

FOLKLORE RESEARCH METHODS
Folklore 2100-01
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Fall 2010

INSTRUCTOR: Janice Esther Tulk
OFFICE: ED 4049
OFFICE HOURS: MWF 11am – noon, 1:00-1:45pm
 Tu 1:00-1:45pm & by appointment
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CLASS TIMES: TR 2:00-3:15pm
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

FOLK 2100 is designed to provide the basic introduction to the research resources, tools and methods regularly employed in the area of Folklore. On the one hand, the course will examine what types of Library and Archive resources can be useful to the folklorist and, on the other hand, it will explore how folklorists in fieldwork situations should handle people, and how they can capture for posterity a record of the interviews that they have conducted and the events that they have observed. This course qualifies as a Research/Writing course.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Sunstein, Bonnie Stone and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater. 2007. *Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research*. 3rd ed. Bedford: St. Martin's.

RECOMMENDED TEXT:

Turabian, Kate. 2007. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Additional supplementary readings will be announced in class and on the website (listed above) and placed on reserve at the QEII Library.

EVALUATION OVERVIEW (see descriptions on subsequent pages for details):

	Item	Date	Value
1.	Assignment 1: Topic Statement & Bibliography	28 September 2010 at 2pm	15%
2.	Assignment 2: Observation & Fieldnotes	14 October 2010 at 2pm	15%
3.	Assignment 3: Interview & Partial Transcription	4 November 2010 at 2pm	25%
4.	Terminology and Methodology Test	18 November 2010 at 2pm	20%
5.	Assignment 4: Research Essay	8 December 2010 at 12 noon	25%

ASSIGNMENTS IN DETAIL

1. ASSIGNMENT 1: TOPIC STATEMENT AND BIBLIOGRAPHY (15%)

DUE: SEPTEMBER 28 AT 2PM (START OF CLASS)

All assignments in this course must focus on the same topic. The idea is that you will build a body of research over the course of the term that can then inform your final research essay. You may choose any folklore topic, but must keep in mind that whatever you choose must be conducive to the research techniques upon which assignments focussed. You must be able to 1) locate library resources on the topic, 2) observe an event related to the topic, and 3) interview a person in relation to the topic. For example, if your topic is karaoke, there are books and articles written on the topic that you can read, there are karaoke events throughout the city that can be observed, and there are many individuals who sing karaoke who could be interviewed.

Submit a statement of topic (maximum one page) that clearly identifies your research focus, the event you plan to observe, and the person you plan to interview in relation to it. Append a bibliography of fifteen items related to your chosen topic. This bibliography must primarily include academic books and articles, but should also include relevant multimedia resources, such as audio or video recordings, CD-ROMs, or websites. Websites cannot account for more than one quarter of the items in this bibliography. Citations for each item must conform to the Turabian citation style (see guide available online at <http://www.library.mun.ca/guides/howto/turabian.php>).

Assignments will be graded 75% on content and 25% on style (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc). See submission guidelines below.

2. ASSIGNMENT 2: OBSERVATION AND FIELDNOTES (15%)

DUE: OCTOBER 14 AT 2PM (START OF CLASS)

Spend at least one hour observing a cultural event or practice in a *public* place and record what you observe with a notebook and pencil/pen. Do not make audio/video recordings, photograph the event, or interview anyone during this assignment. The purpose of this activity is to rely on your senses to experience and describe a cultural “scene” – what you see, hear, smell, etc. Following your observation, write a brief (2-3 page) summary of the event or practice you observed, reflecting on observation as a research technique. Consider the benefits and limitations of observation alone. What questions are you left with?

Submit both your fieldnotes and your typed summary/reflection. The summary/reflection will be graded 75% on content and 25% on style (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc) and is subject to submission guidelines below.

3. ASSIGNMENT 3: INTERVIEW AND PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT (25%)

DUE: NOVEMBER 4 AT 2PM (START OF CLASS)

Well in advance of the due date for this assignment, contact the person you would like to interview. Tell them about the project and that it is for your Folklore 2100 course at MUN. Ask them whether they would be willing to be interviewed and have that interview recorded. Inform them that your professor will listen to the interview. Ensure they are ok with this. If so, arrange a time to meet. If not, thank them for their time and ask someone else.

Prior to the interview, compose a list of questions that you would like to ask. If necessary, borrow a recorder from the Circulation Desk of the QEII Library. When you meet the person, explain the project again and ask them to sign a consent form (provided in class). Conduct an interview of no less than 20 minutes on the topic of your term project. While it may be tempting to follow your prepared questions closely, be open to following your interviewee’s lead or inviting him/her to elaborate on particular responses. When you are finished, thank your interviewee for sharing with you and ask them if they would like a copy of the interview or to read your term paper when it is done. If they respond yes to either (or both) of these, then be sure to follow up. Choose a 10-minute excerpt of the interview and transcribe it, including time codes as appropriate.

Submit the consent form, audio recording of the interview, and your transcript, along with a brief (1-2 page) summary of the interview context and a reflection on the process. See submission guidelines below. Assignments will be graded 75% on content and 25% on style (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc).

20% of your final grade will be based on your performance in a terminology and methodology test. It may include fill-ins, multiple choice, short answer questions, and/or essay questions. It will draw on material covered in class (including any guest lectures, videos, etc) and in reading assignments. The focus will be on the *research process* itself rather than research results (content). Students are strongly encouraged to attend every class to ensure success in exams. If you do miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining missed material from your fellow students.

5. ASSIGNMENT 4: RESEARCH ESSAY (25%)

DUE: ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 8 AT 12 NOON

In any essay of 8-10 pages (double-spaced), synthesize your library/archival research with your fieldwork. Assignments will be graded 75% on content and 25% on style (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc). Sources must be cited according to Turabian citation style (see guide available online at <http://www.library.mun.ca/guides/howto/turabian.php>). See submission guidelines below.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments must conform to the following guidelines:

- double-spaced
- 1" margins
- 12pt Times New Roman font
- hard copy (double-sided preferred) – no email
- pages stapled or paper-clipped
- first sentence of each paragraph indented
- no extra spacing between paragraphs
- Turabian format

Assignments must be submitted at the *start of class* on the day that they are due. Assignments received after this time will be considered late. Late submission of assignments without prior approval for an extension will result in a *penalty of 5% per day*. If you decide to submit your assignment late, it must be placed in the drop box outside the Department of Folklore main office (ED 4046) or handed directly to the instructor during an office hour. Students must not slide papers under office doors.

Assignments will be graded on both content and writing style. Writing style includes proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation, as well as adherence to the Turabian documentation style. 25% of the grade for assignments will be based on writing style and 75% for content.

Materials drawn from other sources and ideas that are not the student's own must be appropriately cited via in-text citations and a bibliography. This means that books, articles, encyclopaedia entries, textbooks, lecture notes, interviews, audio recordings, websites, films, and all other sources of information must be appropriately cited in assignments, whether paraphrased or quoted directly. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism. The calendar states:

Plagiarism: is the act of presenting the ideas or works of another as one's own. This applies to all material such as essays, laboratory reports, work term reports, design projects, seminar presentations, statistical data, computer programs, research results and theses. The properly acknowledged use of sources is an accepted and important part of scholarship. Use of such material without acknowledgment is contrary to accepted norms of academic behaviour. Information regarding acceptable writing or by email practices is available through the Writing Centre at www.mun.ca/writingcentre/about/.

See: 5.11.4 - Academic Offences at <http://www.mun.ca/regoff/calendar/>

NOTE: In the case of documented medical emergency or family distress, students unable to complete course requirements as outlined will not be penalized. Make-up exams and extensions for written assignments will be arranged in consultation with the student. Appropriate documentation must be presented in a timely manner – *before the due date or examination date where possible and within one week of the due date or examination date in all other cases*. In the case of illness, documentation should be written on letterhead and signed by the physician. It must indicate dates on which the student was seen by the physician, as well as the length of time and degree to which the illness would affect the student's ability to complete course requirements. See the current Calendar for guidelines.

SCHEDULE

TOPIC 1: FOLKLORE RESEARCH – What is it? How do we do it?

Read: Text, Chapter 1

TOPIC 2: RESOURCES IN LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

Read: Text, Chapter 7

TOPIC 3: ETHICS IN RESEARCH

Read: Text, Chapter 3

TOPIC 4: OBSERVING – Fieldnotes, description and reflection

Read: Text, Chapter 2; Chapter 4; Chapter 6: 308-10

TOPIC 5: RECORDING – Photography and videography

Read: TBA

TOPIC 6: INTERVIEWING – Preparation, techniques, and transcription

Read: Text, Chapter 5 & Chapter 6: 325-29

TOPIC 7: VIRTUAL ETHNOGRAPHY – Techniques in new “fields”

Read: “The Virtual Objects of Ethnography” by Christine Hine (on reserve at the QEII)

TOPIC 8: INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS – Putting the pieces together

Read: “Representing Ethnographic Experiences: From Fieldwork to Fieldnotes to Stories” by H. L. Goodall, Jr. (on reserve in the QEII)

TOPIC 9: WRITING – Communicating research results

Read: Text, Chapter 8

TOPIC 10: ARCHIVING – Making research accessible and preserving documents for the future

Review: Text, Chapter 7

DATES TO NOTE

September 16: Library Session in L2028 (don't come to ED4008!)

September 23: Ethics presentation by Sarah Moore

September 28: Assignment 1 due at start of class; archive tour – meet in 4008

October 11: Thanksgiving, no classes

October 12: Fall break, no classes

October 14: Assignment 2 due at start of class

November 2: Research presentation by Graham Blair

November 4: Assignment 3 due at start of class

November 11: Remembrance Day, no classes

November 18: Terminology and Methodology Test

December 3: Last day of classes

December 8: Assignment 4 due at 12 noon

TBA: Presentation by the Writing Centre on plagiarism, paraphrasing, using quotations, and citations.