

INTRODUCTION TO FOLKLORE  
Folklore 1000-003  
Memorial University of Newfoundland  
Winter 2011

INSTRUCTOR: Janice Esther Tulk  
OFFICE: ED 4049  
OFFICE HOURS: MWF 9-10am, and by appointment  
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CLASS TIMES: MWF 12:00-12:50  
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

FOLK 1000 will discuss the role that tradition plays in communication, art and society through an examination of folklore materials from Newfoundland and the English-speaking world. Readings and "listenings" will emphasize the use of folklore in context, e.g., the proverb in speech and the folksong in childrearing. Students will be urged to analyse the traditions in their own lives through special assignments. A student may not receive credit for both FOLK 1000 and 2000.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- students will be introduced to folklore as a discipline, its basic concepts, theories, and genres
- students will learn to recognize, observe, collect, analyse, classify, and describe folklore in context
- students will develop the ability to think critically and to write effectively in an academic style
- students will be exposed to the folklore of the many cultural groups that make up the mosaic of Newfoundland and Labrador, including both Euro-Canadian, Mi'kmaq, Inuit, and Innu

REQUIRED TEXT:

Oring, Elliott, ed. 1986. *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction*. Logan: Utah State University Press.

Additional supplementary readings are noted in the attached schedule of topics and/or will be announced in class and on the website (listed above), and placed on reserve in the QEII Library.

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

|    | Item                            | Date                            | Value |
|----|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|
| 1. | In-Class Response Sheets        | 5 Fridays during Term (2% each) | 10%   |
| 2. | Assignment 1: Personal Folklore | 4 February 2011<br>12noon       | 10%   |
| 3. | Mid-term Exam                   | 16 February 2011                | 20%   |
| 4. | Assignment 2: Survey Cards      | 4 March 2011<br>12noon          | 20%   |
| 5. | Assignment 3: Fieldwork Project | 1 April 2011<br>12noon          | 20%   |
| 6. | Final Exam                      | TBA by Registrar                | 20%   |

## ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS IN DETAIL

### 1. IN-CLASS RESPONSE SHEETS (10%)

FIVE FRIDAYS DURING TERM

On five Fridays during term, students will be invited to respond to topics and issues discussed in class and through assigned readings. Each will be worth 2% of the overall grade in the course. These response sheets must be completed in class on the day they are assigned.

### 2. ASSIGNMENT 1: PERSONAL FOLKLORE (10%)

DUE: FEBRUARY 4 AT 12NOON (START OF CLASS)

In a short essay (2-4 pages, double-spaced), identify and describe an item of folklore from your own personal life. This may be a saying, a belief, a custom, an object, a game, an initiation rite, etc. Provide the “text” of the folklore item, identify the genre into which it falls, and describe the social and cultural contexts in which this folklore is found/used. Give as much detail as possible, considering where, when, how, and from whom you learned this item of folklore; where, when, and how you use it (context); and why or how it is meaningful.

You will be graded on your ability to recognize and describe an item of folklore, and explain its meaning and/or purpose. Assignments will be graded 75% on content and 25% on style (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc). See submission guidelines below. Please be prepared to discuss your folklore item in class.

### 3. MID-TERM EXAM (20%)

FEBRUARY 16

20% of your final grade will be based on your performance in a mid-term exam. This exam may include fill-ins, multiple choice, short answer questions, and essay questions. It will focus on material covered in class (including any guest lectures, videos, etc) and in reading assignments up to the date of the exam. 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 classmates.

### 4. ASSIGNMENT 2: SURVEY CARDS (20%)

DUE: MARCH 4 AT 12 NOON (START OF CLASS)

Students will be provided with 5 folklore survey cards, a sample consent form, and a contract for deposit (to be explained in class). Students will then consult family members and/or friends to collect and document folklore and traditions using the survey cards. Examples of topics for documentation include jokes, riddles, sayings, ways of predicting weather, Halloween customs, personal experience narratives, beliefs, Thanksgiving customs, supernatural occurrences, ghost stories, St. Patrick’s Day customs, froshing customs, residence cheers and chants, etc. Students will employ consent forms when collecting these materials and will complete the contract for deposit. The survey cards, consent forms, and contract for deposit will be submitted for evaluation. After grading, survey cards will be deposited in MUNFLA archive. [If you strongly object to having these cards deposited, please discuss your concerns with the instructor before the due date for this assignment.]

You will be graded on your ability to recognize, collect, and record/describe items of folklore, as well as the completeness of the survey cards and accompanying documentation. Please be prepared to share your items with the class.

### 5. ASSIGNMENT 3: FIELDWORK PROJECT (20%)

DUE: APRIL 1 AT 12 NOON (START OF CLASS)

Students may choose one of the three options below for their final fieldwork project. Specific focus areas selected by students must be approved by the instructor by February 28, either via email or in-person discussion during office hours. For those choosing topics which involve conducting and recording interviews, recorders are available for loan through the Circulation Desk of the QEII Library. These are in high demand as deadlines approach for many courses. If you wait until the week before the project is due, you can’t be guaranteed that a recorder will be available for your use. Unavailability of recorders will not be grounds for an extension.

Students with an interest in communicating the results of their research project in an alternate creative or multi-media format (film, website, etc) should contact the instructor to discuss this possibility.

## OPTION A: FOLK NAMING

*The Research Process:* Select an “unusual” place name in Newfoundland & Labrador or your home province for which the origins are not obvious. It may be the name of a community, a specific location in a community, or a street name. Through a combination of fieldwork and library-based research, explore the origin(s) of that place name and its meaning. Interview one or more people about their understandings of the origin of that place name and its meaning, using consent forms as appropriate. Consult appropriate library resources, such as the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland & Labrador*, the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, and other books and journals to learn more about this place name. While websites may serve as an additional source of information, this assignment cannot be entirely based on internet research. Only one third of sources can be websites; the other two thirds must be interviews, scholarly sources, or archival sources.

*Submission:* Compose an essay of 6-8 pages, double-spaced, that identifies and situates the chosen place name in a broader context. Present the various explanations for the name of that location. Consider both official and unofficial names for places, and how folk histories and official histories may differ. Sources must be cited according to Turabian author-date references style (see guide available online at [http://www.library.mun.ca/guides/howto/turabian\\_reference\\_list.php](http://www.library.mun.ca/guides/howto/turabian_reference_list.php)). Consent forms must be submitted, along with audio recordings of interviews. See submission guidelines below. Assignments will be graded 75% on content and 25% on style (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc).

## OPTION B: CUSTOM

*The Research Process:* Through a combination of fieldwork and library-based research, explore a folk custom (for example, a calendar custom, an initiation rite, etc), its origins, its purpose, and its meaning. Identify an individual who participates in this custom and interview him/her about his/her experiences and understandings of the custom, using consent forms as appropriate. Consult appropriate library resources to place this tradition within a broader context and/or identify the history of the tradition. While websites may serve as an additional source of information, this assignment cannot be entirely based on internet research. Only one third of sources can be websites; the other two thirds must be interviews, scholarly sources, or archival sources.

*Submission:* Compose an essay of 6-8 pages, double-spaced, that describes the custom and places it within a social, cultural, and historical context. Consider the function(s) of this custom and the folk group associated with it. Sources must be cited according to Turabian author-date references style (see guide available online at [http://www.library.mun.ca/guides/howto/turabian\\_reference\\_list.php](http://www.library.mun.ca/guides/howto/turabian_reference_list.php)). Consent forms must be submitted along with recordings of interviews. See submission guidelines below. Assignments will be graded 75% on content and 25% on style (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc).

## OPTION C: FOLK ART AND CRAFT

*The Research Process:* Choose to focus on a particular form of art or craft (for example, quilts, lawn art, carvings, hand-made toys, decoys and models, etc) or the folk art/craft of one tradition bearer. Photograph a minimum of 5 items of folk art/craft, recording the maker, date, location, dimensions, materials, and other relevant information. Arrange your printed photographs into groups of like items and analyse the content, the context in which it appeared or is used, and any stylistic features of note. Consult appropriate library resources to assist your analysis and place this tradition within a broader context. While websites may serve as an additional source of information, this assignment cannot be entirely based on internet research. Only one third of sources can be websites; the other two thirds must be interviews, scholarly sources, or archival sources.

*Submission:* Compose an essay of 4-5 pages, double-spaced, that comments on similarities and differences between the items you collected (considering content, context, and style) and places the tradition in a broader social, cultural, and historical context. Append your photographs (one per page). For each, identify the maker, the date it was made (if known), the date it was collected, the location, the dimensions, and the materials used. Provide other contextual information as relevant. Sources must be cited according to Turabian author-date references style (see guide available online at [http://www.library.mun.ca/guides/howto/turabian\\_reference\\_list.php](http://www.library.mun.ca/guides/howto/turabian_reference_list.php)). 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 final exam. This exam may include fill-ins, multiple choice, short answer questions, and essay questions. It will focus on material covered in class (including any guest lectures, videos, etc) and in reading assignments from the date of the mid-term exam up to the last day of classes. This final exam will be scheduled and announced by the Registrar. 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.

#### 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 submission
- pages stapled or paper-clipped
- first sentence of each paragraph indented and no extra spacing between paragraphs
- Turabian author-date references style

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 author-date references 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. 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/](http://www.mun.ca/writingcentre/about/). 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. The value of a missed mid-term exam will be added to the weight of the final exam. 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.

#### CELL PHONE AND LAPTOP POLICY

Inappropriate use of cell phones and laptop computers during class will not be tolerated. Be advised that the Department of Folklore supports the rights of any instructor to restrict or ban the use of electronic communication devices (for example, cell phones and laptop computers) during the teaching of their classes.

## SCHEDULE

### TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW OF GENRES

*Read: Text pg 2*

### TOPIC 2: CUSTOM & RITUAL

*Read: "I Knew it Would be a Real Bonding Experience': Utah State University's English Department Pig Party as an Annual Rite of Passage" by Lynne S. McNeill (on reserve at the QEII)*

### TOPIC 3: FOLK MUSIC AND DANCE

*Read: Text Chapter 7*

### TOPIC 4: MATERIAL CULTURE

*Read: Text Chapter 9*

### TOPIC 5: FOLKLORE RESEARCH

*Read: Text Chapter 10*

### TOPIC 6: VERBAL FOLKLORE AND NARRATIVE

*Read: Text Chapter 6 & 8*

### TOPIC 7: BELIEF

*Read: Text Chapter 3*

### TOPIC 8: FOODWAYS

*Read: A Welcoming Wilderness: The Role of Wild Berries in the Construction of Newfoundland and Labrador as a Tourist Destination by Holly Everett (on reserve at the QEII)*

### TOPIC 9: DEFINING AND ANALYSING FOLKLORE

*Read: Preface, Chapter 1*

### TOPIC 10: IDENTIFYING FOLK GROUPS

*Read: Chapter 2*

### TOPIC 11: CAREERS IN FOLKLORE

### ROUND-UP AND REVIEW

### DATES TO NOTE

January 6: Classes begin  
February 4: First assignment due  
February 16: Midterm exam  
February 25: Research Period  
March 4: Second assignment due  
April 1: Third assignment due  
April 6: Classes end  
April 11: Exams begin