

Eastern Illinois University
Course Proposal
EIU 4100G, Folklore, Culture, and Society

1. Catalog description

- a. 4100G
- b. Folklore, Culture, and Society
- c. 3-0-3
- d. F,S,SU
- e. Folklore
- f. Through a comparative examination of various folk groups and genres, this course will address the ways in which folklore contributes to the beliefs, traditions, and behaviors of individuals and societies. Special attention will be paid to contemporary folklore research and its relevance to the study and understanding of modern societies.
- g. English majors are excluded.
- h. Writing intensive

2. Student learning objectives

- a. In accordance with the goals of general education, Students will
 - exercise their abilities to summarize and synthesize information from scholarly sources of various disciplines and from interdisciplinary materials (writing, critical thinking)
 - have opportunities to make oral presentations of these summaries and syntheses (speaking)
 - learn to conduct interdisciplinary folklore research using both primary and secondary sources (critical thinking)
 - learn how to best communicate these research findings in oral and written form (writing and speaking)
 - learn to collect, study, analyze, and compare folklore from their own culture and those of other groups (critical thinking)
 - learn the importance of folkloristics (the study of folklore) in understanding cross-cultural interactions (citizenship)
 - learn the importance of folkloristics as a basis for social action (citizenship)
- b. As they become more familiar with folkloristics, students will also
 - learn the role folklore plays in our everyday lives
 - learn the impact of folklore on human behavior

3. Course Outline: There are four major units in the course, based on the segments of *Folkloristics*, a primary text for the class. Based on one 150-minute class meeting a week for fifteen weeks, these units will fill 10 weeks. The first week is devoted to introducing terms, themes and methods. The twelfth week will be devoted to assessment, specifically the TASKS test, and the last two weeks and the finals period will be reserved for oral presentations of research projects. Throughout the course, students will be expected to draw relevant connections between folklore and their major disciplines.

Week 1

Introduction to folklore and folkloristics

- Definitions
- Identifying folk groups
- “Everyfolk” vs. the “Intentional Folklorist”
- How can understanding folklore make us more at home in the world?
- The relevance of Folkloristics to other academic areas

Weeks 2 and 3

Unit 1: Folklore as Tradition; the Survival and Continuity of Cultures

- This unit covers the way folklore works—how it travels over time, how oral traditions differ from literate dissemination of lore, how the Internet influences modern folklore—and folklore’s role in preserving traditions, establishing continuity, and influencing change.
- Readings: “Survival, Continuity the role, Revival, and Historical Source,” *Folkloristics*, Chapter 3
 - “The Dissemination of Folklore,” *Folkloristics*, Chapter. 5
 - “On the Concepts of Folklore,” *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres*, Section 1
 - “The Folklore Process,” *The Dynamics of Folklore*, Chapter 1
 - “Dynamics of the Folk Group,” *The Dynamics of Folklore*, Chapter 2

Weeks 4-6

Unit 2: Folklore as Transmissible Entity

- This unit reviews the genres of folklore, paying particular attention to the verbal and material genres and how they are collected, classified, and analyzed. The focus of week 6 will be how verbal folklore (i.e. folk and fairy tales, myth and legends, riddles and proverbs) is adapted over time and through cross-cultural transmission.
- Readings: “Folklore as Genre and Type,” *Folkloristics*, Chapter 4
 - “Folk Narratives,” *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres*, Section 6
 - “Ballads & Folksongs,” *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres*, Section 7
 - “Riddles & Proverbs,” *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres*, Section 8
 - “Folk Objects,” *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres*, Section 9
 - “The Folk Performance,” *Dynamics of Folklore*, Chapter 3
 - “Dimensions of the Folk Event,” *Dynamics of Folklore*, Chapter 4

Weeks 7-9

Unit 3: Folklore as Culture

- The unit explores folklore as a facet of and basis for culture. Particular attention will be paid to the role of folklore in the interactions among different cultures.
- Readings: “Folklore in Cultural Contexts,” *Folkloristics*, Chapter 6
 - “Folklore in the cultures of Groups in Contact,” *Folkloristics*, Chapter 7
 - “Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Folklore,” *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres*, Section 2
 - “Occupational Folklore,” *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres*, Section 4
 - “Children’s Folklore,” *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres*, Section 5
 - “Aesthetics and Repertoire,” *Dynamics of Folklore*, Chapter 5
 - “Folklore and Cultural Worldview,” *Dynamics of Folklore*, Chapter 7

Weeks 10, 11, and 13

Unit 4: Folklore as Behavior

- This unit will explore the role of belief and tradition in influencing human behavior. Psychological theories of folklore, political analyses of folklore, and the relationship between folklore and religion all will be introduced as means of exploring the connections between folklore and everyday life.
- Readings: “Folklore and Human Psychology,” *Folkloristics*, Chapter 8
 - “Folklore as Personal Resource,” *Folkloristics*, Chapter 9
 - “Folklore and Connotation,” *Dynamics of Folklore*, Chapter 6
 - “Applications of Folklore,” *Dynamics of Folklore*, Chapter 10

Week 12
Assessment Activities

Weeks 14 and 15, Finals week
Project Presentations

3. Evaluation of student learning

- a. Writing skills will be evaluated through a number of means. Students will keep response journals on the weekly readings. In addition, each student will write two reports based on reserve readings and share these with the class through handouts and an oral presentation. There will be a five-page essay, based on class work and library research, due in Week 6 that will serve as a prospectus for the fifteen-page term paper; the longer paper will entail both library research and fieldwork. Speaking skills will be evaluated based on participation in weekly class discussions and the oral presentation of research. Critical thinking and understanding folkloristics and cultural studies will be evaluated throughout the course in the grading of the content and quality of written and oral work.
- b. The five-page essay will be returned to the student after preliminary evaluation for further revision and expansion into the research paper. In addition, students will be advised to consult with the instructor often during the writing process. 70% of the course grade will be based on written assignments, as indicated below:

Response journals	20%
Article summaries & presentations	10%
Short paper	10%
Term paper	30%
Discussion	20%
Presentation	10%
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Total	100%

4. Rationale

- a. Senior seminar
- b. Prerequisite: 75 hours completed
- c. This course does not duplicate any current offerings.
- d. Course will not be required in any majors or programs other than general education senior seminar.

5. Implementation

- a. Initial instructor: Bonnie Irwin
- b. Primary Texts:
Georges, Robert A., and Michael Owen Jones, *Folkloristics: An Introduction* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995).
Oring, Elliott, ed., *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction* (Logan: Utah State UP, 1989).
Oring, Elliott, ed., *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: A Reader* (Logan: Utah State UP, 1989).
Toelken, Barre, *The Dynamics of Folklore* (Logan: Utah State UP, 1996).

Library Reserve Readings, including,

Bendix, Regina, *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1997).

Cashorali, Peter. *Fairy Tales: Traditional Tales Retold for Gay Men* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1997).

Dorson, Richard M., ed., *Handbook of American Folklore* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1983).

- Fine, Gary Alan. *Manufacturing Tales: Sex and Money in Contemporary Tales* (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1992).
- Jordan, Rosan A., and Susan J. Kalcik, eds., *Women's Folklore, Women's Culture* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1985).
- Preston, Cathy Lynn, ed., *Folklore, Literature, and Cultural Theory* (NY: Garland, 1995).
- Scheub, Harold. *Story*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1998.
- Wachs, Eleanor. *Crime-Victim Stories: New York City's Urban Folklore* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988).
- Yolen, Jane, *Briar Rose* (NY: Tor, 1992).
- Yolen, Jane, *Favorite Folktales from around the World* (NY: Pantheon, 1986).
- Articles from *The Journal of American Folklore*.

- c. Additional Costs: A \$25 course fee will be charged to cover the cost of the TASKS in Critical Thinking exam.
- d. Term first offered: Spring 2001

6. Community College Transfer

Not applicable.

7. Date Approved by College Curriculum Committee [February 23, 2000]

8. Date Approved by Senior Seminar Advisory Committee [February 21, 2000]

9. Date approved by CAA [March 2, 2000]

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