

Introduction to Folklore: The Canadian Context

CNST 337

(Fall 2019)

Dr. Kevin Anderson



Class Location and Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-10:45, SA 147

Prerequisites: None

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Office Hours: By appointment

Office Location: SS615

Course Description:

This course will introduce you to the major concepts of folklore as an academic subject through the lens of Canada. The course will explore how regional identity, ethnicity, language, religion, class and gender intersect to create specific forms of folklore and folk groups. Folklore is not neutral but reflects the socio-political realities of specific places and times. Of interest will be the construction of an “authentic” folklore and “the folk,” either consciously or unconsciously, by those producing and consuming these items. The course will also attempt to understand the complex relationship between “authentic” folklore and an increasingly industrialized and globalized world.

Learning Outcomes:

Be able to think critically (this does not mean only negatively) by constantly asking questions and (re)-evaluating one’s own mental processes and potential assumptions.

Be able to think interdisciplinarily about contemporary social categories and culture.

Be able to recognize that definitions of “the folk” are inherently political and historical, that authenticity is itself an invention loaded with assumptions.

Be able to discern secondary and primary sources.

Be able to write a scholarly essay with a clear, concise and consistent thesis.

Be able to identify, categorize, collect and cite genres of folklore.

Be able to identify and categorize folk groups.

Be able to articulate the distinctions between folklore and fakelore and how fakelore can be used to explore easy understandings of truth and falsity, particularly in our hyper-technologized contemporary world.

Be able to articulate various reasons why folklore has not disappeared in the face of modernity without relying only on the explanation of vigorous collecting.

Apply the countering of essentialist definitions and teleological thinking to assumptions about Canadian identity and folk traditions.

Assessment:

Class Participation, 15%: Participation will be evaluated based on involvement in class group discussion, largely taking place on Thursdays. Attendance is the prerequisite for a high participation grade.

Collecting Assignment, 15%, due September 26: Collection information, including analysis: 3-5 pages. Transcription: length will vary.

Collecting folklore, or fieldwork, is a central component of folkloristics. You must collect **two** folk objects you encounter in your life. This includes, but is not limited to, jokes, graffiti, tall tales, family legends, ghost stories, urban legends, internet lore, particular gestures/body movements, foodways (ways of cooking, commemorations or holidays, use of herbs for remedies), dances/music, childlore (playground songs, insults, traditions, stories), “medical” lore, or nicknaming. You can collect these objects from friends, family, acquaintances, classmates, the internet (but *not* pre-existing folklore collections. It should be circulating folklore). Who the informant is and where you encounter it is known as the point of discovery (POD). You can select folk objects from within a single folk group or from between folk groups, but your objects must share at least one characteristic, i.e. genre, mode of transmission, style, or folk group.

You will then create a collection document, which must include: 1) POD, including the name of informant, relative age, cultural background, education, or any information on the informant you

can glean, the date of collection and the location. If the informant is not a person, describe where you encountered the folklore 2) title of object 3) genre of object 4) context of encounter (specifically context of collection, context of use, and cultural context of the folklore; how do these components intermingle to impact the folk object?) 5) transcription of object as best you can 6) texture (how was the object communicated to you?). 7) Finally, provide personal analysis of the items, addressing what you believe these items mean, what role it plays for the folk group and/or outside of the folk group.

Mid-Term Exam, 20%, due October 10

Final Essay, 8-10 pages, 25%: The final essay is the main opportunity for you to develop your collection, analytical, writing and research skills. The final essay is an argumentative and analytical essay: in other words, you must have a clear thesis stated in the introduction of the essay, supported by evidence in the form of sub-arguments and ending with a conclusion. The essay should be analytical, and not simply descriptive; you are not repeating information to me but demonstrating that you can think critically and integrate scholarly and non-scholarly sources into a coherent narrative.

You must use at least **three** primary sources (folk objects) and at least **four** secondary (scholarly) sources. You will select a specific genre of folklore **OR** a specific folk group and provide an analysis of it using primary examples mixed with academic folkloristics. Students have the freedom to choose any topic they want, as long as it is an example of Canadian folklore (or at least folklore in Canada).

Some popular examples: fairies, ethnic food traditions, holidays, dance traditions (often of specific immigrant groups), ghost stories, monsters, intersection of religion and folk tales, legend-tripping.

You are encouraged to come to office hours to discuss potential topics with the instructor. While you can use course material as support, you will be expected to find your own materials for this paper.

You can submit the essay *either* November 21 and be guaranteed to have it returned by the last day of classes *or* can submit it on December 3 and have it returned at or after the final exam. There will be no difference in the evaluation criteria.

Final Exam, 25%: Scheduled by the registrar.

All assignments must be submitted as a hardcopy in-class, or in the Red Box in the History Department, 6th Floor Social Science Building. If email submission is required because of extenuating circumstance, students must contact the instructor.

Please make sure to provide references in your work. Students may use any citation system they wish, but students must include page numbers in all references. The *History Student's Handbook* may prove useful for citation suggestions and format.

References exist for several reasons: 1) to provide credit where credit is due. 2) to demonstrate that the author is familiar with the existing literature on the subject under study and is in dialogue with this literature 3) to allow the reader to find the material the author is presenting, whether primary or secondary material, and expand the exposure of writers and readers to the seemingly infinite amount of information and 4) to keep the author accountable to the evidentiary record while allowing simultaneously for interpretation and argumentation.

Be sure to provide complete bibliographic information for each source you use. Please note that a paper submitted without references is unacceptable and will receive a mark of zero.

Students are required to keep all research notes and rough drafts for their essays and may be required to hand them in. Keep this material even after the essay has been graded.

All essays must be written in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with margins approximately 2.54 cm on the top and bottom of the page and 3.17 cm on the left and right of the page. This is to ensure the standardization of all papers submitted.

Extensions will be granted on compassionate grounds or because of extenuating circumstances and only after consultation between the student and the instructor.

Late assignments will have a half-letter grade deducted per day, including weekends.

Cell phones must be turned off during class. Laptops are allowed in-class for copying notes only.

Required Texts:

There are no required texts for this course. All readings will be provided on D2L by the instructor, through links posted in the course syllabus, or on reserve in the library.

Topics, Reading Schedule and Course Schedule

Week 1: Thursday, September 5

Class Orientation, Introduction to Folklore

Week 2: Tuesday, September 10 Thursday, September 12

Nature of Folklore: The Professionalization and Academicization of Folklore

Simon Bronner, *Folklore: The Basics*, introduction and chapter 1.

Week 3: Tuesday, September 17 Thursday, September 19

Legends, Beliefs, Tales and Superstitions

Week 4: Tuesday, September 24 Thursday, September 26

Folklore as National Propaganda: John Murray Gibbon, Folk Festivals, Multiculturalism and the Folklore Industrial Complex

Antonia Smith, "'Cement for the Canadian Mosaic': Performing Canadian Citizenship in the Work of John Murray Gibbon," *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* 1 (2007): 37-60.

Stuart Henderson, "'While there is still time': J. Murray Gibbon and the Spectacle of Difference in Three CPR Folk Festivals, 1928-31," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 39 (2005): 139-174.

Week 5: Tuesday, October 1 Thursday, October 3

Alberta: Campfires and Cowboys

Week 6: Tuesday, October 8 Thursday, October 10

Catching-up, Mid-term Exam

Week 7: Tuesday, October 15 Thursday, October 17

Women and Folklore, Job or Hobby, Professionalization Continued: The Cases of Helen Creighton and Edith Fowke

Ian McKay, *Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia*, chapter 2.

Diane Tye, "'A Very Lone Worker': Woman-Centred Thoughts on Helen Creighton's Career as a Folklorist," *Canadian Folklore* 15 (1993): 107-117.

Pauline Greenhill, "Radical? Feminist? Nationalist? The Canadian Paradox of Edith Fowke," *The Folklore Historian*, vol. 20 (2003): 22-33.

Week 8: Tuesday, October 22 Thursday, October 24

The Uses and Abuses of Aboriginal Folklore, Part I: European Visions, Violations and Commodification

Ronald Labelle, "Native Witchcraft Beliefs in Acadian, Maritime and Newfoundland Folklore," *Ethnologies* 30 (2008): 137-143.

Andrew Nurse, "Marius Barbeau and the Methodology of Salvage Ethnography in Canada, 1911-51," in *Historicizing Canadian Anthropology*, eds. Julia Harrison and Regina Darnell, 52-64.

Kathy M'Closkey and Kevin Manuel, "Commodifying North American Aboriginal Culture: A Canada-US Comparison," in *Historicizing Canadian Anthropology*, eds. Julia Harrison and Regina Darnell, 226-241.

Week 9: Tuesday, October 29 Thursday, October 31

The Uses and Abuses of Aboriginal Folklore, Part II: Aboriginal Stories, Aboriginal Voices

Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*, chapters 1 and 4.

Week 10: Tuesday, November 5 Thursday, November 7

French Canadian Tales, or, The Greater Importance of Werewolves and Flying Canoes

Honoré Beaugrand, "The Werewolves" (starts on page 39) and "The Flying Canoe" (starts on page 9).

Hannah Priest, *She-Wolf: A Cultural History of Female Werewolves*, chapter 6.

November 10-16 Term Break, No classes

Week 11: Tuesday, November 19 Thursday, November 21

Monsters, Ghouls and Ghosts: The Supernatural and Folklore, or the Role of Fear

David D. Gilmore, *Monsters, Evil Beings, Mythical Beasts and All Manner of Imaginary Terrors*, chapter 2 and 5.

Stephen T. Asma, *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears*, introduction.

Week 12: Tuesday, November 26 Thursday, November 28

Cryptozoology: The Intersection of Science and Folklore, or How Sasquatch Became a Canadian Tradition

Brian Regal, *Searching for Sasquatch: Crackpots, Eggheads, and Cryptozoology*, chapter 1.

Gregory Reece, *Weird Science and Bizarre Beliefs: Mysterious Creatures, Lost Worlds and Amazing Inventions*, chapters 1 and 2 (for chapter 2, focus on pages 45-53; 65-70).

Week 13: Tuesday, December 3 Thursday, December 5

Catching-up and Exam Review

Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

- **Attention history majors: History 300 is a required course for all history majors. You should normally take it in your second year.**
- For program advising in the Faculty of Arts, contact the Arts Students Centre (ASC) in SS 102, call 403-220-3580, email artsads@ucalgary.ca, or book an appointment with an ASC advisor at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/current-students/undergraduate>.
- For further information on academic advising and degree planning for arts students, see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/current-students/undergraduate/academic-advising>.
- For registration issues, paying fees, and assistance with MyUofC, contact Enrolment Services in MacKimmie Library Block (MLB), call 403-210-ROCK (7625), or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/>.
- Registration changes and exemption requests: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals>.

Departmental Grading System:

The following percentage-to-letter grade conversion scheme is used in all Canadian Studies, History, and Latin American Studies courses, except for HTST 200.

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
90-100	A+	4.00	Outstanding
85-89	A	4.00	Excellent—superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
80-84	A-	3.70	
77-79	B+	3.30	
73-76	B	3.00	Good—clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.
70-72	B-	2.70	
67-69	C+	2.30	
63-66	C	2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.
60-62	C-	1.70	Receipt of a grade point average of 1.70 may not be sufficient for promotion or graduation.
56-59	D+	1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
50-55	D	1.00	
0-49	F	0	Fail—unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.

Writing:

All written assignments and written exam responses are assessed partly on writing skills. Writing skills include surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) and general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly referenced.

Red Box Policy:

Essays and other assignments may be dropped into the red box located outside of the History Department office (Social Sciences, Room 656). Please include the following information on your assignment: **1) course name and number, 2) instructor, 3) your name, and 4) your student number.** Assignments received after 4:00 p.m. are date stamped the next business day. We do not time stamp any papers. Please do not bring your paper into the office to be stamped. The box is emptied at 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism occurs when one submits or presents one's work in a course, or ideas and/or passages in a written piece of work, as if it were one's own work done expressly for that particular course, when, in fact, it is not. As noted in *The History Student's Handbook*

<https://hist.ucalgary.ca/sites/hist.ucalgary.ca/files/history-students-handbook-2019.pdf>

Plagiarism may take several forms:

- Failing to cite sources properly
- Submitting borrowed, purchased, and/or ghostwritten papers
- Submitting one's own work for more than one course without the permission of the instructor(s) involved
- Extensive paraphrasing of one or a few sources, even when referenced properly, unless the essay is a critical analysis of those works
- Using notes does not justify the sustained presentation of another author's language and ideas as one's own

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and written work that appears to contain plagiarized passages will not be graded. All such work is reported to the Faculty of Arts' associate deans of students who will apply the penalties specified in the *University of Calgary Calendar, Section K.*

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Copyright:

Instructors in all University of Calgary courses strictly adhere to the Copyright Act regulations and educational exceptions permitted by the Act for both print and digital course material. No

copyrighted material may be placed on course D2L or web sites without the prior permission of the copyright holders. In some cases, you may be required to purchase a print course pack from the University of Calgary bookstore or consult books on reserve at the library. For more information on the University of Calgary's copyright policy, see <http://library.ucalgary.ca/copyright>.

Academic Accommodations (implemented July 1, 2015):

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should contact Student Accessibility Services (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

Students needing an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should contact, preferably in writing, the course instructor.

Other Useful Information:

- Department Twitter @ucalgaryhist

Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information on:

- Wellness and Mental Health
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

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