

**Syllabus**  
**English 1700/Anthro 1150: Introduction to Folklore Genres**  
**Section 2**  
Fall 2009

MWF 8 A.M.- 8:50 A.M. • 113 Crowder Hall

Instructor: Claire Schmidt

Office: 1 Tate Hall (all the way to the back and to the right)

Office hours: Wednesdays 10-12 or by appointment

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**Required Texts:**

Brunvand, Jan. Study of American Folklore

Hopkinson, Nalo. Midnight Robber

Mirvis, Tova. The Ladies Auxiliary

**Course Goals:**

The goals of this course are to a) give you a working knowledge of the genres of folklore; b) familiarize you with key terms and concepts of folklore studies; c) explore issues of race, class, power and politics in the performance and study of folklore, and d) engage critical and analytical skills to develop an active understanding of your own folklore as well as the folklore of other groups.

**Course Requirements:**

You will write three short (3-page) analytical papers that each include a folklore collection component and sit a midterm exam and a final exam. You will be asked to complete in-class assignments and other group work, so attendance will, by default, play a large part in your grade. You are expected to participate in in-class discussion. You will also be expected to participate in the exchange of food traditions (more on this later), though your food contribution itself will not be graded.

**Attendance:** You are required to come to class. While I understand that emergencies do happen, you need to attend regularly in order to succeed in English 1700.

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 other documentation.

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

**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.

**Grading Breakdown:**

Collection/Research assignment 1	15%
Humor Collection assignment 2	15%
Family/Community Collection assignment 3	15%
Midterm exam	15%
Final exam	20%
Quizzes	10%
Participation	10%

**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

### **Week 1—The Basics**

Monday, August 24

- Welcome to English 1700 and the study of folklore!

Wednesday, August 26

- Folklore: what it is, what it was, what it will be.
- Homework: Brunvand, Chapter 1, “The Field of Folklore” and Chapter 2, “The Study of Folklore” in The Study of American Folklore

Friday, August 28

- Who are the folk? or, Who am us, anyway?
- Homework:
  - Brunvand, Chapter 3, “Folk Groups” in The Study of American Folklore
  - Toelken, excerpts from The Dynamics of Folklore

### **Week 2—The Basics, Music**

Monday, August 31

- Function, psychology, belief
- Homework: Bascom, “Four Functions of Folklore” (BB)

Wednesday, September 2

- Variation, Stasis, Change
- Key concepts and vocabulary quiz
- Homework:
  - Active vs Passive Tradition Bearers (BB)
  - Toelken, excerpts from The Dynamics of Folklore (BB)

Friday, September 4

- What is folk music?
- Homework: Brunvand, Chapter 13, “Folk Music” and Chapter 11 “Folksongs” in The Study of American Folklore

### **Week 3--Music**

Monday, September 7—LABOR DAY, NO CLASS

Wednesday, September 9

- Blues
- Film: *American Roots Music*

Friday, September 11

- Bluegrass
- Film: *American Roots Music*

#### **Week 4--Music**

Monday, September 14

- Ballads
- Gospel, Spirituals, Hymns, and other sacred music
  - Homework: Brunvand, Chapter 12 “Ballads” in The Study of American Folklore
  -

Wednesday, September 16

- Roots music
- Homework: Prahlad “The Original Man” from *Reggae Wisdom* (BB)

Friday, September 18

- The folk music revival, or, The exaggerated death of the folk musician
- Homework: Cantwell “We Are the Folk” from When We Were Good: The Folk Revival (BB)

#### **Week 5—Oral Tradition**

Monday, September 21

- A brief history
- Urban and rural legends
- Rumors
- Homework:
  - Foley, Excerpts from How to Read an Oral Poem (BB)
  - Brunvand, Chapter 9 “Legends and Anecdotes” in The Study of American Folklore
  - Turner, Excerpts from I Heard it Through the Grape Vine (BB)

Wednesday, September 23

- The folk tale
- Homework:
  - Brunvand, Chapter 10 “Folktales” from The Study of American Folklore
  - Folktales (set #1) (BB)

Friday, September 25

- The folk tale continued
- Homework: Folktales (set #2) (BB)

#### **Week 6—Oral Tradition**

Monday, September 28

- Competitive orality, or, Your mama’s so fat...
- Riddles
- Children’s rhymes
- Homework:
  - Hopkinson, Midnight Robber pg. 1-45

- Abrahams, “The Element of Verbal Contest” from Deep Down in the Jungle

Wednesday, September 30

- Myths
- Oral epics
- Homework:
  - Hopkinson, Midnight Robber pg. 45-119
  - Brunvand, Chapter 8 “Myths and Motifs” in The Study of American Folklore

Friday, October 2

- Proverbs
- Homework:
  - Brunvand, Chapter 5 “Proverbs and Proverbial Lore” in The Study of American Folklore
  - Hopkinson, Midnight Robber pg. 119-175
  - Prahlad, “The Use of Proverbs” in Reggae Wisdom (BB)

### **Week 7—Oral Tradition**

Monday, October 5

- Oral tradition and the written word
- Collection/Research Assignment 1 due
- Homework:
  - Hopkinson, Midnight Robber pg. 235-end
  - Foley, “Contexts and Reading” from How to Read an Oral Poem (BB)
  - Hathaway, “The Unbearable Weight of Authenticity” (BB)

Wednesday, October 7

- Exam review

Friday, October 9

- Midterm exam

### **Week 8—Material Culture**

Monday, October 12

- What the heck is “material culture?”
- Homework: Brunvand, Chapter 19 “Folklife” in The Study of American Folklore

Wednesday, October 14

- Occupational arts & Outdoor lore
- Homework: Brunvand, Chapter 21 “Folk Crafts and Art” in The Study of American Folklore

Friday, October 16

- Domestic arts

- Homework: Read TBA

### **Week 9—Material Culture**

Monday, October 19

- Missouri and Luthiery
- Vernacular architecture
- Homework: Brunvand, Chapter 20 “Folk Architecture” in The Study of American Folklore

Wednesday, October 21

- Paper airplanes and snowflakes

Friday, October 23—NO CLASS—post on Blackboard TBA

### **Week 10--Humor**

Monday, October 26

- The joke
- Homework:
  - Leary, “The Favorite Jokes of...”(BB)
  - Dundes “The Dead Baby Joke Cycle” (BB)

Wednesday, October 28

- The practical joke

Friday, October 30

- An incomplete and abrupt divergence into ghost stories and legends
- Humor collection assigned
- Homework:
  - Ghost stories collection (BB)
  - Goldstein, Excerpts from Haunting Experiences: Ghosts in Contemporary Folklore (BB)

### **Week 11--Humor**

Monday, November 2

- Why is that funny?
- Homework: Dundes, “Elephant Jokes” (BB)

Wednesday, November 4

- The power of folk humor
- Homework: Stokker, Excerpts from Folklore Fights the Nazis (BB)

Friday, November 6

- Humor Collection assignment and analysis due

### **Week 12—Holidays, Rituals, Ceremonies, Festivals**

Monday, November 9

- Introduction to family folklore

Wednesday, November 11

- Holidays and traditions

Friday, November 13

- Rituals and ceremonies
- Homework: Brunvand, Chapter 15 “Customs and Festivals” in The Study of American Folklore

### **Week 13—Holidays, Rituals, Ceremonies, Festivals**

Monday, November 16

- Festivals

Wednesday, November 18

- Superstitions and belief practices
- Homework: Brunvand, Chapter 14 “Superstitions” in The Study of American Folklore

Friday, November 20

- Homework: Read through pg. 104 in The Ladies Auxiliary

### **Week 14—NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING RECESS**

### **Week 15—Foodways**

Monday, November 30

- Family foodways
- Homework:
  - Brunvand, Chapter 23 “Folk Foods” in The Study of American Folklore
  - Read pg. 105-185 of The Ladies Auxiliary

Wednesday, December 2

- Community foodways
- Homework: Read pg. 186-242 of The Ladies Auxiliary

Friday, December 4

- Food production and process
- Homework: Finish The Ladies Auxiliary

### **Week 16--Foodways**

Monday, December 7

- Food and power, food and identity
- Homework: Reading TBA

Wednesday, December 9

- Family/Community collection assignment and analysis due
- Exam Review