2015-2016   MLCS 399 B1 *Folklore and the Internet*
(Winter Term)

Instructor: Natalie Kononenko   Time: MWF 12-12:50
Office: Arts Bldg. 441-C   Place: BUS 3-06
Telephone: 780-492-6810   Fax: 780-492-9106   Office Hours: MWF 11-11:45
E-mail: nataliek@ualberta.ca   or by appointment
Personal Website: http://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/folkloreukraine/   Course Website: on eClass

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Course Prerequisite: none

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?
          Ⅹ Yes   ☐ No, not needed, no such projects approved.

Community Service Learning component
          ☐ Required   Ⅹ 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
           Ⅹ Other (please specify): web material produced by previous students uploaded to ukrainealive.ualberta.ca, indiaalive.ualberta.ca, and chinaalive.ualberta.ca
          ☐ NA

Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)
          ☐ Yes   Ⅹ No

Course Description and Objectives: Folklore is the artistic expression of regular people. And folklore is expression that knows no boundaries. Folklore is told orally as people exchange everything from jokes to ghost stories. But folklore is not restricted to oral transmission. In the recent past one of the fastest growing areas of folk expression has been the digital world. Everything from blog posts to fanfiction to photoshopped images uploaded to social media sites can be analyzed as folklore. The transmission of crafts is now often done on YouTube.

There are **two main objectives** of the course. One is to understand the rich resources of folklore and how they can be used to communicate information and aid in information retention. Folklore can be used in instruction. It engages the student and aids learning. Thus one course

objective is to understand the power of folklore as a communicative tool.

The other objective is to understand digital media. Presenting folklore online is not the same as presenting it orally or in written or filmic form. The course will examine how online presentation affects the delivery of folk material. Jokes presented online, for example, cannot use the communicative possibilities of voice modulation, but they do use visual resources such as picture humour.

Learning outcomes: by the end of the course students should be able to:
1) identify those items on the internet which are folklore, produced by users and not produced by commercial interests
2) create a small cultural unit of quality sufficient for posting on a professional digital site such as a ukrainealive.ualberta.ca, or indiaalive.ualberta.ca, or chinaalive.ualberta.ca.
3) test and assess the usability of newly developed educational materials that are in digital form
4) improve speaking and writing skills through oral presentations and written assignments

Texts: *Required*:
1) Trevor Blank, ed. *Folk Culture in the Digital Age* Utah State Press, 2012
2) *Journal of American Folklore*, Summer 2015 issue on Digital Network Hybridity

Students will also be required to read and present a chapter selected from one of the following:
Trevor Blank and Robert Glenn Howard, eds. *Tradition in the 21ˢᵗ Century*. Utah State
     University Press, 2013.
Bryan Alexander, *The New Digital Storytelling: Creating Narratives with New Media*.
     Praeger, 2011
Russell Frank, *Newslore: Contemporary Folklore on the Internet*. University Press of
     Mississippi, 2011.
Lynne S. McNeill, *Folklore Rules*. Utah State University Press, 2013.
Michael Kinsella, *Legend-Tripping Online and the Search for Ong's Hat*. University
     Press of Mississippi, 2011.
Trevor Blank, ed. *Folklore and the Internet*. Utah State University Press, 2009.

Most of the above are available as electronic resources through the library
Additional materials (both links and articles) will be provided on eClass.

Course Schedule:
The course will have 3 large units and four possible approaches to the course material.
The **units** are arranged by time and there is a January unit, a February unit, and a March unit, plus a concluding section at the end.
The **approaches** are grouped by option. **Option 1** is a community service learning option that will involve producing folklore-based material for Alberta grade three Social Studies and working with a teacher in the Alberta Public School system. Teacher volunteers are already in place.
Option 2 requires working on the further development of an educational game that goes along with the units for grade 3 Social Studies. The game for ukrainealive is quite far along and will need the development of "tasks." The game for chinaalive is at an earlier stage and will need a

storyline. Tasks may be an option. The game for indiaalive does not exist and work here will involve building the village, the avatars, and possibly work on the storyline. There is a possibility of using this option toward CSL credit.

Option 3 involves testing the usability of GWrit, the Game of Writing. Students will develop assessment templates and apply them, writing up reactions and formulating recommendations and modifications. There is a possibility of working to build a separate, more game-like parallel to Gwrit.

Option 4 is a traditional research project. The student will research an online phenomenon such as a game, or newslore connected to a particular event, or fandom, or craft videos or another topic of his or her choice and write a research paper based on the research.

1) Month of January: We all meet and work together. The instructor will present general background on folklore and how it has been understood by scholars in the past and currently. Students will be assigned research projects which will combine reading articles with research online. Sample topics will list jokes, newslore and photoshopped news stories, meme creation and dissemination, RPGs and story-building, the techniques of craft instruction, among others. Students will present their research as oral presentations. They will also write article or chapter synopses to be posted on eClass.

At the end of the month students will chose one of the following options:

1) The Community Service Learning option which involves producing materials for one of the Alive sites – by the end of the month students should select their world area and decide on the type of unit they will produce.

2) Game development option – by the end of the month students should select the game that they will work on and decide on the type of material they plan to contribute.

3) GWrit usability testing – students should be familiar with the nature of usability testing and they should have an idea of the ways that folklore theory may be used to engage students in the use of educational sites.

4) Studying folklore online. Students may choose to continue the study of folk expression on the internet. As noted at the beginning, the forms of expression are many and varied. The student who decides to do this option will choose a topic in consultation with the instructor.

2) Month of February: Students build their units or they collect their data.

Students in **options one and two** work on the units that they are building for their respective websites.

Students in **option three** work with their HuCo graduate student partners on developing usability measures.

Students in **option four** will collect their data and present to the instructor for evaluation and analysis.

Second half of February – before winter break.

Option 1 and 2 students meet with their teacher-partner to present and discuss the unit that they have built.

Option 3 initial testing stage complete

Option 4 first set of data collected. Presentation to the course instructor.

3) Month of March:

Option 1 students and option 2 students doing CSL take the material that they have prepared

to the classroom which their teacher-partner supervises. They present their material to the grade 3 students and get teacher feed back.
Remaining option 2 students work with the programmers in ARC on implementing their gaming units.
Option 3 students work with their HuCo partners of website modifications
Option 4 students complete their collection of data and begin systematizing for analysis

Last week of March and April all students make formal presentations of their work to the class.

Course paper due April 14
For students in options 1, 2, and 3 this will be a description of the work that was done plus an analysis of the project and its successes and problems, 5-10 pages
For students in option 4 – a formal course paper, 10-15 pages long.

Grade Distribution (see "Explanatory Notes"):
      Preparatory work (January projects) 30%:
             10% for the in class presentation of the assigned article
             10% for the written article synopsis (3-5 pages)
             10% for participation in classroom discussions
      February work – 30%
             Groups 1 and 2 – 10% for the unit built
                 10% for work with the teacher or work with ARC staff
                 10% for participation in classroom discussions
             Group 3 –10% for the usability template
                 10% for work with HuCo graduate students
                 10% for participation in discussions
             Group 4 – 10% for research plan
                 10% for the data collected
                 10% for participation in classroom discussions
      March work and final project – 40%
             Groups 1 and 2 – 10% for presentation with teacher/partner
                 10% for oral presentation to class
                 20% for final paper
             Group 3 – 10% for work with the HuCo team
                 10% for oral presentation to the class community,
                 20% for final paper
             Group 4 – 10% for presentation to class and 30% for final paper

There are no exams in this class, but the due date of the final paper is determined by the exam schedule. See:
      http://www.registrarsoffice.ualberta.ca/en/Examinations/Fall-2015-Winter-2016-Exam-Planner.aspx

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): not applicable

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:
Please see the schedule under Grade Distribution

Required Notes:
"Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University calendar."

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 http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx) and avoid any behaviour which 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."

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 safe and free of discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels this policy has been or 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 directs 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 student ombudservice (http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/).
Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at
https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110 .

Academic Honesty:
All students should consult the information provided by the Office of Judicial Affairs regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook and Information for Students). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

Students involved in **language** courses and **translation** courses should be aware that on-line "translation engines" produce very dubious and unreliable "translations."
Students in languages courses should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native

or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of "cheating" that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

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.](#)

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording 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. Recorded material 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 23.3(1) and 23.5.6 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.

In this course teamwork is crucial. This is a very hands-on course where students produce materials that others depend on. Students must do their part to contribute to their team. Discussions of the team's work are as important as the actual building of the units. In fact, the building of units cannot take place with prior discussion. When discussions take place in the classroom, the instructor will note who is present and who participates. For work that takes place outside the classroom, the teammates will be given an anonymous assessment sheet where they will score the participation of all the unit members.

Policy for Late Assignments:

When students work in teams, everyone must contribute in a timely fashion. Adjustments can be made if the instructor and the teammates are notified at least 24 hours in advance of the time when work is due. Otherwise, students will have their grade lowered by 1/3 for every day that an assignment is late. In other words, what would have been A work will be graded as A- if it is one day late, B+ if it is 2 days late, and so forth.

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Specialized Support &

Disability Services, contact their office immediately (2-800 SUB; Email sasrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB www.ssds.ualberta.ca).

Grading:

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below (**"MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale"**). The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

"MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale"

Letter	%	Pts	Descriptor
A+	95-100%	4.0	**Excellent**: Superior performance showing understanding and knowledge of subject matter far exceeding expectations.
A	90-94%	4.0	**Excellent**: Superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
A-	86-89%	3.7	**Excellent**: Clearly above average performance with complete knowledge subject matter.
B+	82-85%	3.3	**Good**
B	75-81%	3.0	**Good**: average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.
B-	70-74%	2.7	**Good**
C+	66-69%	2.3	**Satisfactory:** Basic understanding of the subject matter
C	61-65%	2.0	**Satisfactory**
C-	58-60%	1.7	**Satisfactory**
D+	55-57%	1.3	**Poor:** Marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsec courses in the subject matter.
D	50-54%	1.0	**Minimal Pass**: Marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation f subsequent courses in the subject matter.
F	0-49%	0.0	**Failure**: Unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requiremen