

Survey of American Folklore

ENG 3600 001 CRN: 24973

9:35 a.m.—12:20 p.m. T

1115 Main

Winter, 2010

ad5634@wayne.edu

Instructor: Dr. Janet Langlois

5057 Woodward, #9305.4/

Barnes & Noble Cafe

Office Hours: T, 1-3, TH, 3-5pm

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Course Description

There is more to American folklore than Paul Bunyan and his blue ox, Babe, or George Washington and his father's cherry tree! In this course, we will examine traditional cultural practices of a variety of "American" people, including their verbal arts, social folk customs and material culture. In the process, we'll debate what is "American" and whose America/s we are surveying at a time when globalization and localization issues complicate relationships between countries, regions and communities in the Americas and beyond. We will locate and cross borders and boundaries in our exploration of American folk cultural landscapes, operating in pre-national and post-national realms as well.

This course satisfies a CLAS Culture & Society requirement.

Required Texts (Available for purchase online and at Marwil's Bookstore, and soon to be on reserve at UGL Reserves Desk)

Dorson, Richard and James Leary. *Bloodstoppers and Bear Walkers: Folk Traditions of the Upper Peninsula*. 1952. 3rd ed. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin P, 2008.

Fine, Gary Alan and Patricia A. Turner. *Whispers on the Color Line: Rumor and Race in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Magliocco, Sabina. *Neo-Pagan Sacred Art and Altars: Making Things Whole*.

Folk Art and Artist Series. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2002.

Mayor, Adrienne. *Fossil Legends of the First Americans*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2008.

Paredes, Americo. 1958. "*With His Pistol in His Hand*": *A Border Ballad and Its Hero*. Austin: U of Texas Press, 1970 or any edition.

Additional Readings

Other required readings as noted in the course schedule will be posted on Blackboard or handed out in class. Recommended American folklore textbooks include: Brunvand, Jan Harold, *American Folklore: An Introduction*. 4th ed., 1998; Brunvand, Jan Harold, *American Folklore: An Encyclopedia*, 1996; Dorson, Richard M. *American Folklore*, 1961; Oring, Elliott, ed. *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction*, 1986; Sims, Martha & Martine Stephens, *Living Traditions*, 2005; Toelken, Barre, *The Dynamics of Folklore*, revised and expanded ed., 1996.

Blackboard-Assisted Course

Please check the Blackboard website for this course regularly as I will post full-text readings noted in the course schedule as well as announcements, class information, assignments, exam review summaries and website links. To access Blackboard and to communicate by email, you will need to activate your WSU Access ID at <http://computing.wayne.edu/accessid/activate.php>. You should do this even if you have another email address. If you do use another email address, you should have email that is sent to your WSU account forwarded to you by going to <http://computing.wayne.edu/email/forwarding.php>.

Course Requirements

The class will be a combination of lecture, discussion, and term projects. Final grades will be based on midterm and final examinations (40%), term projects: one critical essay, one ethnographic interview and analysis (to be discussed more fully in separate guidelines) (45%), and class participation (attendance, discussion & discussion board, oral report) (15%).

Course Schedule

1. Jan. 12

Introduction

Readings: Brunvand, Jan Harold. "Does America Have a Folklore?" in his *The Study of American Folklore: An Introduction* (NY: Norton, 1998), pp. 48-50 (handout); Hufford, Mary, "American Folklife: A Commonwealth of Cultures" at the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, website (handout and link <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/cwc/>)

2. Jan. 19

American Folklore Begins at Home?

Readings: Dorson & Leary, *Bloodstoppers and Bearwalkers: Folk Traditions of Michigan's Upper Peninsula*, intro by James Leary, pp. xxx, 1-168.

3. Jan. 26

Readings: Dorson & Leary, *Bloodstoppers and Bearwalkers*, pp. 169-363.

4. Feb. 2

Rumor and Legend in a Divided America

Readings: Fine & Turner, *Whispers on the Color Line: Rumor and Race in America*, pp. 1-80.

5. Feb. 9

Readings: Fine & Turner, *Whispers on the Color Line*, pp. 81-166.

6. Feb. 16

Readings: Fine & Turner, *Whispers on the Color Line*, pp. 167-229.

#1 CRITICAL REVIEW OF WEBSITE ON URBAN LEGENDS & RUMORS DUE

7. Feb. 23

Ballads and Border Crossing

Readings: Paredes, "With His Pistol in His Hand": *A Border Ballad and Its Hero*, pp. xi-xii, 7-107.

Film clips from "The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez"

8. March 2

Readings: Paredes, "With His Pistol in His Hand," pp.108-250.

**Sign Up for oral reports of #2 ethnographic project
Midterm exam review**

9. March 9

MIDTERM EXAM

10. March 16

SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS

11. March 23

Myth and Science in the Americas

Readings: Mayor, *Fossil Legends of the First Americans*, pp. 1-105.

Oral reports

12. March 30

Readings: Mayor, *Fossil Legends of the First Americans*, pp. 106-219.

Oral reports

13. April 6

Readings: Mayor, *Fossil Legends of the First Americans*, pp. 220-331.

Oral reports

14. April 13

Material Culture and a New America?

Readings: Magliocco, *Neo-Pagan Sacred Art and Altars*, introduction, pp. ix-xii, 1-70.

Oral reports

15. April 20

Readings: Magliocco, *Neo-Pagan Sacred Art and Altars* continued

Oral reports

Final Exam Review

Student Evaluations

#2 ETHNOGRAPHIC PROJECT DUE

FINAL EXAM SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY, MAY 3, 2010 FROM 8:00 – 10:30 A.M.

Contract between Instructor and Students

I ask students to come to class, read and discuss readings, write term projects without plagiarizing, and have fun in the process. In turn, I, as instructor, agree to present concepts, examples and term project guidelines as clearly as possible, to give fair exams, and to return graded student exams and projects in a timely manner (usually one week later for exams and no more than two weeks later for ethnographic projects). See more detailed discussion of class policies below.

Attendance (5%)

The English Department attendance policy is as follows:

Enrolled students in any English classes must attend one of the first two class sessions; otherwise, they may be required to drop the class. In addition, the instructor counts attendance as part of the class participation grade based on number of classes attended. Students are allowed up to 2 **excused** absences with no loss of grade that require advance notice, if possible, to instructor; longer **excused** absences due to the flu or other reasons will be handled on a case by case basis, as students are asked to stay home if ill. Students who have 3 or more **unexcused** absences, however, will lose attendance points and may be asked to withdraw.

Late Assignments

Students may ask for extension of assignment due date up to a two-day grace period; after that time, papers will lose two points down per day late (A = 95%, 4 days late = 95-8 = 88% = B+). Papers more than seven days late will not be accepted.

Paper Format

Reports should be typed, double-spaced, one-inch margins, no larger than 12 pt. type, no binders. (Material in appendices need not follow this format.)

Paper Revision

Possible for Assignment #1 only. Students may turn in draft copies of papers **before** due dates for instructor's review. Further guidelines will be given.

Exam Make-ups

The instructor will consider if student arranges with the instructor before the exam.

Incompletes *The mark of “I” (Incomplete) is given to either an undergraduate or a graduate student when he/she has not completed all of the course work as required for the term and when there is, in the judgment of the instructor, a reasonable probability that the student can complete the course successfully without again attending regular class sessions. The student should be passing at the time the grade of “I” is given. A written contract specifying the work to be completed should be signed by the student and instructor and filed with the English Department.*

Students receiving incompletes must finish their assignments by the end of a year or the grade will be replaced by an “F.” The University will not allow any extensions past the year’s deadline.

Withdrawals

The grade of “WN” replaces the “X” grade and applies to any student who has never attended class, or did not complete any assignments, or did not participate in credit-earning activities by the withdrawal date. If a student decides not to go to class after having received a grade for any component of a course, these grades will be issued only as follows: “WP” (Withdrawal with a passing grade earned to date) or “WF” (Withdrawal with a failing grade earned to date.).

Plagiarism

The College of Liberal Arts Policy on Plagiarism states:

The principle of honesty is recognized as fundamental to a scholarly community. Students are expected to honor this principle and instructors are expected to take appropriate action when instances of academic dishonesty are discovered. An instructor, on discovering such an instance, may give a failing grade on the assignment or for the course. The instructor has the responsibility of notifying the student of the alleged violation and the action being taken. Both the student and the instructor are entitled to academic due process in all such cases. Acts of dishonesty may lead to suspension or exclusion.

My policy, on a case-by-case basis, follows the English Department’s guidelines based on college and university guidelines.

Writing Center information:

*The Writing Center (2nd floor, UGL) provides individual tutoring consultations free of charge for students at Wayne State University. Undergraduate students in General Education courses, including composition courses, receive priority for tutoring appointments. The Writing Center serves as a resource for writers, providing tutoring sessions on the range of activities in the writing process – considering the audience, analyzing the assignment or genre, brainstorming, researching, writing drafts, revising, editing, and preparing documentation. The Writing Center is **not** an editing or proofreading service; rather, students are guided as they engage collaboratively in the process of academic writing, from developing an idea to correctly citing sources. To make an appointment, consult the Writing Center website: <http://www.clas.wayne.edu/writing/>. To submit material for online tutoring, consult the Writing Center HOOT website (Hypertext One-on-One Tutoring): <http://www.clas.wayne.edu/unit-inner.asp?WebPageID=1330>.*

Educational Accessibility Services

If you have a physical or mental impairment that may interfere with your ability to complete successfully the requirements for this course, please contact the Educational Accessibility Services Office in Room 1600 of the David Adamany Undergraduate Library to discuss appropriate accommodations on a confidential basis at 577-1851.