

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**  
<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

**2017-2018 MLCS 399 B2 – Folklore and the Internet**

Winter Term

Instructor: Natalie Kononenko  
Office: Arts Bldg. 441-C  
Telephone: 780-492-6810  
E-mail: nataliek@ualberta.ca  
Personal Website: <http://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/folkloreukraine/>

Time: MWF 14-14:50  
Place: HC 2-21  
Office Hours: MWF 11-11:45  
or by appointment  
Course Website: on eClass

---

**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 web material produced by previous students uploaded to [ukrainealive.ualberta.ca](http://ukrainealive.ualberta.ca), [indiaalive.ualberta.ca](http://indiaalive.ualberta.ca), and [chinaalive.ualberta.ca](http://chinaalive.ualberta.ca)

NA

**Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)**

Yes       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 fan fiction 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 digital folklore and how they can be used to communicate contemporary issues and concerns.

Presenting folklore online is not the same as expressing it orally. The course will examine how online presentation affects the delivery of folk material. Online jokes, for example, cannot use the communicative possibilities of voice modulation, but they do use visual resources such as picture humour. Having understood digital folk expression, students will identify folklore online and analyze it to extract the thoughts and feelings that are being communicated.

The other objective is to develop the capacity to produce formal presentation of folklore in digital form. This course, like others, teaches the skills of paper-writing and oral presentation. Its unique feature is that it also teaches the humanistic aspects of creating digital materials. Students will work on producing text that works well online and on combining text with visuals and/or sound. The options are to contribute a small unit to one of the existing folklore websites aimed at elementary education ([ukrainealive.ualberta.ca](http://ukrainealive.ualberta.ca), [indiaalive.ualberta.ca](http://indiaalive.ualberta.ca), [chinaalive.ualberta.ca](http://chinaalive.ualberta.ca), or [perualive.ualberta.ca](http://perualive.ualberta.ca)) or to critique and suggest modifications to an existing website that presents folklore online.

*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) analyze online folklore to determine its meaning and function
- 3) create a small folklore unit of quality sufficient for posting on a professional digital site such as a [ukrainealive.ualberta.ca](http://ukrainealive.ualberta.ca), or [indiaalive.ualberta.ca](http://indiaalive.ualberta.ca), or [chinaalive.ualberta.ca](http://chinaalive.ualberta.ca).
- 4) test and assess the communicative effectiveness of existing folklore websites
- 5) improve speaking and writing skills through oral presentations and written assignments

**Texts: Required:**

- 1) Lynne S. McNeill, *Folklore Rules*. Utah State University Press, 2013.
- 2) Selected chapters from: Trevor Blank, ed. *Folk Culture in the Digital Age* Utah State Press, 2012
- 3) Selected articles from: *Journal of American Folklore*, Summer 2015 issue on Digital Network Hybridity

**Resource texts:**

Trevor Blank and Robert Glenn Howard, eds. *Tradition in the 21<sup>st</sup> 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. .

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.

**The course will have 3 units.**

The **units** are arranged by time and there is a January unit, a February unit, and a March unit,

plus a concluding section.

**Unit 1)** Readings and research. This month will be devoted to studying folk expression online. The readings will cover definitions of folklore and analyses of internet folklore. Lectures by the instructor will be combined with discussion of assigned readings. Internet research will be a big component of our work. For every traditional type or genre of folklore, students will be asked to find an online equivalent.

**Unit 2)** Study of the digital presentation of folklore. We will examine existing professional websites which convey folklore information. Students will write short critiques of existing sites. They will practice writing for online delivery of information, combining text with visuals and/or sound.

Those students who chose to work on one of the Alive series of sites may add the option of Community Service-Learning (CSL) if they work with an elementary school teacher or a community organization. These students will produce a small unit for one of the Alive websites and present it in the elementary classroom or to their community organization. CSL requires 20 hours of volunteer work in addition to normal course work.

**Unit 3)** Work on projects. Weekly reports on work accomplished. Students will choose one of two project types.

Type one will be collecting and analyzing folklore material posted on the internet

Type two will be constructing a small unit for posting to one of the Alive series sites. A small unit for a CSL partner is also an option.

**Last week and a half of class:** all students make formal presentations of their work

### **Course paper due April 20**

The paper for students selecting project type one should be 7-10 pages in length.

The paper for students selecting project type two should be 5-7 pages in length.

**Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”): the due date of the final paper is determined by the exam schedule. See:**

<https://www.registraroffice.ualberta.ca/en/Examinations/Fall-2017-Winter-2018-Exam-Planner.aspx>

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

### **Explanatory Notes on Assignments:**

- 1) Weekly presentation of assigned research. Presentation will be in both oral and written form. 5 units, 5 points each; total of 25%.
- 2) Two midterms based on readings and online research; 15 points each; total of 30%  
Midterm 1 – January 29  
Midterm 2 – February 26
- 3) Participation in discussions and in online forums – 10%
- 4) Project proposal – due in the middle of March – 5%
- 5) Oral presentation of project – last week and one half of class – 10%

- 6) Final paper: a write-up of the project (project type one 7-10 pages, project type two 5-7 pages) – due April 20 – 20%

**Required Notes:** “Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) 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 [www.governance.ualberta.ca](http://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.”

***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](#).

***Academic Honesty:***

**All students** should consult the information provided by the [Student Conduct & Accountability Office](#) 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, 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.

**In this course** attendance will be taken at random. In other words, dates when attendance will be taken will not be announced or scheduled in advance. Attendance is not the same as participation. Participation means contributing to the class discussion and helping classmates. This course includes a participation grade which factors in contribution to class discussions.

***Policy for Late Assignments:*** Punctuality is a must. Much of the work in this class will be done in teams and, 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 [Student Accessibility Services](#), contact their office immediately (1-800 SUB; Email [sasrec@ualberta.ca](mailto:sasrec@ualberta.ca); Email; phone 780-492-3381).

***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	%
<b>Excellent.</b> 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.	<b>A+</b>	4.0	<b>97-100</b>
	<b>A</b>	4.0	<b>93-96</b>
	<b>A-</b>	3.7	<b>90-92</b>
<b>Good.</b> 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>B+</b>	3.3	<b>87-89</b>
	<b>B</b>	3.0	<b>83-86</b>
	<b>B-</b>	2.7	<b>80-82</b>
<b>Satisfactory.</b> 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.	<b>C+</b>	2.3	<b>77-79</b>
	<b>C</b>	2.0	<b>73-76</b>
	<b>C-</b>	1.7	<b>70-72</b>
<b>Poor/Minimal Pass.</b> 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.	<b>D+</b>	1.3	<b>65-69</b>
	<b>D</b>	1.0	<b>60-64</b>
<b>Failure.</b>	<b>F</b>	0.0	<b>0-59</b>