

Dr. David G. Engle
Peters Bldg. 452
office: 278-2708
e-mail: david_engle@csufresno.edu
www.csufresno.edu/mc11/faculty_staff/engle.html

California State University, Fresno
Department of Modern and Classical
Languages and Literatures
Peters Building 393, M/S PB96
Sec'y: 278-2386
FAX: 278-7878

Fall, 2011

Folklore in Contemporary Life

Hum 118 (3 units) schedule no. Wed 19:00-21:50 in M 160
Counts in GE Integrative, Area IC 72456
CSUF folklore website: <http://www.csufresno.edu/folklore>

Prerequisites:

Junior or Senior standing; GE Foundation and Breadth Area C; counts towards fulfilling GE Integration IC requirements (Formerly INTD 118).

Textbooks:

Elliott Oring, ed. Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1986. xiv, 258 p.
David Engle. Central California Folklore Archives: Collection Guide. Photocopied pamphlet in Kennel Bookstore. or at: <http://www.csufresno.edu/folklore/archives>

Grading:

Class participation:	10%
discussion, preparation, attendance, assignments, etc.	
Collection:	30%
Midterm 1:	10%
Midterm 2:	20%
Final examination:	30%

Office Hours:

Mon Wed Fri 10 -12
Mon: 1 - 2
and by appointment

Grading Scale:

A	90-100;	B	80-89;	C	70-79
D	60/69;	F	55;	no show or work	40

Final Examination:

Wednesday, Dec. 14
from 20:00-22:00
in our regular classroom

Assignments:

Reading assignments are to be finished before the class session in which they will be discussed. Informed participation in class discussions is essential. The normal class will consist of lecture and discussion. While the reading assignments are organized by folklore genre, each will have its own implications for the history and theory of folkloristics; thus each lecture and reading will treat both the materials, forms and genres of folklore as well as the theories of folkloristics as a discipline. Given the intense interdisciplinary nature of such a broad, multifaceted field, this is the method of choice. Every student will be expected to submit 2 multiple choice questions for that chapter/lecture each week.*

Collection Project: In addition to the midterms and a final, each student is to participate in a group collection project. Each group is to consist of 4-5 students, who will produce a collection of about 12-15 items total. The collection can be checked over for corrections and amendments without penalty (around midterm, cf. class schedule); the corrected and revised collection when submitted (towards the end of the semester, cf. class schedule) will serve as the semester project. The instructor will retain and archive the items (or a copy thereof). A helpful Guide to Collection Projects with many examples and grading policies is available in the course packet and at www.csufresno.edu/folklore/archives

The **two (2) midterms and final** will consist mainly of objective questions (e.g. multiple choice, identify, define, match, etc.). You will need **Scantron forms 882-E or 882-E-LOVAS**.

University-level **literacy** is expected on all written work. **Late** assignments will be docked one grade per week; after two weeks they cannot be made up; makeup exams only with written doctor's excuse.

Course Description:

An interdisciplinary study of the role of folklore in contemporary life, its power to communicate critical issues through expressive culture, e.g., jokes, legends, folksongs, graphic arts, and festival; special focus on the intellectual currents influencing the study of folklore.

“The great contribution of folklore study... is that it crosses most disciplinary lines, tying all expressive forms together, and especially that it examines the artistic and creative efforts of all human beings, not just the elite....”
--William A. Wilson (“Folklore and the Humanities”)

The study of folklore—folkloristics---—concerns itself with the expressive culture of a given group—women, children, adolescents, men, occupational, ethnic or regional groups, and even entire nations. By expressive culture we refer to any form of verbal art, usually (though not always) orally transmitted—for example, jokes, legends, speech play, narrative, myths, proverbs, riddles and other oral genres. Expressive culture also includes material folk arts such as weaving, quilting, costume, and architecture, and customary lore such as rituals, celebrations, proxemics, customs, and gestures. Converging with a closely related subdiscipline—ethnomusicology—folkloristics investigates yet another important area of expressive culture—folk song and music. In this course we examine both the development of modern folkloristics and the expressive culture that it studies. We shall direct particular attention to some of the intellectual currents, humanistic and interdisciplinary in nature, that influence the study of folklore in contemporary life—for example, developments in psychoanalysis, structuralism, feminism, the ethnography of communication and theories about ethnicity. Further, the works selected for study are noteworthy for the insights they yield toward understanding the symbolic, communicative aspects of folklore: its unique power to summarize key social issues within the compact bundles that make up expressive culture, whether it be a cycle of jokes about blondes, a corpus of corridos [ballads] about interethnic conflict, the blues, or a collection of UFO abduction legends. Folklore, then, is studied in this course not as a collection of “antiquities” or survivals from an earlier stage of human evolution, but as a vital artistic resource for communicating the essential values, concerns and anxieties of modern societies.

Course Goals:

University Policy for General Education Courses (like this one) states:

General Goal for Area C2: Humanities (Literature, Philosophy, Foreign Languages)

Through the study of the humanities [in this case folklore], to understand, appreciate, and analyze the meaning of our civilization, its cultural background, and the nature and role of language. To study the humanities from a variety of historical perspectives and cultures by analyzing individual works. (CSUF GE policy)

Student Learning Outcomes for Area C2: Humanities (Literature, Philosophy, Foreign Languages) — According to CSUF GE policy, students completing courses in Area C2 will be able to:

1. Use understanding of the humanities (Literature, Philosophy, Foreign Language), to explain, appreciate, and analyze the meaning of our civilization, its cultural background, and the nature and role of language.
2. Study the humanities (Literature, Philosophy, Foreign Language) from a variety of historical perspectives and cultures by analyzing individual works.
3. Accomplish at least one of the following:
 - Relate the development of contemporary civilization to the historical antecedents of the humanities (Literature, Philosophy, Foreign Language), or
 - Reflect critically and systematically on questions concerning beliefs, values and the nature of existence; or
 - Apply literary criticism to various types and styles of literature from a variety of historical perspectives and cultures
4. Students will respond subjectively as well as objectively to experience and will develop a sense of the integrity of emotional and intellectual response.
5. Students will cultivate intellect, imagination, sensibility, and sensitivity.

General Education, Area IC Goal: Arts (Art, Dance, Music, Theatre) and Humanities (Literature, Philosophy, Foreign Languages)

The Integration component of General Education Area IC provides instruction at the upper-division level that integrates material from the lower-division Breadth Area C.

Student Learning Outcomes for GE, Area IC: Arts and Humanities

—According to CSUF GE policy, students completing courses in Area IC will be able to:

1. Demonstrate intellect, imagination, sensibility and sensitivity
2. Respond subjectively as well as objectively to experience
3. Develop a sense of the integrity of emotional and intellectual response

4. Cultivate and refine their affective as well as cognitive and physical faculties
5. Become familiar with great works of the human imagination
6. Participate in individual aesthetic, creative experience
7. Intellectually examine the subjective response, thereby increasing awareness and appreciation in the traditional humanistic disciplines such as art, dance, drama, literature and music
8. Explain the interrelationship between the creative arts, the humanities and self.

This course has the following as its more specific goals:

1. to familiarize the student with the field of folkloristics by examining the expressive culture of concern to folklorists, i.e., verbal art forms, customary genres, folksong and music, and material art forms;
2. to instill in the student an appreciation for the dynamic capacity of expressive culture to symbolically express the most fundamental beliefs, values and sense of aesthetics of contemporary society;
3. to instill in the student an appreciation for the theory and practice of folkloristic documentation and collection, and enable the student to recognize the limitations, opportunities and development of documentation for the discipline;
4. to enable the student to recognize the various intellectual currents that have influenced folkloristic theory and thereby appreciate the contribution each has made toward understanding the significance of folklore in contemporary life;
5. to study folklore as an expressive vehicle that enables us to apprehend and appreciate diverse cultures, ethnicities, and social strata.
6. to use the study of folklore as a means of enabling the student to think critically about social and cultural issues and thereby understand the complex ways in which people use expressive culture to impose meaning upon experience;
7. to instill in the student an appreciation for the aesthetic dimensions of folklore as artistic communication and cultural performance—its unique shapes, literary and musical devices, and rhetorical qualities;

So that upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to undertake the following, with respect to the course goals:

1. Identify major folklore genres: legend, myth, proverb, joke, riddle, folksong and music, folktale, and festival;
2. Identify the linguistic and rhetorical devices employed by the various genres above to create their special aesthetic and sociocultural effects;
3. Identify major theories utilized by folklorists, e.g., functional, structural, Marxist, feminist, ethnic;
4. Trace the connection between the various folkloric genres, their rhetorical devices and the sociocultural contexts in which these genres are embedded (e.g., the “dumb-blond” joke-riddle and its contemporaneity with the women’s movement) and, thereby,
5. To draw specific conclusions about the role of folklore in the construction of social reality;
6. Describe associations between folklore and the expression of cultural diversity and/or conflict, as in, e.g., African American folk blues, the Mexican *corrido*, the “dumb-blond” and “elephant” jokes.

Fine Print:

Note: If you have **special needs** as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and need course materials in alternative formats, notify me immediately. I will be pleased to make reasonable efforts to accommodate special needs.

Please refer to University policies on conduct, especially cheating, plagiarism, and behavior in the current Catalogue and the Schedule of Classes [e.g., "Legal Notices"] and recall the University Honor Code: "Members of the CSU Fresno academic community adhere to principles of academic integrity and mutual respect while engaged in university work and related activities."

Please do not use electronic devices in the class without my permission, and certainly no telephones.

Finally, as Rabby Burns has said, "the best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a-gley" (go oft awry), so I reserve the right to change the **syllabus** according to the demands and exigencies of the semester.

Assignment Recap:

- #1 for week two: pick a day (for instance a Friday or Saturday or Sunday) and write down everything that you are involved in that is folklore. (one time only).
- * Ongoing: Every student will be expected to submit 2 multiple choice questions for that chapter or lecture each week. There should be 5 non-trivial choices for each question, and the correct answer should be indicated. True/False do not count.
- * Ongoing: do the reading in advance of the class.

Note Test Days

Note Collection Due Dates

Class Schedule

Week: Theme and readings:

other Assignments:

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|----|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | The Folk and the Lore. Introduction. | |
| 2 | “Popular Antiquities” Becomes Modern “Folkloristics:” from collection to analysis
Read: Oring Chapter 1 | #1 and * |
| 3 | Documenting Folklore. (we will be forming work groups)
Read: Oring Chapter 10 | * & <u>Know the Collection Guide</u> |
| 4 | Material Culture
Read: Oring Chapter 9 | * |
| 5 | Riddles and Proverbs; folk speech and the folk speaks
Read: Oring Chapter 8 | * |
| 6 | FIRST MIDTERM | * |
| 7 | Narratives: Traditional Genres (fairy tales, legends) & Modern Genres (anecdotes, oral history, jokes memorates)
Read: Oring Chapter 6 | * |
| 8 | The Ballads: Story-Songs
Read: Oring Chapter 7 | * |
| 9 | Folksong, Music, and Dance: performance
Read: Oring Chapter 7
Evo Bluestein , celebrated folk musician | * & Evo Bluestein Oct. 19th |
| 10 | Children’s Folklore
Read: Oring Chapter 5 | * |
| 11 | Occupational Folklore
Read: Oring Chapter 4 | * & collections to vet |
| 12 | Religious Folklore, Myths and Rituals
Read: Oring Chapter 3 | * |
| 13 | SECOND MIDTERM | * |
| 14 | THANKSGIVING | No class |
| 15 | Ethnic Folklore
Read: Oring Chapter 2 | *, COLLECTIONS DUE: 2011-11-30 |
| 16 | Folkloristics, applied folkloristics, applied folklore performing folklor(istics), fakelore
Review: Much Lore and Many Folks | * |