

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

**2018-2019 MLCS 204-A1: Forms of Folklore
(Fall Term)**

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Class Time: MWF 14-1450
Place: Tory basement 87
Office Hours: MW 11-1150
or by appointment
Course Website: On e-Class

Course Prerequisite: None.

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed, no such projects approved.

Community Service Learning component

Required Optional None

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

- Exam registry – Students' Union
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)

Yes No

Course Description, Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:

Folklore is all around us. Humans naturally strive toward expression and seek beauty. They create stories, songs, toys, foods, festivals, jokes, dances, games. Folklore is traditional expression. It is those stories, songs, houses, games that have been around for a long time. It is also very modern: folklore is constantly created and adapted to meet the expressive needs of the here and now. This course will acquaint students with the forms of folklore and encourage them to examine artistic expression in everyday life. Particular emphasis will be on ritual expression.

Course Objectives: Folklore governs how we see the world. It is a central aspect of our identity. To help students understand folklore and how it works, students will be led through a series of exercises that will build toward a final collection project. Course goals include:

- 1) Learning to apply a critical and analytical attitude toward everyday life phenomena, phenomena that often go unnoticed, but govern much of what people feel and do.
- 2) Being able to identify folklore, learning to isolate artistic expression and to analyze its meaning.
- 3) Learning fieldwork techniques. Most courses ask students to deal with data compiled by others. In this course, students will gather their own data and learn the techniques of interviewing and recording information. Students will learn data systematization and management.
- 4) Learning analytical techniques. Critical study is seldom applied to everyday phenomena, although these phenomena offer the best path to understanding people. Students will learn how to analyze folklore data and how to present the analysis effectively in written and oral form.

Learning Outcomes: Canada prides itself on its multiculturalism and indeed this is one of its dominant features.

- 1) Students will be able to identify those features of cultural expression that are important in the construction of cultural identity.
- 2) Students will master the techniques of heritage documentation:
 - a. They will be able to conduct interviews with care and sensitivity.
 - b. Or they will be able to film in a respectful manner.
- 3) They will master simple data management.
- 4) Students will be able to write a scholarly paper effectively describing one aspect of heritage expressed through folklore.

Texts: Martha C. Sims and Martine Stephens, *Living Folklore, Second Edition*
A short reading about the ethics of fieldwork will be posted on eClass

Concepts covered include, but are not be limited to:

Folk groups: types of groups, how they are formed, how they are viewed (esoteric and exoteric perspectives).

Tradition and its conservative and dynamic features; questions of authenticity connected to tradition and considered important by folk groups

Ritual and ritual types; the expression of tradition through ritual; the teaching function of ritual; ritual and belief.

Performance and Aesthetics: how performance differs from other behaviours; what makes performance effective; how performance adapts to community needs and values.
Aesthetics: what is considered good or beautiful and why.

Analytical approaches and techniques. Humanistic data is different from scientific data. How does one systematize humanistic data and present one's findings effectively?

Schedule: Topics are by week, along with appropriate readings

Most, but not all, Fridays will be discussion days. Students will discuss the lectures of the preceding week and their assigned readings.

Sept. 5: Introduction. What is folklore and what are the types of folklore? What are the traits of folklore? How have definitions of folklore changed?

Reading assignment: Sims and Stephens, chapter 1.

Week of Sept. 10: Folk groups; the concept of group, folk group types, self-definition and identity construction.

Reading assignment: Sims and Stephens, chapter 2.

Week of Sept. 17: Tradition; defining tradition. Dynamics of tradition, questions of authenticity.

Reading assignment: Sims and Stephens, chapter 3.

Week of Sept. 24: Ritual: ritual forms and ritual types; differences between calendar and life-cycle rituals; “occasional” rituals and the functions they serve

Reading assignment: Sims and Stephens, chapter 4.

Week of Oct. 1: Performance; types of performance, performance theory.

Reading assignment: Sims and Stephens, chapter 5.

Week of Oct. 8: The Monday of this week is Thanksgiving. Happy Thanksgiving and no class. While you are enjoying the holiday, please do look at it with scholarly eyes and see if you can identify ritual and other folk elements in the celebration. Think of the steps of a ritual. Think of foodways and expression of culture through food.

In class on Wednesday and Friday – we start preparing for fieldwork by discussing data collection approaches and techniques and the ethics of fieldwork. We also continue with the subject matter of the book.

Reading assignment: short chapter on Ethics and the Student Fieldworker posted on eClass; also read Sims and Stephens, chapter 7.

PLEASE NOTE THAT FIELDWORK (Ch. 7) WILL COME BEFORE THE CHAPTER ON APPROACHES TO INTERPRETING FOLKLORE.

Week of Oct. 15: Emergence: the interplay between the performer/creator of folklore and the consumer of folklore. Aesthetics and folk-based value judgements. Approaches to interpreting folklore.

Reading assignment: chapter 6 of Sims and Stephens

AGAIN – PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ORDER OF CHAPTERS 6 AND 7 IS REVERSED.

VERY IMPORTANT – FRIDAY OCT. 19 WILL BE YOUR MIDTERM DAY. There will be a review session on the preceding Wednesday, Oct. 17. The midterm will be electronic and will be done through eClass.

Week of Oct. 22: History of folklore scholarship and selecting a project topic. Data management. Selecting relevant data, describing data.

Project proposals due October 26

Week of Oct. 29: Submission and discussion of project proposals; formulation of questionnaires and/or observation plans.

Questionnaires/observation plans due Nov. 2

Week of Nov. 5: Project work. Setting up interviews, reviewing questionnaires and observation plans. Systematizing data, discarding irrelevant data, and analyzing data.

Nov. 12-16: Remembrance Day and Fall Break.

Week of Nov. 19 – student presentations. Oral presentations using a PPT – no Prezi's please. Unless something has changed, Prezi's do NOT upload to eClass.

Week of Nov. 26 – student presentations continue

Write-ups of research **due Dec. 7.** Please note that the University now requires that all course papers be submitted on the last day of class. The write-up should be a formal 5-10 page paper. Detailed instructions will be on eClass.

Grade Distribution and important due dates, plus explanatory notes:

- 1) **Short written exercises** based on Friday discussions – **10%**
Topics will include a) difference between folklore and popular culture, b) folk group types and examples of the lore of each type c) tradition and its dynamic and conservative features d) ritual types, definitions and examples e) performance types, definitions and examples
- 2) **Attendance and participation: 20%.** Attendance will be taken on a random basis. In other words, the dates on which attendance will be taken will not be announced. Participation: Humanities in general and folklore in particular requires negotiation of concepts and beliefs. **Participation means talking in discussion section** and sharing ideas. Attendance alone does not equal participation. Students are expected to attend each other's presentations (see below) and attendance at presentations will be part of the participation grade.
- 3) **Midterm – scheduled for October 19 – 20%**
The midterm will cover the same topics as the written exercises:
- 4) **Course project : 50%**, divided as follows:
 - Project proposal, due Oct. 26 – 10%
 - Questionnaire and/or observation plan, due Nov. 2– 10%
 - Project oral presentation (presentations scheduled Nov 19-30) – 10%) Please note that students are expected to attend each other's presentations and that this will constitute part of the participation grade
 - Project write-up, due Dec. 7 – 20%

For your convenience, the Fall / Winter Exam Planner for the 2018-2019 academic year can be

found at the following site: <https://www.ualberta.ca/registrar/examinations/exam-schedules/fall-2018-winter-2019-exam-planner>

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): there is no exam in this course

Please consult the following site:

[https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations_\(Exams\)](https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations_(Exams))

Student Responsibilities:

Academic Integrity:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

Territorial Statement:

“The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.” (*from the beginning of the Calendar*).

University of Alberta Sexual Violence Policy:

The Sexual Violence Policy was approved by GFC in June 2017. It plays a vital role in ensuring a safe and respectful learning and working environment.

As defined in the policy, **sexual violence** is any sexual act or act of a sexual nature, or act targeting sexuality, whether physical or psychological, committed without consent. **Sexual violence** is a complex and serious problem in society and on university campuses. Sexual violence can affect individuals of all gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations, as well as those from all ages, abilities, racial, cultural and economic backgrounds. Through this policy, the University of Alberta recognizes its responsibility to reduce sexual violence in the University community. The university aims to do so by fostering a culture of **consent** and support through education, training and policy. The University recognizes the possible effects of trauma on those who have experienced sexual violence and supports the efforts of individuals to seek support and recover.

To read the policy in more detail, please visit:

<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Policies/Sexual-Violence-Policy.pdf>

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan.

Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the Code of Student Behaviour.

In this course, participation is part of the course grade. Please see the section on grade distribution for information on how participation will be assessed.

Policy for Late Assignments: Students who consult in advance with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension. Otherwise, a 33%-per-

class-day penalty (one third of a grade, e.g. from B+ to B) will be assessed for each subsequent class-day of lateness.

Disclaimer:

Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

Student Resources:

The best all-purpose website for student services is: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

Accessibility Resources: (1 – 80 SUB)

The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information to register for services visit the [Accessibility Resources](#) webpage.

The Academic Success Centre: (1-80 SUB)

[The Academic Success Centre](#) offers a variety of workshops on effective study and exam strategies. There are in-person and online sessions available for a modest fee.

The Centre for Writers: (1-42 Assiniboia Hall)

The [Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

Health and Wellness Support: There are many health and community services available to current students. For more information visit the [Health and Wellness Support](#) webpage.

Office of the Student Ombuds:

The [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) offers confidential interviews, advice and support to students facing academic, discipline, interpersonal and financial difficulties.

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
Failure.	F	0.0	0-59

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