



Course Description

English 251 is kind of a “sampler platter” of the variety of cultural productions that comprise American folklore studies these days. First, we’ll establish some working definitions of folklore, and then we’ll analyze the productions of a variety of folk groups as well as a variety of folklore genres in order to explore and challenge those definitions. You’ll be introduced to the history of the discipline of folklore, some basic concepts of that discipline, and have the opportunity to collect and interpret folklore materials on your own. And we might even have some fun along the way.

Contact Information

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Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays* 2-3:30 p.m., and by appointment

(*except for Wednesday 9/16, Wednesday 10/14, and Wednesday 11/18)

Required Texts

Sims & Stephens, *Living Folklore*, 2nd edition (ISBN 9780874218442)

Selection of required readings on eCampus

Social Justice Statement

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services at <http://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu> or 304/293-6700. For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>. And of course, feel free to talk with me about how we can work together most effectively.

Attendance Policy and Daily Procedures

It should go without saying, but ***please turn off your phone and put it away during class***. If you're expecting an important call, please set your phone to vibrate and take the call in the hallway.

Attendance—Since the breadth of folklore studies can only be fully understood through interactive learning, I expect you to attend every class. Should you miss a class, I trust that you'll check in to find out what you've missed, and that you will get notes from another class member. ***Missed quizzes or other in-class work must be made up before the next class meeting—no exceptions.***

Late arrivals—We will start class on time, and quizzes will almost always be given at the start of class, so please plan to be here at 10:30 a.m. Late arrivals are really disruptive, and if you arrive after a quiz is underway, you will not be permitted to take it.

Leaving early—Please let me know before class begins if you need to leave early, and what time you will need to leave. In this situation, I'd also appreciate it if you'd sit close to the door so that you can slip out without disrupting the class.

End of class—I know that some professors have a bad habit of going way over the scheduled ending time for their classes (I had some of them myself in college)—but I do keep track of the time and promise to always let you out at the class' scheduled ending time. Frequently, the end of the period will be devoted to summarizing material or making announcements, so please refrain from packing up books, etc., so that you don't miss anything yourself or distract others. I will verbally dismiss the class after this wrap-up, and promise to do so on time so that you can get to your next class.

Course Requirements

Major assignments for this course include periodic quizzes (both announced and unannounced), three short papers, a midterm, and a final exam. Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Midterm	15%
Quizzes*	25%
Three papers	45% (15% each)
Final exam	15%

Most major assignments (papers and exams) will be graded on a 100-point scale, with 90-100 being an A, 80 to 89 a B, 70 to 79 a C, 60 to 69 a D, and anything below 60 an F. Quizzes will generally be five or ten points each, and at the end of the semester, your lowest quiz score will be dropped.

* "Quizzes" include short in-class quizzes, both announced and unannounced, as well as at-home quizzes that will be posted to eCampus, in-class writing activities, and participation quizzes (see separate assignment).

Late Papers/Assignments, Make-up Work, and Extensions

All assignments are due in class, at the beginning of class, on the day they are due. Papers submitted by e-mail or put in my mailbox instead of in class will have 10 pts. deducted from the paper's final score, and papers turned in in any form after class will lose 5 pts. per day. (So, a paper turned in on the day it is due but after class will lose 5 pts., a paper turned in the following day will lose 10 pts., and so on.)

I'm very willing to grant extensions, but you must talk to me about this and then submit your request for an extension to me, in writing, before the assignment is due. I will ask you to set your own revised due

date, subject to my approval, and you will be held to that due date (afterwards, it will be subject to the above penalties).

Academic Integrity

I expect you to abide by the university's definition and policy regarding plagiarism (see below). If I feel you have violated this policy, I will follow the university's reporting policy and file paperwork to report the incident, and you will receive an unforgiveable "F" in the course.

The following definitions are from the *West Virginia University Undergraduate Catalog*. Please see the catalog's section on Academic Integrity/Dishonesty for the full definition and discussion of procedures.

Plagiarism. "Submitting, without appropriate acknowledgment . . . material that has been knowingly obtained or copied in whole or in part, from the work of others, whether such source is published or not, including (but not limited to) another individual's academic composition, compilation, or other product, or commercially prepared paper."

Cheating. "Doing academic work for another student, or providing one's own work for another student to copy and submit as his/her own."

DAY-TO-DAY SCHEDULE

In the following schedule, "READ" means that you need to have completed the reading listed *before* class meets on that day. "DUE" means any assignment listed is due on that day. "IN CLASS" describes what we will be doing/discussing in class on that day. "LF" = Sims & Stephens' *Living Folklore*; "EC" = eCampus electronic article (downloadable from the ENGL 251 eCampus site).

WEEK ONE—INTRODUCTION

M Aug 17	Introduction to course—What we talk about when we talk about folklore
W 19	READ: <i>Living Folklore</i> (LF) Chapter 1 IN CLASS: Introduction, continued (history of folklore studies and approaches)
F 21	IN CLASS: Continued discussion of folklore history & definitions DUE: At-home quiz: As you review chapter 1 and look through your notes for this week, jot down all the things mentioned that you wouldn't previously have considered folklore, and on the class' eCampus blog, post a brief (1-2 paragraph) explanation about why you wouldn't have considered them "folklore." Please post before our class meeting today.

WEEK TWO—DEFINING "FOLK" AND "LORE"

M 24	READ: LF Chapter 2 to p. 61 (stop at the heading "Groups & Belief") IN CLASS: Discussion of folk groups; introduction to Paper 1, the Folk Group/Inventory paper
W 26	IN CLASS: Continued discussion of folk groups
F 28	READ: eCampus (EC) article, Bascom, "The Four Functions of Folklore" IN CLASS: Discussion of the importance of context and function in folklore studies

WEEK THREE—TRADITION AND TRADITION-BEARERS

- M 31 READ: LF Chapter 3 (“Tradition”)
IN CLASS: Discussion of the definitions and implications of “tradition”
- W Sep 2 IN CLASS: Continued discussion of tradition
- F 4 IN CLASS: **Participation quiz**

WEEK FOUR—FAMILY FOLKLORE

- M 7 NO CLASS—Labor Day Holiday
- W 9 READ: EC, Zeitlin’s “The Forms of Family Lore” and “Family Stories”
IN CLASS: Discussion of the forms and concepts underlying family folklore
- F 11 **DUE: Paper 1**, the Folk Group/Inventory paper
IN CLASS: Wrapup of family folklore

WEEK FIVE—MATERIAL CULTURE

- M 14 READ: LF, Section on “Aesthetics,” pp. 157-171
IN CLASS: Introduction to material culture and Paper 2, the Material Culture/Foodways paper
- W 16 IN CLASS: Continued discussion of material culture and tradition
- F 18 READ: LF, Saum’s “Roadside Memorials” (pp. 255-269), and EC, articles on other folk memorials, TBA
IN CLASS: Discussion of folk memorials

WEEK SIX—MATERIAL CULTURE; RITUAL

- M 21 IN CLASS: Conclusion of discussion of material culture; **participation quiz**
- W 23 READ: LF Chapter 4 (“Rituals”)
IN CLASS: Introduction to rituals as a specific form of tradition
- F 25 IN CLASS: Continued discussion of rituals
DUE: At-home quiz: Having read Chapter 4 and discussed rituals in class on Monday, identify a ritual you’ve participated in and write a short (1-2 paragraph) description/explanation of it. Please post to the class’ eCampus blog before our class meeting today.

WEEK SEVEN—ETHNICITY, ETHNIC GROUPS, AND FOODWAYS

- M 28 READ: EC: Oring, “Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Folklore”
IN CLASS: Presentation/discussion of the concepts of ethnicity in folklore
- W 30 IN CLASS: Continued discussion of ethnicity and its connections to tradition, ritual, and foodways
- F Oct 2 READ: EC, Widdicombe’s “The End of Food”
IN CLASS: Discussion of the cultural meanings of food

WEEK EIGHT—FOODWAYS, CON'T.

- M Oct 5 READ: EC, readings on foodways TBA
 IN CLASS: Continued discussion of foodways
- W 7 IN CLASS: Conclusion of discussion of foodways
- F 9 **DUE: Paper 2**, the Material Culture/Foodways paper
 IN CLASS: Class potluck (**participation quiz**)

WEEK NINE— FALL BREAK AND MIDTERM EXAM

- M 12 NO CLASS—FALL BREAK
- W 14 Midterm review
- F 16 MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK TEN—PERFORMANCE THEORY, CON'T.; CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE

- M 19 READ: LF Chapter 6 (“Performance”) to p. 153 (stop at the heading “Folklore that Pushes the Boundaries”)
 IN CLASS: Discussion of performance theory
- W 21 IN CLASS: Continued discussion of performance theory
- F 23 IN CLASS: Intro to children’s folklore and Paper 3, the Children’s Games paper

WEEK ELEVEN—CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE

- M 26 READ: EC, Mary & Herbert Knapp, “The Games Children Play”
 IN CLASS: Discussion of children’s games
- W 28 IN CLASS: Continued discussion of children’s games; **participation quiz**
- F 30 IN CLASS: Participation quiz, continued (if necessary); introduction to folk narratives

WEEK TWELVE—FAIRY TALES

- M Nov 2 READ: EC, Tatar’s “Why Fairy Tales Matter” and variants of Little Red Riding Hood
 IN CLASS: Introduction to fairy tales as a folk/literary genre
- W 4 **DUE: At-home quiz:** Having discussed the history of fairy tales and read the variants of LRRH and Cinderella, describe what your own “Ur” version of one of these fairy tales is, and explain why you think that became the definitive story for you.
 READ: EC, variants of Cinderella
 IN CLASS: Continued discussion of FTs
- F 6 READ: EC, Clapp-Intyre, “Princess Fanatic”
 IN CLASS: Discussion of Disney Princesses, Brave girls, and Frozen sisters

WEEK THIRTEEN—CONTEMPORARY LEGENDS

- M 9 **DUE: Paper 3**, the Children's Games Paper
IN CLASS: Conclusion of discussion of fairy tales and activity around Vladimir Propp's "Functions of the Folk Tale"
- W 11 READ: EC, excerpt from Brunvand's *The Vanishing Hitchhiker*
IN CLASS: Introduction to contemporary legends
- F 13 READ: EC, articles about recent legends TBA
IN CLASS: Continued discussion of contemporary legends

WEEK FOURTEEN—LOCAL LEGENDS

- M Nov 16 READ: EC, Bird's "Playing with Fear" and Wright's "Here Comes Sheepsquatch!"
IN CLASS: Discussion of local legends and folk belief
- W 18 Conclusion of legend discussion; **participation quiz**
- F 20 **DUE: At-home quiz:** Post a brief description and analysis of a legend you've heard (either a contemporary legend or a local legend) on the eCampus blog before class today. If you haven't heard/received one recently, describe and analyze a version of one of the older legends that you do remember having heard at some point.

NOVEMBER 23-27: THANKSGIVING BREAK**WEEK FIFTEEN—FOLKLORE IN DIGITAL CONTEXTS**

- M 30 READ: EC, articles about memes, internet legends, and other digital folk genres
IN CLASS: Introduction to internet folklore
- W Dec 2 IN CLASS: Continued discussion of e-lore and other emerging forms of folklore;
participation quiz
- F 4 READ: EC, Evans' "Ghosts in the Machine"
IN CLASS: Discussion of the "Slenderman" legends and ostension

WEEK SIXTEEN

- M 7 IN CLASS: Wrapup of e-lore discussion; final exam review and course evaluations

FINALS WEEK

Monday, December 13th: FINAL EXAM from 3:00 — 5:00 p.m. in our regular classroom

Please note: No early exams or makeup exams will be given. Check your schedule now and plan accordingly.