

## **ANTHRO 3W03**

**Fall 2017**

### **STORYTELLING, FABLE AND SONG: THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF ORAL TRADITIONS**

**RM. BSB B138**

**Tuesdays 8:30-11:20**

**Instructor:** Dorian Jurić

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**Office:** CNH 502

**Office Hours:** Tues. 12:00-13:00

(or by appointment)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course offers a broad introduction and critical overview of anthropological and folkloric approaches to narrative oral traditions among a wide range of cultures and groups. Humans have been called ‘The Storytelling Animal’ and indeed, fabulous narratives, legends, myths, jokes and other forms of oral lore have excited the human imagination; passed down important information, traditions and beliefs; and brought entertainment, structure and meaning to our lives throughout our species’ history. Whether in literate or non-literate societies, oral traditions represent a large stake in how tradition, history and culture are disseminated. In this course students will learn to identify types of oral narratives and explore critical methods for their analysis as well as how to think critically about their forms, functions and meanings in a broader cultural context. Students will gain a practical and competent understanding of this material by conducting their own oral tradition collection research project and analyzing it critically. No prior experience with folklore research required. This course may also be of interest to students in Indigenous Studies, Classics and literature who may enlist with special permission from the instructor.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of the course students will be able to identify, explain and apply basic concepts in folklore and anthropological scholarship regarding oral traditions, as well as to identify, explain and analyze diverse oral traditional materials in relation to their historical and cultural contexts. Students will demonstrate an introductory competence and understanding of conducting research on folklore topics as well as an ability to integrate research findings into written research. Because the research project involves human interlocutors this course will also provide students a basic understanding of research ethics and fieldwork practices.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

Reading assignments are to be completed before the date scheduled for class discussion. All students are required to complete a mid-term and a final examination as well as a fieldwork project which will be discussed further in class. Additional requirements include attendance and participation in class discussion. There are no lecture slides for this course and none will be posted online, this means that regular attendance and interaction in class are critical for a competent engagement with the reading coursework and examinations.

## CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Students *must* observe classroom etiquette. You are requested **not** to chat (verbally or electronically), **not** to email, text, twitter or use other social networking sites, and **not** to eat during class although beverages are permitted. Students are requested **not** to bring cell phones, pagers, audio recorders or any other intrusive electronic gadgetry into the classroom. If you have special needs for such items, please discuss them with me.

- ✓ Please **turn off** all cell phones, PDAs and other electronic gadgets while in the classroom.
- ✓ Audio recording lectures **must** be cleared with me.
- ✓ Do not miss class; if you are a bit late, just come in quietly.
- ✓ If you have to leave early, please advise me beforehand and leave quietly.

In class lectures and discussion sections **LAPTOPS are strongly discouraged**. This course will be a forum in re-learning how to communicate in person, to read, write and think in more than 140 characters at a time, while engaging with real (not virtual) human beings, and without electronic gadgets to distract you. Research has shown that the use of a laptop actually impairs your ability to take notes, to concentrate, to participate, and ultimately, to be successful in coursework. People who access laptops in class generally achieve one full grade lower than those who listen, engage in the lectures and discussions, and take notes sparingly. If you need or strongly prefer a laptop for taking notes or accessing readings in class for any reason, please come talk with me, and I am happy to make that work. I'll just ask you to commit to using the laptop only for class-related work. Students using laptops for other purposes will be asked to turn their laptops off for the remainder of the course.

## COURSEWORK

### **Outline Your Research Plan: 5%**

Students will be required to submit a 1 or 2 paragraph-long outline of their intended object of collection. This plan will be due AT THE LATEST by Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> and must be approved by the professor in order for the student to proceed with their oral narrative collection.

### **Collect an Oral Narrative: 5%**

Students will be required to conduct a field recording (with either an audio or video recording device) of a performance of an oral narrative (a joke, tale, memorate, legend, song, riddle or other) to be submitted by Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Transcribe Your Narrative: 20%**

Students will be required to make a competent transcription and/or translation of their field recording to be submitted by Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Analyze Your Narrative: 35%**

Students will be required to write an 8-12 page paper (appx. 2,000-3,000 words, double-spaced) analyzing their field recording using concepts and terminology from the course. This project is due on Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Mid-Term Exam: 15%**

There will be a small mid-term exam on Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> to test students' comprehension of the readings and lectures. The exam will take the form of short paragraph responses.

**Final Test: 20%**

There will be a cumulative final test which will be made up of short essay questions and possibly some multiple choice. This will be held sometime between Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> as decided by the registrar.

\*\*\* **IMPORTANT** \*\*\* Students will be responsible for submitting both a digital copy and a paper copy of their assignments. Digital copies will be submitted through Avenue to Learn while PAPER COPIES will be handed into the instructor at the end of class on the day that the assignment is due. All LATE SUBMISSIONS will be penalized 5% per day late.

## **COURSE TEXTS/READINGS**

The readings for this class will be comprised of book chapters and academic articles. Most sources will be uploaded to Avenue to Learn, all others will be included in a course packet. Students are responsible for coming to class each week having read the course materials in advance and ready to engage in class discussion.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

September 5: **INTRODUCTORY LECTURE FOR COURSE** (no reading required)

September 12: **COLLECTING AND INTERPRETING ORAL TRADITIONS**

Reading: Richard Dorson – Current Folklore Theories  
William A. Wilson – Documenting Folklore pgs. 82-96

September 19: **EPIC SINGING, BARDIC TECHNIQUE AND THE (IL)LITERACY PARADIGM**

Reading: Albert Bates Lord – The Singer of Tales pgs. 13-29  
Ruth Finnegan – What is Oral Literature Anyway?

September 26: **ORAL FORMULAIC THEORY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER RESEARCH**

Reading: David Bynum – Preface to Dæmon in the Wood pgs. 3-31  
**Oral Narrative Research Plan Due**

October 3: **ORAL LIFE NARRATIVES: TRADITIONS AND INNOVATION IN DAILY DISCOURSE**

Reading: Cornelia Cody – 'Only in New York'...  
Torunn Selberg – Faith Healing and Miracles...  
**Oral Narrative Recording Due**

## **MIDTERM RECESS**

October 9-15

October 17: **O. L. N.: ORAL GENRES IN SPEECH ACTS AND INFORMANTS AS COLLABORATORS**

Reading: Julie Cruikshank – Confronting Cultural Erasure  
**Transcription of Oral Narrative Due**

October 24: **FOLK AND FAIRY TALES: THEIR ROLE AND ANALYSIS**

**Mid-Term Exam**

Reading: Hermann Rebel – When Women Held the Dragon’s Tongue Chpt. 8 pgs. 303-332  
Steven Swan Jones – On Analyzing Fairy Tales

October 31: **FOLK AND FAIRY TALES: POST-MARXIST AND CONFLICTING THEORIES**

Reading: Hermann Rebel – When Women... Chpt. 8. II (cont.) pgs. 332-371

November 7: **LEGENDS, MEMORATES AND FABULATES**

Reading: Luka Šešo – What is ‘Real’ in Believing in Supernatural Beings  
Steve Siporin – A Contemporary Legend from Italy

November 14: **JOKES, RIDDLES AND OTHER SMALLER LORE**

Reading: Robert Klymasz – The Ethnic Joke in Canada...  
Chandra Mukerji – Bullshitting: Road Lore among Hitchhikers  
David Evans – Riddling and the Structure of Content

**Analysis Paper Due**

November 21: **MYTH: STRUCTURALISM AND OTHER RESPONSES**

Reading: Claude Lévi-Strauss – The Structural Study of Myth  
Frog – Mythology in Cultural Performance...

November 28: **SONG AND BALLAD: WHENCE VERNACULAR MATERIAL AND FROM WHOM?**

Reading: John Ashton – The Badger Drive  
David Evans – Techniques of Blues Composition

December 5: **SONG AND BALLAD: IMMIGRATION AND SHIFTING TRADITIONS**

Reading: Natalie Kononenko – Ukrainian Ballads in Canada  
Christine A. Cartwright – Johnny Faa and Black Jack Davy

## READING LIST

### Selected Course Pack Readings From

Bynum, David. 1978. *The Daemon in the Wood: A Study of Oral Narrative Patterns*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cruikshank, Julie. 1998. Confronting Cultural Erasure: Images of Society in Klondike Gold Rush Narratives. In *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory*. Pp. 71-97. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Finnegan, Ruth. 1976. What is Oral Literature Anyway? Comments in the Light of Some African and Other Comparative Material. In *Oral Literature and the Formula*. Benjamin A. Stolz and Richard S. Shannon, eds. Pp. 127-166. Ann Arbor: Center for the Coordination of Ancient and Modern Studies at the University of Michigan.

Lord, Albert B. 2000. *The Singer of Tales*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Stephen Mitchell and Gregory Nagy, eds. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.

### Articles available on Avenue to Learn

Ashton, John. 1994. "The Badger Drive": Song, Historicity and Occupational Stereotyping. *Western Folklore* 53(3):211-228.

Cartwright, Christine A. 1980. Johnny Faa and Black Jack Davy: Cultural Values and Change in Scots and American Balladry. *The Journal of American Folklore* 93(370):397-416.

Cornelia, Cody. 2005. "Only in New York": The New York City Personal Experience Narrative. *Journal of Folklore Research* 42(2):217-244.

Dorson, Richard M. 1963. Current Folklore Theories. *Current Anthropology* 4(1): 93-112.

Evans, David. 1974. Techniques of Blues Composition among Black Folksingers. *The Journal of American Folklore* 87(345):240-249.

Evans, David. 1976. Riddling and the Structure of Context. *The Journal of American Folklore* 89(352):166-188.

Frog. 2015. Mythology in Cultural Practice: A Methodological Framework for Historical Analysis. *Between Text and Practice: Mythology, Religion and Research. Special Issues of RMN Newsletter* 10. Frog and Karina Lukin, eds. Pp. 33-57. Helsinki: Folklore Studies and Department of Philosophy, History, Culture and Art Studies.

Klymasz, Robert. 1970. The Ethnic Joke in Canada Today. *Keystone Folklore Quarterly* 15(4):167-173.

Kononenko, Natalie. 2008. Ukrainian Ballads in Canada: Adjusting to New Life in a New Land. *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 50(1/2):17-36.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. The Structural Study of Myth. *The Journal of American Folklore* 68(270):428-444.

Mukerji, Chandra. 1978. Bullshitting: Road Lore among Hitchhikers. *Social Problems* 25(3):241-252.

Rebel, Hermann. 2007. *When Women Held the Dragon's Tongue and Other Essays in Historical Anthropology*. Electronic document. [http://www.marefa.org/images/5/5b/Rebel\\_when\\_women.pdf](http://www.marefa.org/images/5/5b/Rebel_when_women.pdf)

Selberg, Torunn. 1995. Faith Healing and Miracles: Narratives about Folk Medicine. *Journal of Folklore Research* 32(1):35-47.

Siporin, Steve. 2008. A Contemporary Legend from Italy. *Journal of Folklore Research* 45(2):171-192.

Swann Jones, Steven. 1987. On Analyzing Fairy Tales: "Little Red Riding Hood" Revisited. *Western Folklore* 46(2):97-106.

Šešo, Luka. 2011. What is "Real" in Believing in Supernatural Beings? The Informant's Cut. *Studia Mythologica Slavica* 14:113-124.

Wilson, William A. 2006. Documenting Folklore. In *The Marrow of Human Experience: Essays on Folklore*. Jill Terry Rudy, ed. Pp. 81-106. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.

**The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.**

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3, <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

In this course we will be using a software package designed to reveal plagiarism. Students will be required to submit their work electronically and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

## LATE POLICY

Extensions for course assignments will only be granted under conditions of medical, family, or other extraordinary circumstances. All other late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 10% per day. Late assignments will not be accepted after 4 days beyond the original deadline without appropriate documentation from the Office of the Associate Dean of Social Sciences. It is recommended that students retain a copy of all assignment materials that they submit.

GRADE RE-WEIGHTING POLICY - Grades will **\*not\*** be reweighted, i.e. if an exam is missed, then a make-up exam has to be taken, the grade will not be added to the next requirement.

## MCMASTER STUDENT ABSENCE FORM (MSAF) POLICY

- The MSAF should be used for medical and non-medical (personal) situations.
- Approval of the MSAF is automatic (i.e. no documentation required)
- Rules governing the MSAF are as follows:
- The timeframe within which the MSAF is valid has been reduced from 5 days to 3 days.
- The upper limit for when an MSAF can be submitted has been reduced from 'less than 30%' to 'less than 25%' of the course weight.
- The 'one MSAF per term' limit is retained.
- As per the policy, an automated email will be sent to the course instructor, who will determine the appropriate relief. Students must immediately follow up with their instructors. Failure to do so may negate their relief.
- Policy: The MSAF policy can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar under General Academic Regulations > Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work or here:
- [http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests\\_for\\_Relief\\_for\\_Missed\\_Academic\\_Term\\_Work](http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests_for_Relief_for_Missed_Academic_Term_Work)

## FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Email Forwarding in MUGSI: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>

\*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link

(Approved at the Faculty of Social Sciences meeting on Tues. May 25, 2010)

Most questions can and should be asked in class/discussion section or in person outside of class/discussion section. However, if you need to email the instructor or TA, do so with very brief questions (a couple of sentences) and in a form that can be answered briefly (ideally "yes" or "no"). We cannot respond to lengthy questions in writing but are happy to discuss them in office hours. Please do not expect an immediate answer. We will try and answer emails within two days (three if it is over a weekend).

When sending the instructor an email put **ANTH 3W03** in the subject line of your email. Please sign it with your full name and student number. A final note on communication etiquette: when writing the instructor an email, please conform it to the standard greeting in letter-writing practices, i.e. "Dear Prof. Jurić."

## SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

All written work (essays) will be submitted in electronic copy through the Dropbox function on the course's ATL website; hard copies may also be required. Ungraded work will **not be accepted** or date stamped by the administrative staff in the Department of Anthropology. All written work (essays) are subject to evaluation for originality. This course uses an evaluation service provided by Turnitin.com, which **students may opt out** of; in this case, Grammarly.com will be used. If you would like to opt out of evaluation by Turnitin.com, please let the instructor know before October 1.

## ACCESSIBILITY

McMaster University has an office of Student Accessibility Services (<http://sas.mcmaster.ca/>). Students who require accommodation for documented issues should contact SAS as early in the term as possible. McMaster also recently launched AccessMAC, part of the Office of Human Rights and Equity Services to help advance the University's goal of building an inclusive community with a shared purpose. More information can be found at <http://www.hres.mcmaster.ca/>.

If you require this information in an alternate/accessible format, please contact Marcia Furtado at 905-525-9140 extension 24423 or email [furtam1@mcmaster.ca](mailto:furtam1@mcmaster.ca)