its unique curriculum in the study of folklore and folklife. Early on, the program was designed to provide a usable master's degree that made its graduates marketable in the burgeoning field of folklore; it was not intended merely to be a stepping stone for the Ph.D. The program merges traditional folklore studies with a pragmatic orientation to the job market. While covering major genres and theoretical perspectives of folklore and folklife, the student is also exposed to such courses as Applied Folklore, Museum Techniques and Procedures, and Folklore and Preservation.

There is a long history of the study of folklore here at Western Kentucky, beginning in 1928, when Gordon Wilson taught the first folklore class. D.K. Wilgus taught at Western in the 1950's and early '60's. Robert Teske, Jay Anderson, Marilyn White, and Kenneth and Mary Clarke are among the others who have been on the faculty. Currently, the Folk Studies core faculty consists of Camilla Collins, Burt Feintuch, Lynwood Montell, and Michael Ann Williams. Along with these four, the program is complemented by faculty members from a number of other departments.

The Folk Studies Program also offers a specialized degree track, unique in North America, that combines folklore and historic preservation. Since 1978, students in the folklife and historic preservation track have focused on the preservation of the architectural landscape and cultural conservation. Recognized by the Na-
tional Council for Preservation Education, the historic preservation track exposes students to the study of material culture, museology, vernacular architecture, and to relevant historical investigation.

Two other degree tracks in Western’s Folk Studies Program are the thesis and the non-thesis options. All students consult with their advisor to determine the most appropriate track given their interests and plans. Regardless of the degree track chosen, students must pass a written, four-hour comprehensive examination, as well as fulfill a research tool requirement, either by demonstrating competency in a foreign language or by taking an additional course designated as a research tool. Folk Studies graduate students are required to take core courses in folklore genres, folklore theory, and folklore fieldwork and oral history. Historic preservation students must also satisfy additional course requirements in other departments. Most thesis and non-thesis students finish the program in three semesters; preservation students finish it in four.

Since the program’s formal inception in 1970, Western’s students have had multi-faceted educational opportunities. The program was the first in the country to develop an internship network that provided students with academic credit and work experience. A wide range of institutions and agencies have sponsored interns, ranging from the Smithsonian, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the National Park Service to numerous state and local museums and preservation agencies.

Additionally, a strong folklore, folklife, and oral history archive is an important part of the Western program. Considered a "working archive," it is based with museum and manuscript collections, and is the only folklore archive in the country based in the university library system and administered by library staff. In addi-
tion, the program enjoys a strong working relationship with the Kentucky Museum and Library, which often provides important research and practicum facilities.

For many years the faculty has edited for the regional journal, *The Kentucky Folklore Record*. Recently, Western Kentucky University acquired the once prominent *Southern Folklore Quarterly*. Both journals will be merged into a new journal to be called *Southern Folklore*. The first issue will come out in the fall of 1988 under the editorship of Camilla Collins.

For five years now, the program has had an endowed annual lecture series known as the Rudy-McNulty Folklife Lecture, which brings nationally significant folklorists to Bowling Green for lectures and forums. Also important are the several colloquia held throughout the academic year when other important folklorists and preservationists are brought to campus, often for extended visits. Currently, plans are underway to develop a student exchange network and working relationship in conjunction with the Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language at the University of Sheffield.

Today, the Department of Modern Languages and Intercultural Studies is a hybrid department which merged Modern Languages and the Department of Intercultural Studies as a consequence of university-wide reorganization in the late 1970's. The Graduate Program in Folk Studies is essentially a free-standing academic program within this hybrid department. The program administers its own curriculum and graduate assistantships; the latter carry stipends up to $4,000 and a waiver of out-of-state tuition.

Past experience has demonstrated that students who do well and want a job upon degree completion have little difficulty finding a position. Western graduates have been employed as state folklorists, state oral historians, museum professionals, and in Main Street Preservation
Programs, state arts programs, and regional centers for folklore and folklife. Additionally, a number have chosen to continue graduate studies at the doctoral level, not only in folklore/folklife, but also in such fields as American studies, anthropology, sociology, and urban studies.

Theses completed at Western Kentucky include:

Allen, Ray

Aim, Jan
1981 A Sourcebook for the Interpretation of Traditional Dance by Outdoor Museums and Historic Sites.

Archbold, Annelen

Axler, David
1977 Fandom is a Way of Life: A Folkloristic Ethnography of Science Fiction Fandom.

Beatty, Roger
1975 Chester Cornett: A Study of the Effects of Culture Change on a Traditional Kentucky Craftsman.

Beisswenger, Donald Andrew
1985 Singing Schools in South Central Kentucky.

Boaz, Peggy

Bulger, Margaret Anne
1976 The Carter Family: Traditional Sources for Song.

Cochrane, Timothy
1982 The Folklife Expressions of Three Isle Royale Fishermen: A Sense of Place Examination.

Downs, Stuart

Farris, Nana

Gibson, Debbie

Grenier, Kate Parker

Hall, Deborah
1983 Using Folklore to Teach English as a Second Language.

Hansen, Gregory
1987 "The Blankety-Blank" of Bear Creek Camp: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Folk Drama.
Harzoff, Elizabeth  

Hauri-Foster, Julie  
1984 Two Hairdressers: Artistry and Communication.

Howard, Gilbert  
1981 Fiddle Songs and Banjo Songs: A Description and Index.

Jurek, Theresa  

Kaplan, Lori  
1979 The Lark on the Strand: A Study of a Traditional Irish Flute Player and His Music.

Kiely, Dennis  
1983 The Loving of the Game: A Study of Basketry in the Mammoth Cave Area.

Kohn, Ira  
1976 The Use of Architectural Drawing in the Documentation of Log Folk Housing.

Korn, Michael  
1979 ...An' the Whole Nine Yards: An Ethnography of a Kentucky Gunsmith.

Krontz, Marian  
1978 A Folkloristic Look at Cockfighting.

Landes, John  
1978 Social and Psychological Aspects of the Style and Repertoire of a Folk Musician.

Laude, Jan  
1982 A Contemporary Female Psychic: A Folkloristic Study of a Traditional Occupation.

Ludden, Keith  
1982 "No Bob Yet": A Collection of Narratives from Nobob, Kentucky.

Lyne, David  

Marshall, John  
1981 Barbecue in Western Kentucky: An Ethnographic Study.

Martin, Charles  

Martin, Katherine  
1974 A Comparative Study of German and Kentucky Moon Beliefs.

Mason, Ervin  

McCurley, Edward  

Middlewarth, Victoria Lynn  
1977 A Folkloristic Approach to Storytelling Performance by a Contemporary Librarian.
Morse, Michael

Morse, Rebecca
1979 Tinsley Bottom, Tennessee: An Historical Reconstruction Utilizing Oral Narrative Traditions.

Ostrofsky
1982 O. Henry's Use of Stereotypes in His New York City Stories: An Example of the Utilization of Folklore in Literature.

Parker, Carol
1975 A Study in Oral History -- Cedar Grove Community.

Poyser, Stephen
1978 Latent Didactic Functions of Tlingit Mythology: A Re-evaluation of Raven's Role in Northwest Coast Culture.

Riley, Sheila

Reynolds, George

Rufty, Ruby
1976 The Paper Repertoire of the Students in One Elementary School.

Sadewasser, Judith
1976 The Reliability of Selected Weather Beliefs.

Schofield, Albert
1977 Oystering in Kent Narrows, Maryland.

Steed, Daniel, Jr.
1977 A Folkloric Perspective on Traditional Auctioneering.

Stoner, Michael
1976 "If I'd Been Polish, I'd Be Playing Polkas": An Examination of the Social Contexts of Traditional Irish Music in Rochester, New York.

Sutherland, David
1973 The Little People of Pea Ridge.

Taft, Ann
1986 At the Spiritual Grass Roots: An Analysis of Visionary Art and Artists.

Taylor, David
1978 They Like to Sing the Old Songs: The A.C. Phipps Family and its Music.

Taylor, Robert
1973 Drowned at Turnhole: A Study of Western Kentucky Epitaphs.

Umberger, Eugene, Jr.
1975 Tobacco Farming: The Persistence of Tradition.

Vincent, Benjamin
1977 The Price of Folk: The Progression of Two Decoy Makers' Work from Folk to Non-Folk.

Waggoner, Gayle Anne

Webb, J. Vaughan
1977 Traditional Elements in the Selected Columns of Allan M. Trout.
Weldy, Mary Helen
1980 A Study of the Usefulness of Folkloric Topics in a Remotivation Technique Program with Institutional Elderly Persons.

Whie, Linda C.
1976 "I Love Ta Plow": The Role of Traditional Farm Women in Peytonsburg, Kentucky.

Willett, E. Henry, III

Those interested in further information about the Graduate Folk Studies Program at Western Kentucky University should write Burt Feintuch, Coordinator, Programs in Folk Studies, Department of Modern Languages and Intercultural Studies, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY 42101.